

Department of Asian Studies

Fall 2014

Letters from the Chairs...

Greetings from Jan...

As my term as department chair comes to an end, I find myself reflecting on how much the Department of Asian Studies has grown over the years. When I joined the faculty in 1994, we could all fit around one small table. Now, we must reserve a large classroom for faculty meetings! We have strong programs in Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Hindi-Urdu, Japanese, Korean, and Persian, and more students than ever before are taking Asian languages. Visit our department website (<http://asianstudies.unc.edu>) to see the innovative courses on Asia in English taught by our faculty. Our website also records the many events initiated by faculty and students to bring Asian films and filmmakers, scholars and artists, and celebrations such as Chinese New Year and the Persian Nowruz festivities to campus. Our small kitchen in New West is also the site of hands-on learning as faculty and students meet to make Asian foods, hold "tea hour" conversations in Asian languages, and practice calligraphy.

The growth and vitality of our department has come from years of leadership, and I take this opportunity to thank past chairs Judith Farquhar, Larry Kessler, Miles Fletcher, and Gang Yue for their advocacy of Asian studies at Carolina. I also wish to thank our faculty who, despite scarce resources, work tirelessly to create new knowledge about Asia, lead challenging classes, and share their expertise with audiences beyond UNC. Our students continue to provide inspiration, especially through their class presentations, original research, study abroad work, and their genuine curiosity for learning. Our department manager, Lori Harris, who recently celebrated ten years of service to Asian Studies, and her staff Ash Barnes and Brenda Moore provide the logistical support that makes possible our classes, activities, and all that we do in New West.

Our new chair, Nadia Yaqub, an expert on Palestinian literature and film, is a superb scholar, teacher, and leader, and I know the department is in good hands with her. In summer 2008, I visited Nadia in Amman, Jordan, where she was leading the UNC study abroad program, "Women and Leadership in the Arab World." I saw how Nadia encouraged her students to explore the city, make connections between their experiences and their class readings, and arranged for them to meet locals in all walks of life. Nadia brings this kind of vision, creativity, and enthusiasm to all she does.

Recalling the activities of our 2013-14 academic year makes me grateful anew to our donors. Your generosity makes possible Asia events on campus, faculty travel to conferences to learn the newest research on Asia and about teaching Asian languages, and the celebration of our students' achievements in festivities honoring them, such as our annual commencement reception. Find information about supporting the Department of Asian Studies on the last page of this newsletter. Your gifts make an enormous difference and we thank you for being part of the vitality of Asian Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill.



Jan Bardsley

Greetings from Nadia...

As I begin my term as chair of Asian Studies, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the excellent work that outgoing chair Jan Bardsley has done for students and faculty during the past five years. When Jan assumed the chairship in July 2009, she faced extraordinary challenges. The financial crisis of 2008 led to budget cuts, furloughs, and considerable uncertainty regarding the economic future of the University. Jan led the department through that difficult time with generosity and grace, supporting our research and teaching with dedication and good humor. A winner of multiple prestigious teaching awards, Jan brought many of her strengths in the classroom to departmental administration. She was always accessible to students and faculty and dedicated considerable time and resources to mentorship. She was a "say yes" chair, enthusiastic about accomplishments and supportive of individual initiatives. She leaves me with big shoes to fill!

This fall, I look forward to welcoming several new permanent faculty members: Fadi Bardawil, Khalid Chahhou, and Alan (Bud) Kauffman in the Arabic program; and Dongsoo Bang and Jackie Relyea in Korean. These faculty will contribute to our ongoing commitment to top quality language instruction and expand our content course offerings related to the cultures of Asia and the Middle East. See photos of our new faculty on the next page.

I also take pleasure in extending my congratulations to Pamela Lothspeich and Yaron Shemer on their promotions to associate professor. Their success is a testament to their excellent scholarship and dedication to the department. Their research is highlighted in this year's newsletter.

Asian Studies, like other departments at Carolina, depends for its success on the generosity of its friends and alumni. This year, in addition to financial gifts, we are pleased to receive a donation of books from former chair Larry Kessler which will serve faculty and students in the years to come.

As Chair of Asian Studies I will be working closely with department staff Lori Harris, Ash Barnes, and Brenda Moore to ensure the smooth running of the Department. Robin Visser has generously agreed to assume the roles of Associate Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies. A

talented and thoughtful teacher and researcher, Robin will assume responsibility for the Department's curriculum. We will also work together to conceptualize and implement new initiatives.

