



DICKINSON COLLEGE

East Asian Studies

2024-2026

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NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

DEAR COLLEAGUES, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE DICKINSON EAST ASIAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT,

Dear colleagues, alumni, and friends of the Dickinson East Asian Studies department,

We are wrapping up another productive year in the department. There is a lot to report. In May, we were happy to celebrate with the nine graduates of our programs. It was nice to see the results of their research and wish them well as they moved on to life beyond the limestone. The presentation of senior theses is always one of my favorite events of the year. We get to see the results of students' four-year journeys developing skills in language, research, and critical thinking. Because they choose the topics and work closely with a faculty mentor, these projects reflect student passions and the best examples of their scholarship. See the range of fascinating projects from the last two years on pages 4 and 5.

We were as busy as ever with events that bring a bit of Asia to Central PA thanks to the generous support of our donors. In the fall, we had mooncakes and mochi at a fall social that brought together students and faculty as we highlighted our offerings for the spring semester. We repeated this in the springtime as well in addition to our major annual celebration of the Lunar New Year (Year of the horse!). We were particularly happy to welcome Lieutenant Colonel Ian MacNab back to campus. LTC MacNab graduated with a major in East Asian Studies in 2002 and came back to Carlisle to attend the Army War College, where he revisited some research that he began at Dickinson. We also hosted Professor Gina Tam for an intriguing lecture on the historical contests behind making Mandarin the official Chinese language. Another highlight was the range of food-related activities we had in conjunction with Professor Bender's new class on

"Food and Culture in Japan": special demonstrations and workshops on tea ceremony, sweets, sushi and more. You can find photos and the list of events on page 2 and more about Professor Bender's class on pages 7 and 8.

Study abroad is going strong with students experiencing Taiwan and Japan. They report strong engagement with the host culture, and we can certainly see the growth upon their return. It is always nice to see students who return whip up excitement for the students heading out, along with some practical tips about life abroad. See some photos from students on page 10.

Our faculty have been busy developing new courses and refining previous ones, along with keeping up with their research. We particularly applaud Professor Christopher Peacock's critical translation of Tsering Döndrup's novel *The Red Wind Howls* (see more on page 6). In addition to Professor Bender's new course on food, mentioned above, we were also pleased to offer new courses by Professor Diamant, which included one looking at law and society in East Asian Film. He was able to deftly show how films engaged with real legal and political issues in the region. In Japanese, we were happy to incorporate Professor Meguro's new chatbots developed over her sabbatical. They are great ways for students to practice independently. Over the last two semesters, Professors Ma and Ren were on sabbatical, and we look forward to their return in the fall. You can read more about what they have been up to during their sabbaticals along with other faculty news on pages 8 and 9.

We hope to hear about what you are all doing and perhaps see you sometime if you drop by Carlisle.

ALEX BATES,
CHAIR OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES



LECTURES & EVENTS

FALL 2024

- SEPT. 17 Mid-Autumn Festival at K-Pot Harrisburg
- NOV 5 Tea Ceremony
- NOV. 7 Lecture: "Before the Red Wind Howled: Revolution, Rebellions, and Remembrance on a Tibetan Frontier of Maoist China," Benno Weiner (Carnegie Mellon)
- DEC. 9 End of Semester Party

SPRING 2025

- FEB. 3 Lunar New Year
- MARCH 18 Lecture: "Treatments for an Age of Anxiety: Perspectives from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam," Allen Tran (Bucknell)
- APRIL 24 Lecture: "Colonial Moments in Japanese Video Games: Towards a Multidirectional Perspective," Rachel Hutchison (University of Delaware)
- MAY 10 Senior Thesis Presentations

FALL 2025

- SEPT. 26 J-Table at the Farm
- OCT. 6 Mid-Autumn Festival at K-Pot Harrisburg
- OCT. 30 Fall Social
- NOV. 11 Onigiri Workshop

SPRING 2026

- JAN. 23 Kakizome Workshop
- FEB. 16 Tea Ceremony
- FEB. 17 Lunar New Year
- FEB. 24 Lecture: "The Cost of Cultural Illiteracy: Why U.S. Military Observers Misread the Russo-Japanese War," LTC Ian MacNab (U.S. Army War College)
- MARCH 17 Spring Social
- MARCH 19 Makizushi Workshop
- APRIL 13 Lecture: "The Fate of Dialects Under China's New Linguistic Regime: A Modern History," Gina Tam (Trinity)
- APRIL 16 Onigiri Workshop
- MAY 6 Senior Thesis Presentations



VISITING FACULTY



QINGTAO LONG, VISITING INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR OF CHINESE 2025-2026

Time flies, I can hardly believe that two semesters have passed so quickly. When I first arrived at Dickinson last August, to be honest, I felt a bit nervous: although I had extensive prior experience teaching abroad, this was my very first time doing so in an English-speaking country. I would like to express my gratitude to the outstanding faculty and staff of the East Asian Studies Department for their support over the past year, which enabled me to carry out my

teaching duties smoothly and enjoyably.

