
Asian Studies at Colgate

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022

What's happening in Asian Studies at Colgate and Beyond



What's inside:

- From the director
- Program news and events
- News from alumni
- and more!

Find us at: <http://www.colgate.edu/asian-studies>

From the Director

My grandfather was a Buddhist monk of a tiny temple in a small coastal city in Japan. Our residential quarter was attached to the temple building, and I spent my childhood there. I was not raised with the expectation of inheriting the occupation; hence my knowledge of Buddhism and its practices is little to none. I only remember that I saw and did some things that most of my friends did not, such as polishing brass candle stands and hanging scrolls that depict *Sukhavati* (“western pure land”) before the summer *bon* season, and visiting neighbors and other temples for new year’s greetings, often in deep snow, every year. I also remember that every once in a while local residents, often elderly people, gathered in the main hall of the temple, drinking *sake* and eating food. Only later I learned that those also acted as a meeting of a community-based mutual loaning. For some of our students (like myself), studying Asia is at least in part about (re)learning about themselves, their own culture and values, and their (un)familiar neighbors. For other students, it may be about exploring further and digging deeper into what they have encountered (language, trip to or friends from Asia, pop culture, particular course at Colgate (!), etc.). Yet for some others it may be an accidental outcome. Whatever the reasons are, I hope that the Asian Studies Program offers a place to meet those with shared interests and unique insights, to be inspired by new and strange ideas, and to prepare students to engage with Asia with passion and empathy.



Another idea that I only learned after coming to Colgate was the view of Kunio Yanagita (a folklore scholar, 1875-1962) on “modernization” (maybe we can replace it with the notion of “development”). To him “modernization” is a process “like peeling off again and again and again the outer crusts to bring into existence the truly worthy core of our culture.” I feel that we can think of the future of the program in the same way.

Daisaku Yamamoto



Why Study Asia?

By all measures, the global significance of Asia has only grown since the beginning of this century. Though the boundaries of Asia are fluid and vary depending on observers, it covers over one-third of the Earth's land surface, 60% of population, and over 35% of global GDP. Its diversity is equally tremendous with about 2,300 living languages, variegated colonial experiences, and a wide range of political regimes. It is also the site of ongoing and emergent geopolitical conflicts, environmental distress and struggles, persisting socio-economic disparities, and public health challenges that have global implications. Furthermore, knowledge of and from Asia can also help decenter and destabilize the knowledge systems rooted in "the west" and lay ground for innovative ideas and more empathetic engagement with the world. Accordingly, an increasingly globalized world demands deeper place-specific knowledge and wisdom to cope with a variety of challenges that we face.

In the spirit of liberal arts education, Asian Studies provides you with an intellectual space that accommodates and encourages your aspiration to engage with the whole of the place and people, rather than viewing them through a specific disciplinary lense alone. Our premise is that if you want to understand something about the Chinese economy, for example, you cannot do so without knowing the country's historical experiences, geographical settings, political dynamics and its relations with other countries, changing social values and realities, evolving language, and so on. Engaging the many changes taking place in Asian societies today requires a diverse set of intellectual skills, which will prepare you to extend your career in and with one of the most dynamic world regions of our time.

The Asian Studies Program offers Major and Minor in Asian Studies. For more information about the program visit us at: <http://www.colgate.edu/asian-studies>



News

Welcome Cathy Sheridan-Lee: Our new Academic Department Coordinator



Catherine "Cathy" Sheridan-Lee began on March 21, 2022, as academic department coordinator for Asian Studies. Cathy previously worked as an administrative assistant at Syracuse University. She received her bachelor of science, communication and rhetorical studies, from Syracuse University. She enjoys doing crafts, sewing, glass fusion, reading, and spending time with her family. She and her husband, Victor, have two dwarf rabbits, Bunz and Colin.

Professor Sullivan receives recognition for his new book

Professor Brenton Sullivan was honored by the Association of Asian Studies for his new book *Building a Religious Empire: Tibetan Buddhism, Bureaucracy, and the Rise of the Gelukpa* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020). Congratulations!

[From publisher's book description] The vast majority of monasteries in Tibet and nearly all of the monasteries in Mongolia belong to the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism, best known through its symbolic head, the Dalai Lama. Historically, these monasteries were some of the largest in the world, and even today some Geluk monasteries house thousands of monks, both in Tibet and in exile in India. In *Building a Religious Empire*, Brenton Sullivan examines the school's expansion and consolidation of power along the frontier with China and Mongolia from the mid-seventeenth through the mid-eighteenth centuries to chart how its rise to dominance took shape.



