



The Department of Asian Studies

Asian Studies Newsletter

Fall 2017

Greetings from the Chair

After my research leave in 2015-16, I was pleased to find out how much had been accomplished in my absence under the capable leadership of Robin Visser. Her careful work as acting chair allowed me to hit the ground running when I returned in July 2016.

Even before fall semester began, department staff were hard at work on a major departmental move. Hill Annex, where several Asian Studies faculty have had offices for almost 7 years, was torn down last summer. Lori Harris oversaw the move of our faculty to new offices in 134 E. Franklin Street. Moving is never easy, but Lori successfully organized the transition such that classes and office hours were not disrupted, and we are very happy with the new space.

2016-17 was a year of intensive research and reflection for the department. The department undertook its first self-study in preparation for the visit of an external review committee in February. After two full days of meetings with administrators, faculty, and students, the committee wrote a glowing report, praising the department for the caliber of its faculty and students and its impressive curriculum. In fall 2017 department faculty will discuss how we can implement suggestions from the report as we continue to grow and develop.

As I reviewed our accomplishments in preparation for this newsletter, I, too, was

impressed with all that we have done. Faculty are engaging in exciting research involving digital humanities, broad and deep engagements with interdisciplinarity, material culture, and ethnography. They are employing innovative teaching practices that have resulted in student publications, digital class projects, and exhibits. A few of the outstanding accomplishments of our faculty and students are outlined in the following pages.

One of our fastest growing sections has been the Korean program, which celebrated its tenth anniversary this year. This fall, in conjunction with the Carolina Asia Center, we submitted a successful proposal to the Korea Foundation to fund an assistant professorship in Korean Studies. The grant will cover 70% of salary for a new faculty member for the next five years. We are grateful to the Korea Foundation for their support.

Asian Studies welcomes two new faculty members this year: Eunji Lee, a teaching assistant professor in Korean language, and Dwayne Dixon, a teaching assistant professor in global east Asian studies. More information about these impressive scholar/teachers can be found in this newsletter.

Unfortunately, we also said goodbye to two valued members of our faculty. Jackie Relyea, a lecturer in the Korean program, left UNC in December to take a postdoc at the University of Houston.

Zeina Halabi, assistant professor in the Arabic program, has decided to leave UNC to take a position at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. We will miss Jackie and Zeina. I hope that they continue to thrive in their new professional environments.

Looking ahead to 2017-18, we will be welcoming Fadi Bardawil, Afroz Taj, and John Caldwell back to campus after their research leaves. Pamela Lothspeich will be on leave, thanks to a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship from the American Institute for Indian Studies. Robin Visser will be on leave at the National Humanities Center for the coming year, and Li-ling Hsiao will serve as acting associate chair in her stead. I look forward to working with her as well as our dedicated department staff: Lori Harris, Ash Barnes, and Angelika Straus, for the coming year.



Nadia Yaqub
Chair

Meet Our New Faculty



Eunji Lee

I have taught Korean language courses for the past four years, from beginning to advanced levels, at the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown University, and King Sejong Institute at the Korean Cultural Center in Washington, DC. I received my doctoral degree in linguistics from Georgetown University. My dissertation, entitled *L2 acquisition of number marking: a bidirectional study of adult learners of Korean and Indonesian*, analyzed second language acquisition of plural forms and classifiers by native Korean speakers learning Indonesian as well as by native Indonesian speakers learning Korean. My current research

focuses on Korean language pedagogy, linguistic approaches to L2 acquisition, and heritage language acquisition. I'm so happy to be part of the Department of Asian Studies, and looking forward to working at UNC.



