Date: 24 July 2015 (Friday)                 Time: 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm                  Venue: GH128

Speaker: Mr. TSUI Tsz Chun
MPhil Program
Department of Applied Social Sciences
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Topic: Who are the New Farmers/return-to-village youth? An exploratory study of their implications on social economy development in Hong Kong and Mainland China

Abstract:
Seeing the problems a profit-driven capitalist economy has imposed on society and environment, the search for alternatives that embrace social egalitarian and emancipatory values and environmental concerns for replacing the existing system has been going on for the last century. To these ends, the concepts and movements of social economy/solidarity economy were first promulgated in Europe and America before they were taken up by post-reform China. After decades of migration to the urban areas for better work opportunity and living conditions in Chinese Mainland, we have seen an emerging trend in recent years that increasing numbers of young people are beginning to return to their rural villages to engage in community-based agricultural production, using environmental friendly practices. Similar movement, albeit on a smaller scale and less visible, is also observed in Hong Kong, refuting the foregone conclusion that agriculture is a sunset industry. In this presentation the following questions will be explored: Who are these people and what are they doing in the rural villages? Why do they undertake such projects and what do they hope to achieve? In what way are they reacting to the capitalistic economy? What lessons can we learn from them about the development of social economy in the two places? How can it aid our search for alternatives to the global capitalist economy?

Speaker's brief biography:
John is a full-time MPhil student in the Department of Applied Social Sciences. He worked as a research assistant at the School of Design on projects related to ageing and as an editorial assistant of China Journal of Social Work. He is also a volunteer in a political party in Hong Kong for over 6 years. He received his Bachelor degree in political science and history from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.