EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Co-Chairs, Professor Kimberly Besio and Associate Professor Hideko Abe

Professors Kimberly Besio (Chinese), Tamae Prindle (Japanese), Nikky Singh (Religious Studies), and Ankeney Weitz (Art); Associate Professors Hideko Abe (Japanese), James Behuniak Jr. (Philosophy), Walter Hatch (Government), Steven Nuss (Music), and Hong Zhang (Chinese); Assistant Professors Elizabeth LaCouture (East Asian Studies and History) and Daniel LaFave (Economics); Faculty Fellows Hui-Ching Lu (Chinese), Peter Thilly (East Asian Studies and History), and Melissa Walt (Art); Teaching Assistants Yurino Matsumura (Japanese) and Chia-Ling Tang (Chinese)

Language courses offered by the department are listed separately under “Chinese” and “Japanese.”

The East Asian Studies Department offers students a multidisciplinary approach to understanding Japan, China, and Korea. Our mission is to build language competency in Japanese or Chinese and provide in-depth exposure to traditional and contemporary East Asia through a wide variety of course offerings across the humanistic and social science disciplines.

A major in East Asian studies will achieve an ability to communicate effectively in English and an East Asian language, to critically interpret texts, to develop research skills using primary sources and data, and to acquire a comparative understanding of the region. Students achieve these goals through an immersion experience in East Asia as well as their course work at Colby.

Requirements for the Major in East Asian Studies

One introductory comparative course (East Asian Studies 150); a language concentration consisting of three language courses beyond the all-college requirement (normally Japanese 128, 321, and 322 or one 400-level Japanese course; or Chinese 128, 321, and 322 or one 400-level Chinese course); one capstone course, East Asian Studies 493, taken only in the fall semester of the senior year; and an additional six courses chosen from those approved for the East Asian studies major. These six courses must conform to the following distribution: one 200-level art, religion, philosophy, literature, or music course; one 200-level government, anthropology, economics, history, or sociology course; one 300-level or 400-level course; and three additional electives. Fourth-year language courses or three- or four-credit East Asian language courses outside the language concentration may constitute elective courses. Students who start taking Chinese or Japanese at the 300-level or above are expected to take at least four language courses, which may include three- or four-credit independent study Japanese 491, 492 or Chinese 491, 492. East Asian studies majors are required to spend at least one semester of study in the country of their language concentration. Under extraordinary circumstances students may petition to substitute an equivalent immersion experience in the country of the language concentration for a semester of study.

The point scale for retention of the major applies to all courses offered toward the major. No requirement for the major may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory. To achieve distinction in the East Asian studies major, the student will have to achieve a 3.5 grade point average in the courses listed for the major and will have to take two additional language courses beyond those required for the major. These courses may be a continuation of the language of concentration at the 400 level, or they may be introductory courses in a second Asian language.

Honors in East Asian Studies

An honors program is available for senior majors who have earned a 3.5 major average. Normally, application to the program must be submitted prior to the senior year. Some aspect of the culture of East Asia must be studied as the honors project in East Asian Studies 483 and 484.

Attention is called to the minor in Chinese and the minor in Japanese. Requirements for these minors are listed under “Chinese” and “Japanese.”

Requirements for the Minor in East Asian Studies

The East Asian studies minor consists of six courses: one introductory comparative course (East Asian Studies 150); two language courses at or above the 126 level in either Chinese or Japanese; three non-language courses, one at the 200 level, one at or above the 200 level, and the third at the 300 level or above. Courses may be selected from offerings in anthropology, art, economics, government, history, literature, music, philosophy, and religious studies courses on East Asia. With the exception of one introductory comparative course, no content course at the 100 level will count toward the minor.

Courses Approved for the Major in East Asian Studies

Art

- 273 Survey of East Asian Art, to 1300
- 274 Survey of East Asian Art, 1300 to the Present
- 276 Zen and the Arts in Asia
- 293 Asian Museum Workshop
- 376 Chinese Painting
• 397 Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art
• 398 Buddhist Visual Worlds

Anthropology
• 339 Asian Pacific Modernities

Chinese
• All courses offered

East Asian Studies
• All courses offered

Economics
• 279 Economic Rise and Future of China

Government
• 256 Introduction to East Asian Politics
• 355 Winners and Losers in Chinese Politics
• 356 Winners and Losers in Japanese Politics

History
• 197 History of Modern China
• 250 History of Modern China
• 297 Nations and Nationalism in Asia
• 350 Women and Gender in East Asia
• 352 Asian Migrations
• 398C Crime and Punishment in Modern China

Japanese
• All courses offered

Music
• 254 Music of Meditation
• 275 Cultured Tough Guys: Samurai Devotion, Music, Poetry, and Art

Philosophy
• 265 Chinese Philosophy
• 266 Buddhist Philosophy

Religious Studies
• 212 Religions of China, Japan, and Tibet

Course Offerings

[EA120] Made in China Listed as History 120.  Four credit hours.  H, W1.

