



**EAST ASIAN
STUDIES
FALL 2024**



BROWN
East Asian Studies

Alumni Newsletter



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LETTER
FROM
THE
CHAIR

HYE-SOOK WANG

INTERIM CHAIR, FALL 2024

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, EAST ASIAN STUDIES

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

Alah! I'm back again writing this message. It's been six years since I completed my service in this position and I'm called upon to serve the department again as interim chair while our chair, Professor Bossler, is on leave this semester. I'm grateful for this opportunity and glad that I was able to step up to help in a small way.

The 2024-2025 academic year is off to a great start this year as well, serving 457 students registered in our courses this semester. Our DUG co-chairs this year, Jared Ong and Emily Boron, are planning various exciting events in addition to the department-sponsored events and activities. The EAS website has a new look thanks to our new program and outreach coordinator, Robin Diotte. I strongly urge you to visit it when you have a moment.

This year, as of September, we have 19 concentrators who are working on China, Japan, and Korea. This is somewhat smaller than last year that had a record-breaking number of graduates as EAS concentrators, but it is still strong and we hope this trend will continue.

Let me first report on some changes since the chair's letter was written in the last newsletter.

In May this year, we had to say 'good bye' to two of our long-time colleagues as they wrapped up their time at Brown.

Professor Kiko Yamashita, Japanese linguist and language pedagogue, retired after over forty years of teaching and service. Professor Yamashita was the oldest member of the department who we called 'institutional memory.' Ms. Lung-Hua Hu, also known as Gail, and/or 'tone police' to her students, retired, too. Lung-Hua has been a delightful teacher and colleague who had brought so much energy to the Chinese program and the department. They will both be missed but our fond memories will last long. And we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their dedication to their students and contribution to EAS and Brown. We wish them all the very best in their life after Brown.

The department also welcomed several new faculty members this fall. The Chinese program was happy to welcome Ziyue August Jiao, a visiting lecturer, and Dr. Chuanhui Meng, a postdoc researcher to their program. Professor Hieyoon Kim, Assistant Professor of Korean Studies and Dr. Wooyoung Jee, a visiting lecturer in Korean language, joined the Korean Program. We are very excited to have them as EAS family. Many thanks to our faculty for their hard work to bring these colleagues and for guiding them to settle in quickly and smoothly. The department wishes all the best of luck to the new faculty in their new home.

There is also exciting news that I am delighted to share. Kai jun Chen, Assistant Professor of Chinese Studies, was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. Jeffrey Niedermaier, Assistant Professor of EAS and Comparative Literature, received the prestigious Wriston Fellowship, which allowed him to focus

on his book manuscript while he's taking some time off from teaching. Professor Kerry Smith of EAS and History was promoted to full Professor. Big Congratulations to Professors Chen, Niedermaier, and Smith!

There have been some staffing changes during the summer in the department as well. Our department manager, Jonah Trout, left Brown to move to Chicago. Lauren Leslie, who had been serving as our program coordinator, was promoted to the department manager position and we welcomed Robin Diotte as program and outreach coordinator. Robin worked in the Department of Art History and Architecture before joining EAS. We send our best wishes to Jonah for his new life in Chicago and to Lauren and Robin for their happiness and success being part of the EAS family.

This past academic year has been an extremely exciting one. EAS graduated 27 concentrators – the largest group of graduates in EAS history. It was such a great pleasure to see that many students chose EAS solely as, or one of, their academic focus. The concentrators in the Korea program have also notably increased, which is another encouraging development.

The 2024 Graduation Ceremony was held in a RISD building for the first time. Our students, faculty, family and friends celebrated our students' many accomplishments and shared much joy. On April 29th, a month before graduation, the department hosted our annual Senior Forum, which was another exciting and educational event. Six talented seniors presented their research on various topics; The Sŏn Buddhist Response to Neo-Confucian Hegemony in Early Chosŏn period, Classical Daoist Mysticism, Masculinity in Post-IMF Korean Film, San Mao's Stories of the Sahara, Exophony in Translation, and Revisiting Hegemonic Behavior During Instability in the Global World Order.



