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Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs Newsletter



JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of ADVANCED
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Asia Programs

Welcome to the Spring Semester!



Asia Programs welcomes students back at our Spring Semester Reception.

Dear Students, Alumni, Colleagues, and Friends:

Asia Programs began the semester with our Lunar New Year celebration, co-hosted with SAIS China Studies and the Hopkins-Nanjing Center. Our second annual event was a big hit, an excellent opportunity for SAIS Asia students, alumni, and friends to meet and celebrate the coming year with food and drink from across the Asia region.

This semester, we are offering new courses in Southeast Asia, Korea, and Japan Studies. Professor Vikram Nehru is teaching a course on the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar, a deep dive into an international challenge that will include a simulation, with students acting as members of a UN task force analyzing the interests of involved stakeholders. We also welcomed Professor David Rank, who recently left the U.S. State Department after serving six tours in China and Taiwan. He joins Professor James Person, U.S.-Korea Institute Research Director, in team-teaching a Korea Studies course which considers the trajectory of the two Koreas' relationships with the United States and China and their role in the international politics of East Asia. In Japan Studies, Professor Calder is offering a new course which identifies the major infrastructural challenges facing industrial nations, particularly Japan and the United States, and examines prospects for greater U.S.-Japan and transpacific cooperation to address those challenges.

We are also hosting experts and practitioners at our monthly policy luncheons and planning career talks for our students. And on March 30, our seventh annual SAIS Asia Conference, "Competing Visions for Asia's Future," will take place at Johns Hopkins SAIS. The annual conference is organized and led by a hard-working committee of SAIS Asia M.A. and Ph.D. students.

Best wishes to all for a happy and successful New Year of the Dog!

Kent Calder, Director
Sharon Yanagi, Associate Director



Assortment of dishes from across the Asian region at the Lunar New Year celebration on February 14.

A Look Back at the Fall Semester

In the fall, in addition to hosting a Getaway Day to Capitol Hill, a roundtable with David Rank, former Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and current Adjunct Professor in Korea Studies, and a conference, Twenty Years After the Asian Financial Crisis (check out our Fall 2017 newsletter for more information), Asia Programs hosted several other events and activities for our students.



Roundtable Discussion with Satu Limaye, Director of the East-West Center in Washington, D.C.

On October 26, Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs hosted Dr. Satu Limaye, Washington Director of the East-West Center, for our monthly roundtable discussion. 2017 marked the 25th anniversary of the India-ASEAN bilateral partnership, and in January 2018, the government of India invited the ten ASEAN leaders to be chief guests at India's Republic Day parade. Dr. Limaye discussed his views on the evolving India-Southeast Asia relationship and its



Roundtable with Wendy Cutler, Vice President and Managing Director of the Washington, D.C. office of the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI)

On November 8, Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs hosted Wendy Cutler, Vice President and Managing Director of the Washington, D.C. office of the Asia Society Policy Institute, for its monthly roundtable discussion. Her talk coincided with President Trump's first visit to Asia, and Ms. Cutler discussed her views on the evolving U.S.-Asia trade dynamic post-TPP 12, U.S. relations under the Trump Administration, and implications for the United States and the region.



Getaway Day to the U.S. Department of State

On December 1, Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs concentrators and minors attended a roundtable discussion with Mark Lambert, Deputy Special Representative for North Korea Policy and Director of the Office of Korean Affairs in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and Korea and Southeast Asia analysts, including two Johns Hopkins SAIS alumni, from the Intelligence and Research Bureau (INR). Our students asked a range of questions about security policy and U.S.-Asia relations, and our alumni gave advice on ways to take advantage of the opportunities SAIS offers to prepare students for future careers in public service.



Career Seminar with Maureen Grewe, U.S. Department of the Treasury

On November 17, Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs hosted Maureen Grewe, senior official with the U.S. Treasury Department, who discussed job and internship opportunities with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the U.S. government. Ms. Grewe was the U.S. Alternative Executive Director at the ADB from 2010-2013 and has worked extensively on multilateral development bank issues,

including as Counselor in the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) Board of Directors and Treasury's desk officer for IADB. She is currently an International Economist working on China issues in the International Trade Office at the U.S. Treasury Department.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Studying Asian Energy Security in Japan

Shiyana Gunasekara, South Asia Studies, '18



For a week in January, Johns Hopkins SAIS students of Professor Kent Calder's Asian Energy Security course, along with researchers from the Reischauer Center, traveled to Japan as participants of the KAKEHASHI Project. Sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japanese International Cooperation Center (JICE), the KAKEHASHI Project offered the SAIS group an opportunity to learn about Japan's energy security. We spoke with experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; a thermal power plant company, J-Power; the Central Research Institute of Electric Power Industry; the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies; and the Institute of Energy Economics. Our workshops and lectures ranged from topics on the different electrical supply systems in eastern and western Japan to the potential resurgence of civil nuclear power. The most memorable portion of the week, however, was our homestay in Kumamoto. We enjoyed home-cooked meals, trips to the local *onsen* (Japanese public bath house), and bonded with our host families in a short period of time — a special ending to a busy week.