EA150s Foundations in East Asian Studies An exploration of the foundations of East Asian civilization, with a focus on reading the classical texts of ancient China, Korea, and Japan. Provides an introduction to East Asian studies as an interdisciplinary field of study, as we explore interpretations of these foundational texts from a number of perspectives (philosophical, historical, artistic, political, etc.). Students will also work on improving writing and research skills.  Four credit hours.  H, I.  THILLY

EA212f Religions of China, Japan, and Tibet Listed as Religious Studies 212.  Four credit hours.  S.  SINGH

[EA231] The Chinese Novel: Vignettes of Life in Imperial China A critical examination of the development of classical Chinese literature of various genres such as poetry, popular songs, philosophical discourse, historical narrative, prose, fiction, tales of the supernatural and the fantastic, romance, and drama. All readings are in English translation.  Four credit hours.  L.

[EA240] Japanese Animation: Sensitivity to Differences Study of the art forms and Japanese/human culture in six Japanese animé, spanning the time frame of WWII through the future cybernetic age. Students will be asked to pry out the meanings that are embedded in the artistic expressions. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are dedicated to animé viewing.  Prerequisite: Any W1 course.  Three credit hours.
History of Modern China  Listed as History 250.  Four credit hours.  H, I.

Gender Politics in Chinese Drama and Film  A historical survey of Chinese drama and film from the 13th century to the present with a focus on representations of gender and sexuality. Paired readings of major works from various genres that make up the Chinese dramatic tradition with viewing of modern and contemporary films are informed by reading secondary scholarship in order to place these works and their portrayals of gender and sexuality in their historical and cultural contexts. Students will hone analytical skills and improve their ability to communicate insights both orally and in writing.  Four credit hours.  H, I.

Hell on Earth? Chinese Writers on Modern Chinese Society  An examination of how Chinese writers used literature and film to address the political and social crises their country faced during the 20th century. Through close readings of literary and cinematic works, students will reflect critically on the experiences of the Chinese people as they struggled to modernize and reform society. Students will reflect on what these experiences might teach us about our own society as well as contemporary China, and they will develop their ability to express insights both orally and in writing.  Three credit hours.  L, I.

Three Kingdoms in Chinese Literature  China’s Three Kingdoms Period (220-280 BCE) inspired thrilling stories that were told and retold in the following centuries, in China and throughout Asia. By tracing the migration of the Three Kingdoms story cycle over time and space, students will acquire an understanding of the continuing legacy of traditional Chinese culture up until the present, and will become familiar with the defining characteristics and formal requirements of the major genres within Chinese literature. Course goals include the development of critical thinking and research skills, as well as the ability to communicate insights effectively, orally and in writing.  Prerequisite: Any W1 course.  Four credit hours.  L.  BESIO

Introduction to East Asian Politics  Listed as Government 256.  Four credit hours.  S.  HATCH

Japanese Language and Culture  An introductory course on Japan in which we explore a global perspective of how Japanese people interact and see the world through knowledge of their own culture and language. Examines cultural patterns of Japanese society by looking at various political, social, economic, and gender relations among people in current times. Analyzes the variety of ways in which culture is consumed, reconstructed, reproduced, and manipulated in various local contexts. All readings are in English, but students are expected to memorize Japanese terms that signify Japanese culture and language.  Four credit hours.  S.  ABE

Chinese Philosophy  Listed as Philosophy 265.  Four credit hours.  BEHUNIAK

Buddhist Philosophy  Listed as Philosophy 266.  Four credit hours.  L.

Politics of Satire and Humor in Modern China  Explores the evolving role of satire, jokes, and comics in modern China from the Republican Period (1912-48) to Maoist China (1949-78) and reform-era China (1978-present). Particular attention to new and historical forms and targets of Chinese political humor as a way to understand changing state-society relations. Should the proliferation of political humor on the Internet be seen as a sign of new political openness or a part of everyday forms of resistance under authoritarian rule in contemporary China?  Four credit hours.  S, I.

Survey of East Asian Art, to 1300  Listed as Art 273.  Four credit hours.  A.  WALT

Survey of East Asian Art, 1300 to the Present  Listed as Art 274.  Four credit hours.  A.  WALT

Cultured Tough Guys: Samurai Devotion, Music, Poetry, and Art  Listed as Music 275.  Three credit hours.  A.

Zen and the Arts in Asia  Listed as Art 276.  Four credit hours.  A.

