Asian Studies Perspectives

Student Accomplishments

We are especially excited to celebrate the exceptional success of our students in securing scholarships and awards recognizing student excellence and helping to further their studies in 2009-2010.

The Friends of Asian Studies Scholarship, administered by Asian Studies faculty and the College Foundation, was awarded to Asian Studies major Ebony Bowens. Ebony, now a senior, is utilizing her scholarship toward a year of study abroad at Kanazawa University in 2009-2010, after which she hopes to pursue graduate studies in Japanese literature. The entire group of applicants this year was strong. Among them, Devalera Sin and Emily Sobel were selected for the India Academic Award.

Asian Studies is also proud that nearly all the fourteen scholarships awarded to current SUNY New Paltz students for study and research abroad this academic year were earned by students seeking to pursue language and cultural studies in Asia. In addition to the Friends of Asian Studies Award, Ebony Bowens also garnered a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, a Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarship, and a Roger Bowen Scholarship to study in Japan. Liam Stephens, a senior majoring in International Business, received the Levin Institute Chinese Government Scholarship to study in China. Theresa Steele, a senior majoring in graphic design, received the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, the J.P. Morgan US/Japan Bridging Scholarship, and the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarship to study in Japan. Theodore Svirbly, a sophomore majoring in Asian Studies and International Economics, received the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarship to study in Japan.

New acceptances for study abroad in spring are now being announced. Raquel Kubikowski, majoring in Art and also pursuing Asian Studies, was selected for the study abroad program at Nagasaki University. Alex Moullos will be studying at the University of Urbino in Italy. Alex is a History major and Asian Studies minor.

External support for graduates in Asian Studies

Asian Studies graduates of 2008-2009 have secured significant external support to begin their careers overseas in Asia.

Asian Studies majors Jaclyn DeMarzo (Class of 2009), Gavin Greene (Class of 2008), and Patrick Tumambing (Class of 2009) are all currently teaching in Japan on the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET). Veronica O’Keefe (Class of 2009), who graduated in May with a double major in Philosophy and Printmaking and a minor in Asian Studies, was awarded a competitive Fulbright Fellowship, which has enabled her to travel to China following graduation for ten months to conduct a photography project entitled, “Agricultural Evolution: A Photographic Study of China’s Modern Farms,” documenting China’s farms today and creating a portrait of the nation through photographs of its farmers. In China, O’Keefe will be affiliated with Dalian University of Technology. She began her study of Chinese language at New Paltz, and will continue to build on her language skills with the support of an additional Critical Language Enhancement Award (CLEA) from the Fulbright Program.

Asian Studies and Political Science, received the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarship to study in Japan. Christopher L’Abate, a senior majoring in Asian Studies and History, also received a Japan Student Services Organization Scholarship (JASSO) to study in Japan. Emily Sobel, a junior double majoring in Asian Studies and International Relations, was selected for the Levin Institute Chinese Government Scholarship to study in China. Theresa Steele, a senior majoring in graphic design, received the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, the J.P. Morgan US/Japan Bridging Scholarship, and the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarship to study in Japan. Theodore Svirbly, a sophomore majoring in Asian Studies and International Economics, received the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) Scholarship to study in Japan.

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Special points of interest:
- Asian Studies students and graduates garner record numbers of awards and external support for overseas study, research, and teaching
- Special events feature the Chinese qin (zither), Taiwan-US-China Relations, Mahayana Buddhism, and Art of Ghandara
- Faculty win grants for research
- Fulbright awarded to Asian Studies Program faculty for one month of curriculum development in India
- New study abroad programs in India and Thailand
Alumni News

Recent and longtime alumni of Asian Studies have been keeping busy and keeping in touch.

Keryn Price (Class of 2009) is now pursuing graduate studies in East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Oregon. Last December’s salutatorian, Sondra Hardwick (Class of 2008), is now Assistant Treasurer of Sumitomo Corporation, New York. Amanda Cheney (Class of 2008), is currently studying mandarin at National Taiwan Normal University, working for an NGO in Taipei, and applying for graduate school. Bo Huang (Class of 2007) taught in China after graduation, and was accepted to the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures to pursue an M.A. at Columbia University, where he will study the history of China’s frontier regions. Kelly Long (Class of 2006) has been finishing up her MPA degree at the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs. Dylan McGee (Class of 2001), completed his Ph.D. in Japanese literature at Princeton University. In May, he successfully defended his dissertation “Eccentric Circles: The Writings of Ueda Akinari (1734-1809) in Social and Cultural Context,” and is now working on several articles and translations relating to Edo period literature. Erynn Sarno (Class of 1998) works in development and fund-raising, and recently began a new position as Research Analyst at Mount Sinai Medical Center. She contributes her free time and weekends to JCC Rockland and to the Museum at Eldridge Street in lower Manhattan, where she serves as a Museum Docent.

