
Asian Studies at Colgate

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018

What's happening in Asian Studies at Colgate and Beyond



What's inside:

- From the director
- Events on Asia
- Voices of alumni
- and more!

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

From the Director

I spent the spring semester in Kyoto, Japan, leading the Japan Study Group. This was my first time to lead a study group. Even though I grew up in Japan, I had never spent extensive time in Kyoto, and I took this study group as my own opportunity to learn about the city with the students. One of the courses in Kyoto looked into cultural landscapes of the city, which really meant that we would walk miles and miles of the city streets every week. It was not just about simply visiting temple and shrines; rather, it involved, for example, thinking about how the bends of river might be related to the development of *Hanamachi* (geisha districts); understanding the relationship between Meiji modernization and the curvature of street corners; and identifying the traces of Christian influence in the city. By the end of the semester, some of the students said, “I know more about Kyoto than my hometown L.A.” Another course that I offered focused on various sustainability issues with particular focus on rural areas of Japan. We visited Iwai Shima, a tiny island of about 300 residents in the Seto Inland Sea, and had opportunities to harvest *hijiki* seaweed, to see a beautiful sunrise, and to listen to the thoughts of the people about the controversial project of building a nuclear power plant across the coast. In a scenic village on the foot of the Japanese Alps in Nagano, we interacted with preschool children and middle school students, talked to a young family who moved into the village, and got to see the site of a golf resort development project, which ultimately failed.



At the end of the study group, I thought that I had so many new materials for my Core Japan upon return. Yet, I found it quite challenging to talk about the cultural landscape of Kyoto without the experience of wandering around the city together, or about the perspectives of rural residents without listening their actual voice in person. For me, that is more than enough reason to encourage Colgate students to join in study groups and extended studies in Asia. At the same time I have not given up the idea of bringing in Asia more forcefully and creatively to classrooms and to the minds of Colgate students. To that end I would also love to know how other faculty members in Asian Studies and beyond are embracing this challenge.

I was hoping to issue this newsletter much earlier in the semester, but I hope that this still serves as a good record of activities in and around Asian Studies.

Daisaku Yamamoto



Why Study Asia?

Asia holds a unique and vital place within the globalizing world of the early 21st century. Home to an extraordinary range of linguistic and ethnic groups, this broad and dynamic region is rich in cultural and environmental diversity. 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 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.

Asian Studies Program at Colgate



Nine courses are required for the major, of which four courses must be at the 300 or 400 level.

The introductory course may count toward the five courses focused on a single subregion of Asia. Three other courses should be chosen from the list of Governed Electives and may address any region of Asia. Other courses may also serve as electives for this major if they are at the 300 or 400 level and if at least 40 percent of the course and of the student's work concerns Asia. Students must gain approval

from the director of Asian Studies prior to taking these courses for them to count toward the major.

Majors are strongly encouraged to acquire proficiency in one or more Asian languages, although no more than three language courses at any level may count toward the nine courses required for the major. Normally, the nine courses will include courses from at least two of these three divisions: arts and humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics.

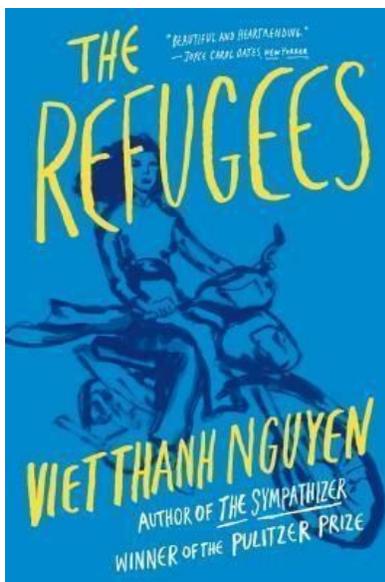
We also offer a minor in Asian Studies.

