



Fudan campus, March 2020. Photo: Wen Liu

Nordic Centre Newsletter *Spring 2020*

Just as life is gradually getting back to normal in Shanghai, the Nordic countries – indeed most countries– find themselves in a dire situation due to the novel coronavirus. While the full scale of its impact on public health and the economy remains to be seen, the virus's effects on education and research are already easily felt, with universities and schools closing, conferences being cancelled, and visits postponed.

We are also witnessing a rapid adaptation to virtual modes of collaboration and education, both in Europe and China. The last few weeks have seen Nordic Centre member universities transition to online classrooms as “socially distanced” researchers and students make use of web-based tools to adjust to these new circumstances.

This newsletter takes a look at the situation that has unfolded in China since Spring Festival in January, and which currently is being felt across the globe at a pace fueled by the virus's exponential contagiousness. What tools has the education system here employed to adjust to distance learning, and how has society at large responded to the “corona crisis”? Our Nordic Centre programme officers Linus Ling and Wen Liu offer their takes, and we get an update on how this semester's Demola course is running remotely from coordinator Nancy Lai. We also bring you some updates on research and education activities that we have had to postpone.

We hope all our friends, colleagues, and students are staying safe and taking all the recommended precautions.

On behalf of the Nordic Centre team,

*Magnus Jorem
Programme Manager
Nordic Centre
Fudan University*

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About

- Nordic Centre at Fudan University is a platform for academic collaboration between the five Nordic countries and China
- If you wish to subscribe to the Nordic Centre newsletter, which is published 3-4 times yearly, please sign up for free at nordiccentre.net

Masthead

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Summer courses

Our summer courses “Chinese Politics and Society” (June 25-July 8) and “Business and Innovation in China” (July 10-23) are still planned to take place as usual.

However, given the great uncertainties of global coronavirus developments, we might have to change plans. Therefore, we discourage booking tickets to Shanghai that cannot be refunded. In any case, we have extended our nominations deadline to April 30 to buy more time to assess the situation. We will keep everyone posted.

For a glimpse at last summer's courses, please take a look at these videos, filmed and edited by programme officer Wen Liu, with the purpose of promoting this year's courses.

[Chinese Politics and Society](#)
[Business and Innovation in China](#)



Fall internship

We are searching for a fall intern for Nordic Centre. The Nordic Centre promotes and supports research and educational cooperation between its member universities and Chinese partners, and also promotes Nordic culture in Shanghai. The intern is responsible for, among other things, organizing social and cultural events, helping to organize academic workshops, assisting with communication efforts with both member universities and external stakeholders.

[The internship's full description with application instructions is available here.](#)
[Please read closely before applying.](#)

Email your application to
applications@nordiccentre.net by 11.59
PM, April 5, 2020.

NORDIC CENTRE
FUDAN UNIVERSITY
SHANGHAI, CHINA

INTERNSHIP IN
SHANGHAI
AUTUMN 2020

Deadline:
April 5
before
midnight

Organize cultural and social
events in Shanghai

Perform communication tasks
through social media, web,
and newsletters

Assist Chinese and Nordic
researchers and delegations

Free Chinese classes

Read more at
nordiccentre.net

Housing
covered

Ranked
China's #3
university
2020 QS University
Rankings

October 19-20: Nordic Centre 25-year anniversary

The 25-year anniversary of Nordic Centre is scheduled to take place as planned, on October 19-20. Besides festivities, the anniversary will focus on three research topics through thematic workshops: 1) The Arctic (one track in social sciences, one in natural sciences, and one plenary session), 2) Social welfare, and 3) Cultural heritage in a Nordic-Shanghai context. More information will follow soon.

Please write to programme manager Magnus Jorem, magnus@nordiccentre.net if you have any questions about or proposals for the anniversary.

Note that if international travel is still heavily restricted in October, we are considering a “digital version” of above workshops.



Workshop funding: Ethics of Managing Innovative Organizations

We are happy to announce that Nordic Centre will fund a research workshop on “Transparency and Opaqueness: Nordic and Chinese Perspectives on the Ethics of Managing Innovative Organisations & Responsible Research”. The main organizer is David Guttormsen, Assistant Professor in International and Cross-Cultural Management at B.I. Norwegian Business School. Given the current coronavirus circumstances a date has yet to be announced for the workshop.