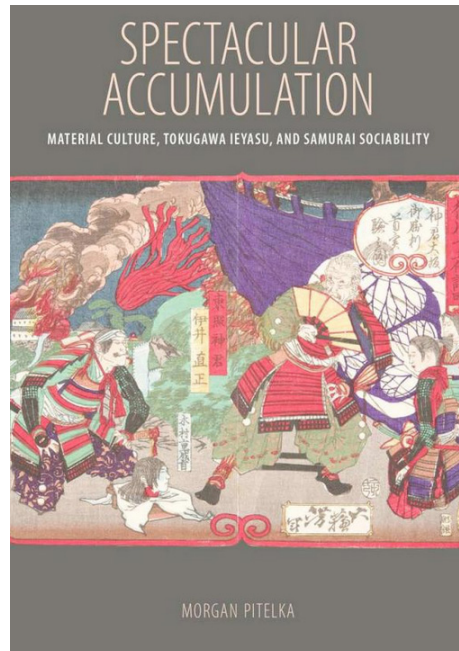
Dwayne Dixon

We are happy to welcome a new teaching assistant professor, Dr. Dwayne Dixon, to the department. Dr. Dixon received his PhD from the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University in 2014. His dissertation examined young people in Tokyo and their relations to urban space, changing economic conditions, and visual technologies. His research includes extensive ethnographic video along with traditional scholarly writing and is presented in digital form. In 2011 he wrote and directed a web video series on the ethics of fieldwork, produced by Duke University. His photographic and video works have been exhibited globally, including NYC, Istanbul,

Buenos Aires, and London. Dr. Dixon will bring his expertise on global youth and East Asia to a variety of courses at UNC—Chapel Hill. In 2017-18 he will be teaching ASIA 150 (Asia: An Introduction), the core requirement for the interdisciplinary track of our major. He will also be teaching a first-year seminar, "Dis-Orienting the Orient," an honors seminar, and an introductory course on Japanese popular culture. Dr. Dixon will be developing additional courses related to his research in youth culture, city spaces and urban life, media, and bodily experiences. Dr. Dixon will also be playing a lead role in undergraduate advising for the department.

Morgan Pitelka

In *Spectacular Accumulation: Material Culture, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Samurai Sociability* (University of Hawaii Press), Morgan Pitelka investigates the significance of material culture and sociability in late sixteenth-century Japan, focusing in particular on the career and afterlife of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate. The story of Ieyasu illustrates the close ties between people, things, and politics and offers us insight into the role of material culture in the shift from medieval to early modern Japan and in shaping our knowledge of history. *Spectacular Accumulation* won the 2016 Book Prize from the Southeastern Conference of the Association of Asian Studies.



Faculty Honors

Robin Visser has been awarded a National Humanities Center fellowship for the 2017-18 academic year to complete her book manuscript "Bordering Chinese Eco-Literatures (1984-2014)."

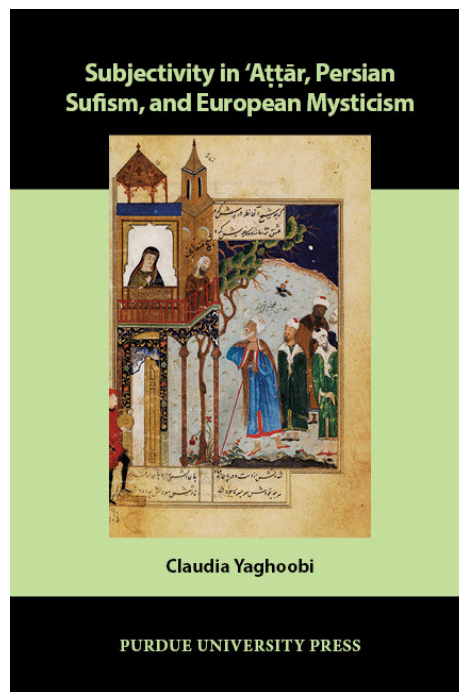
Pamela Lothspeich has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship from the American Institute for Indian Studies to complete her book manuscript "The Radheshyam Ramayana and the Neighborhood Ramlila."

Ji-Yeon Jo has been granted tenure and promoted to associate professor of Korean Studies.

Yi Zhou has been promoted to teaching professor. She will be the first faculty member to hold this rank in the Department of Asian Studies.

Claudia Yaghoobi

Claudia Yaghoobi, Roshan Institute assistant professor in Persian Studies, has published a new book, *Subjectivity in 'Attār, Persian Sufism, and European Mysticism* (Purdue University Press). Adopting an empirical and systematic approach, this interdisciplinary study of medieval Persian Sufi tradition and 'Attār (1145–1221) opens up a new space of comparison for reading and understanding medieval Persian and European literatures. The book invites us on an intellectual journey, revealing exciting intersections that redefine the hierarchies and terms of comparison. While the primary focus of the volume is on reassessing the significance of the concept of transgression and construction of subjectivity within select works of 'Attār within Persian Sufi tradition, the author also creates a bridge between medieval and modern, literature and theory, and European and Middle Eastern cultures through reading these works alongside one another.