I would also like to make a special mention of one particular aspect: ever since leaving my hometown to attend university, I had lived exclusively in large cities—until I arrived in Carlisle last year. It felt as though I had returned to the fresh, tranquil, and even idyllic living environment of my youth. My daughter, who had never lived in a small town before, shared this very same sentiment. The only difference is that back in my hometown in southern China, the winters are not nearly this cold, nor is there this much snow.

Finally, I would like to pay a special tribute to the exceptional students at Dickinson. As Confucius once said, “Teaching and learning are mutually enriching.” My teaching experience here over the past year serves as the perfect testament to the truth of this timeless adage.



NAOKO DATE TEUNISSEN, VISITING INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR OF JAPANESE 2025-2026

The Japanese language program at Dickinson College allowed for a warm and supportive teaching environment. Small class sizes fostered close relationships between students and instructors, and students’ enthusiasm made teaching especially rewarding. Cultural activities such as tea ceremonies and sushi-making helped students connect more deeply with Japanese language and culture.

Through J-table, students also had opportunities to practice Japanese outside the classroom and build friendships with classmates and exchange students from Japan.

With the kindness and support of the faculty, staff, and students, I gained a very meaningful experience that I will carry into my future career in Japanese language education.



XIANGYANG YE, VISITING INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR OF CHINESE 2025-2026

During my year at Dickinson, I had the opportunity to experience the teaching and academic environment of an American liberal arts college, where students were encouraged to pursue a wide range of interests with openness. Being part of it made my work feel meaningful, and I especially appreciated the supportive and collegial atmosphere among faculty and staff.

I enjoyed the spacious, often sunlit common areas in Stern, as well as the tree-shaded courtyard in front of the building, which will remain in my memory.

I often experienced an interesting reversal. In the classroom, I spoke my native language while my students navigated a foreign one. But once class ended and daily life resumed, they returned naturally to their familiar linguistic and cultural world, while I moved back into life in a different language. This constant shifting between what feels like self and other has been fascinating to experience, and in the end, it has made me realize how much we actually share.



2025 SENIOR THESES



L TO R, BACK ROW: Shawn Bender, Xiu Edelheit, Ella DeGrenier, Christopher Peacock

L TO R, MIDDLE ROW: Mackenzie Hughes, Laena Brody, Katie Mosima, Nan Ma, Wei Ren

L TO R, FRONT ROW: Kelly Hansen, Simon Weber, Bridget Onest, Erin Kilpatrick, Anna Wallace, Alex Bates

CHINA AREA

Laena Brody

Capturing the Needs of New Mothers: Postpartum Care Centers in East Asia in the 21st Century

Ella Clarke DeGrenier

From Grassroots Activism to State Policy: The Democratic Progressive Party and Taiwan's Anti-Nuclear Movement*

Xiu Edelheit

A Republic on Display: Painting and National Image at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition

Mackenzie Hughes

Strategic Anxieties and Digital Threats: U.S. Perceptions of China's E-CNY and the Securitization of Central Digital Currencies*

Katie Mosima

Spectacle and Agency: Resisting Canonical Disability Tropes in Yan Lianke's *Shouhuo*

JAPAN AREA

Bridget H. Onest

Ijime Mondai no Keisetsu e: Continuity and Change in Heisei Era Anti-Bullying Initiatives^

Simon Weber

'Ve' to 'Voku': Exploring Translations of Non-Standard Language in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and Yuko Matsuoka's *Hari Potta to Hono no Goburetto*

KOREA AREA

Erin Kilpatrick

Girlboss or Good Daughter?: Neoliberal Feminism and Familial Relationships in a Korean Drama and its Chinese Remake^

Anna Wallace

Diplomacy Babies: Korean International Adoption as a Foreign Policy Tool (1950s-1970s)