For more information visit us at: <http://www.colgate.edu/asian-studies>

Events on Asia at Colgate

Living Writers guest: Viet Thanh Nguyen, author of *The Refugees*

On September 13, 2018, the Division of University Studies, the First-Year Seminar Program, and Asian Studies co-sponsored a talk on the book *The Refugees* by Viet Thanh Nguyen. *The Refugees*, the required reading for the Class of 2022 during the summer of 2018, was a short story collection that shed light on the lives of Vietnamese refugees. Viet Thanh Nguyen began the talk by bringing up his earliest childhood memories in the pre-1975 South Vietnam. Since his family was on the losing side, he and his relatives fled to one of the four refugee camps in Pennsylvania. “When you become a writer, you go to where it hurts.” He remarked, remembering how he was taken away from his parents by a sponsor. From that point, he related to the 24 million refugees in the world, and the stigma attached to them. They were unwanted where they came from, and where they went to. At times, even the previous refugees refused to accept a new generation of refugees into their new country. The refugees were often associated with job loss, but many of them in reality were hard-working people, such as Viet’s parents who worked in their restaurant 24/7, got shot on Christmas Day, and went through unimaginable obstacles to survive in the United States. As Viet contemplated on the traumatizing effect the war had on men, women, children, civilians, he emphasized the need to tell stories about the immigrants for people to understand what it meant to remember, forgive, and forget. The theme that tied all characters together was a shared haunted history, stressing the necessity of empathy in everyday life.



Taiko Drum Concert: *Thousand Ocean Sounds* by Eitetsu Hayashi

On September 7, the Colgate Arts Council grant, Asian Studies, Music Department, University Studies, CORE Communities and Identities, East Asian Languages and Literature Department, and the Arts and Humanities Division cooperated to host the Taiko Drum Concert *Thousand Ocean Sounds* by Eitetsu Hayashi in the Chapel. Eitetsu Hayashi is a renowned Japanese solo drummer who helped transform the traditional Japanese drum taiko into a new art form and genre of music after the Second World War. Days before the Concert, Colgate students had joined the taiko drum groups for three intensive taiko workshops to prepare for the main performance. They opened the concert with a fast-paced and intense sequence of drum movements, conveying the strength of human determination in the face of diversity. When it was finally the turn of Eitetsu Hayashi and the professional performers, the melody turned quieter, calmer, and more intricate. The drummers stepped in front of the drums to execute martial arts movements, in tune with the silent message of Eitetsu Hayashi. The last piece, played jointly by Eitetsu and his unit, and Colgate and Cornell students, was created to celebrate the recovery of Kobe, a port city destroyed by earthquake in 1995. The theme was not only about the outward human strength at the beginning of the disaster, but it was also the subtle resilience that held people

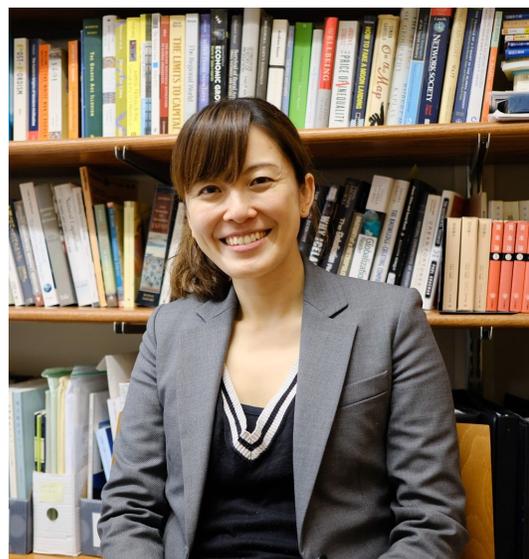


together and helped them rebuild the city with hope for a better future. In the Chapel, students, professors, and villagers alike were moved by the advanced taiko skills and fervent emotions of the drummers. Several people expressed their delight at the marvelous performance. “The show is great,” said one student, “I admire the strong spirit of Japanese people.”



Japan’s Demographic Time Bomb, Women to the Rescue **by Yukiko Asai**

On Thursday, October 25, 2018, Professor Yukiko Asai of Waseda University and University of Chicago held a public lecture titled "Women in the Workplace in Japan" in Persson Hall. The talk addressed Japan’s demographic challenges. At the present time, Japan was witnessing the sharpest drop in working-age population of any economy, followed by an aging population. The decline in fertility rate precipitated this problem - within 30 years, it had fallen from 2.2 to 1.4. Too few young workers were available to support people older than 65, and automation was slowly replacing humans, leading to a plateau in payroll tax revenue and social insurance. Since Japan had strict laws pertaining immigration, immigrant workers were not a solution. Therefore, one resolution was to promote the presence of women in the labor market. Since Japan’s gender gap in median earnings of full-time employees hovered between 25% and 30%, the second highest rate among OECD countries, Japan ought to solve certain problems. New policies could



help encourage women to go to work: parental leave, childcare subsidies, and permanent contracts could prevent women from having to choose between their jobs and children, and shorter hours and tax and social security system would provide a more ideal workplace. Evaluation of Prime Minister Abe's new economic policies catered for working women showed that governmental policies would indeed be effective in encouraging women to go back to work. Professor Yukiko Asai concluded the presentation with three key points: the underutilization of women, the role that women play in the deactivation of the demographic time bomb, and the efficiency of the workplace policies for women.

