**Sara Liao**

Department of Film Production and Media Studies

Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University

118 Carnegie Building, State College, PA 16802, US

Email: saraliao@psu.edu

**Education**

2017 **Ph.D.** in Media Studies University of Texas at Austin, US

2013 **M.Phil.** in Communication Chinese University of Hong Kong

2011 **B.A.** in Advertising Renmin University of China, Beijing

**Professional Employment**

2020—now **Assistant professor**, Bellisario College of Communications, Pennsylvania State University (PSU)

2021—now **Affiliated faculty**, Department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Department of Asian Studies, College of Liberal Arts, PSU

2017—2020 **Assistant professor**, School of Journalism and Communication, Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

2017—2020 **Director**, Global Communication undergraduate program (GCOM), CUHK

**Publications**

**Book**

Liao, S. (2020). *Fashioning China: Precarious creativity of women designers in Shanzhai culture*. Pluto Press.

**Refereed Journal Article**

Liao, S. (in press). Women politicians, social movements, and misogyny in democratic struggles. *Global Storytelling: Journal of Digital and Moving Images*.

Liao, S., & Ling, Q. (accepted). Streaming feminism: Women-centered net dramas, global television culture, and feminist textual possibilities. *Television & New Media*.

Liao, S. (2024). Unpopular feminism: Popular culture and gender politics in digital China. *Communication & the Public*, *online first*. https://doi.org/10.1177/20570473241268066

Liao, S., & Sun, L. (2024). Nationalism for sale? Transnational capital, gender politics, and policing the patriots in digital platform. *International Journal of Communications*, *18,* 2479-2496. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/21933/4598

Liao, S., (2023). The platformization of misogyny: Popular media, gender politics, and misogyny in China’s state-market nexus. *Media, Culture & Society*, *46*(1), 191-203. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437221146905

Guo, J., Zhang, Z., Song, J., Jin, L., Yu, D., & Liao, S. (2022). Femvertising and postfeminist discourse: Advertising to break menstrual taboos in China. *Women’s Journal of Media and Communication*, *45*(3), 378-398. https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2022.2053624

Liao, S., & Xia, G. (2022). Consumer nationalism in digital space: A case study of the 2017 anti-Lotte boycott in China. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, *29*(6), 1535-1554. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565221090198

Liao, S., & Ling, Q. (2022). The “little third:” Changing images of women characters involved in extramarital affairs on Chinese TV. *Communication, Culture, and Critique*, *15*(3), 355-371. https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcac002

Liao, S., & Luqiu, R. L. (2022). #MeToo in China: The dynamic of digital activism against sexual assault and harassment in higher education. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *47*(3), 741-764. https://doi.org/10.1086/717712

Liao, S. (2021). Feeling the 2019 Hong Kong Anti-ELAB movement: Emotion and affect in the Lennon Walls. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *15*(3), 355-377. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2021.1954964

Luqiu, R. L., & Liao, S. (2021). Rethinking “the personal is political”: Telling the story of sexual harassment in China. *Discourse and Society*, *32*(6), 708-727. https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265211023225

Ling, Q., & Liao, S. (2020). Intellectuals debate #MeToo in China: Legitimizing feminist activism, challenging gendered myths, and reclaiming feminism. *Journal of Communication*, *70*(6), 895-916. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaa033

Liao, S. (2020). Feminism without guarantees: Reflections on teaching and researching feminist activism in China. *Asian Journal of Women Studies*, *26* (2), 259-267. https://doi.org/10.1080/12259276.2020.1769368

Liao, S. (2019). *Wang hong* fashion culture and the postfeminist time in China. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*, *25*(5), 663-685. https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2019.1638158

Liao, S. (2019). “#IAmGay# What About You?”: Storytelling, discursive politics, and affective dimension of social media activism against censorship in China. *International Journal of Communication*, *13*, 2314–2333. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/10376

Liao, S. (2017). Fashioning China: Precarious creativity of women designers in Shanzhai culture. *Communication, Culture, and Critique*, *10* (3), 422-440. https://doi.org/10.1111/cccr.12170

Liao, S. (2016). Precarious beauty: Migrant Chinese women, beauty work, and precarity. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *9*(2), 139-152. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2015.1105270

Liao, S. (2016). Japanese console games popularization in China: Governance, copycats, and gamers. *Games and Culture*, *11*(3), 175-197. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412015583574

Liao, S., & Lee, F. L. F. (2014). Do journalists believe in gender specificities of news topics? The impact of professionalism and family status. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *24*(5), 456-473. https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2014.908934

**Book Chapter and Special Issue Editor**

Liao, S. (2021). (Ed.). Gender and media (special issue). *Communication & Society*, *57*, v–viii.