2026 SENIOR THESES



L TO R, BACK ROW: Alex Bates, Neil Diamant, Ethan Lebo, Eli Berman
L TO R, THIRD ROW: Christopher Peacock, Matthew Barna, Shawn Bender
L TO R, SECOND ROW: Anna Purvis, Abigail Allport, Samuel Edmonds, Felix Zehe
L TO R, FRONT ROW: Chinue Kinsale, Jameson Ketcham, Naoko Date, Xiangyang Ye, Qingtao Long

CHINA AREA

Abigail Allport
 Abstraction
 in Taiwanese
 Contemporary Art:
 Constructing Identity
 and Cultural Memory

Farrell Gregory
 Chinese Perspectives
 on the Development
 and Potential of
 Artificial Intelligence

Chinue Kinsale
 Who is Gao Xingjian's
 "madman" in *One
 Man's Bible?*^{^*}

Anna Purvis
 Obesity Camps
 in Contemporary
 China: Demand and
 Social Pressure in an
 Unregulated Industry

Felix Zehe
 Pollution Portrayed:
 How Western
 and Chinese
 Documentaries Frame
 Pollution in China

JAPAN AREA

Matthew Barna
 30 Years of Pokémon:
 How a Fad from Japan
 Became a Staple of
 American Pop Culture

Eli Berman
 Challenges Facing
 the Japanese *Wagyu*
 Industry

Samuel Edmonds
Giri and Ninjo in
 Japanese New Wave
 Yakuza Films

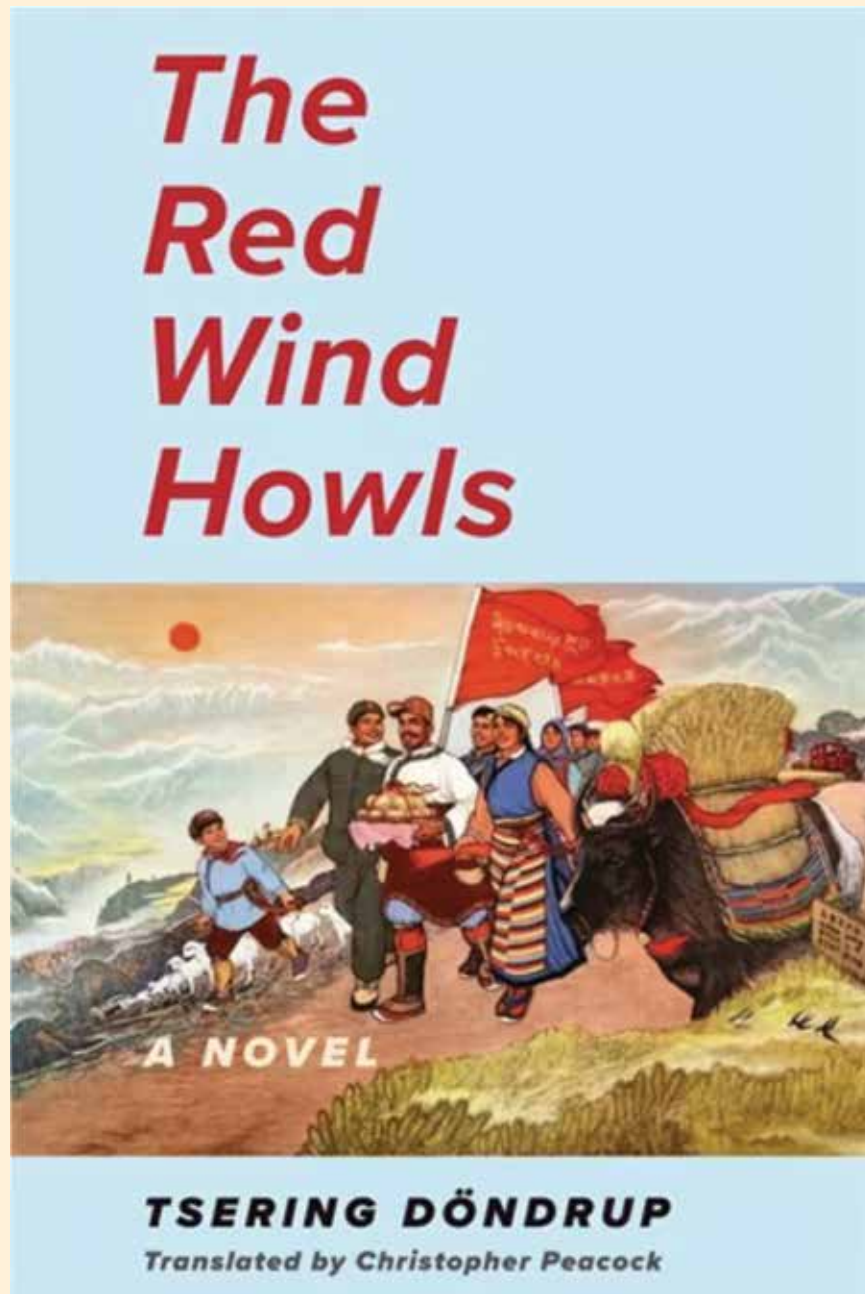
Jameson Ketcham
 Picturing Women:
 How *The Tale of Genji*
 Adaptations Frame
 Feminine Standards
 Across Time