Graduating seniors — Congratulations!



Alex Almer



John Hultenius



Adriana Kartanadi



Alyssa Reyes



Yang Yang



JY Khoo



Avery Martinez

Asian Studies Banquet

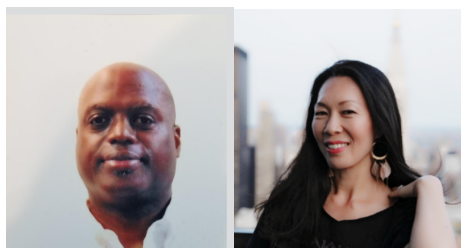
We had an annual celebration of the program with Asian Studies students, staff, and faculty over dinner at the Coop lounge on April 22. It was the first banquet since the start of the pandemic. We expressed our best wishes to the graduating seniors. During the dinner John Hultenius '22 gave us a talk based on his Music honors thesis on the Japanese Noh theater, which was followed by many questions and comments. In a relaxing atmosphere, participants enjoyed conversation and tasty food; hopefully it was a nice break from the busy last stretch of the semester.



Events on Asia at Colgate

A Conversation about Black and Asian Solidarity

The first set of two virtual webinars that make up the Black-Asian Solidarity speaker series. This series of conversations focus on the many dimensions of Black-Asian relations and solidarities. Organized on February 23 and March 1 by Shavell Jones, Brown Commons Residential Fellow, with support from the ALANA Cultural Center and the Office of Alumni Relations.



Our first discussion featured Jamal Young '89 and his wife, Ji Young, as they discussed their journey as a family of Black and Asian descent. This discussion was moderated by John Palmer, Professor of Educational Studies and academic director of the Office of Undergraduate Studies. The discussion covered themes including, but not limited to: Ji's perspective as a mother and creator of TIDE Film Festival, the triumphs and challenges she faced as an Asian woman raising Black and Asian children, Jemal's experiences as a student leader during his time at Colgate, and how student leaders can work to build bridges between these two communities on campus. A Zoom recording of this conversation can be found on the [Colgate Alumni Office event page](#).

Daburu: Exploring Afro Japanese Identity

On March 1 Professor Margo Okazawa-Rey and Iain Mason '18 discussed their experiences of being Black and Japanese in Japan and beyond. Shavell Jones, organizer of the Black and Asian Solidarity Speaker series and Brown Commons Residential Fellow, served as the moderator for this discussion. Some of the themes covered in our discussion includes: the usage of the term Daburu and Hafu in describing mixed-race identity

in Japan, both of the panelists coming to terms with their identity while growing up, the type of community activism both panelist do regarding this topic in Japan/Abroad, and questions of how to move forward to build and maintain a coalition between the Japanese and Black community in Japan. A Zoom recording of this conversation can be found on the [Colgate Alumni Office page](#).



The Audacity of Radio: Democracy, Censorship, and the Political Satire of Miki Toriro in Occupied Japan

On March 7, Kyoko Omori, Associate Professor of Japanese at Hamilton College, gave a public lecture on the politics of media stardom in occupied Japan by reviewing the early career of Miki Toriro (1914-94), the most popular radio star in the immediate post-WWII years. Professor Omori examined how Miki strategically used music to create entertaining songs while negotiating the various constraints imposed on him by the Japanese government and GHQ/SCAP. The lecture was followed by a number of questions from students and faculty.



The Ties that Bind: Technology, Geopolitics, Why Reshoring Supply Chains Will Be Harder than Joe Biden Thinks

Lampert Institute for Civic and Global Affairs hosted a public lecture by Professor Eric Thun (Oxford University) on March 22. Thun discussed how complex and modular supply chains would challenge reshoring critical inputs. The in-person lecture was well attended and lively discussion followed the lecture.



Gongs, Rhythm, and Ritual: Javanese Music, Dance, and Shadow Puppetry in Modern-Day Indonesia



On March 24 there was a demonstration and conversation about the roles of traditional Javanese music (gamelan), court dance, and storytelling in modern-day Indonesia by Maho Ishiguro ('04, Bates College) and Darsono Hadiraharjo (Yale University). The event was hosted by the Music Department and co-sponsored by Asian Studies and many other programs/divisions.

