



BROWN
East Asian Studies

A photograph of the Terracotta Army, showing several life-sized clay soldier figures in a row, standing in a trench. The figures are wearing detailed armor and have distinct hairstyles. The background shows more of the excavation site with earthen walls and other figures in the distance.

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letter from the chair

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Professor Beverly Bossler

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Friends of East Asian Studies:

Greetings from Gerard House! It is hard to believe that another year has passed, and we are nearing the end of yet another semester. 2025 has been another busy and exciting year in EAS, with a full complement of classes as well as social and academic events. In January I returned refreshed from a fall-semester sabbatical: I wish to thank Prof. Hye-Sook Wang for so ably shepherding the department as Interim Chair while I was on leave.

Interest in East Asia continues to increase on campus: we had over five hundred students enrolled in EAS classes in 2025. Thirteen students were awarded degrees in EAS this Spring, of whom three wrote impressive honors theses on East Asia. We also had a high number of applicants for our summer language-study abroad fellowships: thanks to our generous donors we were able to offer funding to ten students this year. Six went off to study Chinese; two to study Korean; and two to study Japanese. You can read about their amazing experiences elsewhere in this Newsletter.

On the faculty front, one big piece of news this year was the decision by the university to change the Lecturer-rank titles of faculty at Brown to that of “Teaching Professor.” This decision was a response to an Academic Senate Task Force on non-tenure track faculty, and it affects many of our language-teaching faculty. We are happy to see our colleagues get this recognition of their academic accomplishments and of their critical role in preparing students to work in East Asian languages. We are also delighted to announce that our Korean-language faculty member Dr. Heeyeong Jung was recently named the Yoon Se Young Assistant Teaching Professor of Korean Language and Literature. Finally, we are happy to welcome Ms. Cin-hua Chen as a new Visiting Lecturer in the Chinese language program, and to welcome back Ms. Kyoko Tanoshima as a part-time Visiting Lecturer in Japanese.

Our event calendar seemed especially full this year, with a steady stream of activities. In addition to their regular weekly get-togethers and annual speech contests, each of the language programs sponsored

numerous special events. In the Spring semester, Japan Week included a calligraphy event, a tea ceremony, a Bento Workshop, and an introduction to Japanese Sign Language event. The latter was a companion event to this year's special Japan Week lecture by Dr. Nozomi Tomita of Harvard University, entitled "About Japanese Sign Language: Deaf as a Linguistic and Cultural Minority." The Japan program also held a Japanese Cuisine Workshop with Kazu Kondo, proprietor of the popular Hope Street restaurant, Wara-wara. Among other events, the Chinese Program sponsored a talk with famed Animator Lei Lei, as well as a special showing of his film "Love is Stronger than Witchcraft." The program capped off the semester with the famous annual Chinese Talent Show, as well as a concert by student Erhu player, Harrison Yang. Korea Week, held in October, featured not only a day of Korean games on the Green, a workshop highlighting the Korean traditional musical instrument Gugak, and a lecture about the Korean alphabet, Hangeul, but also a very popular visit by the "Hanguel truck." Equipped with simultaneous-translation software, the colorful truck allowed students to create messages that could be instantly translated into Korean and projected from a screen on the outside of the truck. It attracted great interest from students and others across the campus. Last but not least, the Vietnamese program held a guest speaker series which featured three fascinating lectures on the varied topics of Vietnamese history, the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in the US after the Vietnam War, and the origins of Vietnamese language.

Outside of the language programs, EAS sponsored academic lectures on such diverse topics as "Chinese Climate History: Using Horse Records to Understand the Medieval Climate Anomaly- Little Ice Age Transition in Inner Asian Borderlands"; "Litigating Fengshui, Law and Environmental Knowledge in Qing China" and "Medieval Chinese sericulture: Religion and the Small Agencies of Silkworms", to mention just a few. We also had an extremely well-received visit from Korean novelist Cho Nam-joo, the author of the international bestseller *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982*. In addition to a class meeting with students who had studied her novel, Cho participated in a public discussion of her work, moderated by Assistant Professor Hie-yeon Kim.

As most of you are probably aware, Brown along with other

universities has been facing many challenges this year, and that has had an impact on every department, including ours. But even in the face of belt-tightening, we revel in our mission of delivering our courses and rich extra-curricular activities to our students. The joy of watching students attain new skills and develop new ideas sustains us when other things look bleak. As we approach the end of the semester and another calendar year, we hope that you find joy in the things that matter most, and we send you our warmest wishes for peace and happiness in 2026. Please stay in touch!

Sincerely,
Beverly



faculty news



Jiao on the Great Wall

LIWEI JIAO 焦立为

Associate Teaching Professor, Chinese

The highlight of my past academic year was my 2025 summer course, EAST 0311 Chinese Language, Arts, and Culture. Nine Brown students, one RISD student, and I traveled to China from late June to late July. We visited dozens of cultural sites in Beijing, Xi'an, Luoyang, and Anyang, and learned about Chinese culture by exploring palaces, mausoleums, temples, gardens, grottoes, ruins, and museums, as well as by observing numerous artifacts up close. I would like to share some anecdotes from the journey.

1. While waiting to enter cultural sites, students played jianzi (shuttlecock), which drew much attention from local people. After a long day outdoors, they played mahjong back at the hotel to relax. Soon, many hotel guests came to watch and even volunteered to act as advisors. Their skills were far beyond the students'. Mahjong might be one of the most convenient ways to communicate with Chinese people.

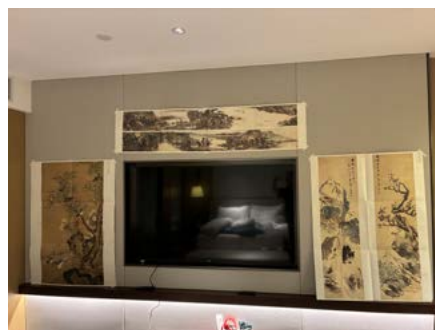
2. I was proud of the students who walked tirelessly under the 104-degree Fahrenheit sun. During our month in China, we experienced virtually no daytime rainfall. However, immediately after our trip ended, Beijing suffered the worst torrential rain in the past decade.