Culture of Cuteness: Japanese Women  Surveys the diverse experiences of Japanese womanhood. While the stereotypical image of Japanese women being humble and reserved persists, we will challenge these images by examining how Japanese women manipulate their gender roles to negotiate their power and status both within and outside the family system. We will also examine the complex factors that frame the phenomena of “cuteness” in Japan. By exploring the diversity of Japanese women’s everyday lives, we will analyze how the notion of cuteness has been explored and/or rejected and how a broader band of girl culture extends to adult women and their power as consumers. All readings are in English.  Four credit hours.  S, D, I.

Language and Gender  An examination of how the field of sociolinguistics has been developed and studied with a focus on the
relationship between language and gender. Looks at specific linguistic practices that speakers of various languages (mainly Japanese, English, and Chinese) manipulate to negotiate their gender identities and power. Students cannot earn credit for both this course and East Asian Studies 371. All readings in English.  

Four credit hours.  S, I.  ABE

[EA279]  The Economic Rise and Future of China  Listed as Economics 279.  Four credit hours.  I.

EA332s  Masterpieces: Modern Japanese Novels  An appreciation and examination of masterpiece novels and short stories written by 10 illustrious Japanese writers, including two Nobel Prize laureates. Cultivation of the students' sensitivities to the feelings and values questioned by Japanese novelists. Examination of the novels as works of literature, aided by published scholarship in the fields of literary philosophical, psychoanalytic, historical, and socio-anthropological studies in Japan and the West. Each student will pry out covert meanings, verbally express those findings to an audience, and write a high-quality research paper.  

Three or four credit hours.  L, I.  PRINDLE

EA339f  Asian Pacific Modernities  Listed as Anthropology 339.  Four credit hours.  MILLS

[EA350]  Women and Gender in East Asia  Listed as History 350.  Four credit hours.  H, I.

[EA352]  Asian Migrations  Listed as History 352.  Four credit hours.  H, I.

[EA353]  Globalization and Human Rights in China  Globalization refers to a variety of political, economic, cultural, and social changes transforming our world. Countries are increasingly interconnected by flows of information and technology, capital and labor, ideas and culture. We will use China as a case study to address some major issues concerning globalization: its problems and prospects; terms of trade between and among nations; sweatshop labor; the role of states, markets, and global institutions; human rights and cultural preservation.  

Prerequisite: Anthropology 112 or East Asian Studies 150 or Government 131 or History 250.  Four credit hours.  S.

EA355f  Aging and Public Policy in East Asia  Examines how the family system, household structure, and power relations have changed in East Asian societies as the region has experienced rapid industrialization, urbanization, mobility, and population aging in recent decades. Using ethnographic studies from Korea, Japan, and China, we will explore how changing demographic trends and broader societal transformations reshape the nature of family relationships, community involvement, the Confucian age-reverent tradition, public policy and debates on care-giving patterns, and aging experiences in each of these countries.  

Four credit hours.  S, I.  ZHANG


EA357s  Winners and Losers in Chinese Politics  Listed as Government 355.  Four credit hours.  I.  HATCH

[EA371]  Japanese Language, Gender, and Sexuality  An examination of the many aspects related to Japanese language and culture. The goals are to learn how cultural ideologies affect how we speak our language, how language plays a role in constructing our experience and understanding gender, and how gender and sexuality are negotiated through language.  

Four credit hours.  I.

[EA376]  Chinese Painting  Listed as Art 376.  Four credit hours.  A.

EA398s  Buddhist Visual Worlds  Listed as Art 398.  Four credit hours.  WALT

[EA483]  Honors Project  An interdisciplinary analysis of an aspect of East Asian culture employing diverse sources and methods. Independent study, extensive readings, consultations, and a thesis. Successful completion of the honors project and of the major will result in the degree being awarded with "Honors in East Asian Studies."  

Prerequisite: Senior standing, a 3.5 major average, and permission of a faculty mentor.  Three or four credit hours.

EA491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual study of special problems in East Asian civilization, offered in the departments that participate in the program.  

Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.  One to four credit hours.  FACULTY

EA493f  Seminar: Advanced Research in East Asia  An examination of methods for researching East Asia. Introduces students to the major debates that have come to define the field of East Asian studies, from John Fairbank's "response to the West" to Edward Said's "orientalism," and prepares them with the skills necessary to engage Asian sources for independent research. Students will develop an independent research project on East Asia in any area of the humanities or social sciences, which, with approval from the student's major department, may be developed into a senior honors thesis.  

Prerequisite: East Asian Studies 150 or relevant course work in East Asia, and
permission of the instructor. *Four credit hours.* BESIO