Ethan Lebo
 Kanehara's
Hebi ni Piasu as
Eroguronansensu

[^]DEPARTMENT HONORS ^{*}THE NEWTON PRIZE IN EAST ASIAN STUDIES

The Department of East Asian Studies is proud to award the **Newton Prize in East Asian Studies**. Generously funded by alumna and trustee Kellie Newton '81, the Newton Prize is awarded to a graduating senior with at least a 3.33 overall GPA and major GPA, strong departmental citizenship, excellence in our capstone project and a senior thesis graded A- or higher.

FACULTY PUBLICATION SPOTLIGHT



THE RED WIND HOWLS: A NOVEL

Tsering Döndrup

Translated and with an introduction by Christopher Peacock,
Assistant Professor of East Asian Studies

Columbia University Press, 2025

The Red Wind Howls is a remarkable novel by one of Tibet's foremost authors. Born in 1961 in the Tibetan region of Amdo, Tsering Döndrup penned his first story in 1983, and has since published numerous full-length novels and collections of short fiction and essays. Professor Peacock's book presents a translation of the entire Tibetan text of the *Red Wind Howls*, as well as a critical introduction that contextualizes the novel's history and analyzes its significance.

The novel is a courageous and gripping portrayal of Tibetan suffering under Mao's regime. It delves deep into forbidden history, spanning the famine of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and, most taboo of all, the 1958 Amdo rebellion when Tibetans rose in armed revolt against the Chinese state. Tsering Döndrup self-published the book in 2006, because no publisher would risk accepting it. When the authorities caught wind, all copies were confiscated and the author faced severe reprisals. He lost his job as head of the local archives, his passport was confiscated, and he has been under close surveillance ever since.

The Red Wind Howls is set in part in the punitive labor camps to which Tibetans were sent after the failed rebellion, where many perished from starvation or forced labor. Inside and outside the camps, it depicts with dark humor a world of informers, cruelty, and score settling, against the backdrop of environmental devastation and the destruction of traditional Tibetan ways of life. The novel draws on extensive interviews conducted by the author, and the rhythms of oral storytelling are reflected in its fragmented narrative style, which jumps back and forth between periods and events. An unparalleled account of the Chinese Communist Party's takeover of Tibet, *The Red Wind Howls* is both a richly imaginative work of fiction and a vital piece of historical testimony.

COURSE HIGHLIGHT: FOOD AND CULTURE IN JAPAN

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR SHAWN BENDER

Q: HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN TEACHING A COURSE ON FOOD AND CULTURE IN JAPAN?

There were really a couple reasons why I decided to teach this course. The first is that I'm working on a new project related to agricultural automation, and I've been reading a lot of scholarship related to food, labor, and culture. So, the course is a nice way of connecting my current research to my current teaching. The second is related to a student project that I supervised over the past couple of years. I worked with a student from Vietnam who wanted to explore the emerging fine dining food scene in her home country of Vietnam through an anthropological lens. In mentoring her and later co-authoring an article manuscript with her, I learned even more about scholarly perspectives on food in Asia, beyond what I read for my own research purposes. This combination of factors piqued my interest in developing a course focused specifically on food and culture. This is not to say that I've never taught on these topics before—it's hard to avoid the topic of food when you teach courses on contemporary Japan—but it was first time that I devoted an entire course to the topic.

Q: WHAT KINDS OF TOPICS DID YOU INCLUDE IN THE COURSE?