Liao, S. (2017). Hong Kong net-bar youth gaming: A labeling perspective. In A. Lee and A. Pulos (Eds.), *Transnational Contexts of Development History, Sociality, and Society of Play: Video Games in East Asia* (pp. 183-209). Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fung, A., & Liao, S. (2015). China. In M. J. P. Wolf (Ed.), *Video Games Around the World* (pp. 119-136). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

**Book Review and Academic Dialogues**

Liao, S. (2024). (Weibo feminism: Expression, activism, and social media in China) [Review of the book *Weibo Feminism*, by Aviva Wei Xue and Kate Rose]. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *49*(4), 953-956. https://doi.org/10.1086/729828

Liao, S. (2024). (Feminisms with Chinese characteristics) [Review of the book *Feminisms with Chinese characteristics*, by Ping Zhu and Hui Faye Xiao]. *China Quarterly*, 258, 585-587. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741024000407

Liao, S. (2023). (Dreadful desires: The uses of love in neoliberal China) [Review of the book *Dreadful Desires*, by Charlie Yi Zhang]. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *49*(1), 259-261. https://doi.org/10.1086/725834

Liao, S. (2022). (The art of useless: Fashion, media, and consumer culture in contemporary China) [Review of the book *The Art of Useless*, by Calvin Hui]. *China Information*, *36*(3), 439-440. https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203X221130402e

Chen, L., Huang, Y., & Liao, S. (2019). Dialogue on Marxism journalism. *Communication & Society*, *50*, 1–26.

Liao, S. (2016). (Asians wear clothes on the Internet: Race, gender, and the work of personal style blogging) [Review of the book *Asians wear clothes on the Internet*, by Minh-Ha T. Pham]. *Journal of Asian Studies*, *75*(3), 795-796. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911816000632

Liao, S. (2015). (The imperial university: Academic repression and scholarly dissent) [Review of the book *The imperial university*, edited by P. Chatterjee and S. Maira]. *E3W Review of Book: Global Intimacy & Networked Dissent*, *15*, 64-66.

**Grants, Honors, and Awards**

**Research Grants**

2022—2023 **Principal investigator**. *Platformization of misogyny: Digital media, the manosphere, and toxic cultures of anti-feminism*. International Research Travel Award, the Center for Global Studies, PSU. ($4,000)

2022 **Principal investigator**. *Contentious politics: Digital media and transnational feminist activism*. Research in Democracy Support Grant, the McCourtney Institute of Democracy, PSU. ($5,000)

2019—2022 **Co-investigator**. *Global public opinion and public diplomacy: Developing monitoring and research system to address increasing uncertainty in global public opinion*. National Research Foundation of Korea, South Korea. (KRW$600,000,000)

2019—­2020 **Principal investigator**. *Digital feminist activism in China: Promises, pitfalls, and futures*. General Research Fund—Early Career Scheme, Research Grants Council [Project No. 24618149], Hong Kong. (HK$440,000)

2019—­2020 **Principal investigator**. *In bed with the trolls: Online misogyny in the aftermath of #MeToo in China*. Faculty Direct Grant [Project No. 4052206], CUHK. (HK$50,000)

2018 **Principal investigator**. *The creative multitude in becoming: Women’s culture of fashion imitation in China*. Contemporary Chinese Comparative Centre Research Grant, CUHK. (HK$30,000)

**Awards, Fellowships, and Scholarships**

2024—­2025 Henry Luce Foundation/ACLS Program in China Studies Flexible Early Career Fellowship

2023 Helen Award for Emerging Feminist Scholarship at International Communication Association (ICA)

2023 Dean’s Excellence Award in Research and Creative Accomplishments, PSU

2019 Early Career Award, Research Grants Council, Hong Kong

2017 Graduate School Fellowship, UT-Austin

2016 Professional Development Award, UT-Austin

2016 Audre Rapoport Prize for Scholarship on Gender and Human Rights

2016—2017 International Student and Scholar Scholarship, UT-Austin

2016 Moody Doctoral Fellowship, UT-Austin

2014—2016 Continuing Fellowship, UT-Austin

2013—2014 Prestigious Recruitment Fellowship, UT-Austin

**Scholarly Presentations and Activities**

**Conference Presentations (Selected)**

2024 November “*Popular media and gender politics in digital China*.” Paper accepted for presentation at the 2024 National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) annual conference, Detroit, U.S.

“*Misogyny on the menu: Transnational gendering and sexualization of the food and drink*.” Panel accepted for presentation at 2024 NWSA annual conference, Detroit, U.S.