3. We visited the White Horse Temple, the first Chinese Buddhist temple, established in 68 AD. The Abbot of the temple sent each of us a consecrated bracelet through his assistant. The next day, we visited the Shaolin Temple, the first Chan Buddhist temple in the world. Two weeks later, the Abbot of the White Horse Temple was appointed as the Abbot of the Shaolin Temple.

4. To introduce Chinese calligraphy and painting, I transformed my hotel room into a studio (see attached pictures). Surprisingly, the hotel rooms proved to have this function!



The group at the Shaolin Temple



Hotel room transformed into a studio



HIEYOON KIM

Assistant Professor of East Asian Studies

The 2024–2025 academic year proved both productive and rewarding. Three of my articles were published: one on artistic solidarity with Myanmar's Spring Revolution and its ongoing struggle against the military junta in South Korea; another on the first South Korean feminist film collective; and a third on a queer feminist film streaming platform and the ethics of care.

In teaching, I introduced two new courses—"Korean Popular Culture" and "Women Make Movies: Feminist Practices in Asia and Beyond." The latter, in particular, sparked vibrant discussions on the representation of gender, race, and sexuality in Asia and across diasporic

contexts. (Attached is a picture from the final class session.) Students also had the rare opportunity to meet and engage in dialogue with international bestselling author Cho Nam-joo (Kim Ji-Young, Born 1982). This public event drew a full house and fostered an inspiring exchange between the author, students, and the broader community.



NAEMI MCPHERSON マクファーソン苗美
Assistant Teaching Professor, Japanese

This academic year, I am directing JAPN0700-0800, and it has been a delight to see how far my students have come—many of them were in my JAPN0100 class three years ago! It is wonderful to witness their continued growth on their Japanese learning journey. At the same time, I do miss working with our first-year Japanese students; teaching beginning-level learners has always been one of my favorite parts of the job. Instead of teaching the first-year students, this year I find myself back in the beginner's seat—I'm taking KREA0100 and learning Korean! Thanks to the kindness and support of the Korean language faculty, I am thoroughly enjoying the challenge (and it really is a real challenge!). My motivation is purely personal, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to begin this new learning journey.



During the summer, I spent some time with my family in Japan and visited two remarkable museums: the Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park in Shiraoi, Hokkaido, and the Utoro Peace Memorial Museum in Uji, Kyoto. I also had the pleasure of reconnecting with the director of the film *Kaba*, which I introduced in my JAPN0812: Japanese Language and Society through Contemporary Film course in spring 2025. We shared a lively conversation over delicious gyoza and cold beer on a hot, humid day in Osaka.

After returning home to Rhode Island, I enjoyed a slower pace - reading, occasional biking rides, and harvesting an abundance of vegetables from my backyard garden.

REBECCA NEDOSTUP

Associate Professor of East Asian Studies

I received an ACLS Fellowship for 2025-26 for my book *War Being: Lost and Found in Mid Twentieth Century China and Taiwan*. *War Being* analyzes the social experience of displacement and its effects on community, understandings of space and time, and moral reckonings with prolonged hot and cold war between the 1930s and 1950s. The fellowship offers welcome time to pull together archives, oral histories, genealogies and more that I've gathered over a long period in Jiangsu, Sichuan, Taiwan, the US, and Europe. In the spring I helped guide the research projects of a fantastic group of undergrads and grad students in the course "Assembling Chinese History", advised by guest experts in archival and library research, oral history, and digital methods. I helped organize the Modern Asian History Working Group and a reading group on access, labor, and equity in digital Asian Studies, in which grad students and faculty in EAS and other departments shared readings, works in progress, and mutual support. In the summer, a wonderful UTRA team (Abby Berwick, Renee Kuo, Gabi Yuan and Aimee Zheng) helped me gather materials for a future course on transitional justice, historical records, and the legacies of authoritarianism. Finally, lots of good news from the modern Chinese history PhD program: Yu-chi Chang began a tenure-track position at Vassar; Richard Shih-Yu Cheng transitioned from a postdoc at Harvard's Mahindra Center to one at CUHK's Research Institute for the Humanities; Shiuon Chu's first book (on modern examinations) will soon come out from Harvard Asia Center; and Shih-Yu Juan won a China Times Young Scholar Award, among other fellowships.

SAMUEL PERRY

Associate Professor of East Asian Studies

I continue to read subversive texts with my students at Brown in classes such as "Queer Japan and Beyond". I am now working on an anthology of stories from Pyongyang (1925-1950), which I am translating from Japanese and Korean, and will include works of both modernism and genre fiction featuring the lives of schoolgirls, Christians, archeologists, underground activists, boatmen, mothers, kisaeng and novelists, all living under the conditions of colonial and newly liberated Pyongyang. This fall I have been enjoying the marsh on my farm, which is now dry enough to trek through, and still filled with the purple flowers of *eutrochium maculatum* taller than I am.

TRANG TRAN *Trần Diễm Trang* Visiting Lecturer, Vietnamese

I'm proud to share that I have received two significant recognitions this year!

1. *GUAVA Innovation Award 2025*

My project, "Vietnamese Vocabulary Video Contest: Enhancing Language Learning Through Creative Engagement," was honored for its innovative approach to language pedagogy. Inspired by the New York Times Vocabulary Challenge, this initiative invites students to create short, creative videos to bring Vietnamese words to life—fostering imagination, engagement, and deeper learning, one word at a time.

2. *Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC) Stole Celebration 2025*

I was also recognized as a faculty honoree at the annual BCSC Stole Celebration. This meaningful honor highlights my dedication to inclusive teaching, mentorship, and the vibrant Brown community.

The Vietnamese Language Program's Language Tables welcomed learners at all levels to practice conversation in a friendly,

supportive setting. Each month, our Cultural Corners bring the language to life through music, film, and traditional arts, connecting grammar and vocabulary with authentic cultural experiences.

Our [new online platform](#), launched last winter, has quickly become the program's digital home. Students can access course materials, explore cultural resources, and stay updated on upcoming events—all in one place. This semester, we're adding student spotlight videos, guest speaker recordings, and interactive vocabulary games, making it easier than ever to keep learning Vietnamese beyond the classroom. And our Vietnamese Program Guest Speaker Series continues to expand and inspire.