Postponed activities

Due to the circumstances caused by COVID-19, the following research activities have been postponed:

- Workshop on “Land and Natural Resources: East and West” (new date TBA)
- Workshop on “Patterns of responsible innovation in farming; innovation and responsibility repertoires in different geographical contexts” (new date TBA)
- Biannual Conference, “Ageing and Global Healthcare Challenges”. [Please follow this site for updates.](#)
- PhD summer course on “Ageing and Services in Changing Societies” (new dates: October 12-16, TBC, [Please visit our website for more details](#))
- Chinese legal culture PhD course (new dates TBA)

Distance learning surges during outbreak

Linus Ling

As the coronavirus has swept China – and now other parts of the globe – Chinese students of all education levels have had to adjust to learning from home. In response to the outbreak, Fudan University immediately formed a working team to handle various virus-related issues and, based on the actual needs of different faculties and departments, implemented a number of plans, including for remote learning.

Schools across China are out of necessity embracing new teaching methods online, thereby minimizing human-to-human interactions. Teachers are using variety of online streaming and recording tools to make distance learning possible. Furthermore, the Information Office of Fudan University and other related departments have provided teachers and students with various help regarding the distance learning: Databases like cnki.net, Web of Science, is now available even to computers not connected to the school wifi; the meeting platform "Zoom" has made it convenient to have cloud meeting at home; and Fudan's "E-learning" platform assists teachers in daily needs such as uploading articles and making announcements.



Picture from cnki.net: Don't delay the scientific research, don't forget to study.

Public service

Linus Ling



Post of the livestreaming course taught by Wu Fan and Zhang Wenhong

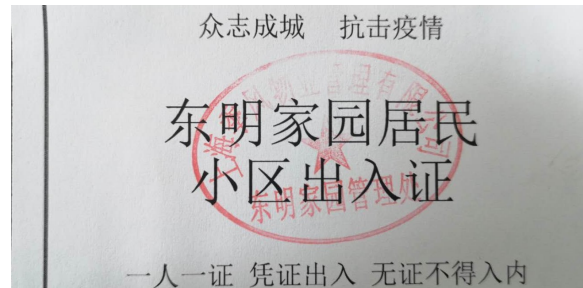
Fudan University is also livestreaming some courses nationwide. Wu Fan and Zhang Wenhong, two experts in the field of virus prevention, livestreamed a course on what we need to know about the virus to the public on February 24. They talked about COVID-19's infective characteristics and some general knowledge regarding preventing the virus such as the correct way to put on masks, washing hands and how to protect ourselves in public areas. It not only educates the audience of virus-related knowledge, but also raises public attention. Both teachers and students are required to fill in health and residential information via online platforms everyday so that the university can monitor students' and teachers' basic status, and keep in touch with them.

Speaking of students, some say that it takes some time getting used to the online-learning system because of network reasons and unfamiliarity with how it works. And while the online learning platforms appear to be running smoothly after a bit of a learning curve, there are activities like chemical experiments that are better suited for an actual laboratory. Some in their last years are worried about whether they could graduate and register on time because they have to apply for the visa in their master programs' countries with graduation certificate, but they are sure and have full confidence in Fudan University's reaction that they will take adapted methods to these concerns. (Students' opinion from Demola Course alumni interview and Fudan University Student Union's official Wechat account)

The quiet metropolis

Linus Ling

The city government of Shanghai has been taking active steps to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. This year, normally bustling zones like Nanjing Road, Xintiandi, and the Bund have been unusually quiet, bereft of the usual throngs of tourists that visit during Spring Festival. Many residents say they've never experienced such "deserted" street areas before, but it truly reflects the key method that Shanghai, and even China, suggests their residents do: avoid unnecessary outdoor activities. Most of the neighborhoods require using a special "permit" to get in and out of their residential areas, while supermarkets are asking all customers to wear masks. Otherwise, they're not allowed to shop inside. And speaking of this undoubtedly precious good, masks, Shanghai has applied an apartment-register method: each family, depending on its residence certificate, can buy five masks each turn. Some TV programs that usually cost money have become free so that people won't get bored in their quarantines. All these methods have one overarching aim, which is to ensure everyone's good health, both physically and mentally.



