

# Friday Seminar



Department of Anthropology  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
香港中文大學人類學系

Spring  
2024

## Of Experts and Muppets: Knowledge and Solidarity in the HK Quarantine Support Group



Apr 12

1:00 - 2:30PM

NAH 213

During the three years of the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2020 – 23, people in Hong Kong lived with sometimes daily changing quarantine policies, testing requirements, and travel restrictions. In a confusing and often contradicting scape of government press releases and announcements, media coverage, and social media discussions, staying informed became a frustrating task and routine. In these times over 100,000 residents and those who wanted to come to Hong Kong turned towards the HK Quarantine Support Group, a Facebook group to offer crowdsourced support for quarantine in Hong Kong and especially on matters of travel restrictions, testing requirements, hotel bookings, and vaccine documentation. This talk explores how people come to trust strangers and those they never meet in-person; and how they create knowledge collectively. Based on an online ethnography of the HK Support group from 2020 – 2023, I examine various processes of solidarity formation as well as the interactive practices and hierarchies of knowledge production within the group. I show how this online community emerged specifically because of the uncertainty of COVID-policies in Hong Kong and how the group both challenges and reaffirms notions of official expertise.

**Tim Rosenkranz** is a Lecturer in Anthropology at CUHK. His research focuses on the study of organizations as sites and professionals as actors of social, cultural, and economic change. His work has been published in the journal, *Poetics*, as well as *Work, Employment, and Society*. His current project explores the practices and crisis of privileged mobility and the ambiguities of place-making in Hong Kong.