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On the student side, as in the past years, the department was pleased to be able to continue to provide financial support for students studying abroad in the summer. Ten students (six studying Chinese, three studying Japanese, and one studying Korean) benefited from the department's annual scholarship program. This program has been possible for many years by the generous gifts from Mr. Brian Leach and by the family of Arun Stewart, as well as by the SBS Foundation funding to support students studying Korean. These scholarship recipients studied their respective language in various programs in their target county, polishing their language skills, making new friends, and deepening their love for the culture. Their reflections can be found on page 47.

This past spring and fall, various department-sponsored events and activities brought EAS lovers together. The Chinese Program held the annual Talent Show in February, they brought Beijing Normal University performers to Brown in the fall, and also hosted a series of Chinese Calligraphy workshops in October. The Japanese Program held a Japanese Tea Ceremony, a Character Bento Workshop, and a Japanese Speech Contest in April. The Korean Program held their annual Speech Contest in spring and hosted the annual Korean Language Week just this fall. As part of Korean Language Week the department hosted a National Foundation Day Celebration. The large and successful event was hosted in collaboration with the Consulate General of Boston and the Korean American Association of Rhode Island. The Vietnamese Program continues to thrive with guest speakers and a variety of conversation tables, which are featured on page 30. More about all of these exciting past events can be found at <https://eas.brown.edu/events/past-events>.

And there are also many events forthcoming! Scholarly talks, lectures and student-focused activities – including a Translation Conference are sure to enliven our spirits for the remainder of the year, and we're very excited about them. For many years this

newsletter has been a wonderful forum for sharing information. It allows us to connect and reconnect with our former students as well as current students while we look back the past year. With that note, I invite all of you to take a short break from your hard work, look back and reminisce about your time at Brown, and continue to share your stories with us. We would love to hear from you wherever you are.

With gratitude and best wishes,
Hye-Sook Wang
Interim Chair

FACULTY NEWS

Kaijun Chen Associate Professor of East Asian Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies

I had a productive sabbatical year at the Institute for Advanced Study, where I discussed my new research on ceramic manufacturing and the global exchange of technology and design in state-owned factories in Jingdezhen, China's renowned porcelain town from 1950s-1990s. During the summer, I conducted fieldwork in this revitalized city, examining an extensive archive and collection of recent artifacts. A chapter titled "Human Thoughts and Creativity," reflecting on socially and culturally conditioned innovation in the handicraft industry, will be published in the Bloomsbury Cultural History of Technology: The Age of Expansion and Enlightenment (1650-1800).



Wenhui Chen Senior Lecturer, Chinese

This summer, while visiting my family in China, I took the opportunity to attend the 20th International Conference on Chinese Language Teaching at Beijing Language and Culture University, funded by the Campus-Consortium Grant I received from the Center for Language Studies. My conference presentation focused on teaching Chinese poetry in beginning and intermediate classes, showcasing how I use poetry to teach pronunciation, tones, morphemes, vocabulary, and grammar points. I believe this approach not only consolidates students' language skills but also enables them to apply their learning to poetry reading and appreciation. Additionally, these authentic materials introduce Chinese culture and values while alleviating the stress of everyday language practice.

In addition to presenting my proposal, I had the opportunity to listen to and exchange ideas with scholars, mainly from China, on teaching advanced Chinese classes. This was particularly beneficial for my CHIN913 course: Life, Trends, and History of Modern China.

I also took the opportunity to explore China's beautiful scenery by climbing Hua Shan—one of the five famous mountains in China—and experiencing the Cliffside Plank Path, which is more daunting to look at than to walk on. With this, I moved closer to my goal of climbing all famous mountains in China.



Liwei Jiao Senior Lecturer, Chinese

Twenty-six years ago, I began my teaching career at Renmin University of China. My very first class of students left a profound impression on me, which led me to dedicate my most acclaimed book, *500 Common Chinese Proverbs and Colloquial Expressions* (Routledge, 2013), to them. One of the class monitors, Mr. Takeuchi Kazuo, has been working with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in various places across Asia for years. He is now the Chief Representative of the China Office. I was delighted to send him a copy of the book during my recent trip around China this past summer.