Language Study in Indonesia

Minjoo Jang, Southeast Asia Studies, '19



Studying Bahasa Indonesia in Yogyakarta (Jogja) at Alam Bahasa was a great opportunity for me to learn Bahasa and the culture of Indonesia during the intersession. Staying in Jogja, I practiced Bahasa daily, not only in class but also with my homestay family and the local residents. Students gave presentations on the last day of class, and I was able to introduce Korean culture using simple words that I learned during my time at Alam Bahasa.

The homestay offered me a great opportunity to practice my language skills. My entire homestay family was very kind, and I could practice Bahasa every day, especially during meals. I also learned a lot about Indonesian culture and religion by communicating with them in Bahasa.

I enjoyed living in Jogjakarta, as there are many historic places to visit. I went to Borobudur temple, Prambanan temple, Kraton and Taman Sari. There are many beaches in the southern region of Jogja, and I visited one of them with my homestay family. I went to watch Ramayana ballet in the indoor theater near Prambanan temple. I enjoyed the ballet, but I was later informed that it is even more enjoyable at the outdoor theater during the dry season. Jogja is also close to Bali, should students be interested in traveling to Bali for a weekend. I did so on the first weekend of my stay in Jogja. Overall, as an incredible cultural and historic region of Indonesia, Jogja was a great city to study in during the intersession.

Language Study in Myanmar

Tianlei Huang, Southeast Asia Studies, '18



Southeast Asia Studies students Tianlei Huang and Cole Landfried with Saya Nyein (right), Sayama Khin (middle), and teaching assistant Ma Thiri (left) at the Decent Myanmar Training School in Yangon.

During the winter break, I studied Burmese with Sayama Nyein Ma Ma and Sayama Khin Thida Win at the Decent Myanmar Training School in Yangon, Myanmar. One of my instructors, Sayama Nyein, is the Burmese language instructor at several different foreign embassies in Yangon and teaches at the U.S. Embassy, and has taught several U.S. Ambassadors to Myanmar.

In terms of speaking, we focused mainly on “survival Burmese,” such as how to order food in a restaurant, how to ask for directions, and other everyday conversational topics, which proved to be very helpful for handling the basic needs that accompany daily life in Myanmar. I practiced speaking with taxi drivers, who surprisingly liked to talk about politics. As an International Relations Student, this was an invaluable experience.

Every day at school, Sayama Nyein would treat us to traditional Burmese snacks, such as delicious tea leaf salad. On the weekends, Sayama Nyein and her husband drove us to a few interesting places in the city, including U Thant House (U Thant was the former UN Secretary General) and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s Yangon residence (she has now moved to the nation’s capital and is not living there anymore).

Yangon is the biggest city in Myanmar and houses most foreign embassies, even though the nation’s capital is now located in Naypyidaw. In Yangon, I lived near the University of Yangon and Inya Lake (which is beautiful). This was my first time in Myanmar, and I absolutely loved it.

Featured Clubs

Japan Club

The Japan Club is one of seven student clubs focused on Asia at Johns Hopkins SAIS. Japan Studies concentrator **Steven Pelcovits** is the president this year.

By Steven Pelcovits

The Japan Club provides the SAIS community opportunities to engage with Japanese culture, society, and politics. Our social events, such as our rooftop happy hour and shinnenkai (New Year party), have drawn participants from a wide range of nationalities and concentrations who are united by an interest in Japan. Every week, we hold a conversation table where beginners and native speakers can take a load off and make new friends by speaking Japanese.

So far, the 2017-18 school year has been a particularly exciting one for the Japan Club. In partnership with the China Club and Korea Club, we invited several experts from SAIS and affiliated institutions to comment on the North Korean nuclear crisis. Our table at the International Dinner served sushi and matcha-flavored desserts to great acclaim. Finally, some of our members also organized the first-ever SAIS Japan Trek over winter break. In addition to enjoying the major sights of Japan, participants got to meet with leaders and policy experts in true SAIS fashion.

Looking forward, the Japan Club will be hosting the SAIS Friday happy hour on April 6 to welcome the cherry blossoms. We will celebrate with Japanese food, drinks, and more. “Omachi shite orimasu” — we hope to see you there!