2023 May “*The business of mediated nationalism: Transnational capitals, gender politics, and the political economy of digital media*.” Paper presented at 2023 ICA annual conference, Toronto, Canada.

April “*Streaming feminism: Women-centered net dramas, global television culture, and feminist textual possibilities*.” Paper presented at the annual conference of Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), Denver, U.S.

2022 November “*Manufacturing misogyny: Patriarchal state discourse, social media, and sexism*.” Paper presented at the 2022 NWSA annual conference, Minneapolis, U.S.

July “*Popular media, sexism, and gender antagonism: The market-state complex of misogyny in China.*” Paper presented at the 2022 annual conference of the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), Beijing, China.

June “*Platformization of misogyny: Weibo and toxic cultures of anti-feminism*.” Paper presented at the Conference of Global Perspectives on Platforms and Cultural Production, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

March “*Engineering nationalism: Ideological work, popular TV, and public interpretations of The Awakening Age*.” Paper presented at the SCMS annual conference, Chicago, U.S.

2021 December “*Fighting afar: Chinese feminists, transnational activism, and digital culture for intersectional politics*.” Paper presented at the workshop Feminist Activism in Post-2010 China: Identifying Issues, Sharing Knowledge and Building Movements, virtual conference.

March “*From emotional to political: Post-it-note arts of the Lennon Wall in the anti-extradition bill movement in Hong Kong.*” Paper presented at the SCMS annual conference, virtual conference.

2020 July “*Not a perfect victim: Sexual harassment, misogynistic culture, and digital activism*.” Paper presented at the 2020 IAMCR conference, virtual conference.

2019 December “*Witch-hunting, shaming, and trolling: Misogyny and digital culture in China*.” Paper presented at the 5th Congress of the Asian Association of Women’s Studies (AAWS), Seoul, South Korea.

May “*#MeToo in China? Digital activism against sexual assault and harassment in higher education*.” Paper presented at the ICA annual conference, Washington D.C., U.S.

March “*#MeToo movement lashing back: Sexual violence and digital anti-/activism in China*.” Paper presented at the annual conference of SCMS, Seattle, WA, U.S.

2018 December “*The affective, cultural and psychic life of #MeToo in China*.” Paper presented at the International Conference on “Gender, Sexuality and Justice: Resilience in Uncertain Times,” Hong Kong.

August “*Consumer nationalism and anti-South Korea: A case study on boycott toward Lotte in Sino-Korean tension over THAAD*.” Paper presented at the Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference, Shanghai, China.

May “*In the making of celebrity: Wang hong, fashion labor, and the post-feminist identity in China*.” Paper presented at the ICA annual conference, Prague, Czech.

2017 July (with Jinsook Kim) “*Eating women: A transnational exploration of online misogyny*.” Paper presented at the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies conference, Seoul, South Korea.

2016 November “*Shanzhai sensation: From subalternity to precarity*.” Paper presented at the National Communication Association (NCA) Annual Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.

August “*Precarious copycats: The subaltern problem in Shanzhai culture*.” Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.

June “*A transnational political imagination: China’s Feminist Five and online feminist activism*.” Paper presented at the ICA Annual Conference, Fukuoka, Japan.

“*Untimely globalization: The 11.11 Shopping Festival in the global culture industry*.” Paper presented at the ICA Annual Conference, Fukuoka, Japan.

**Conference Panel Chair, Organizer, and Discussant**

2024 July Organizer and chair of the roundtable discussion “*Intervening Asia Hate: Emerging Issues in Digital Violence*” at AAS-in-Asia conference, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

2024 March Discussant of the panel “*Transgressing boundaries: #MeToo and politics of representation in Chinese societies*” at Association for Asian Studies (AAS) annual conference, Seattle, U.S.

2023 May Organizer and chair of the panel “*Nationalism in the global media ecology: Power, authenticity, and resiliency*” at ICA annual conference, Toronto, Canada.

April Organizer and chair of the panel “*Radical politics, media texts, and feminist criticism: Gender and sexuality in popular media in South Korea and China*” at the SMCS annual conference, Denver, U.S.

2022 July Organizer and chair of the panel “*Consensus and contestation: Popular gendered discourses in contemporary China*” at the IAMCR annual conference, Beijing, China.

June Organizer and chair of the panel “*Emerging issues of platform cultures in Asia: Interrogating gender, labor and the state*”at the Conference of “Global Perspectives on Platforms and Cultural Production,” Amsterdam, Netherlands.

May Organizer and chair of the panel “*Interrogating Gender: Feminist Struggles in Contemporary China*” at ICA annual conference, Paris, France.