The "pass" of the community

Back to business... Gradually

Linus Ling

After the relatively long Spring Festival vacation, the city is gradually recovering from the medical crisis and getting back to its normal working rhythm. Thermometers have been installed in public transportation to monitor whether any passengers are afflicted with a high body temperature. Restaurants are getting back to business little by little because of the 14-day quarantine period for those employees who went back to their hometown. Companies, meanwhile, are exploring new methods as substitutes for working in the office. The company versions of the WeChat and Dingding apps have attracted great attention as a result. Brick and mortar shops seem ready to welcome customers back, hanging out opening signs, but you won't yet find that many customers inside. In front of some popular shops there is queues, but in a more "Nordic" manner: People are lining up with at least one-meter intervals. Generally speaking, there are signs that Shanghai is gradually getting back to its normal pace, but things are not there quite yet. Although many uncertainties remain, circumstances will likely get better after the inflection point of the virus, which Professor Zhong Nanshan (Academician of Chinese Academy of Engineering) predicts will happen in early April.

People have to show this sign in order to enter some public areas or take certain public transportation, the red one means you should be quarantined while the green indicates you are ok to go.



Fighting an invisible enemy

Wen Liu

Just a week before Chinese New Year, people across the country were still busy preparing for the most important holiday of the year. There had been some “rumors” about a virus breakout in Wuhan, but most people believed it not to be dangerously contagious, as some experts had assured the public on national news channels.

Non-official information about the new coronavirus breakout and serious medical crisis in Wuhan exploded on Chinese social media just a few days before the holiday. Young people typically got alerted faster than their elder family members, since they receive information from more diverse sources. The alarm went off when the government declared the lockdown of Wuhan on January 23, only one day before New Year’s Eve. Many citizens from Wuhan escaped to other cities before all kinds of transportation were blocked. In almost every city, masks were sold out overnight. The general public was advised to cancel family gatherings and dinners during the most important traditional holiday, which is unprecedented in the history of People’s Republic of China. In fact, one major reason for the quick and wide spread of the new coronavirus was the world’s largest human migration – Chinese New Year.

Wuhan has long been a pivotal transportation hub in China, accelerating the spread of virus to other parts of the country. A kind of national panic ensued, and people traveling from Wuhan encountered strict quarantine measures across the country, at times with undue discrimination. There was a wide array of measures taken at all levels: Everyone was required to report travel records to their residential communities. A lot of villages cut off roads to the outside; in some places, highways were closed. It felt like China was fighting a war against an invisible enemy.

