City University School of Law hosted the first of a series of talks on Law and Literature. In an attempt to foster cross-disciplinary research and critical approaches to legal studies, we gathered researchers with different backgrounds and research focus. Law and literature is taught as part of the curriculum of an increasing number of law schools. The field has now matured to the point where it can address topics that are very relevant not only to legal researchers, but also to lawyers and law students. In this first event, we heard about the content, the goals and the process of the law and literature movement, and witnessed it in action.

The first speaker was Mr Mitchell Stocks who talked about “A Practitioner’s Perspective”. Mitchell Stocks is Adjunct Professor of Law and a Visiting Fellow at City University of Hong Kong. He is a former partner at an international law firm specializing in project development and finance, and the general counsel, Asia Pacific, for a Silicon-Valley based Fortune 1000 technology company. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from City University of Hong Kong and has published
stories in several literary journals. His legal interests include professional skills training, law and literature and water law, especially the adjudication of cross-border water claims. At the seminar, he discussed Richard Posner’s perspective on Law and Literature and how it is relevant to lawyers and to the process of writing.

The second speaker was Mr. Daniel Matthews. He presented a research project in progress entitled “True Grit and the strange wonders at the limits of the law”. Daniel Matthews will soon defend his PhD thesis at the University of London, Birkbeck. He is an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Hong Kong. His primary research interests are in legal theory and law and literature.

The third speaker was Dr. Jeffrey Clapp, on “Surveillance and Privacy in U.S. Law and Literature”. He presented his views and how law and literature can help to understand and broaden contemporary legal debate. Jeffrey Clapp is a Lecturer in the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. He holds a PhD from the University of California, Irvine. He specializes on American Literature.

The seminar was moderated by Mr Knut Fournier, Graduate Teaching Assistant, School of Law, City University of Hong Kong.

The seminar was widely attended and drew students and teachers from law schools as well as from literature and media departments across Hong Kong. Together they listened to three very different presentations, and the presence of a wide-ranging audience enabled a rich cross-disciplinary discussion.