Asian Studies has exciting plans for the 2014-15 academic year. Several new courses will be offered by new and returning faculty. In keeping with our commitment to teaching excellence, the Department is sponsoring a four-day workshop in oral proficiency testing that will contribute to the certification by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages for ten of our language faculty. We look forward to continuing our junior faculty colloquium and

to hosting numerous academic and cultural events relating to Asia throughout the coming year.



Nadia Yaqub

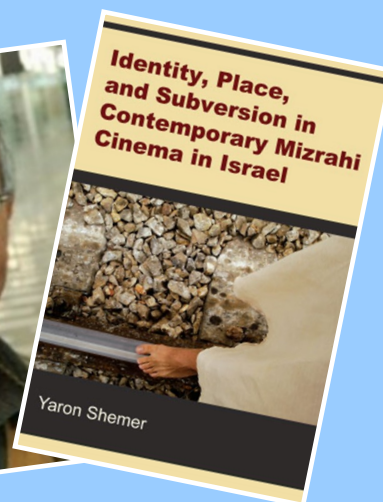
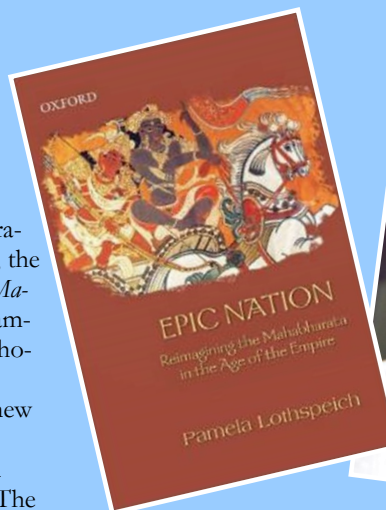


Congratulations to Newly Tenured Faculty!

Congratulations to Pamela Lothspeich and Yaron Shemer on their promotions to Associate Professor of Asian Studies.

Dr. Lothspeich is an expert on twentieth-century Hindi theater and literature who concentrates on modern retellings of the famous Hindu epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Her book *Epic Nation: Reimagining the Mahabharata in the Age of Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2009) offers an ambitious, comprehensive survey of colonial-era Hindi adaptations of mythological (*pauranik*) narratives from classical and medieval sources. A Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship supported Dr. Lothspeich's new research in and around Bareilly, India, where she studies contemporary performances in the folk tradition known as *Ramlila*. UNC students can learn firsthand about these topics from Dr. Lothspeich in her classes, "The Mahabharata: Remembered, Reimagined, Performed" and "The Story of Rama in India."

Dr. Shemer is an expert on the cinema and culture of the Middle East. His book *Identity, Place, and Subversion in Contemporary Mizrahi Cinema in Israel* (University of Michigan Press, 2013) is remarkable in scope and analysis. Drawing on over one hundred Israeli films, the book reveals the cinematic shape of Mizrahi ethnic identity, reading filmic representation in terms of the larger context of Israeli culture and politics. A fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies gave Dr. Shemer time this year to work on his newest project, "Neighboring Identities: The Jew in Arab Cinema." The project analyzes representations of Jews in Arab cinema and the role Jewish producers, directors, and actors have played in the Arab film industry from its inception in the 1920s until the exodus of Jews from Arab countries in the 1950s-1960s. UNC students can study these topics with Dr. Shemer by taking classes such as "Israeli Cinema: Gender, Nation, and Ethnicity," "The Cinemas of the Middle East and North Africa," and his newest course, "Arab-Jews: Culture, Community, and Coexistence."



Welcome, New Faculty!

