



EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Prof. PEKING UNIVERSITY, Beijing, China August 2020 - Present

- History of Science, Technology, & Medicine Department
- Research Fellow, Institute for Advanced Interdisciplinary Study

EDUCATION

Ph.D. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, Princeton, New Jersey June 2020

- Department of History

M.Phil. UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, Oxford, United Kingdom July 2014

- Master of Philosophy in Modern Chinese Studies (with Distinction)

A.B. DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, Hanover, New Hampshire June 2010

- Bachelor of Arts in Chinese Studies and Government (Double Major)

PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH

BOOK PROJECTS

Seeking News, Making China: Information, Technology, and the Emergence of Mass Society. (Stanford UP, March 2024)

What is it like to live through a news revolution? What is the relationship between technological and political development? How can we theorize these interrelated phenomena? Tackling large questions through an analysis of the everyday experience of news in social and material context, the book traces changes in the 'newsscape' over the long-durée, revealing a complex technopolitical process outside of established developmental narratives.

Bird Paths: Science and Exploration in China's Great Game 1842-1885. (in process)

A global history of science, exploration, and empire centered on the life and travels of one late-Qing mathematician and astronomer, this project pays close attention to how people mobilized information in the race for empire. A three-year grant from Peking University under the title *China and the Global Struggle for Science in the 19th Century* 《中国与19世纪的全球科学之争》 has supported the research and initial writing of this manuscript.

Historical Logic, Illustrated: An Introduction to Thinking and Speaking about the World in a Western Classroom (in process)

What does it mean to think historically? What are the logics and premises of the way we think about human societies in fields as varied as economics, history, anthropology, or sociology? Based on my experience teaching *ab initio* humanities students, this illustrated bilingual handbook aims to outline the principles of critical thinking.

The Spirit of Science: The Global History of a Concept Shaping Modern China (research stage)

The *spirit of science* is an objective, ahistorical, and apolitical force, a source of redemption for the nation. This spirit drives political, technological, and economic development; only its absence can hold the country back. Such is the message of a vast body of Chinese propaganda. Where did this idea come from? How did a Hegelian and Positivist philosophy from the nineteenth century come to dominate the twenty-first? What are its implications?



北京大學
PEKING UNIVERSITY

John N. Alekna

History of Science, Technology and Medicine
Peking University, Beijing, China
jalekna@pku.edu.cn

PUBLICATIONS

- "Neither Nation nor Empire: Situating Shanghai Radio in the Global Technological Moment, 1922-1925." *Technology and Culture*. (October 2022)
- "Notes from Enlightenment Studio: The Circulation of Scientific Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century China," in preparation for submission to *Isis* in Fall 2023.
- "Ernest George Hayward Osborn (1891-1957): Radio Pioneer in East Asia." in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK. (2018)

INVITED LECTURES

- "Radio, Cultural Revolution, and the Meaning of Technology in Twentieth Century China." History Colloquium, *University of Lethbridge*, Alberta, Canada. November 2021
- "Key Questions and Debates in the History of Science in China." Yenching Academy, *Peking University*, Beijing. April 2021.
- "Radio Technology in China's Media History." Department of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. *Peking University*, Beijing. January 2020.
- "China's Information Revolution: Radio Broadcasting and Society in the Nanjing Decade 1927-1937." University Lecture on Science and the Humanities: *Chinese Academy of Sciences*, Beijing. June, 2018.

CONFERENCE PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

- "Astronomy, Mathematics, and Exploration in China's Great Game 1866-1879." Goethe University, Frankfurt. As part of self-organized panel 'Science and the Late Qing Polycrisis: Perspectives from the Interior and Non-elite 1866-1930' at the 16th International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia. August 2023.
- "Never Still: Acts of Transportation, Translation, Replication, and Definition in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Science." Colloquium, History of Science, Tech. & Medicine Department, Peking University. September 2023.
- "The Technopolitics of Social Collapse, 1966-1968" Sound Studies Working Group. Online, hosted by the University of Freiburg. October 2022.
- "The Newsscape of 1919." Sound Studies Working Group. Online, hosted by the University of Freiburg. August 2021.
- "The Intermedial Experience of News in Twentieth-Century China." Association for Asian Studies (AAS) annual conference panel 'Remaking the History of News in East Asia.' Organizer and Chair. March 2021.
- "Red Women on the Radio: the Communist Newsscape in China 1937-1949" Modern East Asian History Workshop, Princeton University. December 2020.
- "Reading the Radio: the Intermediality of Information Practices in Twentieth-Century China." International Conference on the Practices of Reading in the People's Republic of China. University of Freiburg, Germany. December 2020.
- "Socialized Media: Communication Technology, News, and Information Flow in the Making of New China 1949-1958." History of Science Program Seminar. Princeton University. February 2020.
- "China's Response to the Washington Conference" Columbia Graduate Students Conference on East Asia. February 2014



北京大學
PEKING UNIVERSITY

John N. Alekna

History of Science, Technology and Medicine
Peking University, Beijing, China
jalekna@pku.edu.cn

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

“Reunified through Radio: Media, Technology, and Politics in Modern China 1923-1958.” Unpublished Dissertation.
Princeton University, May 2020.

MASTERS DISSERTATION

“The Citizen’s Diplomacy Movement: Civil Society in Response to the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-1922.” Unpublished
Dissertation: Oxford University, 2014.

TEACHING & SERVICE

PEKING UNIVERSITY: Instructor of Record

The History and Philosophy of Science (<i>graduate seminar</i>)	2021-present
The History of Chinese Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Western Tradition (<i>graduate seminar</i>)	2021-present
Historical Research Methods (<i>graduate seminar</i>)	2021-present
Communications as Material, Theory, and Practice (<i>graduate seminar</i>)	2023-present

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY: Preceptor-Assistantship in Instruction

East Asia Since 1800 Sheldon Garon & He Bian (<i>one section</i>)	Spring 2019
Modern China, 1850 to the Present Janet Chen (<i>two sections</i>)	Fall 2018

SERVICE

Graduate Admissions Committee; Academic Standards Committee; Departmental Hiring Committee	2020-present
--	--------------

MAJOR FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

FALL 2023	RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, CLARE HALL, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, Cambridge, UK
FALL 2023	LI FAMILY FELLOW, NEEDHAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE, Cambridge, UK
2021-2023	PKU ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROJECT GRANT, Beijing, China
2021-2022	PKU GRADUATE COURSE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT GRANT, Beijing, China
2017-2018	FULBRIGHT RESEARCH FELLOW, Beijing, China
2017-2018	CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, VISITING SCHOLAR, Beijing, China



北京大學
PEKING UNIVERSITY

John N. Alekna

History of Science, Technology and Medicine
Peking University, Beijing, China
jalekna@pku.edu.cn

2016-2017 **BLAKEMORE-FREEMAN FELLOW**, Taipei, Republic of China
2014-2016 **UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP**, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey

MEDIA & OUTREACH

Politecnico di Torino, *Biennale Tecnologia*, "The Past and Future of Chinese Technology," featured interview, November 2022.

Yenching Academy, interview "Questions on the History of Science" WeChat media. April 2021.

BBC World Service *The Documentary Podcast*, "The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: National International," featured interview. September, 2018.

LANGUAGES

- Mandarin Chinese: professionally fluent with research-level reading skills
- Classical Chinese: reading ability
- Modern Japanese: reading ability
- French: reading ability
- Latin: reading ability