Christopher Tong, Ph.D. awarded 2014

What was your favorite thing about living in Davis?

What Davis lacks in comparison to larger cities such as Berkeley and San Francisco, it makes up for in abundance with its small-town charm and high quality of life. Some of my favorite memories of Davis include meeting friends at the Farmer’s Market, jogging on the green belt, visiting the University Farm on Picnic Day, and cooking with vegetables grown by UCD students. If you work in Sproul Hall, you will have one of the best views in Yolo County.

Do you have any advice for current students? What should they make sure to take advantage of while they’re still here?

UC Davis supports its grad students very well in terms of academics and services. Consider getting a Designated Emphasis. Learn a new language (or how to teach one you already know). Build a teaching portfolio. Get to know the faculty in Comp Lit and other departments by taking their courses or reading their scholarship. Attend workshops organized by the University Writing Program, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and the Internship and Career Center.

What is the topic of your dissertation?

My dissertation focuses on the emergence of environmental ethics and aesthetics in early 20th-century China. My secondary languages were German and English, so I was able to discuss German philosophy, British Romanticism, and critical theory in comparison to the Chinese materials.

Where are you headed now? (Job title, location, responsibilities)

I am currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Washington University in St. Louis. I chose this position, because I wanted the opportunity to teach both undergrads and grad students and time to work on my publications.

Do you have any advice for your colleagues who are beginning their job search now?

It will feel like working three full-time jobs in Fall quarter when you apply, so you have to manage your time very carefully. Start preparing your application materials in the summer, especially if you have to teach and finish your dissertation during the school year. When you write your cover letter, remember that you are applying as a potential faculty, not a grad student. Your tone should be professional and factual, as opposed to enthusiastic and inspired.