The main purpose of my trip was to prepare a course titled “Chinese Language, Arts, and Culture” for submission to the Brown Global Summer Programs. One of the stops on my journey was Anyang, Henan, once the capital of the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC – 1046 BC). The National Museum of Chinese Writing is a must-see destination. After touring the museum, I enjoyed a cup of coffee in the cafeteria. To my surprise, the cappuccino decoration was an oracle bone inscription (OBI). Can you guess what it symbolizes? Feel free to ask if you’re curious!



Naemi McPherson Lecturer, Japanese

This semester I am very happy to teach the largest number of students JAPN100 has enrolled in my four years of directing the class. I enjoy teaching and working with first-year students because by the end of one semester I can see them progress from being a zero beginner to conversing about everyday life! It is rewarding to see them communicating with students in Japan via our virtual exchange program with KNOX English Network students who participate remotely from all over in Japan.

In summer 2024 I visited the KCJS summer program in Kyoto. It was wonderful to see familiar faces working hard in class and to hear about their experiences in Japan. We walked around the city and went to the lively Nishiki Market, where we got to see a May 2024 graduate who just happened to be visiting Japan! I hope more of our students get to visit, do research, live and work in Japan after studying the language and culture with us.





Kyuwon Moon Lecturer, Korean

This past summer, I had the opportunity to attend a conference in Korea, where I presented on the use of ethical guidelines in incorporating generative AI into language classrooms. The trip was a chance not only to engage with current issues in education but also to reconnect with previous colleagues and, of course, family. Along the way, I indulged in some incredible Korean food and reflected on my cultural roots.

Interestingly, this was my second visit to Korea in two years, after a decade-long hiatus. These trips have sparked reflections on reconnecting with my own culture, from which I felt somewhat disconnected during the long years of hiatus. Now that I am raising a child, it was such a joy to witness him learning about our culture—especially the importance of using honorifics to adults! One special moment was purchasing a Hanbok (Korean traditional clothes) from Gwangjang traditional market, which we then incorporated into this year's Korean Game Day event, adding an authentic cultural element to the festivities.





Samuel Perry Associate Professor of East Asian Studies

I had a busy year following the December 2024 publication of my MLA-published book, *A Century of Queer Korean Fiction*, and its companion volume, *한국의 퀴어 문학: 한 세기*. I gave invited talks and conference presentations in Singapore, Perth, Tokyo, Toronto, Chicago, as well as at Brown's John Hay library, where I was joined by librarian Toshi Minami and RISD Professor Jung Joon Lee in a special panel that introduced the community to Brown's queer Asian magazine collection—which is now the largest collection of its kind in North America. I am currently working on a volume of translated stories about the city of Pyongyang as well as a broader project on “The Bad Gays of Japan”. I split my time between my home in Providence and my farm in New Hampshire.



Janine Sawada Professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies

During my spring 2024 sabbatical I worked intensively on my translation from Sino-Japanese into English of the volume, *Zenkai ichiran* (A Ripple in the Sea of Zen), by the 19th-century Rinzai Zen master, Imakita Kōsen. The translation is part of a project funded by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation in Buddhist Studies. I also traveled to Japan to meet with the current abbot of the Zen monastery, Engakuji, in Kamakura, and other Japanese scholars who have worked on this well-known text. During the summer I participated in a panel held at the European Association for the Study of Religion annual convention in Sweden, titled “Building on (Buddha)-Nature: The Daidōsha and the Establishment of Buddhist Political Communities.”



[A photo of me during my visit to Engakuji, next to the original oil painting of Zen master Imakita Kōsen (1816-1892), which the abbot, Yokota Nanrei rōshi, kindly brought out from the monastery's collection to mark the occasion.]

Atsuko Suga Borgmann Senior Lecturer, Japanese

In December 2023, I completed my Ph.D., a long-term goal I set when I first began teaching Japanese as a world language. I didn't embark on my Ph.D. journey until later in life, and balancing full-time teaching and dissertation work was challenging at times, but I am thrilled to have finally achieved this milestone.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Kelly Wang, who created all the illustrations that appear in my research, and to Manni Amoah, who incorporated texts into the illustrations. Your support made this project possible. I also deeply appreciate all the participants who participated in my research despite their busy schedules—thank you all for your time and effort!