HYE-SOOK WANG 왕혜숙

Associate Professor of East Asian Studies

For my research, two books that I have been working on for the past few years have been published. *Sociolinguistics and Korean Language Education: Linking Language, Culture and Society* which I edited was published at the end of 2024, by The Institute of East Asia at University of California-Berkeley. The 2nd edition of *Integrated Korean: High Advanced I & II* which I co-authored with my colleagues at other institutions, was published by the University of Hawaii Press in early 2025. I also contributed a chapter entitled "Teaching in a Time of Change: 'Politeness Inflation' and Its Implications for Korean Language and Culture Education" to the book I edited.

I had the privilege of giving invited talks at the University of Michigan in March 2025 and the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia in April 2025. I also presented papers at the International Association of Korean Language Education in July, at the New England Association of College Korean Educators (NEACKE) in Nov., and at the 2nd Harvard Korean Language Research and Pedagogy Workshop in Dec. 2024. In June 2025, I delivered a talk at an annual conference of



the American Association of Teachers of Korean (AATK). I performed my second year as a global fellow of Ewha Womans University in Korea.

As for professional services, I continued to serve on the executive board of AATK, the National Advisory Board of the International Student Conferences based in D.C. and on the editorial board of the journal, *Korean Language in America*. As usual, I conducted manuscript reviews for various journals in my field as a referee and for AATK's annual meeting selection committee.

For the University, I served as a faculty mentor for the Dean of the Faculty Office. After completing interim chairmanship last fall, I, in my role as Korean Program coordinator, with the help of my devoted colleagues, successfully held our annual Korean Language Week events last year as well as this year in celebration of the Hangeul Day (October 9). What had been special this year was that we hosted the Hangeul Truck 'Airstream' event as one of the IVY schools on Sept. 29, 10 am ~5 pm. Over 1,000 students visited the truck, learned about the Korean Alphabet 'Hangeul', experienced what technology can do and shared their messages to the world while exploring other activities.



We also hosted our annual Brown Korean Speech Contest in person on March 14 and three students advanced to, and competed in, the 6th New England contest on April 12, 2025, held at Wellesley College, in which 8 NE schools participated. Two students from Brown, Tijesuni Ademuwagun and Giang La, received prizes. Congratulations again to the awardees. On April 25, the Korean Language Program held a semester-end party where everyone taking Korean language courses gathered together and celebrated their learning and achievements. The program conferred a special certificate to three students (Lukas Strelecky, Jared Ong, and Thomas Yun) who started from Korean100 and completed Korean600 as a recognition of their commitment and dedication to learning Korean for six semesters.

On the teaching side, I taught Advanced Korean in 24-25 AY and advised an Honors Thesis for Sam Cobin who graduated as a Korea track concentrator in May 2025.



new faculty spotlight



CIN-HUA CHEN 陳勤樺
Visiting Lecturer, Chinese

What do you enjoy most about your position?

This semester, I'm teaching *Chinese 100* and *Chinese 350*.

In *Chinese 100*, I love witnessing my students' progress from 0 to 1. It's deeply rewarding to see them go from knowing no Chinese at all to being able to express themselves. Every small breakthrough feels like a shared victory. In *Chinese 350*, our focus shifts toward reading and writing Chinese characters, as well as exploring cultural topics such as history, folklore, and traditional festivals. It's fascinating to see how

students respond to these stories. Meanwhile, sharing them often inspires me to reflect on the cultural roots I grew up with from a fresh perspective.

What do you like to do when you aren't working?

Providence is a beautiful place, quiet, artsy, and walkable. I feel lucky to live and work here. I usually start my mornings by brewing a cup of coffee, and after work, I unwind with yoga, cooking, plant care, and meditation. I love trying new things, so I've taken workshops in candle making, floral arrangement, and even cocktail crafting. On weekends, I enjoy exploring local yard sales and chatting with people in the neighborhood. Above all, traveling is my biggest passion. I love learning about different cultures and trying exotic cuisines wherever I go. And my travel bucket list just keeps getting longer!

What is a fun fact about you that people may not know?

I've been teaching Chinese for years... but I actually don't know how to play Mahjong or Chinese Chess!

What is your favorite place in the world?

Taipei City — my hometown.

A Japanese writer once described Taipei as “a dazzling, fruity mille-feuille cake, rich in filling and meant to be savored slowly. Each layer of fruit represents a different generation, ethnic group, and historical element of Taiwan.” I think that perfectly captures its charm - vibrant, diverse, and full of stories waiting to be discovered.



KYOKO TANOSHIMA

Visiting Lecturer, Japanese

What are your research interests?

I'm interested in language aptitude in second language acquisition and in how learners develop pragmatic competence.

What do you enjoy most about your position?

I enjoy seeing students discover connections between their own culture and Japanese culture through language learning. It's especially rewarding when they begin to see themselves from new perspectives.

What do you like to do when you aren't working?

I enjoy taking water exercise classes at the YMCA, exploring local cafés on weekends, and visiting historical sites around New England.

What is a fun fact about you that people may not know?

I used to be quite inactive until I joined a gym's free trial a few years ago. Since then, I've been exercising regularly and feeling healthier—at one point I almost thought I could see some abs!

What is your favorite place in the world?

One of my favorite places is Akita, in northern Japan, where my parents lived for several years. I still miss its quiet snowy winters, lively fish markets by the port, and the warmth of people speaking the gentle Akita dialect.

congratulations to the class of 2025



Everett Pearson Brooks
Samuel J. Cobin
Miranda Rylee Gonzales
Deven K. Kamlani
Finn Kadam Kirkpatrick
Trinity Sola Lee
Seth Aaron McKenzie
Jared Ong
Griffin Luke Bertolaet Seidel
Leshan Shui
Yifei Song
Olivia Qing Suomi
Adam Xiangyuan You



summer fellowships



EMMA BRIGNALL

My sixth-grade self never expected learning Chinese to one day take me to the streets of Taipei, advocating for human rights as a summer intern. Having studied in Beijing, China the summer before, I was excited to experience life in Taiwan and for the chance to intern at the Taiwan Association for Human Rights. Enrolled in the program CET, I was able to take language classes at National Taiwan University in the morning, intern in the afternoons, and participate in program-specific classes and excursions.

