The University of Hong Kong
School of Biological Sciences

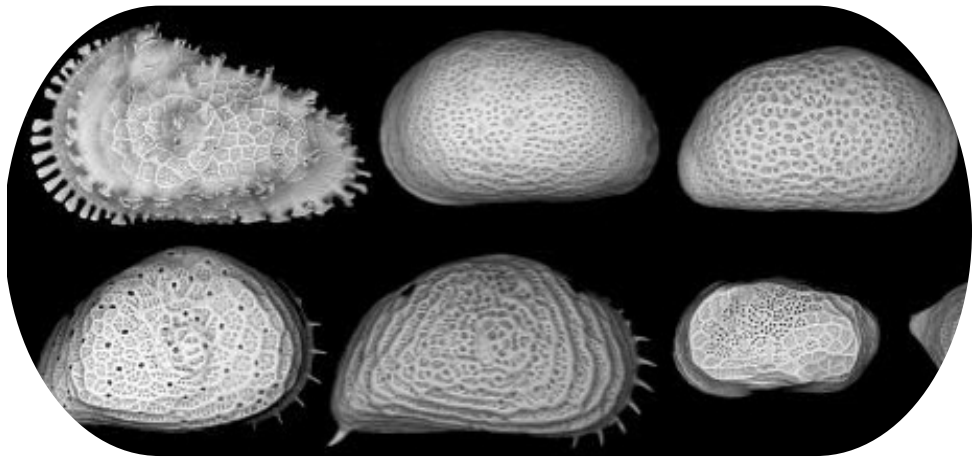
Qualifying Seminar

The Neogene Formation of the Isthmus of Panama and Caribbean Sea Biodiversity

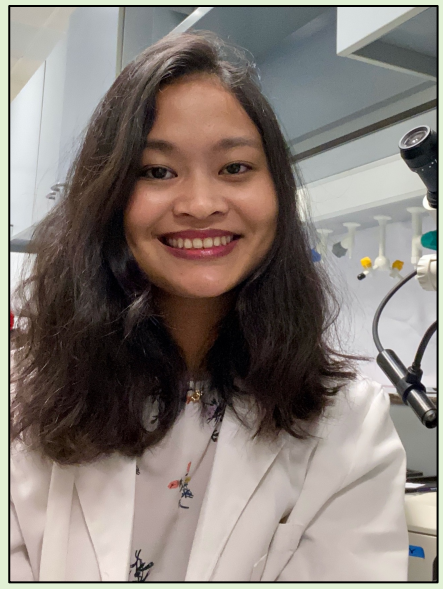
Date: Thursday 02 June

Time: 11am

Venue: Zoom



About the speaker:



Kk Aye is a PhD student in the Palaeontology and Biodiversity Lab under the supervision of Dr. Moriaki Yasuhara. Her research focuses on biodiversity through time using ostracods as a model system.

Abstract:

The modern Caribbean biodiversity owes its origins to the Neogene formation of the Isthmus of Panama, a land bridge that connected North and South America. Extensive evidence indicates that the closure of the Central American Seaway associated with the Isthmus of Panama caused a major productivity crash, prompting a regional extinction of marine taxa termed the Caribbean Extinction Event. However, fossil records reveal a 1–2-million-year delay in extinction timing and declining productivity, leading to question whether other ocean processes influenced the extinction event. The aim of my PhD is to reconstruct the history of the Caribbean Extinction Event in detail by analysing ostracod faunal turnover during the closure of the Panamanian Isthmus to better evaluate the nature of the extinction event and the role of productivity there.