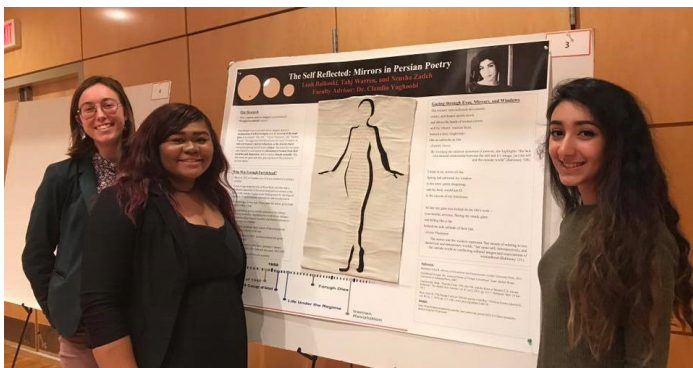
Asian Studies Student Accomplishments



DIEGO MORRO PAREDES WON SECOND PLACE IN THE EAST USA DIVISION, ADVANCED LEVEL, AT THE ANNUAL CHINESE BRIDGE SPEECH CONTEST. AN EXCHANGE STUDENT FROM SPAIN, DIEGO WAS A STUDENT IN DR. WENDAN LI'S FOURTH-YEAR CHINESE CLASS.



HEBREW MINOR JORDAN MALY-PREUSS (2013) WON THE PRESTIGIOUS ERTEGUN GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP AND WILL PURSUE AN MA IN CLASSICS AT OXFORD, STUDYING GREEK AND LATIN LINGUISTICS AND PAPYROLOGY.



DR. CLAUDIA YAGHOobi'S STUDENTS LEAH BALKOSKI, NEUSHA ZADEH, AND TAHJAMARE WARREN WON AN AWARD FOR THEIR PRESENTATION ON FOROUGH FARROKHZAD'S POETRY: "THE SELF REFLECTED: MIRRORS IN PERSIAN POETRY" AT THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH.



ARAB CULTURES MAJOR PETER COOKE RECEIVED THE ALGERNON SYDNEY SULLIVAN AWARD, ONE OF TWO PRESTIGIOUS CHANCELLOR'S AWARDS THAT HONOR HUMANITARIAN WORK BY UNDERGRADUATES EACH YEAR.

MOHIT BAJAJ AND JUNE YANG, STUDENTS IN JIA LIN'S 4TH-YEAR CHINESE CLASS, HAD ESSAYS PUBLISHED IN JUHE SUPPLEMENT, AN ANNUAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO PUBLISHING THE BEST ESSAYS BY SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNERS OF CHINESE.

CHINESE MINOR JULIA TENYOTKIN (2012) WON THE NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM'S DAVID L. BOREN FELLOWSHIP WHICH SUPPORTS LANGUAGE AND OTHER STUDIES DEEMED CRITICAL TO U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY, AND WILL STUDY MANDARIN IN CHINA.



Arabic Program Reaches Out to Assist Local Refugees

For the past two years, students and faculty in the Arabic program have been working to assist refugees from Arabic-speaking countries to settle into life in the United States. When 90 Syrian families were settled in Chapel Hill this fall, these efforts took on added urgency. Arabic instructor Bud Kauffman created a

listserv for campus community members interested in providing assistance, and Doria El Kerdany organized a successful social gathering in which refugee families and students gathered for an afternoon of conversation, games, and art making. She also arranged for a small group of Syrian refugees to present a lecture in Arabic to all students studying Arabic during spring 2017.

Four Arabic program students, Soumaya Lansari, Hailey Waller, Abby Thurman,

and Samuel Barber, deserve special recognition for their ongoing substantive commitment to this work. These students met regularly over the course of one or more semesters with recently settled families, serving as a resource and friend to these new immigrants, many of whom knew no English when they arrived. Asian Studies is proud of the work of these volunteers and hopes to foster ongoing commitment to service and community outreach among our students.

Katsu Sawamura helps students find jobs in Japan

Japanese lecturer Katsu Sawamura organized an event to help UNC students find employment in Japan after graduation. About thirty current UNC students and several alumni participated in this event.

Maura McCarthy (2012) talked about her experiences working as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) on the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, in public schools in Ehime, Japan. Gabe Allen (2016) talked about his experiences utilizing the Boston Career Forum and the process of gaining employment at the cosmetics company Shiseido. The event

concluded with video messages from two other UNC alumni—Andrew Hartsell (2006), who is currently working at Microsoft Japan, and Elizabeth Anne Nunley (2011), who is working as a travel writer in Kyoto. Due to the success of this event, faculty in the Japanese program plan to repeat it next year.