My Mandarin improved greatly from classes, where I learned not just about Taiwanese culture but also about the cultures of my classmates, who hailed from Japan and Vietnam. I was able



to practice the words I learned in class each day with my local roommates, who offered a glimpse into the differing lives of the city and the countryside. One roommate knew all the internet slang from social media, the other brought us fruits fresh out of her father's farm, and both were eager to hear all about American life.

At my internship I learned the Chinese that I would never learn in a regular class. I translated articles on refugee rights, digital privacy laws, and protests related to the historic recall vote that took place this summer, and I authored an article in Chinese on forced labor. The other interns and I visited exhibits on Tibetan culture and Ukrainian war photography, participated in protests and memorials, and interviewed a woman on the housing demolition case she was fighting against. We interacted with interns from other organizations and learned about the issues each was focusing on, including LGBTQ+ rights, gender equity, the death penalty, and nuclear power. I witnessed democracy and advocacy in all their fervor firsthand.

I crossed the hurdle of learning traditional characters, only



to discover it was not just the written language that differed from mainland China. Each week I would encounter new words that are only used in Taiwan. Soon I was questioning basic elements to the language I had studied for years: Is a panda a bear-like cat (熊猫 - xióngmāo) or a cat-like bear (貓熊 - māoxióng)? Why does 土豆 (tǔdòu) mean peanut in Taiwan but potato in China?

Through CET activities, I sampled food from a traditional market, heard from an Atayal speaker about indigenous customs, and took a cooking class so I could bring back tastes of Taiwan. Living in an apartment and commuting to school and my internship ensured I

learned the subway and bus systems through and through, but even on the occasions I inevitably got lost, I only returned with more stories to share. One night I hopped on a bus going the opposite direction as I intended and ended up past the last stop at the bus parking lot, frightening the bus driver who met a foreign face when he had thought there was no one left on the bus. I arrived home an hour later, having trekked back to the nearest stop (picking a spider off myself after walking straight through its web), while my roommates stared at my location on their phones, asking how I had ended up “in the boonies.” Taipei may be the most unique place I have had the chance to visit. It is safe without supervision; it is remarkably efficient even in intense heat; it is bursting with history, religion, and delicious food. Taiwan fights not just for itself but for others, a lesson we could all stand to learn from.

RASHUAN BERTRAND

Ever since I began learning Korean, travelling to South Korea has been a huge goal of mine. When I arrived at Brown, while the daily commitment to language learning proved challenging, it also fueled my desire to experience the culture firsthand. I spent about a day and a half travelling to Incheon International Airport, which left a lot of room for introspection and self-talk. In the moments leading up to my arrival, I allowed myself to feel every emotion and understand that this experience would be one of the most important moments in my life. As I got in my taxi from the airport to the hotel, it became clear that I was right.

Each day was filled with a new adventure that exposed me to a new way of thinking. Whether it was walking around the historic Gyeongbokgung Palace or unwinding at a PC cafe, each setting filled me with joy and granted me an opportunity to speak with someone new. It was a bit nerve-racking to throw myself into a sea of native speakers, but I welcomed the discomfort because each time it offered a chance for growth. Most of the time, each person was patient with me and always expressed how intriguing it was to communicate with a

foreigner in their native language—even when I felt I had missed a grammatical particle or two. On days when I didn’t speak to anyone for extended periods, the environment of Dongdaemun helped me remain immersed in the language through the beautiful signs and sounds of the city.

The class I took during my time with CIEE, “Korean in Popular Media,” also exposed me to parts of Korean culture I wasn’t familiar with. In class, we discussed movies like *The Housemaid* (1960), which showcased the dynamic roles of women and social class in Korea during the postwar era. Additionally, I learned about cultural ideologies like the Han, a concept that incorporates the generational pain and resentment of Koreans, whilst simultaneously including emotions of joy and hope for their future. Apart from being very difficult to translate, it was an idea that resonated with me deeply, even as a foreigner who can never fully understand the intricacies of the word. After learning about the Han, it became indescribably apparent everywhere I looked in Korea, making it self-evident that true progression is bred primarily by those who care for the people they’re surrounded by.

Overall, my time in Korea helped me reimagine my views on balance and routine. It was quite evident each time I entered a cafe that people prioritize productivity and work; they also emphasized the importance of play and rest. Singing at noraebang after a long class day or visiting the spa to retreat from the busy city life were little aspects I never knew could have such a positive impact on my outlook. The time I spent prioritizing pockets of joy amidst completing assignments or research was something I not only cherished but also helped give me the stamina required to continue working hard. This semester at Brown as an IAPA concentrator, I’m looking forward to sharing my knowledge on South Korean culture with my peers and hopefully inspiring others to explore a new destination. Going abroad helped refine my opinions on art, societal development, and the human experience, which I couldn’t have achieved without the guidance of my Korean professors, who helped foster my love for the Korean language and culture.

NATALIA BEGARA CRIADO

This summer I had the incredible opportunity to attend Princeton in Beijing at Beijing Normal University. As an international student who has lived in both Spain and the United States, I've always been drawn to the unfamiliar—cultures and languages that expand how we see the world. Chinese fascinated me for that very reason: it felt so different from anything I had ever known. At Brown, I pursued the language all the way to Chinese 600, but I knew that to truly understand it, I had to go beyond the classroom. Having never even set foot in Asia before, I was eager to immerse myself fully in the culture and language.

Out of the five levels offered, I was placed in fourth-year Chinese. My class was small—just twelve students—which meant we got to know each other and our teachers quickly. The first week was tough: I was adjusting not only to life in Beijing, but also to the famously rigorous Princeton curriculum, the language pledge, and the rhythm of daily quizzes. Our mornings began with four hours of classes in small groups, where we practiced speaking constantly. At lunch we had 中文桌子, or “Chinese Table,” eating with our teachers and continuing conversations entirely in Chinese. In the afternoons, individual sessions pushed us even further, testing our vocabulary, essays, and fluency. Most evenings were devoted to homework—writing essays, reading new chapters, and drilling vocabulary. It was intense, but the warmth, patience, and passion of our teachers made all the difference.