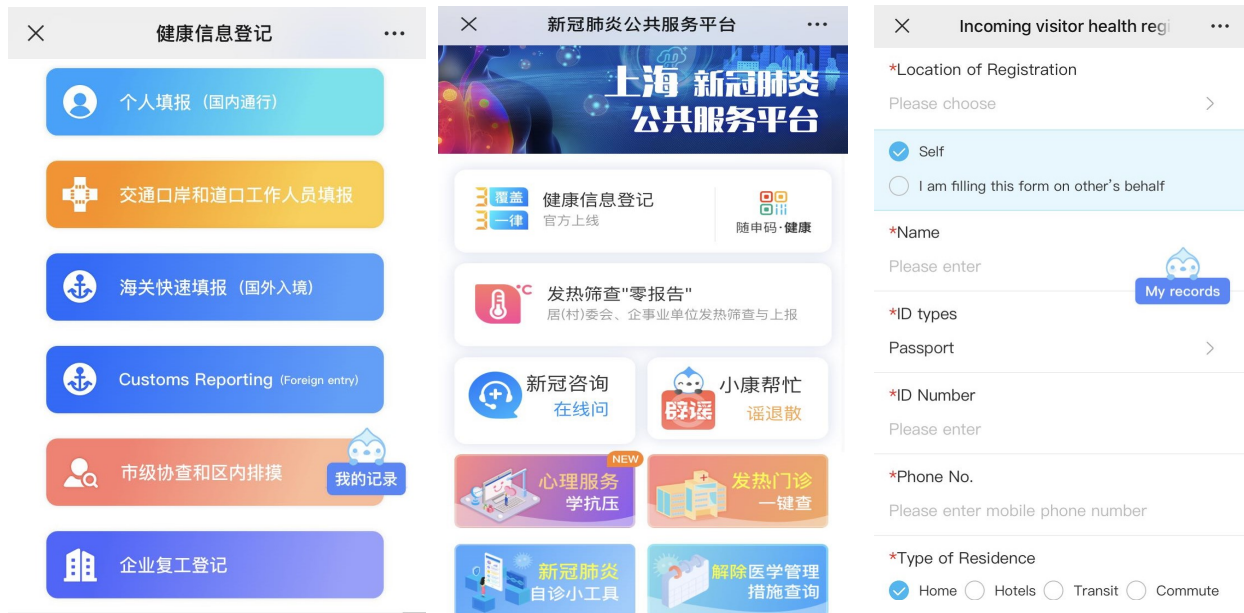


Empty shelves in the supermarket

In the month and a half since, citizens have been required to stay at home and avoid contact not only with strangers, but also friends and family members. As people stocked food at home, a shortage of vegetables became a problem in some cities. Most stores and restaurants were forced to close as well, entailing great financial losses for the owners. The influence on tourism has also been economically destructive, especially considering that Chinese New Year is one of the most popular holidays for traveling. Some countries quickly banned Chinese citizens from entering the borders and stopped international flights. Many Chinese tourists were forced to change or cancel their trips, sometimes even left stranded at the airports. Students who study in Australia and New Zealand might not be able to continue their study if they went back to China during the Chinese New Year, because both countries have banned all travelers from China.

In normal times, the Chinese New Year holiday lasts for seven days and then people gradually go back to work or study. But this year, due to the threat of infections, all the schools and businesses have delayed the starting date. Students have had to study online, and staff in various industries have been advised to work at home.

From my personal experiences, although the number of infections remains zero in my hometown (Qingzhou, Shandong), my family, too, has been quarantined at home. We were given a pass for going in and out of our residential community, in order to prevent strangers coming in. In some cities, especially in Hubei Province, only one member of each household was allowed to go out and shopping for the entire family every two or three days. Fortunately, in my hometown there were fewer restrictions. Only a few big supermarkets have remained open, and everyone has had to wear a mask when shopping inside, and have their body temperature checked at the entrance. There were only a few cars and people on the street. The auspicious decorations for Chinese New Year were put on before the virus breakout, but have lost their meaning this year. All kinds of celebrations got canceled. No holiday greetings, and no visit to my grandparents, which has never happened in my life.



Above is the personal health information registering platform

Fortunately, Chinese government’s strict quarantine policy came into effect and the number of infections outside Wuhan started to decline near the end of February. But on my way back to Shanghai, all the passengers still needed to have their body temperature checked at the train station. Everyone was wearing a mask on the train and no one was talking. It was also required to register one's travel records during the Chinese New Year online and have one's body temperature checked again before entering Shanghai. As for the residential community I live in, I have had to register and get a pass every time going out, and return the pass when going back. A lot of staff returning to Shanghai are required to wait for another 14 days before going back to work, and those returning from Hubei Province must be quarantined at home.

The situation in China has stabilized as a result of the aforementioned steps, and is gradually getting better. But news about COVID-19 virus breakouts in Japan, South Korea, Italy, Iran and indeed the Nordic region have increased concerns for about what is now officially a global pandemic. The Chinese New Year holiday may be over, but the battle against the new virus is just entering the next stage.

Demola Global donates 280 FFP2 masks to Nordic Centre, Fudan University

Nancy Lai

Our collaboration partners Demola Global have been following the situation of the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) in China closely. On Feb 5, they decided to purchase 280 FFP2 masks and ship them from Finland to China. The masks were the last stock of the medical device company, LIFAair, in Finland. After some complications, including additional tariffs and document requirements of China customs, the masks arrived at Nordic Centre on Feb 24 and will be distributed to Fudan students and staff.



The masks have arrived



Remote-working for Slush China

Nancy Lai

This semester, the leading startup-event organizer Slush China and Demola launched a joint project titled "Slush around the Year." This project aims to solve challenges for Slush China on "How better to serve international startup and investor communities around the year and better engage stakeholders in China." Students participating in the project will engage with Slush's startups, corporate partners, and investors to optimize communication, user experience, and operations for the next Slush event.

To facilitate remote project work during the virus outbreak, the project makes use of DingTalk – a co-working software developed by Alibaba Group, originally used by businesses and now also popular for students — as well as WeChat and Fudan's E-learning system. Meetings are held every Friday, from March 6 to May 29, in addition to daily communication with the participating students. The final demonstration will be livestreamed on May 29, 2020 at the premises of Slush.

Please contact Nancy at nancy@demola.net if you would like to attend some of the Friday sessions as external experts of startups services or watch the final demonstration remotely.