We took a very expansive view of the relationship between food and culture in the course. After considering the defining elements of Japanese food culture, the first half of the course focused on the relationship of well-known drinks and foods like tea, rice, fish, sushi, and noodles. But, like I said, we treated these topics expansively. When considering fish, for example, we discussed the integration of



fish and fish products into specific dishes, but we also looked at the work of people who bring fish to restaurants and those who prepare it once it's there. We read about the lives of workers at Tsujiki, the world's largest fish market. We considered how ideals of family, gender, and labor play out among sushi-making masters like those featured in *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*. The connection of food production to ideas of gender and labor emerged as a really important theme in the course. The masculine world of fishers and sushi restaurants stood in sharp contrast to the dominance of mothers at home who prepare bento for their children and meals for their husbands. Perhaps more than one might think initially, the preparation and consumption of food helps make concrete the abstractions of gender roles and gender norms in Japan. Along with the cultural perspectives, there was an additional sustainability dimension to the course. We thought about the impact of food imports and the popularity of fish-based dishes like sushi have on the environment. But perhaps even more enjoyable was a poster assignment where students had the opportunity to design their own more sustainable version a classic Japanese dish.

Q: GIVEN THE FOCUS ON FOOD, DID STUDENTS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACTUALLY MAKE OR EVEN EAT ANY SPECIFIC FOODS?

Yes, they did. This was another really fun part of the course. Over the course of the semester students had four opportunities to make and taste Japanese food. First, an instructor of tea ceremony came to campus and led students through a short version of tea ceremony. I think students really enjoyed this experience but maybe didn't love sitting in the formal seiza sitting position. Also, with the crucial assistance of senior lecturer Akiko Meguro, students were able to learn how to make their own makizushi and onigiri. And, as if this were not enough, we were also very fortunate to have a Japanese influenced cake maker bring her cakes to campus for students in the class to sample during finals week.

Q: ARE YOU PLANNING TO OFFER THE COURSE AGAIN?

Yes, the current plan is to teach the course again in the 2027-2028 school year. Watch out for an announcement about the course and sign up if you're interested!

FACULTY NEWS

In the summer of 2025, Professor **ALEX BATES** led a great group of students on a summer program to Japan, the first he has led since the COVID shutdown. Students explored "Japan in the time of Samurai and Geisha" as they traveled in areas around Nagoya, Kyoto and Nara. Some highlights were walking the path of samurai retainers between two Tokugawa-era post towns, Magome and Tsumago, in the mountains of Gifu and Nagano, visiting a Tokugawa-era banquet house/salon in the old Shimabara pleasure quarters, and eating a vegetarian Buddhist monk feast in a Kyoto temple. He is looking forward to settling into his second year chairing the department this fall.

Along with a senior seminar and a course for the health studies program, this past year Professor **SHAWN BENDER** taught a new 200-level course called "Food and Culture in Contemporary Japan" in spring semester. That course built on Shawn's new research interest in agriculture and food studies as well as his summer 2025 participation in Dickinson Valley & Ridge program, which aims to enhance the teaching of sustainability on campus. In addition to this new course, Shawn Bender also worked on two projects related to his research interests. In summer 2024, Shawn and a rising-junior student, Helen Van, collaborated on a project to study the emerging high-end food industry in Vietnam, which was supported by student-faculty research grant from the College. Shawn and Helen are currently putting the final touches on a co-authored article manuscript that resulted from that collaboration. The following summer, in 2025, the two worked together again, this time on Shawn's project on the impact of automation on agricultural work in the local Pennsylvania region, with Helen's work on that project supported by a college Dana Research Assistantship. In the coming years, Shawn plans to expand his course offerings on food and the environment and to extend his project on agricultural automation to include comparative fieldwork in Japan.

Since publishing *The Politics of Veteran Benefits in the 20th Century: A Comparative History* and *Useful Bullshit: Constitutions in Chinese Politics and Society* (Cornell University Press, 2020 & 2022), Professor **NEIL DIAMANT** has devoted most of his time to developing new courses. During his Fall 2025 sabbatical at Charles University in Prague he prepared two courses: "Constitutions in Comparative Contexts" and "Law and Justice in East Asian Cinema," both of which were taught during the 2025-26 academic year. He also taught a course on Asian law and society at the Law School. In the fall of 2026, he will return to Prague as Dickinson's faculty-in-residence in the semester abroad program and will also teach a course on Chinese politics at the Institute for International Studies at Charles University.

FACULTY NEWS, CONTINUED

During this academic year, Professor **NAN MA** devoted her sabbatical leave to advancing several research projects. She completed a peer-reviewed article, “Freedom under Constraints: Children’s Dance in China, 1906–1966,” forthcoming in *Contemporary Dance Research*, China’s leading academic journal in dance studies. Professor Ma is co-authoring, with another Chinese scholar, a book project titled *Warring Dance: Dance as the War Machine in Socialist China*, which is planned for a Bloomsbury book series. The first draft has been completed. She has also been invited to contribute a chapter to *The Oxford Handbook on the History of the Emotions in China* (Oxford University Press). Her chapter examines emotion making in Chinese dance drama. In addition, she has begun her second book project, tentatively titled *Japan in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literary Prose*, which explores Chinese intellectual engagement with Japan in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Her current work on Su Zhenshu and Zhou Zuoren is laying the foundation for this next monograph.