Of course, the program was not only about academics. We explored some of China's most iconic landmarks—the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, and so many more. Our trip to Xi'an was unforgettable: despite the sweltering heat, seeing the Terracotta Warriors and walking the ancient city wall gave me a glimpse into China's vast history. For my birthday, we even celebrated at a KTV, singing karaoke late into the night—a uniquely Chinese experience I'll never forget.

What truly shaped my time in Beijing, though, were the friendships I built. I was especially grateful for my two closest friends, Nilab Ahmed from Yale and Alexia Ludlow from Notre Dame.



Together, we explored hidden Hutongs, bargained at the Pearl Market, biked across campus, grabbed Luckin Coffee almost every day, and pulled late-night study sessions side by side. They made Beijing feel like home, and saying goodbye to them—and to our teachers—was harder than I expected. By the end of the program, we weren't just classmates; we were a family.

Looking back, I know my Chinese improved enormously and my understanding of Chinese culture deepened in ways no textbook could ever provide. But the most powerful lesson I carried home was something even bigger: that human connection transcends language, borders, and background. My teachers and I may have grown up continents apart, communicating only in Chinese, but at the end of the day we were simply young women with shared hopes, dreams, and fears. That realization—that beneath everything, we are all one—was the most inspiring gift Princeton in Beijing gave me.

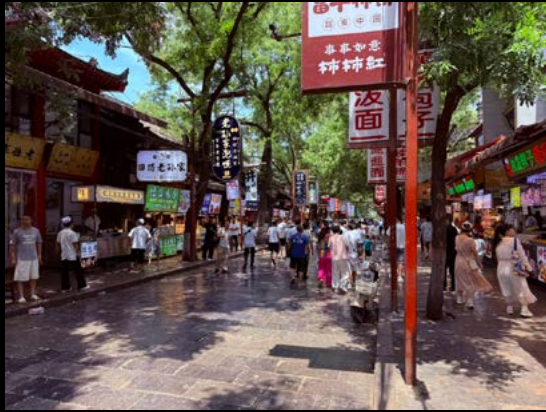


JACK DE HAAN

This summer with Princeton in Beijing (PiB) was nothing short of phenomenal. I met so many amazing people, ate fantastic food, travelled to incredible places, and, of course, learned a lot of Chinese, and I'm very grateful to my first year Chinese teachers 陈老师、焦老师、谢老师 for preparing me so well for this program, as well as for the Stewart family and the EAS department and for making this experience possible for me!

Food: This year was the first time that PiB class was provided with prepaid cards, so we didn't have to worry about paying for food at the university canteens—which were all phenomenal, especially the “Xinlequn” Canteen: I still dream about it! (新乐群食堂, 全世界都知道我想你)

And, of course, the food outside campus was delicious. Although this was my first time in China, I thankfully already had friends who were nearby: so of course we went out to eat together! I discovered that Beijing doesn't have many “specialties” (besides roast duck 北京烤鸭, of course).



Travel: Every weekend, PiB organized “cultural activities” or other excursions: we went to the Great Wall (慕田峪长城), the National Center for the Performing Arts, Jingshan Park and Beihai Park, an acrobatic performance, etc. I thought they were all great trips!

I don’t know when’s the next time I’m going to China, so during my free time I knew I needed to take advantage of the opportunity of being here to visit other cities: like Shanghai, Xi’an, Datong. I unfortunately didn’t have enough time to visit cities in the south like Chengdu and Chongqing, but at least that leaves me more for next time!

PiB also brought us to Datong for a few days: we visited famous attractions like the Hanging Temple, the ancient city wall, and the Yingxian Wooden Pagoda. But, of all the places we visited, my favorite definitely was the Yungang Grottoes—the stories behind the statues and the caves were so fascinating!

I went to Xi’an during our between-semester long weekend, where I visited Brown’s August Jiao (焦子悦老师)! She was kind enough to bring me around: we saw the drum tower and bell tower, Muslim Street, the Wild Goose Pagoda, and we walked the city wall (despite the 100+°F weather! I also went to the famed Terracotta Warriors 兵马俑 the next day, which of course were stunning, but I think what gave me an even deeper impression was actually the size of Qinshihuang’s Mausoleum: he had an entire city built underground, and archaeologists have barely started excavating! While I was there, I thought about the next time I’d come here, and how much more of this site they’ll have uncovered and all of the things they’ll have discovered!

Class: And of course I have to mention class, which was the primary reason I was coming all the way here! The program was really incredible: because first year Chinese gave me a strong foundation in Chinese, and since throughout first year I participated in many other EAS activities like 焦老师’s weekly Mahjong nights, afternoon teas, calligraphy workshops, and more, my conversational skills coming into the program were already relatively advanced for my year. PiB recognized this and encouraged me to participate in the Inter-University Speech Contest at Tsinghua, where, thanks to the

exceptional teachers who spent many hours with me helping me prepare, I won second place! On top of this, since I was progressing quickly through my classes, the head of the program was gracious enough to meet my needs by giving me the exclusive ability to take one-on-one classes with teachers of any of the five levels: suddenly I was learning Chinese imperial history, classical Chinese writing, the linguistics of East Asian languages, etc. from more senior teachers, while younger teachers would teach me the lives of young Chinese people, recent slang, and Chinese memes online. With some doctoral students, I learned how to read Confucius' Analects and Sun Tzu's Art of War, discussed stories from Journey to the West, conferred about generative grammar and the Brown University corpus (I had no idea we had such a famous one!), and I memorized many famous poems like 静夜思、水调歌头、登高、望岳. With a teacher who studied in Hong Kong, I even picked up some Cantonese!

Conclusion: After returning to the US, my mind was still speaking Chinese: I noticed that speaking English was already difficult, needless to say my other languages! Besides this "disadvantage," my experience has brought many benefits: my Chinese has of course improved significantly, but I think the more valuable experience has been learning how to integrate into a new country and culture. I made great friends in PiB, but I'm actually also still in contact with some locals, like some college students I met, who took me out to eat local food, and a blogger who interviewed me on the street in Wangfujing!

Finally, I was deeply honored to be chosen to represent our second year class at graduation, giving a speech in front of all the students and faculty from PiB, as well as important faculty from Beijing Normal University. I used the idiom "看山是山..." as a metaphor for our experience in PiB, and then concluded with an excerpt from Du Fu's "一览众山小" about success in our future endeavors.