March Organizer of the panel “*Popular nationalism and popular media in China*” at the annual conference of SCMS, virtual conference.

2021 October Discussant in the “*Interrupting global media studies*” roundtable discussion at the Global Fusion annual conference, virtual conference.

March Organizer and chair of the panel “*Affect and media culture in Asia*”at the annual conference of SCMS, virtual conference.

2020 January Co-organizer of the Communication Visiting Scholar Program, and the Gender and Media Workshop, CUHK, Hong Kong.

2019 March Organizer and chair of the panel “*Interrogating #MeToo in Asia: Media activism and social backlash in South Korea and China*” at the annual conference of SCMS, Seattle, WA, U.S.

April Discussant and facilitator at the Using Gender Data Workshop organized by UNESCO, Hong Kong.

2018 December Organizer and chair of the panel “*After the disclosure: A year of #MeToo and feminist politics in China*”at the International Conference on “Gender, Sexuality and Justice: Resilience in Uncertain Times,” Hong Kong.

**Invited Talks and Engagement Scholarship**

2024 March “*Technocultures of Feminisms: Popular Media and Gender Politics in Digital China*.” Invited talk in the Bellisario Brownbag series, PSU

2022 November “*#MeToo in China: Media, Activism, Contemporary Patriarchy and Beyond*.” Guest speaker, University of Toronto, Canada.

June “*Contentious politics: Digital media and transnational feminist activism*.” Mini Symposia: A conversation about digital intimacy and young women in Asia, Ahmedabad University, India, and Lingnan University, Hong Kong.

February “*Social media, social change, and development communication: Voluntourism and representations of the others*.” World in View talk series sponsored by Schreyer Honors College, PSU.

2021 February “*Attention not wanted: Sexual harassment, media, and feminist politics in China*.” Invited talk in the Bellisario Brownbag series, PSU.

2020 April “*Precarious labor and women fashionistas in Shanzhai culture*.” Book talk in the Centre for Chinese Media and Comparative Communication Studies, CUHK.

2019 April “*Digital activism and contentious politics*.” *S-Seminar*,CHUK.

September “*Misogyny and digital culture in China*.” Invited talk at Peking University HSBC Business School, Shenzhen, China.

December “*Digital culture, popular practices, and gender politics in contemporary China*.” Invited talk in the Graduate School of Communication & Arts at Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea.

**Public Scholarship, Interviews and Media Mention**

“U.S.–China rivalry enters a new sphere: Who can best carry a tune.” Interviewed by Lyric Li from *The Washington Post*, July 11, 2024. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/07/11/china-singer-united-states-adam-lambert/

“Undressing: Gender and authenticity in the counterfeit luxury goods market.” Interviewed by Stewie Myers from *Polyester*, January 18, 2024. https://www.polyesterzine.com/features/undressing-shanzhai-gender-and-authenticity-in-the-counterfeit-luxury-goods-market

“Screenwriter hit with #MeToo allegations, igniting debate in China about ‘gray areas’.” Interviewed by Zhao Yuanyuan from *The China Project*, May 4, 2023. https://thechinaproject.com/2023/05/04/famed-chinese-screenwriter-hit-with-metoo-allegations/

“Digital activism in fourth wave feminism.” Guest in *Beyond the Headlines* radio show, January 30, 2023. https://www.beyondtheheadlines.net/episodes/digital-activism-feminism

“A high-profile sexual assault settlement in Minnesota puts a fresh spotlight on the #MeToo movement in China.” Interviewed by Lili Pike from *Grid News*, October 5, 2022. https://www.grid.news/story/global/2022/10/05/a-high-profile-sexual-assault-settlement-in-minnesota-puts-a-fresh-spotlight-on-the-me-too-movement-in-china/

Liao, S., & Luqiu, R. L. (2022, September 9). Four years after #MeToo in China: Shrinking digital space for change. *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/four-years-after-metoo-in-china-shrinking-digital-space-for-change/

“The struggles of anti-sexual harassment in higher education in China after #MeToo.” Interviewed by Qin Si from The Initium, August 6, 2022. https://theinitium.com/article/20220805-mainland-university-sexual-harassment-metoo/

Xiang, Z., Shanzhai Lyric, Yang, F., & Liao, S. (2022). Shanzhai roundtable. *Viscose*.