Professor **CHRISTOPHER PEACOCK** has continued to teach elementary Chinese classes over the last year while working closely with our two wonderful visiting faculty members from Peking University. In the fall, he introduced a new class, “How Literature Changed China,” which focused on the social and cultural upheavals of early twentieth century China. The class was a joy to teach and will certainly be back soon. In 2025, Professor Peacock published *The Red Wind Howls*, a translation and introduction to a major novel by the Tibetan writer Tsering Döndrup, a publication which also entailed media articles, interviews, and a book talk at Columbia University. Over the last two years, he has presented on his research at the Association for Asian Studies conference in Nepal, at the Modern Language Association, and led a workshop on Tibetan literature for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia. After a productive research trip to China last summer, he has been typing away and hopes to share some exciting new projects soon.

Professor **REN WEI** is enjoying her yearlong sabbatical to finish her book manuscript on modern art and book design associated with China’s most famous modern author Lu Xun. Her recent essays “Free the Female Nude! Lu Xun’s Book Cover Designs and Symbolist Art in Republican China” appeared in the latest issue of *The Art Bulletin* and “Surface Matters: The Cover Art of Gongxian and Modern Design in Republican China (1911–1949)” in the latest issue of the *Journal of Design History*. In the fall of 2026, she will lead the seniors majoring in art history to curate an exhibition on mid-century East Asian prints and paintings that will open in the Trout Gallery in February 2027. The exhibition is inspired by the colorful mid-century Chinese paintings collected by Katheryn M. Linduff ’63 and the Trout Gallery’s newest acquisitions of East Asian

prints.

Over the past year, Professor **EVAN YOUNG** has continued his research into hitherto unexplored domestic records of families living in eighteenth and nineteenth century Japan. Visiting archives in Kanagawa, Saitama, and Ibaraki prefectures, he has uncovered familial medical handbooks that reveal how families exchanged medicinal formulas outside of the purview of doctors or canonical medicine. This research lays the foundation for the chapter “Domestic Knowledge and Medical Practice” that he is developing for the new *Cambridge History of Medicine*. This year Professor Young will serve as president of the Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies, which hosts annual conferences for undergraduate, graduate, and professional scholars to present their work.



STUDY ABROAD IN EAST ASIA!

Dickinson offers a wide variety of opportunities for studying abroad as we believe there is no better way to learn than immersing oneself in a culture. Study abroad programs in East Asia include:

JAPAN

NANZAN UNIVERSITY (*Nagoya, Japan*)

Nanzan offers intensive language classes along with courses taught in English on politics, folklore, religion, literature, history, and more. Students have the opportunity to fully engage with Japanese culture in one of Japan's largest cities.

AKITA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (*Akita, Japan*)

AIU is centered on international business and international studies along with courses on Japanese language and culture more broadly. It offers an opportunity to experience Japan's more rural side in the beautiful northern region of the country.

TAIWAN

CET TAIWAN (*Taipei, Taiwan*)

CET Taiwan gives students access to the best parts of study abroad – intensive language classes, internship opportunities in Chinese and English-speaking environments, and a location that balances life in a big city with quick getaways to nature.



MAJOR AND MINOR INFORMATION

MAJOR	EAST ASIAN STUDIES	CHINESE	JAPANESE
FOUNDATION	CHIN 101, 102, 201, 202 -OR- JPNS 101, 102, 201, 202		
ELABORATION	TOPICS* EASN 120 2 HUMANITIES ELECTIVES 2 SOCIAL SCIENCES ELECTIVES 1 ADDITIONAL ELECTIVE (Choice of humanities, social sciences, or advanced language) 1 300-LEVEL SEMINAR *One elective must cover transnational Asia or focus on an area other than the country of language study.	ADVANCED LANGUAGE CHIN 231 & 232 OR EQUIVALENT CHIN 360 TOPICS* 1 HUMANITIES ELECTIVE 1 SOCIAL SCIENCES ELECTIVE 1 ADDITIONAL ELECTIVE (choice of humanities, social sciences, or advanced language) 1 300-LEVEL SEMINAR *On country of target language or on transnational Asia.	ADVANCED LANGUAGE JPNS 231 & 232 OR EQUIVALENT JPNS 360 TOPICS* 1 HUMANITIES ELECTIVE 1 SOCIAL SCIENCES ELECTIVE 1 ADDITIONAL ELECTIVE (choice of humanities, social sciences, or advanced language) 1 300-LEVEL SEMINAR *On country of target language or on transnational Asia.
CULMINATION	EASN 480 & EASN 490		