Steven Pelcovits (middle), Matthew Kawatani (right), and Reischauer Center Visiting Scholar Kazutaka Kuga (left) at the SAIS International Dinner.

Southeast Asian League of Students

The Southeast Asian League of Students (SEALS) is one of seven student clubs focused on Asia at Johns Hopkins SAIS. Southeast Asia concentrators **Dominique Dulay** and **Ava White** are co-chairs this year.

By Dominique Dulay and Ava White

The Southeast Asian League of Students (SEALS) is a student-led organization aimed at fostering discussion and encouraging appreciation of the political, economic, environmental, and cultural context of Southeast Asia. The SEALS hosts both academic and cultural activities throughout the academic year, including but not limited to speaker and panel discussions, movie screenings, and participation in the annual SAIS-wide international dinner.

In the fall, SEALS co-hosted with the Indonesia Corner and Thai Club the event “ASEAN Turns 50: Taking Stock and Discussing SEA’s Next 50 Years,” a panel discussion with diplomats from the Philippine, Thai, and Indonesian Embassies. The organization also screened “Heneral Luna,” the Philippines’ submission to the 2015 Oscars, and participated in the annual school-wide International Dinner. This spring, SEALS hosted a happy hour in celebration of the Chinese New Year, together with the SAIS China Club. Future events include screenings of other Southeast Asian films, career-focused coffee chats with alumni and practitioners, and speaker events on topics concerning the region.



SEALS members at a happy hour co-hosted with the China Club.

Meet Our Professors

SAIS Asia Programs interviewed two faculty members. K. Mi Tak, Professor of Korean Language, and David Rank, Adjunct Lecturer of Korea Studies, who is team-teaching “The United States, China, and the Intersection of Interests on the Korean Peninsula” this semester. They discuss their professional backgrounds and give advice to SAIS students on language study and career development.



Professor K. Mi Tak Korean Language

What led you to teach at SAIS?

I started teaching Korean as an intern at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) in my senior year of college and developed a passion for teaching. I was then offered a full-time job at SWCS in a program designed to teach the necessary language skills to U.S. military staff for overseas deployments. In addition, I developed curriculum for Department of Defense employees to better match language needs with instructional techniques. I also managed the entire foreign language department there with over 80 instructors and approximately 20 different languages.

From there, I moved to the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to teach Korean to U.S. diplomats. There, I developed a course and a textbook for Consular Officers to assist in conducting interviews in their target language overseas. I was then hired by SAIS to teach a pilot Korean course, which led to the first SAIS student successfully passing the Korean proficiency exam.

How does your professional background influence how you teach Korean?

My career has focused on teaching language skills to government and foreign affairs professionals and preparing students for this career field. Many of our students are preparing for careers in government and foreign affairs, and my goal is to give them the tools to succeed. I have been teaching in this space for nearly 30 years so I have an understanding of what the language requirements are and how to prepare students for success.

SAIS is an ideal platform for this preparation, as the academic structure allows for more autonomy to tailor instruction to meet students’ language goals. This autonomy requires my accountability to the students so that they get the most out of the instruction in the short time they are at SAIS. Because we meet only five hours or less per week, my personal challenge is to design a program that allows our students to learn, maintain, and progress in the Korean language within this timeframe.

What is your advice to SAIS students who want to learn a difficult language?

My advice is to just do it. SAIS students all have the ability to learn difficult languages. Studying difficult languages like Korean can set students apart, provide necessary career skills, and help make them more marketable to potential employers. Students who want to learn a difficult language should commit themselves to taking full advantage of the language block. My commitment is to make full use of time and ensure they get the most productivity in the four language skills, prioritizing speaking over all others in the classroom.



Professor David Rank

Korea Studies

Teaching *The United States, China, and the Intersection of Interests on the Korean Peninsula* (Spring 2018)

How does your professional background influence how and what you teach?

In addition to taking a practitioner's perspective into the classroom, I hope I will bring a sense of humility. Having spent nearly three decades working on big, messy, complicated issues in China, Afghanistan and elsewhere — and as part of the big, complicated, messy U.S. foreign policy system — I have a sense of how tough it can be for a person to simply understand the issues in play, let alone make a difference. At the same time, I also know that it is possible, because I have seen it done.

What is your advice to SAIS students who might want to pursue a career similar to yours?

