



CCCL Legal Research Talk: Writing Doctorate Thesis – Research Experience of an SJD (15 Feb 2023)

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The Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL) of the School of Law of the City University of Hong Kong organized an offline and online legal research talk on 15 February 2023 to assist students in developing writing skills for their Doctorate thesis. Dr. HUANG Tao has been invited as a guest speaker to share his research experience of a JSD.

The seminar kicked off with a welcoming speech by **Professor Wang Jiangyu**, Director of the CCCL.

Dr. HUANG Tao is an Assistant Professor at the City University of Hong Kong. He has earned a B.Eng. in computer science from Chaohu University (2010), a J.M. from Peking University (2013), an LL.M. from Harvard University (2016), and an S.J.D. from Duke University (2021). Before embarking on his academic career, he's been working for two years at the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice, where he reviewed the legality and feasibility of several government ordinances and regulations.

Dr. HUANG introduced three steps of writing the dissertation generally. First, is to find a topic; second, is to develop and structure the topic into an article; and lastly, revise and edit it. He explained the writing steps in detail using his topic. His initial topic entitled administrative rulemaking process in China, that the main reason he chose this topic is that he has been working in the legislative Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipality People's Government. However, he changed his topic to free speech since this is the topic he is truly interested in and is more related to his LL.M. study. He found three shortcomings in the current theories including challenges from the Internet, value parochialism, and limits of the rights approach (discourse). To find the solution, due to the unsatisfactory theories in the current legal field, he found a good candidate for constructing a new theory of free speech: a theory from economics and ethics – the capabilities approach (CA). He pointed out that the most challenging part of his writing a dissertation is to use a non-legal approach to build a legal/constitutional theory. Different disciplines use different paradigms, problems, and audiences; thus, he emphasized the key to success is to extract, borrow, redact, and reformulate. At last, he gave some tips for students in the process of writing a dissertation: first, find a topic that you love and are interested in; second,

build your research base in an organized and concise way; third, write down any idea at any time; fourth, ask yourself what is your contribution; fifth, be frank and admit your limits.

After Dr. HUANG's thought-provoking speech, we moved on to a discussion session led mainly by Professor Wang Jiangyu, who presented his insightful views on writing skills. The majority of attendees jumped on the opportunity to express their opinions, many of which were thoughtful and innovative. The seminar concluded with a closing speech by Professor Wang, who thanked the speaker for his valuable contributions and all the participants for their attendance, which made the seminar a fruitful one.