MINOR

CHINESE
CHIN 201 and 202, two language courses above 202, and 1 additional 300-level language course OR 1 topics course on either China or greater East Asia

JAPANESE
JPNS 201 and 202, two language courses above 202, and 1 additional 300-level language course OR 1 topics course on either Japan or greater East Asia



EASN COURSES, FALL 2026

EASN 108-01: ARTS OF EAST ASIA

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. REN

This course introduces students to a selection of objects and sites that elicit new modes of cultural perception and insight into the artistic cultures of China, Korea, and Japan. Loosely arranged in a chronological order, each week is devoted to in-depth examination of a different type of object, medium, and format. The diverse mediums (sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, lacquer, prints, painting, calligraphy, photography, performance and architecture) and the long historical span covered in class will chart how culture traveled within East Asia, and later, globally, as well as each culture's distinctive methods of adaptation over time. Major themes include the relationship between artistic production and sociopolitical and socioeconomic development, cultural exchange, aesthetics, impact of religion, power and authority, gender, and issues of modernity. Lectures are supplemented by viewing sessions in the Trout Gallery.

EASN 120-01: HISTORY OF EAST ASIA FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO THE PRESENT

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. YOUNG

This course explores the diverse and interrelated histories of the region currently composed of China, Korea, and Japan, over the past two thousand years. We begin by studying the technologies and systems of thought that came to be shared across East Asia, including written languages, philosophies of rule, and religions. Next, we examine periods of major upheaval and change, such as the rise of warrior governments, the Mongol conquests, and engagement with the West. The course concludes by tracing the rise and fall of the Japanese empire and the development of the modern nation states that we see today.

EASN 210-01: BUDDHIST ART IN EAST ASIA

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. REN

How are narratives transformed from texts into images? How are images brought to life, becoming more than mute blocks of stone or colors on paper? How can we best reconstruct and understand these past visual experiences? Through classroom discussion and close examination of key East Asian Buddhist artworks, this course introduces students to the unexpected conceptual interest within the cultural context of East Asia. Each week is devoted to the discussion of a particular keyword, beginning with the basics such as “Buddha” and “bodhisattva” and proceeding towards more specialized terms including “pure land” and “mandala.” In conjunction with the investigation of keywords in Buddhist art, we will also address theories of iconography, space, spectatorship, ritual, etc. The class will also view Buddhist artworks in the Trout Gallery.

EASN 262-01: LIFE AND DEATH IN THE AGE OF SAMURAI AND GEISHA

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. YOUNG

In this course, we critically investigate the surprising origins behind some of the most pervasive icons of premodern Japan. By analyzing a variety of historical sources, including diaries, picture scrolls, and woodblock prints, students will gain insight into what it was like to live in the 12th–19th centuries. Topics include the rise of the samurai as a military and political force, the development of geisha as skilled entertainers, and how those figures featured in everyday life. By analyzing these sources and engaging with new, innovative scholarship, students will learn how to craft original and compelling arguments that change the way we understand premodern Japanese society and culture.

EASN 305-01: WAR AND MEMORY IN EAST ASIAN LITERATURE AND FILM

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. BATES

This class examines Japanese, Chinese, and some Korean and Taiwanese representations of the war fought in Asia between 1937 and 1945. This conflict affected the lives of millions and irrevocably changed the landscape of foreign relations in the region. We will investigate questions of collective (and contested) memory, victimization and responsibility, as well as how artists attempted to represent experiences that stretched the boundaries of imagination. Many of the issues we will discuss remain heated topics of debate in domestic and international politics today. This investigation into collective memory will involve in-depth engagement with fiction and films as well as scholarship relating to the war. By the end of the semester, students will gain experience expressing their ideas using the analytic and research tools that we practice in class. Students will evaluate responses to historical controversies in the realms of academia, politics, literature, film and popular culture, and consider how these debates shape the ways in which we remember and understand past conflicts.