As I was trying to figure out what to “do with my life” as I graduated, I decided that I wanted to live an extraordinary life. I meant that in the etymological sense of that word. Literally, “beyond the ordinary.” The Foreign Service gave me the opportunity to do that, and I feel truly fortunate to have had the chance to do some extraordinary things, work with some extraordinary colleagues, and live through some extraordinary times. Where I worked was only one factor, and lots of places offer opportunities that are equally extraordinary. Certainly in my case, luck played a role in where my life took me, but so did hard work and commitment to the colleagues I worked with.

What are you reading right now?

I picked up a used history of the French Revolution, David Andress's *The Terror*, at a thrift store. I had not really read any European history since my undergraduate days in the 1980s. Although Andress did not intend his book as a critique of American politics today (it came out in 2005), I have been struck by how relevant the issues of 1789 remain. Inequality that pitted society against a privileged few. Politics and politicians unable to resist being pulled to extremes. A system being dismantled without a clear replacement in sight. It has been a great reminder of why we study history.

PhD Snapshot



Yun Han

Japan Studies

Yun Han is a Ph.D. student in the Japan Studies Program. Her research interests include comparative political economy of East Asia and Western Europe, with a focus on the connection between state-market relations and foreign policy outcomes. Yun holds a M.A. in International Economics and Japan Studies from Johns Hopkins SAIS and a B.A. in International Affairs from the George Washington University. Prior to commencing her doctoral studies, Yun was a Policy Research Fellow at the Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies at SAIS.

Yun at Thimphu-Dechencholing Palace in Bhutan last summer.

Where Are They Now? Alumni Snapshots



Sid Ravishankar South Asia Studies Minor, Class of 2017

Right before I graduated from SAIS, I joined the office of Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX) as a legislative assistant primarily covering the Congressman's foreign affairs committee work. I have had the opportunity to represent the Congressman in discussions with other government agencies and congressional offices and also form legislation on important issues. At the office, I engage on a variety of issues, both within the realm of foreign affairs and national security and other matters. In this job, you never know what each day will bring. Events unfolding in the Middle East, elections in East Asia, and natural disasters in the Indian Ocean all require responses from my office. My SAIS education and experiences have equipped me to apply a diverse set of

skills to issues as they occur. The job requires not only an understanding of the issues, including on other areas I cover, such as financial services, housing, telecommunications and technology, and space, but also the communication skills to navigate bureaucracies and political systems. Working for Congressman Castro is an unbelievable opportunity. It is a job where I can continue the process of learning something new every day, as I did at SAIS.



Gian Gozum Southeast Asia Studies, Class of 2015

I graduated from SAIS in 2015 and have worked at Exiger Diligence in Silver Spring, Maryland since then. At Exiger, I write reputational risk analysis reports that investigate a company or individual's potential ties to corruption or fraudulent activity. With information from public records, regulatory, and litigation databases, I take all of this information and write it into a concise report for our clients, who then decide whether to pursue an investment in the subject companies/individuals. I participated in a business trip in Mumbai, India, where I assessed an international bank's compliance procedures.

I came to SAIS with the ability to speak Mandarin Chinese at an intermediate level and continued studying the language while I was a student. As a Southeast Asia Studies concentrator, I studied Bahasa Indonesia and participated in various advanced Indonesian language programs in Indonesia during SAIS (SAIS Winter Break Language Study) and after SAIS (with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education). At Exiger, I have been able to utilize these language skills, in addition to my native Tagalog, in investigations of Chinese pharmaceuticals companies, Indonesian SOEs, and Philippine nonprofits.

In addition to the language training, coursework, seminars, and discussions, SAIS prepared me well for understanding the political contexts in which various research projects have occurred. Living in D.C. after being a student at SAIS for two years is a completely different experience. The city has a lot to offer, and I've kept myself busy by participating in various social leagues, including flag football, kickball, soccer, dodgeball, and competitive karaoke (yes, it's a thing!).

Happy Lunar New Year!



Johns Hopkins SAIS Dean Vali Nasr, Director of China Studies David Lampton, and Director of Asia Programs Kent Calder welcomed students, faculty, and friends at the Lunar New Year celebration. Asia Programs, China Studies, and the Hopkins-Nanjing Center celebrated the Lunar New Year on February 14, 2018.

Upcoming Events

SAIS Asia IR Conference, “Competing Visions for Asia’s Future,” research conference led by SAIS Asia Programs and China Studies M.A. and Ph.D. students
30 March 2018

Roundtable Policy Discussion with James Loi, Partner and Chief Operating Officer, The Asia Group LLC; Former Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. State Department
4 April 2018

“Pakistan Beyond Seventy: The Long View,” co-sponsored with Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)
16-17 April 2018

“Indonesia Update 2018,” co-sponsored with the Embassy of Indonesia
18 April 2018