Mike Boccio (Class of 1977), VP-Commercial Director at OSI Industries in Chicago, has visited New Paltz this year and met with Asian Studies faculty; he was also invited to lecture on food safety for university specialists in the Chicago area. Dr. Denis Simon (Class of 1974) recently visited campus as a featured alumnus guest speaker. He gave a talk on “Globalization, Innovation, and China’s Evolving Role in International Competition,” to a large audience of students, faculty, and staff. Dr. Simon’s book China’s Emerging Technological Edge: Assessing the Role of High-End Talent, co-authored with Dr. Cong Cao, was published this year by Cambridge University Press. He is currently Professor of International Affairs, and Director of the Program on US-China Technology, Economic and Business Relations at the School of International Affairs, Penn State University. In fall 2009 he was also a Senior Research Scholar at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of Columbia University, where he taught the course Government and Politics of China: The Political Management of Change and Continuity.

Special Events

Some engaging special events with an Asian Studies focus were held in 2009.

Ming-mei Yip performed on the qin for our annual Spring Festival party in February.

Also in October, Dr. Kurt Behrendt, Assistant Curator, Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, gave a public lecture: “The Sculpture and Architecture of Gandhara: International exchange and emerging Buddhist ideologies” on Wednesday Oct. 28th in the Honors Center at 7 PM. The talk was attended by approximately 75 students, faculty, and community members.

In November, Dr. Denis Fred Simon (‘74), Professor of International Affairs and Director of the Program on US-China Technology, Economic and Business Relations at Penn State University, gave a special guest lecture on “Globalization, Innovation, and China’s Evolving Role in International Competition,” attended by approximately 100 students and faculty.

Dr. Jay Garfield, Doris Silbert Professor of Philosophy, Smith College, spoke on Mahayana Buddhism and Skepticism to a group of 85 students and faculty in November. Asian Studies also helped co-sponsor the play-back theater event “Immigrant Stories in the Hudson Valley.”

In October, Tony Ong, Director of the Press Division of TECO (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York), gave an afternoon lecture attended by approximately 50 students from the Freshman Interest Group courses on Chinese politics and history taught by J Schwartz and K. Harris. Mr Ong also gave a public lecture at 5 PM entitled “Taiwan’s Relationship with China and the USA: The Unique Position of an East Asian Democracy,” which was attended by approximately 50 students, faculty, and community members.

We look forward to hearing from you!
Faculty Research, Grants, and Publications

A substantial group of new faculty have joined us in recent years, and we’re proud to report their wide-ranging accomplishments in 2009.

Prof. Sunita Bose (Sociology) was selected for a Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Award, which enabled her to travel to India for research in fall 2009.

Prof. David Elstein (Philosophy) published an article about Confucian ideas about the roles of teachers and students, “The Authority of the Master in the Analects” in the journal Philosophy East and West 59, 2.

Prof. Dylan McGee (Foreign Languages-Japanese) published an article on Japanese literature in the Southeast Review of Asian Studies.


For more information about faculty areas of expertise and recent accomplishments, visit the Asian Studies website www.newpaltz.edu/asianstudies and the SUNY New Paltz Experts Database: www.newpaltz.edu/publicaffairs/experts/

Longtime SUNY New Paltz faculty continue to expand their contributions to the field.


Prof. Kristine Harris (History) was invited back to the University of Chicago for a second time as Visiting Associate Professor in spring 2009, where she developed two new courses, Women in Chinese Film and Shanghai Film Mediascape for graduate students and undergraduates in cinema and media studies, East Asian languages and civilizations, and gender studies. At SUNY New Paltz, she will teach a revised version of one of these courses, Shanghai, this coming spring. Prof Harris contributed three articles on 1930s actresses to the new Encyclopedia of Modern China (Scribner’s, 2009), and also submitted three articles for publication in journals and edited books that are forthcoming next year.

Prof. Jonathan Schwartz (Political Science) co-edited a book with Shawn Shieh entitled State and Society Responses to Social Welfare Needs in China: Serving the People (Routledge Contemporary China Series, 2009). He was also invited to provide expert testimony to the government of Canada. In summer 2009 he was awarded an East Asian Institute Fellowship from Korea, and gave guest seminars in South Korea and Taiwan on the topic of crisis response as part of the Fellows Program on Peace, Governance, and Development in East Asia.