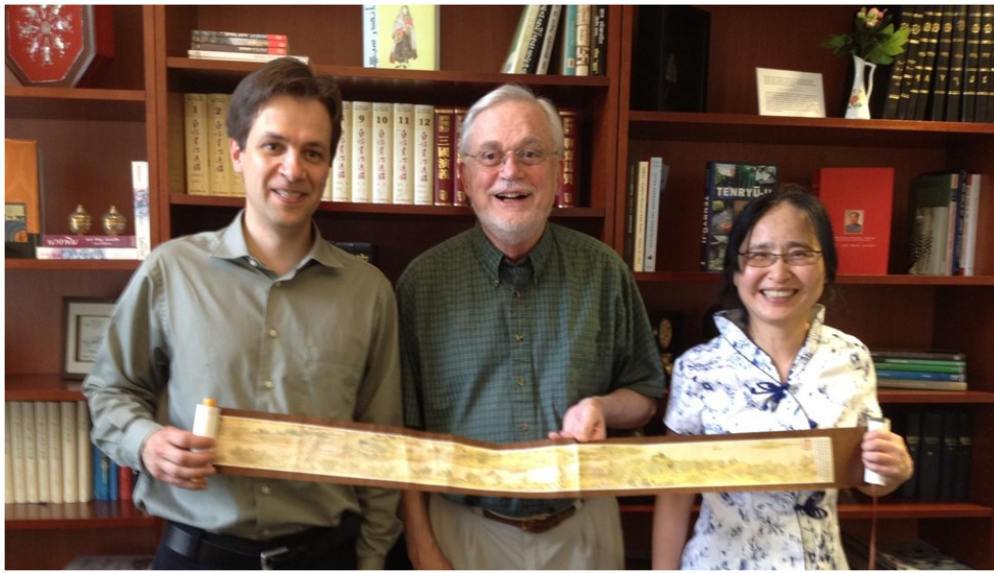
We are happy to welcome five new faculty members: Fadi Bardawil, Assistant Professor of Asian Studies (Arabic); Lecturers in Arabic Khalid Chahhou and Bud Kauffman; and Lecturers in Korean Dongsoo Bang and Jackie Relyea. They bring experience and enthusiasm to our programs in Arabic and Korean.

Top row, l-r: Dongsoo Bang, Jackie Relyea
Bottom row, l-r: Bud Kauffman, Khalid Chahhou, Fadi Bardawil



Clockwise from top left: Food from Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival; Debkah dancing with Arabic lecturer Farida Badr; UNC Summer in India students; Sufi singing demonstration; presenters Lindsay Miller and Rebecca Kirk (l-r) at Asian Studies Senior Honors Colloquium; Chinese students performing at Mid-Autumn Festival.

Thanks to Larry Kessler



Professor Emeritus Larry Kessler with premodern China specialists, Professors Uffe Bergeton and Li-ling Hsiao.

Larry Kessler, UNC-Chapel Hill Professor Emeritus (Chinese History) and former chair of Asian Studies (1997-2000), donated seventeen volumes on China and the lovely Chinese scroll painting pictured here. Larry's generous donation supports the scholarship and teaching of two of our gifted faculty in Chinese, Professor Uffe Bergeton and Professor Li-ling Hsiao. Professor Bergeton, who works on premodern Chinese and has a strong interest in digital humanities, teaches advanced Chinese language classes and classes in English such as "Introduction to Chinese Culture through Narrative." Professor Li-ling Hsiao, a specialist in Chinese art history and theater, and current President of the Southeast Conference/ Association for Asian Studies, has earned

a reputation among students for her lively classes in "Kung-fu: The Concept of Heroism in Chinese Culture" and "Traditional Chinese Theater."

Larry's gift is a colorful reminder of all that he did for Asian Studies at Carolina, and it will inspire us for years to come. In recent years, Larry has continued to teach about Asia through online course contributions, co-leading teachers' groups to China, Japan, and Vietnam, and participating in the Southeast Conference/Association for Asian Studies. He has also been traveling across the globe, visiting Austria, England, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Jordan, Portugal, Spain, Tibet, and locales in the United States.

Make a Gift to Asian Studies

Your gift to Asian Studies supports a number of important initiatives by faculty and students, including outside speakers, cultural events, projects by student groups, and faculty travel to pedagogical workshops and professional conferences.

To make an **online gift**, please go to <https://college.unc.edu/foundation/makeagift>. Click the *Search Funds* button and enter fund designation code **1030** to find Asian Studies.

Or send your contribution to:

The UNC-Chapel Hill Development Office
P.O. Box 306, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-0309

All contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for your support.

Name _____

My gift to the Department of Asian Studies Annual Fund is:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal gift | | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company match (if available) | + | \$ _____ |
| | = | \$ _____ |

Method of Payment:

- ☐ Check: Enclosed is my contribution, payable to the Department of Asian Studies
- ☐ Charge:
 - ☐ Visa
 - ☐ Mastercard

Card # _____ Expiration _____/____

Signature _____

Date _____

Joint gift with your spouse? Spouse's name: _____