Club Diamond

On November 15, the Department of Theater with the support of the Japan Foundation New York and various divisions and departments, including Asian Studies, hosted an intriguing theater performance by Saori Tsukada (director/performer), Nikki Appino (director), and Tim Fain (violinist) at the Brehmer Theater:

1937 Tokyo—An American silent film about a Japanese immigrant is live-narrated by a celebrated Benshi whose existence is being threatened by the impending arrival of the talkies. Ten years later, he will survive under US occupation as a street performer, desperately attempting to finish this story. Admiration and resistance, dreams and survival, Club Diamond is a modern take on the immigration tale. (from: <http://www.clubdiamond.org/>)



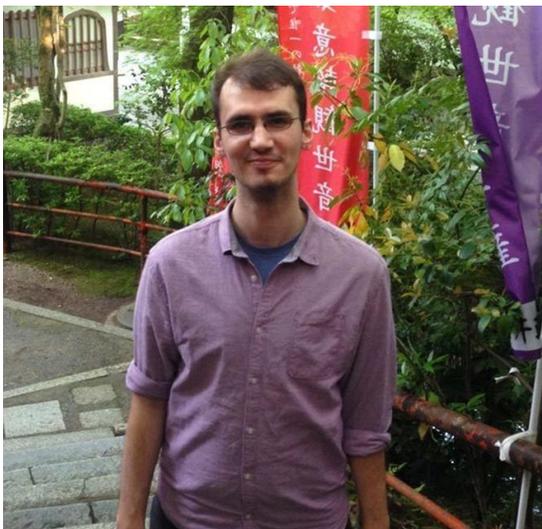
Multiple stories of lives, all played by Tsukada, were layered in this relatively short performance, accompanied by the touching sound of the violin played by Fain. Tsukada's acting was truly impressive and mesmerized the audience.

***What Time Is This Place?: Gentrification and Historic Preservation in Shanghai* by Non Arkaraprasertkul**

On November 28, Non Arkaraprasertkul, an independent scholar and founder of Anti-Fragile Design + Consultancy based in the Southeast Asian metropolis of Bangkok, Thailand, gave a fascinating talk to the audience in Persson Auditorium. Based on his ethnographic dissertation work, which explored the lives of residents in *lilong* or alleyway houses in Shanghai, he documented how this landscape, once commonplace but now increasingly scarce historical artefacts, was being transformed in different ways. One of the key findings is that the urban landscape did not simply become dominated and controlled by external capital, as the gentrification literature often predicts; rather, one could find “innovative” and ingenious acts of current and former residents.



Voices of Alumni



Alex Sklyar (class of 2010)

Alex Sklyar graduated from Colgate in 2010 with a double major in Japanese and a self-designed concentration in Humanities (foreign literatures). Alex is currently a PhD candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology at the University of Michigan, studying how mothers responded to the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, making difficult choices and life decisions. He returned to his alma mater on October 15, 2018, and visited a couple courses of Dai Yamamoto to give guest lectures. We had an opportunity to ask him about his experience when he was a student, nearly 10 years ago (!), and would like to share the conversation with you.

How did you stumble upon studying Japan?

I'm Alex. I was at Colgate from 2006 to 2010. In my sophomore year, I got inspired by my freshman convocation which encouraged us to get out of our comfort zone, study something we would not do regularly, and go somewhere we would be a visible minority. I came here to study International Relations (IR) then got disheartened by the heavily political science-influenced approach in IR, so I decided to go more heavily into the humanities. I speak Russian at home, English everywhere else, took French, German, and Spanish literature classes. And then Japanese worked into my schedule. I was going to the French Study Group in the Spring 2009, so I applied to the Japan Study Group for the Fall 2008. Then I went to Japan and my life changed.

Shifting all the way to a country in Asia and becoming a specialist - were you not scared?

I drank the liberal arts kool-aid. They wanted me to try everything and I did. I really liked languages and theater so I acted in theater every semester. I studied French literature, Spanish literature, German, and Japanese language. In my sophomore year I applied for the Japan Study Group, for the Middlebury Language School, and additional fellowships to get extra money. When I was in Japan, Professor Hudson and the group focused a lot on Buddhist tradition and Buddhist history of the Kyoto and Nara areas. He encouraged me to go to temples and shrines. Then, for a week, we went to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Colgate Japan Study Group is out of this world. I have met many students from other US institutions and from Europe; no one has anything close to what the Japan Study Group does. You get urban Japan (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka) and modern history, but we also went to the countryside and made coal out of wood, did an internship, and went on a ship to an island chain in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, where a ship only comes once every 10 days in the middle of nowhere to get a connection with international history.