My dissertation, titled “Multimodal Vocabulary Learning Through Manga in Japanese as a World Language,” has been published. It can be accessed via: <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/multimodal-vocabulary-learning-through-em-manga/docview/2911060942/se-2> or <https://dc.uwm.edu/etd/3392/>.

My quantitative study examined the effect of manga on vocabulary learning among college-level learners of Japanese as a world language (JWL). Specifically, it investigated to what extent manga's multimodality helped learners infer the meanings of unknown words and retain them over two weeks, compared to using a text with an English glossary. The results indicated that manga offered an initial advantage in vocabulary learning, but this benefit significantly diminished in terms of retention. The pedagogical implication is that instructors need to reinforce learning through various output activities to solidify students' knowledge. These findings prompted me to create pre-class multimodal vocabulary learning materials on Canvas for the JAPN0200 class in Spring 2023. Students completed online multimodal practice quizzes before class, giving them more opportunities to use the new

words during in-class activities. This also allowed for more time to focus on application during class, rather than spending time simply memorizing new vocabulary.

Due to these positive results, I will continue to refine these materials for this course as well as develop similar materials for other courses.

I look forward to continuing my research in multimodal teaching and learning, seeking new ways to foster and enhance language learning.

Naofumi Tatsumi Visiting Lecturer, Japanese

In the Spring 2024 semester, I created and offered a new content-based Japanese language course entitled, “JAPN0401 Japanese Language Through Popular Culture.” While learning new vocabulary and grammar structures needed to write formal essays in Japanese, students discussed a variety of topics related to Japanese pop culture. Some of the examples included marriage to a computer-generated character, manga/anime censorship in the US, the poor working conditions of Japanese animators, and the racial difference between an anime character and a human actor playing that character in a live-action film. The course was very successful and 16 students were enrolled.

Spring 2024 Japanese Language Through Popular Culture

Course number: JAPN0401

Instructor: Naofumi Tatsumi

Time: Tuesday & Thursday 2:30pm - 4:00pm

Place: TBA

Prerequisite: JAPN0300 in Fall 2023 or a higher-level course



チャンスをつかめ！
(Seize the moment!)

"Give My Regards to Black Jack" SHUHO SATO

Don't miss out on this rare opportunity!

- ✓ **Explore Japanese Pop Culture:** Dive into the vibrant world of manga, anime, and video games.
- ✓ **Practical Language Learning:** Discuss and analyze your favorite pop culture media in Japanese.
- ✓ **Skills for Success:** Develop critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and communication.
- ✓ **WRIT:** Develop Japanese grammar and essay writing skills through pop culture.

Class size is limited, so apply quickly.

Trang Tran Visiting Lecturer, Vietnamese

I hope this message finds you well! I am thrilled to share some exciting updates about the Vietnamese Language Program at Brown University. Thanks to your support and continued enthusiasm for the Vietnamese language and culture, the program is growing more than ever!

In Fall 2024, we welcomed twelve new students to our beginning-level Vietnamese course (VIET 0100) and seven new students to the intermediate-level course (VIET 0300). These increases reflect a significant rise in interest in Vietnamese language and culture on campus, and it has been amazing to see the classroom buzzing with curiosity and engagement.

Our program continues to thrive, not just in terms of numbers but also in the variety of opportunities we offer. From the weekly in-person and monthly virtual Vietnamese language tables at three proficiency levels—beginner, intermediate, and advanced—to cultural enrichment projects, our students dive deep into meaningful learning experiences that connect language with history, art, and personal stories. Follow us on Instagram, [vietbrownu](#)

We are excited to announce the establishment of a new online platform dedicated to the Vietnamese program at Brown in December 2024. This platform will serve as a central hub for course information, cultural event updates, and additional resources to enhance the student learning experience.

Your continued connection to the program is invaluable. We'd love to hear from you and stay updated on your journey since leaving Brown. Please don't hesitate to reach out!

Our Guest Speaker Series continues to bring new perspectives and insights to the community! Each session features an expert delving into various aspects of Vietnamese culture and language, providing

a unique opportunity to deepen your understanding of these rich traditions. The series has already sparked meaningful discussions, and there's more to come. Don't miss the chance to engage, ask questions, and expand your knowledge in these interactive and informative events. Stay tuned for more exciting sessions on Event@Brown, and bring your curiosity!

