

# Hai Ren

"The Countdown: Time Management and the Making of Modernity"

Professor Hai Ren, Department of Popular Culture, BGSU

The countdown enters the domain of our everyday knowledge as an activity of counting down to the end of the last few seconds (5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0) in an event like a New Year celebration, a sports event, or a space shuttle launching. However, the countdown as a sociocultural practice is much more than a counting activity. In this presentation, Dr. Hai Ren will examine the countdown as a technology of public time-telling and time-management. Drawing on both ethnographic and historical research on the countdown to Hong Kong's return to China in the 1990s, Dr. Ren will share his insights on the relations of the countdown to recent practices of transnational capitalism and new conditions of nation-building at the turn of the twenty-first century. Dr. Ren will also discuss how the countdown shapes our notions of "the present."



Dr. Hai Ren is a cultural anthropologist teaching in the Department of Popular Culture. He has received awards from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological

**December 4, Wednesday,  
10:30 a.m. -12:20 p.m.  
Student Union, room 316**

Research, the National Science Foundation, the Pacific Cultural Foundation, and the Asian Cultural Council (a Rockefeller foundation) and published widely in English and Chinese on topics ranging from microlithic culture in the Paleolithic Age, museum representation of aboriginal cultures in Taiwan, the Los Angeles "riots" as a crisis of modernity, and theme parks in China.

Dr. Ren is currently a Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society, where he is working on a book tentatively titled *The Countdown of Time: Public Displays and Symbolic Economy in China and Hong Kong*.

