



*Talk:*

# THE CHINESE TYPEWRITER: A HISTORY

NOV  
**07**  
TUE

4:00 – 5:30 PM  
McCune Conference Room, 6020 HSSB

Chinese writing is character-based, the one major world script that is neither alphabetic nor syllabic. Over the past two centuries, Chinese script has encountered presumed alphabetic universalism at every turn, whether in the form of Morse Code, Braille, stenography, Linotype, punch cards, word processing, or other systems developed with the Latin alphabet in mind. Today, however, after more than a century of resistance against the alphabetic, not only have Chinese characters prevailed, they form the linguistic substrate of the vibrant world of Chinese information technology. In this talk, Stanford historian Tom Mullaney shows how this unlikely transformation happened, by charting out a fascinating series of experiments, prototypes, failures, and successes in the century-long struggle between Chinese characters and the QWERTY keyboard.

**TOM MULLANEY**  
*Chinese History, Stanford University*

Thomas S. Mullaney is Associate Professor of Chinese History at Stanford University, and Curator of the international exhibition, “Radical Machines: Chinese in the Information Age.” His most recent book, published with MIT Press in 2017, is *The Chinese Typewriter: A History*.

*Sponsored by the Department of History, the East Asia Center, and the IHC’s Machines, People, and Politics RFG.*