

ASIAN STUDIES



Admissions Office
Hampshire College
893 West Street
Amherst, MA 01002
tel. 877.937.4267
fax 413.559.5631

AT HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE

Using interdisciplinary courses and resources across the college, Hampshire students engage with Asian Studies through a variety of lenses: social history, political and cultural theory, and modern public culture, as well as literature, economics, anthropology, law, dance, music, and fine art. Asian Studies at Hampshire encompasses a large geographical area, considering South Asia, India, Tibet, Pakistan, China, Japan, Korea, as well as Asian American experiences. Recent students have examined the construction of socio-political identities, processes of assimilation, the construction and performance of Asian musical instruments, and histories of Asian communities.

Sample First-Year Course

Asian Religious Texts and Traditions

The aim of this course is to introduce students to several of the oldest religious traditions of South and East Asia through a study of selected canonical texts. Part of our concern will naturally be to determine what these ancient records reveal to us about how people of these cultures understand, or once understood, such perennial human issues as the meaning of death, the nature of suffering, the value of human life, belief in God or the gods, and the possibility of liberation or life after death. But we will also consider such crucial historical and literary questions as: When were these texts produced and under what religious or cultural circumstances? Were these “texts” written and read, or chanted, performed, and heard? How were they produced or revealed, and by whom? Who had access to these traditions and in what form? What roles have these texts played in religious ritual, liturgy, story-telling, or popular culture?

Student Project Titles

Privatization of Healthcare in China and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Hijra Identity in Pakistan and the Politics of Representation

The Politics of Femininity in Popular Indian Films

Building Dutiful Daughters: Cultural Violence in Thai Prostitution

Translating Japanese

Eating Into Modernity: A Century of Chinese Food and Eating

Preschools in Two Cultures: The Differences in Discipline in Japan and America

Sample Courses

At Hampshire

Advanced Chinese Language Tutorial
Advanced Intermediate Chinese
The Anthropology of Human Rights
Asian Religious Texts & Traditions
China Project Workshop
China Rising: Reorienting the 21st Century
Comparative Orientalisms
Elementary Chinese
Family, Gender, Power
The “Good War:” Interrogating the History of the Homefront During WWII
Introduction to the Buddhist Meditation Tradition
The Making of Modern South Asia
Power, Culture, Imagination
Rethinking the Population Problem
Sacred to the Secular: The Performing Arts of Asia
Yoga Traditions: Philosophy, Practice & Narrative

Through the Consortium

Chinese Civilization (AC)
Contemporary Chinese Fiction (MHC)
Folktales and Legends of Vietnam (UMass)
Intro to Indian Civilization (MHC)
Intro to Modern East Asia (SC)
Japanese I, II & III (MHC)
Modern Korean History (SC)
Traditional Japanese Literature (AC)

(continued on reverse)

Faculty Profiles

Kay Johnson, professor of Asian studies and politics

Kay Johnson has her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. Her teaching and research interests are Chinese society and politics; women, development, and population policy; comparative family studies; comparative politics of the developing world; and international relations, including American foreign policy, Chinese foreign policy, and policy-making processes.

Susan Darlington, professor of anthropology and Asian studies

Sue Darlington received a B.A. in anthropology and history from Wellesley College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Michigan. Her research, based on extensive fieldwork in Thailand, examines the work of Buddhist monks engaged in rural development, environmental conservation, and other forms of social activism. The broader questions she addresses in her research and teaching include understanding the changing social, political and historical contexts of religion, environmentalism and human rights, and the creative use of ritual for social change. She also teaches about socially engaged Buddhism, religious movements, and Southeast Asian studies. She is actively involved in the struggle for human rights in Burma.

Bong Seok Joo, assistant professor of East Asian religions

(Ryan) Bong Seok Joo holds a B.A. in religious studies from the University of California at Berkeley, an M.T.S. in the history of religion from Harvard Divinity School, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Department of Religion of Princeton University. A native of Korea, he has studied in China and Japan under funding from a Fulbright-Hay Grant, the Taiwan National Library, and the Japan Foundation. His scholarly and teaching interests include medieval Chinese Buddhist cultic tradition, Tiantai/Tendai Buddhism, syncretism/anti-syncretism in Chinese religions, modern Japanese religious practices, the history of Korean/Korean-American Christianity, family and gender in East Asian Religions, and the interaction between religion and the state during the Colonial Period.

Facilities and Resources

The Five College Center for East Asian Studies is one of many programs administered by the Five Colleges. In addition to the Center's concern with undergraduate East Asian studies at the five institutions, they aim to support, encourage, and improve the teaching of East Asian cultures in elementary, middle, and secondary schools, and two- and four-year colleges in New England. They work to improve the quality, quantity, and distribution of resources for teaching about East Asia at the college and precollege levels and to offer opportunities for precollege educators to experience East Asian cultures firsthand. The Center maintains a resource library, publishes a newsletter three times a year, and conducts seminars, institutes, conferences, and workshops for college and precollege educators.

The Five College Certificate Program in Asian/Pacific/American Studies is overseen by a committee of faculty from all five institutions. The committee works to coordinate and expand course offerings at the five institutions, advises students seeking to fulfill program requirements in Asian/Pacific/American Studies, and coordinates special events among the five institutions in collaboration with students from the five colleges.

The Five College East Asian Languages Program (EALP) in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean brings together faculty members in East Asian languages to meet regularly throughout the academic year. Recently, they have organized and participated in workshops on the teaching and assessment of oral proficiency, the use of "authentic texts" in the classroom, and uses of Web-based and other forms of computer-assisted instruction. The program also supports joint trips by faculty to professional conferences and outreach projects for pre-college instruction in East Asian languages.

In addition, through Hampshire's own partnership with two universities in Heifei, China, a small number of Chinese scholars reside on the Hampshire campus every year. In addition to pursuing their own international education, the visiting scholars teach or coteach courses in the Chinese language for Hampshire students. Through the same connection, many Hampshire students are able to study in China for a summer or a semester, and go on to do Division III work that reflects this life-changing experience.

