

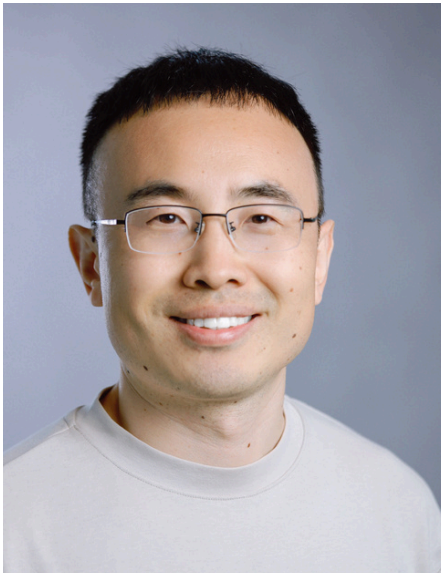
The Department of Health Humanities & Bioethics

GRAND ROUNDS



A Ladder of Hope:

The Religious Capacity to Aspire under Medical Authoritarianism in North China



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Thursday, November 6, 2025

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Large SMD Auditorium, 2-6424

Indeterminacy, open-endedness, and possibility have characterized the predominant understanding of hope in anthropology. This rendering of hope is unsettled by the practices of hope in North China where millions of people muddling through lives in an authoritarian regime seek help from incense seers who foretell their futures. Through an ethnography of the individual/family-based hopes for “living the daily life,” this talk shows how incense seeing offers an affordable and easily accessible “ladder of hope”— a cultural toolkit from which people draw to maintain hope and achieve goals seemingly beyond their reach. This “ladder of hope” affords a sense of determinacy that influences people’s hopeful dispositions and inspires them to act, resist, and make changes in their lives under China’s zero-COVID and birth planning policies.

ACCREDITATION

The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

CERTIFICATION

The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry designates this live activity for a maximum of 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

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Attendance at the entire program is required (no partial credit can be awarded).

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