Last year, we had incredible speakers such as Anh Bui (Learn Vietnamese with Annie), Phúc Mập (Phúc Mập Vlog), Professor Trần Đức Anh Sơn, and Professor Kevin Hoskins share their expertise. Recently, we welcomed Chris Trần (Survival Vietnamese).

We wrapped the semester with a festive gathering featuring mouthwatering Vietnamese food and drinks! It was a delightful opportunity for students and members of the Vietnamese program to come together, celebrate, reflect on the semester's achievements, and perform their talents in the Vietnamese language.



NEW
FACULTY
SPOTLIGHT

Wooyoung Jee Visiting Lecturer, Korean

I am a visiting lecturer of Korean language. I bring my expertise and passion for language and culture into the classroom. I earned my PhD from UMass Amherst and have extensive teaching experience, including roles as an English language teacher in Korea and as a Korean language instructor at Boston University and Wesleyan University. My research focuses on language ideology and identity, second and foreign language pedagogy, heritage language maintenance, sociolinguistics, and multilingualism and multiculturalism.

At Brown I am dedicated to fostering meaningful connections through language education, sharing the richness of the Korean language, and engaging with the university's diverse student community. Beyond the classroom, I enjoy spending time with friends, going on long walks, and experimenting with Korean cuisine.



August Jiao Visiting Lecturer, Chinese

What are your research interests?

My research interests encompass Chinese Phonetics, Dialectology, and Chinese Language Teaching. I am dedicated to exploring the phonetic structures and variations of Mandarin and other Chinese dialects, with a focus on their phonological systems and the socio-linguistic factors influencing them. Additionally, I am deeply engaged in studying effective methodologies for teaching Chinese as a second language, aiming to enhance pedagogical practices and develop innovative approaches for language acquisition.

What do you enjoy most about your position?

What I enjoy most about my position is the vibrant academic atmosphere that fosters intellectual freedom and exploration. I am deeply inspired by the diligent and eager students who continually drive my passion for teaching and research. Additionally, I value the supportive and collaborative environment created by my friendly colleagues, which greatly enhances both my professional growth and personal satisfaction.

What is your favorite place in the world?

Naples. I am a big Neapolitan pizza fan, and the city is also an amazing place to visit.



Hiyeon Kim Assistant Professor of East Asian Studies

What are your research interests?

Dissident culture; film and media activism; film historiography and archive; experimental and avant-garde cinema; feminist filmmaking and programming; Cold War history; Korean cinema and popular culture

What do you enjoy most about your position?

Every day I can find joy in writing and teaching about topics I care deeply about.

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

I'm an avid reader. I do pilates. Since I moved to Providence, I've been trying to walk on Blackstone Boulevard for an hour every day.

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

I love dancing without worrying about moves—I just blast something when no one is around and have some fun. It is incredibly freeing, and I feel so refreshed.

What is your favorite place in the world?

Berlin, Germany. Berlin is my second home in my heart. Second place: Providence.



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Chuanhui Meng Visiting Faculty, East Asian Studies

Chuanhui Meng is a Watson China Initiative postdoctoral fellow/visiting professor in the Department of East Asian Studies at Brown University. Her research interests include modern and contemporary Chinese film and culture, with a particular focus in transnational migrations and translations of film genres, border-crossing circulations of film and media in the global 1950s and '60s, as well as ecocritical studies of socialist and post-socialist China. What she loves most about her position is how teaching a seminar on transnational Chinese cinema has brought so much new energy and intriguing perspectives into her own research, especially having a lovely cohort of Chinese cinema enthusiasts from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds in her Fall course. When not working, Chuanhui enjoys running, hiking, yoga, and meditation. Her favorite places in the world are the library, the meditative space provided by a yoga mat, and a freshly-made bed.