Thank you again to PiB, the Stewart Family, my brilliant teachers, and the Brown EAS department for helping me get started on this incredible journey; I'm so excited for what's to come next.



LUCAS GASCON

I am incredibly grateful to have been able to take part in a study abroad program of my choice thanks to the financial support of the Brown East Asian Studies Department. My experience studying at Doshisha University as a participant in the Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies' summer abroad program was one of my life's most enriching and rewarding experiences thus far. Not only was I able to significantly improve my speaking, reading, and writing skills in Japanese as a fourth-year student, but students were also able to carry out individualized research projects relevant to their interests or thesis topics. As a music & media researcher, I studied Kyoto's underground punk/experimental rock scene, which entailed speaking with local bands and musicians, seeing live performances spanning all genres of music, and interviewing a professor who specializes in the history of Kyoto punk. This research project culminated in an oral presentation at the end of our semester.

The historical sights, unique charm, and enrapturing wildlife of Kyoto made quite a lasting impression, and although I feel as though I could've spent all eight weeks exploring the city, I was glad to be reimbursed by the program for solo/group travel outings outside of class to other parts of the country. Some of my best memories are of exploring Tokyo, Kobe, Hiroshima, and other cities, with friends or alone, interacting with locals and developing a sense of each region's unique characteristics and qualities. Kyoto proved to be an ideal central location, both geographically and culturally, serving as a touchstone through which I was able to explore the many facets of Japanese culture.

As a culmination of my time studying Japanese at Brown, my study abroad experience with KCJS will no doubt prove to be a crucial and foundational step in my education as a student and researcher of language and culture, thanks in no small part to the generosity of the EAS Department.

WILLIAM HUANG

I spent my mornings sitting on random benches across Beijing Normal University's campus, my mind filled with whimsy, just observing the beautiful songbirds twirling in the nascent tangerine sky. Other students walked by, similarly enjoying the gentle 7:00 a.m. breeze, and in these moments, everything felt slow and at peace. Contrary to my expectations of Princeton in Beijing, tranquility was a commodity I could afford in excess. This is not to say that PiB was entirely stress-free, but simply existing in an immersive Mandarin-speaking environment felt so relaxing and natural, so homely.

Classes began promptly an hour later at 8. The content itself was always interesting, ranging from discussions of social morality to international legal systems and Chinese traditional customs. However, the people were undoubtedly the highlights of my daily life. Teacher Chen, Teacher Ma, my roommate Michael, the entire list of people who made my experience abroad unforgettable would be too inconvenient to recount. I am grateful to have met everyone. The people who felt so unfamiliar Week 1 were the same ones who transformed the classroom for me, who accompanied me on the most memorable trip to Datong and other cultural excursions.

In addition to my improved language proficiency, all my photographs, souvenirs, and other memoirs of China were made possible only by Brown's financial support. Not only was studying abroad an academically enriching experience, but it was also a process of self-realization. I found a routine that felt fulfilling, friends that made me happy, and saw novel landscapes that seemed otherworldly. All I can say to everyone involved with the East Asian Studies Department is thank you!



YOHANA KIM

This past summer, I was able to return to Korea for the first time in thirteen years and study abroad thanks to funding from the East Asian Studies Fellowship Award. Growing up Korean in Los Angeles, I've been interested in Korean culture my whole life but was unable to visit for a long period of time due to several complications. In addition, studying abroad has always been a dream of mine, and I'm thrilled that it was able to come true this year in the country I've most wanted to visit. During my time in Korea, I stayed in the city of Seoul and completed a six-week course in Korean language at Yonsei University as well as an eight-week internship at Amorepacific, one of Korea's largest beauty corporations. Due to generous funding from the fellowship, program and housing tuition as well as my plane ticket were free!

Living in Korea for two months has taught me a wealth of things about the culture, language, and expectations, and I am privileged to have been able to experience so many wonderful aspects



of the country. I learned to navigate public transportation and converse comfortably with locals in Korean, and I was able to adapt to many everyday Korean systems such as mail, currency, and online ordering. It was my first time traveling alone in a foreign country, and although it was intimidating in the beginning, I truly enjoyed how much of the culture I was able to absorb as a result. Since I am the third generation in my family (both my parents were born in the States), I grew up speaking English only and picked up Korean myself from watching shows, movies, and webtoons; this trip was the first occasion where I was able to fully test and apply what I had learned, and by the end of the trip my reading, speaking, and comprehension skills had all improved noticeably. This was also in part thanks to my Korean class, where we practiced reading longer passages and speaking on various topics. My program (Yonsei International Summer School) hosted over 2,500 students this summer from all around the world, and it was fascinating to be able to connect with people from so many different cultures and learn about why they were interested in Korean culture.

Furthermore, at my first in-person internship with Amorepacific, I was able to get a glimpse of Korea's corporate culture through my work with the Brand Marketing team for Mise En Scene, a company under Amorepacific which specializes in hair care products. I was surprised to learn that many of my team members stayed at work from 9 to 6 o'clock every day, and that this was due to a flexible schedule and extended lunch break. In addition, the culture was very team-oriented, with my coworkers frequently inviting me to take lunch breaks together and have coffee afterwards before returning to the office, and I was thankful to be received so warmly. Many of them spoke English to me, but I was also able to have conversations with them in Korean and learn about trending topics in Korea, as the majority of them were only a few years older than me. Aside from the social aspect of my internship, my job consisted of creating content for Mise En Scene as well as giving presentations on competitor brands and suggestions to help the company break into the American market, and I learned many relevant skills about global marketing and social media!



Finally, I was most happy to be able to experience the everyday aspects of Korean culture. I made many friends in my program, and we often went shopping together and visited cafes and restaurants, all of which were beautifully decorated and had both cheap prices and high-quality items. I was able to try authentic cuisine, attend pop-up stores and events for various Korean brands, and even see my favorite music artists in concert. I also met many relatives for the first time and was able to have meals with them. I am truly grateful for all the opportunities this fellowship has given me and will remember the experiences I had for the rest of my life!