Prof. Ron Knapp (Geography, SUNY Distinguished Professor Emeritus) completed his Master's degree in Education (Teacher) and a fellowship in Development Education at NYU in 2009. In 2009, seven of his articles appeared in the five volume Berkshire Encyclopedia of China and donated a set to the college library. In addition, he gave a keynote address at the Third International Conference on Chinese Covered Bridges in October in Fujian. He continues to teach each spring an online graduate course for Teachers College, Columbia University titled East Asia: Geographic Perspectives.

New Initiatives: Fulbright & SEASCOHV

The Asian Studies program has been awarded a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad grant, which will enable the faculty to travel for one month to India during the winter break 2009-2010, to expand our curricular offerings on Asia and deepen our understanding of South Asia. In January, Prof. Sunita Bose, Project Director for the grant, and Prof. Akira Shimada, will lead a group of 12 faculty and teachers, including Profs. Elizabeth Brotherton, Kristine Harris, Dylan McGee, and Jonathan Schwartz through Kolkata, New Delhi, Mumbai, and other sites in India. The faculty look forward to sharing the results of this collective project with our students in future Asian Studies courses.

Our campus representative to the new Southeast Asia Consortium of the Hudson Valley (SEASCOHV), Prof. Lauren Meeker, reports that the consortium plans to host a Fulbright visiting specialist on Southeast Asia during fall 2010 for six weeks. The SEASCOHV consortium, comprised of faculty from SUNY New Paltz, Bard, Vassar, and Simon’s Rock, was organized in 2008 to foster new scholarship and events on Southeast Asia in the region.
SUNY New Paltz now offers more than seventy-five different Asia courses in rotation. Each year, our faculty develop new courses that offer students new insight into the latest findings on Asia and developments in the field.

In 2009, new course offerings included ANT 393 Cultures of East Asia (L. Meeker); ANT 298 Anthropology of Tourism (L. Meeker); ARH 493 Japanese Arts of the Edo Period (E. Brotherton); ENG 393 Folklore and Myth (I. Fenkl); HIS 393 Indian Ocean World (A. Shimada); JPN 393 Culture of the Floating World (D. McGee); JPN 293 History of Manga (D. McGee); PHI 382 Contemporary Buddhism (D. Elstein). In addition, Prof Elstein has reorganized some of the philosophy courses on East Asia and Chinese Philosophy.

New courses to be offered in Spring 2010 include:

- **ANT 414 The Anthropology of Performance.** This course introduces the anthropology of performance. Through cross-cultural examples, it explores the cultural conditions of aesthetic experience, the role of the audience, and how performance can create shared identity, voice protest, or promote ideology. (L. Meeker)

- **HIS 393 Shanghai** The distinctive historical situation of modern Shanghai - at once a Chinese walled city, a cosmopolitan semi-colonial port after the Opium War, and the site of the founding of China’s Communist Party in 1921 - has stimulated and haunted the imaginations of artists, industrialists, revolutionaries, émigrés, and exiles from around the world throughout the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first. In this course we track the multiform significance of Shanghai as an artistic and commercial center, as a catalyst for China’s modern economic and technological development, and as a setting for radical politics, espionage, and intrigue. With special attention to the rise of modern media in Shanghai -- photography, film, advertising, popular music, radio, the recording industry, theatre, serialized fiction, lithography, the illustrated periodical press, architecture, and design- we explore the essential relationships among the arts, politics, and commerce proliferating in this multinational city. Interconnections and comparisons with urban histories in other cultures will also be discussed. (K. Harris)

New Overseas Programs in India and Thailand

SUNY New Paltz has added two new programs in South Asia and Southeast Asia through the International Partnership for Service Learning.

Students can pursue language and cultural studies in Loreto College in Kolkata, India or Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Alongside these fresh opportunities for study abroad in Asia, our existing partnerships with Nanjing University in China and with Kanazawa University, Meiji University, and Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies in Japan continue to grow and flourish.

Friends of Asian Studies Scholarships

Current students should begin preparing their applications for the Friends of Asian Studies scholarship and the India Academic Award. The new cycle will begin in spring 2010. Qualifications and application requirements remain consistent each year, and can be accessed in the recent and new Scholarship Book online:


Students are urged to consult with their advisors for more information about application process and deadlines.

You’re Invited!

The annual Asian Studies Spring Festival is scheduled for Wednesday February 27th, 2010, 5-8 PM in JFT 1010.

Everyone is warmly welcomed as we ring in the Year of the Tiger!