Luoyi Cai organizes the second annual Chinese Character Championship

Given the overwhelming success of last year's event, "Chinese Hero—UNC Chinese Character Championship", faculty

in the Chinese program, led by lecturer Luoyi Cai, held their second such championship on March 23. About 140 students from the Chinese program, and some twenty supporters—friends and family members—attended this event. Participants in the competition represented all levels of the Chinese program, from

elementary to advanced. Eventually, after intense competition, five competitors (one from each level) stood out and became this year's "Chinese Heroes." Since students responded so enthusiastically, the Chinese program plans to make this an annual event.

UNC Korean Program Celebrates 10 Years!

In fall 2006, the first elementary Korean language class was offered at UNC, with 23 students enrolled. Ten years later, fall 2016 saw 123 students enrolled in four levels of Korean classes. The Department of Asian Studies has three full-time faculty teaching Korean language and Korean

studies classes, and will be recruiting for a fourth in the coming year. And 29 students are currently pursuing the Korean minor.

To mark this anniversary and celebrate a successful decade for our thriving Korean

program, Korean faculty organized a festive celebration of the lunar new year.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GANG YUE, HAGAR EL-HADIDI, DORIA EL Kerdany, JI-YEON JO, NADIA YAQUB, JONATHAN HARTLYN, AND DONGSOO BANG.



ARABIC LECTURER FARIDA BADR'S STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN COOKING COMPETITION, SINGING EVENT, AND CALLIGRAPHY WORKSHOP.



Samantha Johnson with Japanese program faculty.

Senior Honors Colloquium

Japanese major Samantha Johnson earned highest honors this year for her thesis, "Chasing the White Rabbit in Tokyo: 100 Years of Alice in Japan." Dr. Jan Bardsley led the fall thesis seminar, in which Samantha was joined by Estelle McQueen (Asian Studies) and Megan Pallante (American Studies). In spring, Samantha continued her work with thesis advisor Dr. Mark Driscoll.

This was the second year of collaboration between the Department of Asian Studies and the Department of American Studies. The two departments offer a joint

thesis seminar which not only combines enrollment, but offers unique opportunities for intellectual exchange. In spring, the departments join forces again to host the senior honors colloquium at which students present their thesis research. An audience of faculty, students, friends, and family enjoyed Megan Pallante's presentation on digital folklore and Samantha's talk on *Alice in Wonderland* in Japanese culture.

Donor Profile: Betty Chen

This spring the Department of Asian Studies received a generous gift of \$10,000 to support research and teaching excellence in the Chinese program. The gift comes from Betty Chen, a visiting scholar in the Department of Asian Studies from fall 2014 through spring 2017. A graduate of Beijing Film Academy, Ms. Chen is a playwright and a film and television producer. During her years at UNC, she collaborated with Dr. Gang Yue on his course "Introduction to Modern Chinese Culture through Cinema." Ms. Chen's primary area of research is comparative studies of Chinese and American televi-

sion dramas. We are very grateful for Ms. Chen's work with Dr. Yue and for her generous support of the Department, as well as that of the Department's other donors. Donor support facilitates our research and enriches our courses in innumerable ways.

Faculty workshops in the Department of Asian Studies

Asian Studies faculty are committed to continuing education and training. Toward this end, faculty organized three department-wide workshops in 2016-17.

In September 2016, Yi Zhou arranged for Dr. Orlando Klem, Associate Professor of Hispanic Linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin, to lead a workshop on practical applications to innovative technologies that assist in foreign language learning.

In March 2017, Ji-Yeon Jo organized the Department's first diversity workshop. Facilitated by Ms. Sharbari Dey, Assistant Director for Education and Special Initiatives, the workshop was designed to address diversity issues related to the university and departmental work environment.

Finally, in April 2017, Robin Visser invited Dr. Jenny Loeb, from UNC's Department of Psychology and Neuroscience and the School of Education, to discuss maximizing feedback from course evaluations, tips on writing recommendation letters, and promoting faculty for teaching awards.

Further workshops are already being planned for next academic year as we continue to strive to improve our teaching and overall effectiveness.

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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://giving.dev.unc.edu/donate?&p=AASF>. 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 309, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-0309

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

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