Liao, S. (2020, February 18). Controlled death narrative: Worlding in China and the communication logic of totalitarianism. *Re.Framing Activism*. https://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/activistmedia/2020/02/controlleddeathnarrative

“Women are building real brands selling knockoff clothing.” Interviewed by Simone McCarthy from SupChina, June 2, 2017. https://supchina.com/2017/06/02/women-building-real-businesses-selling-homemade-knockoff-clothing-online-2/

“5 Secrets of a Knockoff Shanzhai Fashion Designer.” Media mentioned by Ruonan Zheng from *Jing Daily: The Business of Luxury in China*, June 6, 2017. https://jingdaily.com/5-secrets-shanzhai-fashion-designer/

**Professional and Societal Services**

**University-Wide Services**

2024—2025 **Faculty member**, Bellisario Graduate Admission Committee, PSU

2023—2025 **Faculty member**, WGSS Faculty Advisory Committee, PSU

2022—2024 **Faulty advisor**, Student Organization Chinese Theater and Movie Society, PSU

2022—now **Organizing member**, Bellisario Brownbag Presentation Series, PSU

2022—2024 **Faculty member**, Bellisario Academic Integrity Committee, PSU

2022—2023 **Organizing member**, Pockrass Memorial Lecture Series, PSU

2021—now **Faculty member**, Bellisario Qualitative Research Group, PSU

2021—2022 **Reader**, Schreyer Honors College Scholar Selection Committee, PSU

2020—now **Member**, Bellisario Graduate Committee, PSU

2020—2021 **Faculty advisor and leader**, GCOM Study Abroad Programs, CUHK

2019—2020 **Member**, Executive Committee, CUHK

**Professional Organization Membership**

Association for Asian Studies

International Communication Association

National Women’s Studies Association

Society for Cinema and Media Studies

**Interdisciplinary and Societal Services**

Editorial board member of *Feminist Media Studies* (2023-2026)

AAS 2024 Faculty Mentor for the Mentoring Program

IAMCR and ICA conference reviewer

ICA 2024 Hellen Award selection committee

ICA 2023 Teresa Award selection committee

NWSA Women’s Centers Committee

NWSA International Task Force

NWSA North American Asian Feminist Organizing Committee

NWSA 2022 Faculty Mentor for the Mentoring Program

SCMC 2023 Annual Conference Organizing Committee

Journal reviewer for

*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*

*Journal of Communication*

*Communication, Culture & Critique*

*Feminist Media Studies*

*Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*

*International Journal of Communication*

*Chinese Journal of Communication*

*Asian Journal of Women’s Studies*

*Cultural Studies*

*Asia-Pacific Review*

*Communication and the Public*

**Teaching and Academic Advising**

**Course taught**

Bellisario College of Communications, PSU (2020—now)

Feminist Media Studies

International Mass Communication

World Media System

Mass Media and Society

School of Journalism and Communication, CUHK (2017—2020)

Globalization and Communication

Media and Culture in Global Societies (with a study trip to Taiwan)

Media and Gender

Introduction to Global Communication

Development of Mass Communication

Mass Communication Theories

Department of Radio-TV-Film (instructor of record), UT-Austin (2016—2017)

Introduction to Media Studies

Consumer Culture and Global Media

**Guest lectures**

2023 November “*Digital media, feminist advocacy, and China*.” Guest lecture for WMNST200 Global Feminisms.

2022 December “*China and world media*.” Guest lecture for COMM410 International Mass Communication (taught by Dr. Martin Marinos), PSU.

November “*Balancing teaching and research*.” Guest lecture for COMM502 Pedagogy in Communications (taught by Dr. Ford Risley), PSU.

2021 November “*Introduction to global communication*.” Guest lecture for COMM180 Survey of Telecommunications and Electronic Media (taught by Dr. Matt Jackon), PSU

“*Introduction to feminist media studies*.” Guest lecture for COMM590 Graduate Colloquium (taught by Dr. Anthony Olorunnisola), PSU

**Mentorship and supervision**

2021— Doctoral advisor for Jingyi Guo and Jing Xu, PSU

Master advisor for Evelyn Yin (graduated in 2023 summer), and Rehab Alayoubi, PSU

Doctoral dissertation committee member for Mikayla Pevac (graduated in 2023 spring), Ashely Smalls (graduated in 2023 summer), Karlin Anderson (graduated in 2024 spring), Jiacheng Liu, Triwick Kurniasari, Emma Zhang, and Pin-Hsuan Zeng, PSU

Master thesis committee member for Yashuri Del Rosario Rodriguez, PSU

2021 Aug Supervision of COMM190 Introduction to Formula One, a student-teaching-student program

2019 Jun Summer Undergraduate Research Program—supervision of Hu Haomin (University of Rochester) in the research project “*feminist activism in China*,” CUHK

2018 Jun Summer Undergraduate Research Program—supervision of Gina Fung (McGill University) in the research project “*young hunks in China*,” CUHK