EASN COURSES, SPRING 2027

EASN 205-01: NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN JAPANESE FICTION AND FILM

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. BATES

This course explores the relationship between humanity and nature in Japanese literature and film. Though we will draw from earlier examples, the majority of the course will be focused on the modern era (post 1868). Some topics for exploration include: the role of animals in Japanese culture, nature as a reflection of the self, natural and industrial disasters, and nature in the imagination. As we move through the class, we will also work to understand and apply “ecocriticism” as an approach to cultural texts in relation to the science of ecology.

EASN 205-02: CHINESE FICTION & FILM AFTER MAO**INSTRUCTOR: PROF. PEACOCK**

China has undergone vast changes since the death of Chairman Mao in 1976, transitioning rapidly from a socialist society governed by mass political campaigns to the economic superpower we see today. Since the start of this “New Era,” Chinese writers and filmmakers have wrestled with the rapid changes in their society while also looking backwards, attempting to reckon with the legacy of Mao’s rule. This course will be split into two parts: the first will examine how Chinese fiction and film has processed and critiqued the tragedies of the Mao era, notably the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. The second will consider recent developments in literature and film and what they tell us about contemporary Chinese society. By studying these sources, we will appreciate the creative contributions Chinese artists are making to global culture, and also gain critical insights into the sweeping transformations China has experienced over the last decades.

EASN 206-01: DIGITAL CULTURES OF EAST ASIA**INSTRUCTOR: PROF. BENDER**

AI systems, robots, and other digital devices are an increasing presence in our lives. They keep us informed, connect us to others, shape our views of the world, and track our behavior. The countries of Asia, especially East Asia, are no exception. There we find some of the most hyper-connected societies on the planet, where distinctions between offline and online are just as fuzzy as they are here. This course examines the social effects of digital technologies in the East Asian region. It treats the digital expansively, placing social media, software platforms, and gaming alongside VR, smart devices, digital capitalism, and ideologies of innovation. Students will consider the role of the digital in the lives of ordinary people and the place of Asia in figurations of digital culture. In so doing, they will review theories of technology, ideas of techno-orientalism, and fictional representations of digital technology, together with the work of social scientists and media studies scholars.

EASN 236-01: JAPANESE SOCIETY**INSTRUCTOR: PROF. BENDER**

This course is an introduction to contemporary Japanese society. The course examines what everyday life is like in Japan from anthropological and historical perspectives. It explores such major social institutions as families, gender, communities, workplaces, and belief systems. The course focuses as well on the ways in which modernization has affected these institutions and the identities of Japanese people.

EASN 259-01: LAW, POLITICS, AND SOCIETY IN ASIA**INSTRUCTOR: PROF. DIAMANT**

This course examines the interaction between law, legal institutions and citizens in China, Japan, and India. Covering history and the contemporary scene, course focuses on how law works in practice and is understood and used by ordinary people in Asia. It covers areas such as marriage and divorce, the legal profession, lost property, civil rights, the environment, sexuality, mediation, land development and property, among others. Comparisons between the United States and Asia, as well as between Asian countries, will be emphasized.

EASN 261-01: HISTORY OF MEDICINE AND THE BODY IN EAST ASIA**INSTRUCTOR: PROF. YOUNG**

This course is an introduction to the history of medicine in East Asia. We will begin by exploring the theoretical and practical underpinnings of classical Chinese medicine, which was the foundation of healing practices in premodern China, Korea, and Japan. We will then move on to trace the introduction of modern bio-medicine and the eventual reemergence of “Traditional Chinese Medicine” (TCM) as an alternative style of therapy in the 20th century. We will also consider a wide range of topics that have generated compelling intellectual dialogue, including the relationship between doctors and patients and between medicine and the state. The history of medicine in East Asia is a lively field filled with intriguing problems and compelling arguments. A key aim of this course is to weigh the efficacy of these arguments while crafting your own position regarding the place of healing in society.

EASN 321-01: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MODERN JAPANESE HISTORY**INSTRUCTOR: PROF. YOUNG**

This course explores how sexuality and gender have been continually redefined and experienced throughout modern Japanese history. We will analyze the changes Japanese society underwent from the 19th century to the mid-20th century, paying particular attention to transformations in eroticism, same-sex love, family structure, and gender roles. A key theme of the course is the socially-constructed nature of gender norms and how women and men frequently transgressed feminine and masculine ideals, a theme that we will explore through both primary sources in translation and secondary scholarship. This course will also acquaint students with the skills and tools of historical research and writing. Building upon in-class workshops and a series of short-essay assignments, the final goal of the course will be to produce a paper that analyzes the development of this dynamic field of history.

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