CLASS
OF
2024

William Albright
Amir Irfan Bin Mohamad Hishammudin
John Fullerton
Matthew Granquist
Ruiting Guo
Ruihan Huang
Nicholas Inadomi
Yanfei Jiang
Carmen Johnson
Keenan Kelly
Revyn Kim
Hiu Yau Charlotte Lee
Sienna Lew
Jiaqi Liu
Marcie Madoff
John Morris
Bryce Okihiro
Liu Rothschild
Charlize Sentosa
Anais Shen
Mateusz Walek
Nondi Walters
Viviana Wei
Nathaniel White
Wenjing Yap
Sofia Yee-Wadsworth

SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS



Emma Brignall

There's a video of me from so long ago that it doesn't exist on my parents' iPhones. Mid-May, my mom pulled out an old iPad, hooked it up to the nearest outlet, and pressed play. In the video I'm in second grade, repeating short sounds in Chinese after a woman whose voice sounds off camera. A sheepish smile flits around my lips as I notice my mother filming. After talking with our Taiwanese neighbor who was doing the same with her daughter, my mother decided to put me in a Chinese language club. Once a week, we would hurry downstairs after classes ended to hoard dried fruit, salty peas, and sing children's songs in Mandarin. The first day I came home and proudly declared that I could count to 100 in

Chinese. We progressed slowly, sticking to the basics and anything that could fit in the lyrics of a catchy song, until it was time to choose a language for middle school. It was an easy choice.

Middle school picked up speed, then high school brought even more excitement. But even as I was learning about 红烧肉 and could tell anyone that the specialty dish of Beijing was 烤鸭, I wondered if I would ever taste these dishes. As we studied mountainous regions and the Great Wall, I wondered if our borders were growing too firm to cross. Even as I learned more Chinese, it felt like China was slipping further away.

The pandemic only made the possibility of a visit to China seem more out of reach. It wasn't until my first year of college—eight years after I formally started taking it and over twelve years since that video was taken—that I finally had the chance to go to China. This summer I studied abroad at Beijing Normal University through Princeton in Beijing, an intensive program with a language pledge, meaning I could only speak Mandarin the entire eight weeks. The summer became one of the best of my life.

I was soon experiencing China through taste, speech, and harrowing taxi rides. The first time I ate 红烧肉, red-braised pork, I felt my eyes welling up. It felt like I had been reading a story for years and was finally transported inside it, able to taste the details that a sentence of writing could not fully transmit. Every DD (Chinese Uber) drive brought me into a race of taxi drivers cutting each other off, swerving around bikers, and either ignoring red lights to sweep around a corner or using them as a break to play a video game.

I was thrilled to talk to people, and I soon found out that they wanted to talk to me too. A clear foreigner, I became an object of curiosity instantly. While I was initially uncomfortable with



the stares, I soon found the privileges and happy moments in my near celebrity status. A photo with locals brought smiles to their faces, in opening my mouth to speak I discovered cross-cultural connections.

When men started snapping photos of me in a park, I approached them and had a conversation about U.S.-China politics. On the subway, I talked to two mothers and their young boys, whom they encouraged to practice their English with “the real American in front of them.” On my last day, I went into a calligraphy shop and began chatting with the owner. He had me sit down, offered me tea, pulled out a book, and instructed me to read from it. From there I learned about his calligraphy, the artists whose work was in his shop, and eventually was offered a piece of his own calligraphy for free. Another shop brought me in contact with a woman and her daughter. The woman had inherited the shop from her own

mother and yet again offered me tea and her own stories. I learned about her mother's work collecting valuable ceramic pieces, the fables enclosed in the teapots around me, her lamentations against the government's erasure of cultural differences, and her hopes for preserving her traditions.

Through the kindness and generosity of people, I learned the most about China. In a sip of tea I was brought into people's lives, in a brushstroke I learned about their history. Most importantly, through a language we bridged the most superficial yet often insurmountable barriers to talk freely and laugh long after our words dried up.



Brooke Cohen

I am incredibly grateful to the East Asian Department's Language Fellowship, particularly to Mr. and Mrs. Stewart for granting me the opportunity to attend Princeton in Beijing. Achieving fluency in Chinese has been a personal and professional goal of mine since I started college. I have always felt disconnected from my Chinese heritage and have been actively searching for ways to connect with my culture. I realized that I have many ways in which I connect with my Jewish culture but lack similar opportunities to connect with my Chinese heritage. This led me to decide to study Chinese all four years at Brown.

