Tuesday, 14 April 2009, 1:00-2:00 p.m.
Room 303, 3/F KK Leung Building, HKU

What to do about June Fourth?
-- A Discussion of Demands for Reappraisal (pingfan) and Other Avenues of Redress

Professor Eva Pils
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The talk compares two forms of institutional redress for political injustice in contemporary China, arguing that one is authoritarian, the other liberal, and that neither is entirely satisfactory. Some victims of political persecution no longer accept the right of the state to classify citizens as enemies, and they thereby undermine the authoritarian idea of corrective official reappraisal of such measures. Liberal avenues of redress through adjudication, on the other hand, have so far remained closed to most victims of historic injustice; but even if opened up, they can become meaningful only if accompanied by the liberation of memory and public discussion.

Eva Pils is a member of the Faculty of Law of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), where she teaches mainly in the areas of Chinese law and of legal philosophy. In her writing, she focuses on human rights and social justice in China. Her publications in the area of Chinese law have addressed the role and situation of Chinese human rights defenders, property law and land rights in China, the status of migrant workers, the Chinese petitioning system and conceptions of justice in China.

Eva studied law, philosophy and Chinese studies at Heidelberg University in Germany, where she also qualified as a lawyer. She holds PhD and LL.M. degrees from the University of London, and a Diploma in Chinese Law from the EU-China Legal and Judicial Co-operation Programme (Beijing). Her PhD dissertation (University College London, 2005) was written on the topic of ‘Conceptions of rights and justice in contemporary China.’ Prior to taking up a permanent position at CUHK in 2007, she held visiting appointments at New York University Law School’s Hauser Global Law School and Cornell Law School’s Clarke Program of East Asian Law and Culture, and in spring 2009 she was a Visiting Fellow at NYU’s U.S.-Asia Law Institute. See also http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/law/faculty/profEPils.html.

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