Farewell: Residential Fellow

Shavell Jones



As the end of my contract approaches on May 16th, I look back fondly on my year here at Colgate. Colgate has become a second home in my heart, and that is no part due to the Asian Studies community here at Colgate! I am grateful for the kindness and generosity that Asian Studies director Dai Yamamoto has shown me during my time here at Colgate University and for helping me get involved with the Asian Studies Program! I am also grateful to the Department of East Asian Language and Literature for the encouragement and camaraderie they have shown since my arrival at Colgate was announced. Thank you to the incredible students and faculty apart of Asian Studies who have shown me nothing but compassion. You all made my time at Colgate exciting and fulfilling!

I will be heading back home to Brooklyn to take an intensive online Japanese language class starting on June 1st (a day before my birthday). In late August, I will move to Ann Arbor and start the first year of my MA program in International and Regional Studies (with a specialization in Japan) at the University of Michigan! I will be looking forward to the next time in the near future when I can return and interact with the Asian Studies community at Colgate!

News from alumni

Molly Meng '21

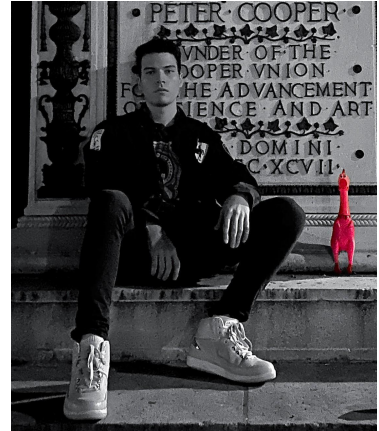
I am currently doing my graduate school at the University of Chicago in-person, focusing on East Asian Languages and Civilization (EALC program under Master of Arts Program in the Humanities, MAPH in short). Academic spheres in UChicago are pretty different. The workload is more intense than what I had in my junior and senior years back in Colgate. Right now, I am writing my thesis on Korean gangster cinema. At the same time, I intend to pick up my Japanese learning, although it is a bit hard since I no longer take any Japanese language courses (my three courses are all more MAPH/EALC studies focused). I think I will manage to find some time during summer break to review the vocabulary and grammar!

Molly was an Asian Studies major and participated in the 2020 Japan Study Group.



Jack Vernon '21

Since graduation I've been trying to keep busy. This year I'm taking off from formal study before starting law school. The first effort I undertook was securing a bartending certification in July, and with an odd sort of pride I can say that I profited first from that degree before my Colgate diploma 😊. Over the summer I worked part-time in catering, as a server or bartender at weddings and formal events in and around New York City. More often than not it was pretty fun, and the food was always pretty decent! I'm currently working as an operations intern for a small consulting firm, helping to update their payroll system and financial performance reports as the company's grown considerably in a short amount of time and needs to upgrade their software accordingly. I figure it's a good idea to try something unrelated to my career interests before starting law school, to determine that it's really the right choice for me. Come fall 2022, I will begin my legal education at Fordham Law, with an acute interest in public interest—namely, criminal justice law. I hope I will find the energy to practice my Japanese occasionally between classes!



Jack was an Asian Studies minor and participated in the 2020 Japan Study Group.

Xander Berry '20

I left my job in San Francisco in September of 2021 and came to Japan with the JET Program shortly after. I'm currently living/working in Shizuoka City, where I get to enjoy an amazing view of Mt. Fuji every day on my way to work. I've been really enjoying working with the students and teachers so far, and there really is no better way to practice my Japanese! I'm hoping to get a lot better over the next year or so and continue my studies. In my free time, I've been able to do a lot of hiking, biking, and *izakaya* restaurant hopping with the new friends I've made. It's been an awesome experience thus far, and I'm looking forward to figuring out my next steps while here.



Xander was a Japanese major and participated in the 2018 Japan Study Group.

Zhongwen Lian '20

I am currently working as a software engineer in the company that I first started out as an intern. I will not give up on Japanese and Asian Studies even though I am in the workplace! Recently, my company is planning to go into the Japanese market for the first time ever. I am lucky to be chosen as one of the pilot members of the team. It may not be impossible to work in Japan in the near future. As a result of that, I am picking up on my Japanese again. Hope I can revisit Kyoto and meet you and other Japan SG members somewhere in the world!