After studying in Japan, what did you do afterward?

I went to France for the French Study Group. Then I went back from France and I studied German in the summer. When I made my way back to Colgate campus, I took two more Japanese language classes and a 200-level film and literature course for the Japanese major. After that, I applied for the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies (IUC) in Yokohama, the top Japanese program in the world, and got in. They got my Japanese up to academic proficiency. Then, I applied to grad school in 2010 in anthropology. I started my grad school in the Fall of 2011.

What would be your message to Colgate students who are studying about Asia in general?

My advisor Professor Hudson who was also our study group leader told me one time. Say you are walking down the street, and you see a woman sweeping the sidewalk by a local neighborhood shrine. There are bushes, trees, and flowers around the shrine and the sidewalk. That person sweeping the sidewalk is going to know so much more about that shrine, about the flowers, and the neighborhood than you'll ever know. So if you have a moment, say hello, ask about the shrine, learn about the flower and plant, and try to have a conversation. Go to exhibitions, temples, museums, and try your best to chat even if you don't know the language very well. Try to continue talking about what people know but you don't really know.

Why should a student choose to major in Asian Studies?

It does not box you in. You can still learn political science, economics, theater, literature, and other languages. It is a multi-and-inter-disciplinary liberal arts approach which allows you to try out different things and have them come together in a meaningful way. With that liberal arts experience, you can go on and learn more about anthropology, like what I am doing, or geography, or even pre-med. One of the girls in the Japan Study Group with me completely switched her direction in life, so you can have the option of switching the path too.

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 firsthand 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.

Korea Study Group, hosted by Yonsei University in Seoul, serves the academic needs of students interested in educational studies and Asian studies.

Approved Programs

- China Shanghai CIEE Shanghai: China in a Global Context
- China The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- China The Chinese City: Living Beijing
- China Extended study to Beijing, China
- China Colgate Exchange in Xiamen
- Korea Yonsei University
- India Pune Alliance for Global Education: Contemporary India
- India Bodh Gaya Antioch Buddhist
- India Dharamsala Emory Tibetan Studies Program
- India New Delhi SIT India: National Identity and the Arts
- India Madurai South India Term Abroad (SITA)
- India Far from Thy Valley: Colgate's Contributions to Northeast India
- Japan Kyoto Antioch Japan and Buddhist Traditions Program
- Japan Hirakata City Kansai Gaidai
- Japan Advent of the Atomic Bomb
- Singapore National University of Singapore
- Sri Lanka Kandy ISLE Program (Bowdoin)



Explore Asian Studies

Courses Offered in Spring 2018

ARTS 245 A	Palaces and Paintings	JAPN 122 A	Elementary Japanese II
ASIA 123 NY6	Elementary Hindi I/NY6	JAPN 122 B	Elementary Japanese II
ASIA 313 AX	Envi Prob & Env Activism in China	JAPN 202 A	Intermediate Japanese II
ASIA 313E AX	Env Prob & Activism/China Extended St	JAPN 222 A	Japan thru Literature & Film
ASIA 313L AX	Env Prob & Activism in China Lab	JAPN 222L A	Required Film Screening
CHIN 122 A	Elementary Chinese II	JAPN 255 A	Hidden Japan: Tea Ceremony
CHIN 122 B	Elementary Chinese II	JAPN 302 A	Advanced Japanese II
CHIN 202 A	Intermediate Chinese II	JAPN 402 A	Readings in Japanese II
CHIN 304 A	Readings in Social Issues	POSC 305 A	Polit Econ East/Southeast Asia
CHIN 406 A	Readings in Modern Literature	POSC 368 A	American Foreign Relatns China
CORE 165C A	China	POSC 368 B	American Foreign Relatns China
CORE 166C A	India	RELG 206 A	Hindu Goddesses
CORE 167C A	Japan		
CORE 167C B	Japan		
GEOG 315 A	Sustain Livelihoods in Asia		
HIST 255 A	The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1924		
HIST 263 A	Cities of the Silk Road		
HIST 305 A	Asian American History		
HIST 368 A	China, the Great Wall & Beyond		



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Russian and Eurasian Studies

Art and Art History

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Japanese

History, African and Latin American Studies

Sociology

Religion

Art and Art History, University Studies

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