REIA LEE

I had the opportunity to conduct research through the UTSIP Kashiwa program at the SCSLab (Simulation of Complex Systems Lab) in the Department of Human and Engineered Environmental Sciences within the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences at The University of Tokyo. My project focused on using an agent-based model on a platform called NetLogo to simulate cancer growth and the interactions between cancer, healthy, and immune cells based on game theory and replicator dynamics.

Although I had prior experience in computational biology, I was new to game theory and complex systems, so this project was an exciting challenge in an unfamiliar field. I was also eager to develop computational skills, since I was interested in diving deeper into dry lab rather than wet lab. Another reason I was drawn to this program and lab was because it was very interdisciplinary – the study of complex systems can range from cancer biology to dermatology to financial modeling. For the project, I first reviewed relevant literature and learned the fundamentals of NetLogo with the help of a masters student in the lab. Next, I identified two key parameters that significantly affected cancer growth: one representing competition between cancer and healthy

cells, and the other representing the immune killing rate of cancer cells. I constructed a phase diagram that illustrated three modes of cancer growth—no growth, dispersed growth, and clustered growth—based on changes to these parameters. To further analyze the results, I coded a script in NetLogo to quantify clustering, drawing on concepts from the DBSCAN machine learning algorithm. This was the most technically challenging part of my research since I was new to the coding language and platform. During the program, there was a midterm and final presentation, where I got helpful feedback and questions from other participants and masters students.

I was also able to attend a few lectures from professors in various labs at the Kashiwa campus – it was very interesting to hear about other areas of research and what some of my peers were doing. Beyond the research itself, UTSIP Kashiwa was an incredible experience. I made friends from all over the world and enjoyed my time in Kashiwa. The program group also went on a day trip to Asakusa and an overnight trip to Yoshida, Shizuoka, which was a great bonding experience. Although I am Japanese and have spent many summers in Japan with my family, living there longer-term and conducting research there gave me a deeper perspective on life in Japan. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity—this was truly one of my most memorable summers, and I gained valuable insights and skills in complex systems research.



ARTHUR SHAMGUNOV

Princeton in Beijing, PiB, or “Prison in Beijing” as I heard it called many a time before I joined, was one of the most transformative experiences of my life so far. Though before entering the program, I was petrified of being in a country so outside of what I was normally used to, only being allowed to speak a language that I had moderate confidence in, and having to navigate life for two months, the experience itself dramatically accelerated my Chinese proficiency, as well as taught me how to conquer unknowns and be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

As for the intensity of the program, it was all it was said to be and more. Going from my once-a-day, 50-minute Chinese classes here at Brown to 4 hours a day there, it was certainly a shocker. Being able to spend my entire day solely speaking and thinking in Chinese was a privilege I had never had before, and am unsure if I’ll ever have again. And the basic conversation with my classmates at the beginning of the program in our limited Chinese certainly became dull sometimes. Though it was that exact dullness which propelled us to push ourselves farther than we had ever done before, since there was no English scapegoat anymore.

But what really made this program stand out as so special for me was the teaching team. At Brown, I thought us having four professors for Chinese 0100 was already insane enough, but having 16 different teachers in class sizes of no more than five students was a truly remarkable experience. And being able to meet and learn from teachers of all different backgrounds from China solidified the cultural component so crucial to learning a language. Those small class sizes and the amicable nature of all our teachers made it so much easier to form close-knit communities and relationships, and break down many of those barriers of discomfort and anxiety, which in so many cases inhibit mistake correction, which is a more crucial component to learning Mandarin than any other language I’ve dealt with. No matter how brutal the classes were sometimes, the difficulty and number of new vocabulary words we had on a nightly basis, or the seemingly endless cold calls during class itself, these sessions made us, our classmates,

and teachers connect, if for no other reason than trauma bonding.

But the most memorable part of this experience was being able to explore China. Being immersed in an environment where every sign, every restaurant menu, everything, was written only in Chinese. An environment that necessitated me to step up my game if I had any hopes of exploring and getting to know the country in anything more than a superficial light. Though the program itself was busy, it wasn’t impossible to travel to different parts of the country on weekends due to the immense system of high-speed rail to facilitate travel, as well as the reasonable prices of accommodation, food, and other living expenses. These adventures made it clear to me that my journey with this language is nowhere near completion. That this culture being so unique, so different from the Western ones I was used to, would require a lifetime of dedication and study to even begin to crack. So safe to say I’ll be taking Chinese again this coming school year.

I can’t even begin to list out all the multitudes of words I’ve learned, friends I’ve made, and places I’ve traveled to. Coming back to Providence, I’ve arrived with a newfound appreciation for cultural distinctions and a newly lit fuel for continuing this language journey of mine. My summer in Beijing highlighted how the China portrayed in the Western media is the antithesis of the China I actually experienced, and to view the immense differences between our countries not as a sign of needed isolation, but as a marker of the infinitely large number of ways of life which make us all unique.



CUTHBERT STEADMAN

This summer, I was lucky enough to attend Princeton in Beijing. I had a wonderful time there making new friends, immersing myself in the culture of China, and, of course, learning Chinese. I was shocked by the end of the program at how much my Chinese had improved. I went in with just two years of classroom experience at Brown, unsure of how to communicate with locals, and left feeling comfortable in most everyday situations.

I enjoyed exploring the campus and environs of 北师大, our host university, although if I'm being honest, I didn't spend all that much time exploring the city of Beijing itself; my weekdays were all spent in the classroom or the university library studying, and I used each weekend to visit a different city. In order of weekends, my roommate and I (a fellow Brown student) went to: 东京 (Tokyo, before the program started), 长城 (The Great Wall, a section near Beijing), 上海 (Shanghai), 大同 (Datong, a small city two hours northwest of Beijing), 昆明 (Kunming,

a larger city the Southwest known for its beautiful nature, weather, and ethnic diversity), 重庆 (Chongqing, China's most populous city, in the Southwest), 丹东 (Dandong, a city in Northeastern China on the border with North Korea), 西安 (Xi'an, in Western China known for the Terracotta Soldiers and rich history. This trip and the trip to the Great Wall were the only ones we went on that were organized by Princeton in Beijing—for the rest, we were “going rogue,” as it were), and then finally the last weekend we explored 北京, Beijing itself. I could go on for days about all of our trips, but it's safe to say we made the most of our time in China.