Zhongwen was a Japanese minor and participated in the 2018 Japan Study Group.



Kerr Patrick Braza '20

I am currently working as a programmer for an investment solutions company. We are at an awkward period of expansion for the primary software we offer to investors, so there is a lot of work to be done to meet clients' unique demands while maintaining and improving on our product. There is always something to improve on, and I find it rewarding to keep busy. I am still unsure what I would like to pursue in the distant future, but I am still considering the idea of living in Japan, and have been reading up on experiences from recent immigrants. Japanese language and culture has and likely never will leave my heart, and still often rears itself in my hobbies. In my free time, I like to travel, cycle, camp, run, and play games.

Kerr was a Japanese major and participated in the 2018 Japan Study Group.



Abroad and Beyond

Studying Abroad with Asian Studies

The Asian Studies Program strongly encourages majors to participate in Colgate study groups and in approved programs in India or other locations in Asia. Faculty of the program serve as directors of study-abroad programs in China, Japan, and Korea.

China Study Group spends approximately four months in Shanghai, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, in intensive language training and first-hand observation of recent cultural, political, and economic changes.

Japan Study Group, based in Kyoto, provides lodging with Japanese families; intensive language training; and instruction in Japanese politics, economics, business, religion, art, linguistics, and literature.



Approved Programs

- China, Shanghai: **CIEE Shanghai: China in a Global Context**
- China, Shanghai: **IFSA: 21st Century City**
- India, Bodh Gaya: **Antioch Buddhist Studies in India**
- Japan, Hirakata City: **Kansai Gaidai**
- Sri Lanka, Kandy: **IFSA - ISLE Program**

There are many other approved programs and extended studies that take place in Asia. For more information, please visit the Office of Off-Campus Studies website ([Search Programs](#))!!



New Course in Fall 2022

RELG 221 Religious Diversity in Asia (Professor Angela Rudert)

How should we understand the relationship between religious texts and lived experiences? Why do religious differences sometimes harden and sometimes become porous depending on the context? Focusing on a single place and its people can help us break down traditional frameworks for understanding religion and reveals instead a much more dynamic image of religious diversity. Students are introduced to at least three major religions in a particular Asian region. In the process, it problematizes the traditional portrait of distinct and timeless world religions by taking a deeper look at the lived experiences of religious practitioners in one designated Asian society. The course utilizes a kaleidoscopic and multidisciplinary approach to the study of religion, allowing students to identify and appreciate the complex and sometimes unexpected ways in which religious practitioners live in diverse societies.



In Fall 2022, the focus will be on the rich diversity of religious experience in modern India's plural, democratic society. Students explore intersecting religious worlds of Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Sikhs, considering distinctive cosmologies and shared cultures; bounded identities and converging practices. It meets TR 1:20 PM - 2:35 PM, 319 Lawrence Hall.



Fall 2022 Courses for Asian Studies

ANTH 252	Muslim Societies in Motion	GEOG 315	Sustainable Livelihoods in Asia
ARTS 103	Arts of Asia: Urbanism (AH)	HIST 105	Introduction to the Modern Middle East (ME)
ARTS 244	Housing the Sacred in Ancient India (AH)	HIST 265	War and Violence in East Asia (AS)
CHIN 121	Elementary Chinese I	HIST 269	History of Modern South Asia (AS)
CHIN 201	Intermediate Chinese I	HIST 305	Asian American History (US)
CHIN 303	Films and Media	JAPN 121	Elementary Japanese I
CHIN 405	Reading Chinese Newspapers	JAPN 201	Intermediate Japanese I
CORE 165C	China	JAPN 301	Advanced Japanese I
CORE 166C	India	JAPN 455	Advanced Grammar in Japanese
CORE 167C	Japan	POSC214	Comparative Politics: East and Southeast Asia (CO)
CORE 197C	Tibet	POSC 307	China's Foreign Relations
CORE 138S	Advent of the Atomic Bomb	POSC 368	American Foreign Relations with China
ECON 219	Chinese Economy	RELG 221	Religious Diversity in Asia
EDUC 205	Race, White Supremacy, and Education	RELG 282	Introduction to Islam
ENGL 431	Ethnographic Fictions: Travel Writing, Bearing Witness, and Human Rights	SOCI 326	Nations and Nationalism

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