Perhaps what surprised me the most was how close I became with my teachers. 彭老师, who led the third-year program, was exacting in class—his timing was legendary, beginning and ending sessions to the minute—but beneath that rigor was a warmth that revealed itself over time. His high standards were worth it: I could hear improvement each week, not just in accuracy but in cadence and comfort. I got to know 张老师, my chaperone on our excursion to 西安 (Xi'an), who was closer to me in age and quickly shifted from teacher to mentor to friend. We teased each other constantly, and by the end she called me “小司” (a diminutive form of my Chinese name, 司康迪) and I called her “老张” (a nickname/casual form of her last name). These nicknames captured the tone of the summer: formal learning giving way to genuine connection.

One would think that I had seen enough of China for a while, but as soon as I landed in the Boston airport, all I wanted to do was go back. Upon returning to Brown, my schedule didn't allow me to enroll in Chinese this semester, but I've kept studying with teachers online, and I've even added Korean. I'm meeting up with 张老师 and another friend I made at the program at Yale in November, which of course I am very excited for. But most of all, I am lobbying my family for a China trip so I can introduce them to the places and people that made this summer meaningful for me. That wouldn't have been possible without the support of the Brown East Asian Studies summer fellowship, and I am eternally grateful for the opportunity.

To learn more about the summer fellowship program at EAS and its generous donors, visit our website's [Study Abroad page](#)

photo credit: Natalia Begara Criado



alumni news

CLASS OF 1989

Andy Meyer

Hello from New Jersey. My book, “To Rule All Under Heaven: A History of Classical China from Confucius to the First Emperor”, will be [published by Oxford University Press next February](#).

Cheers.

CLASS OF 2001

Aya Brackett

I graduated almost 25 years ago (gasp) and studied East Asian Studies and Visual Arts.

[I am a photographer](#) and have continued my interest in these areas with the publication of the following books:

To note:

- The latest book I just photographed is Samin Nosrat’s *Good Things*- currently on the NYT bestseller list (Random House Books)
- James Beard Award Nominee for *Rintaro*, Hardie Grant
- James Beard Award Nominee for Japan: The Vegetarian Cookbook, Phaidon
- James Beard Award for *Bitter*, Ten Speed Press

I live in Oakland, CA with my husband, Corey Creasey, a film director, and my two kids.

I treasure my memories of Brown!



CLASS OF 2012

Yuri Tomikawa

Since graduating from Brown, some of my big life milestones have been: meeting my life partner, founding a mental health startup ([Zencare.co](https://www.zencare.co)) and leading it through acquisition, and welcoming my now 2.5 year old daughter! I've stayed especially close with Debbie Lai, with whom I co-led the EAS DUG back in our Brown days (here's a photo of us at Burning Man!). My partner is Chinese, and we're raising our daughter to speak Japanese and Mandarin — that one year of Chinese studies has come in handy! Hope everyone is doing well. You can find me on [LinkedIn](#) to reconnect!



faculty directory 2025-26

Kumiko Akama あかまぐみこ	Visiting Lecturer, Japanese
Beverly Bossler 柏文莉	Professor, Chair
Cynthia Brokaw	Professor
Cin-Hua Chen 陳勤樺	Visiting Lecturer, Chinese
Kaijun Chen 陳愷俊	Associate Professor
Pin Chi Chen 陳品錡	Visiting Lecturer, Chinese
Wenhui Chen 陈文慧	Associate Teaching Professor, Chinese
Sachiko Hiramatsu	Associate Teaching Professor, Japanese
Jia-Lin Huang Hsieh 谢佳玲	Visiting Lecturer, Chinese
Liwei Jiao 焦立为	Associate Teaching Professor, Chinese
Heeyeong Jung 정희영	Assistant Teaching Professor, Korean
Hieyoon Kim	Assistant Professor
Zhuqing Li	Visiting Associate Professor
Naemi McPherson マクファerson 苗美	Assistant Teaching Professor, Japanese
Chuanhui Meng 孟川惠	Post Doctoral Researcher
Kyuwon Moon 문규원	Assistant Teaching Professor, Korean
Rebecca Nedostup	Associate Professor
Jeffrey Niedermaier	Assistant Professor
Samuel Perry	Associate Professor
Janine Sawada	Professor
Sueyon Seoソー スーヨン	Visiting Lecturer, Japanese
Kerry Smith	Professor
Lulei Su 苏麓垒	Assistant Teaching Professor, Chinese
Atsuko Suga Borgmann	Associate Teaching Professor, Japanese
ボーグマン (須賀) 敦子	
Kyoko Tanoshima 田野島京子.....	Visiting Lecturer, Japanese, Fall 2025
Naofumi Tatsumi 立見尚文.....	Visiting Lecturer, Japanese
Trang Tran Trần Diễm Trang	Visiting Lecturer, Vietnamese
Hye-Sook Wang 왕혜숙	Associate Professor
Lingzhen Wang 王玲珍.....	Professor
Yang Wang 汪洋	Associate Teaching Professor, Chinese
Aya Yamakawa 山川礼	Visiting Lecturer, Japanese

We want to hear from you!

Please contact us if you're interested in speaking to concentrators about what your degree in East Asian Studies has meant for you. Email eas@brown.edu

And as always, we value [your support](#)

RECOGNITIONS

The department of East Asian Studies is fortunate to have committed and multi-talented faculty members. Among their many achievements this year we'd like to acknowledge the following:

Heeyeong Jung named by the university as the Yoon Se Young Assistant Teaching Professor of Korean Language and Literature.

Trang Tran appointed Executive Secretary of GUAVA (the Group of University Teachers of Vietnamese in America) for 2025–2027, and named honoree of the Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC) Stole Celebration 2025

Sueyon Seo is recognized by the department for instruction in two language programs. As a Visiting Lecturer in Japanese, Professor Seo also instructed courses for the Korean Language Program as well as offering a summer course in Korea.

NOTES

Perhaps you've noticed title changes of some of our faculty. In Spring '25, university faculty members voted to change the titles of *Lecturer*, *Senior Lecturer*, and *Distinguished Senior Lecturer* to *Assistant Teaching Professor*, *Associate Teaching Professor* and *Teaching Professor*, respectively.

INSTAGRAM

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54 College Street
Providence RI 02912