Having attended an international high school in Singapore, my exposure to Chinese was limited to biweekly classes. When I started at Brown University, I was excited by the opportunity to attend daily Chinese lessons. After studying two years of Chinese at Brown, I was inspired to do an intensive Mandarin summer

course as I noticed that I lacked confidence when speaking Chinese. Living in Beijing gave me the opportunity not only to dive deep into the study of Chinese but also to connect with my culture. During the week we worked hard, studying Chinese for five hours a day, one of which was a one-on-one class with a teacher. On the weekends, we explored Beijing, visiting the Forbidden City, the



Summer Palace, hutongs (traditional alleyways), night markets, Beijing's art district, watching traditional performances (including traditional Chinese instruments and acrobatics), and more. We even were able to visit the ancient city of Datong with the program as well as explore Shanghai and climb Huangshan (Yellow Mountain, known as the most beautiful mountain in China) during our extended weekend.

I had the best summer of my life. My friends and family who saw my photos all said they could tell by my smile that I had the best time. It's true! On the day-to-day, I was able to witness aspects of Chinese culture that I could not learn from a textbook. I was so nervous about having to make friends using only Chinese, but I was able to click with people from the first day. I have made the most incredible friends in my program and already have plans to visit one another this year. I also made deep connections with my teachers. Since I was in class with them every day for 5 hours and went on field trips with them, they have also become my friends. PIB's 4:1 student to teacher ratio gave me an unparalleled opportunity to improve my tones. I'm finally starting to correct my own tones, which I have struggled with for many years. I'm very proud about this. With the language pledge, I have also become more confident speaking Chinese.

I came back from the summer with a newfound passion for studying Chinese. While I previously felt overwhelmed by the pace of Chinese classes at Brown, I have come back looking forward to homework that allows me to expand my vocabulary and classes where I can perfect my tones. My experience this summer in Beijing — speaking Chinese 24/7, making lifelong friends, eating the most incredible food, and exploring different cities in China — has completely transformed my attitude towards learning Chinese and this is something I am so grateful for. Before attending

Princeton in Beijing, learning Chinese was a goal I set not out of love for the language but out of a personal goal to learn my heritage language, and now I do it for both.



Sophia Dewar

The 8 weeks I spent in Beijing were some of the best weeks of my life. It was the first time I have ever been to China, let alone Asia as a whole. It was such a beautiful experience getting to see the country where I was born and being surrounded by a very unique and ancient culture. It was kind of shocking when I stepped in the airport and saw everything including the TV screens and directing signs all with Chinese characters. I was initially shy and spoke slowly to the Chinese people I first encountered while in China. They would speak and I would listen with wide eyes and a confused look on my face. My first day in China my friends and I went to a very popular tourist hutong called Nanluoguxiang. A hutong is a traditional alleyway in China and this specific one has been converted so all the rooms are small stores, snack stands, and food courts. It's a very bustling place and especially during summertime there were lots of tourists, foreigners and citizens of China.

The second day we signed our language pledge. From this point on I along with everyone else who was part of Princeton in Beijing were only allowed to speak in Mandarin Chinese. This was significantly awkward the first couple days but it gradually got easier and more comfortable. I was especially proud of me and my roommate because we preserved the language pledge until we graduated, when I knew that other people spoke English to their roommate. As the program continued and our Chinese improved with more difficult vocabulary, I was able to have very meaningful conversations with my roommate. I learned about her hobbies, her family, and how her experience in Beijing had been.

When classes started, that's when the reality of the accelerated program kicked in. Studying one text a day in a foreign language is a lot of work for any language, but especially for Chinese since the characters are its own separate alphabet that's not entirely phonetic. I messed up the first day since we were actually assigned two texts

to learn, since they were supposed to be a review of second year Chinese and were described as easier texts. I was very confused to say the least when the second half of the first day we started and I had no idea what we were talking about. Our program also provided individualized opportunities to talk with teachers and practice speaking in a more casual setting. The first couple days I was dreading my one-on-one meetings because fifty minutes of having to carry the conversation in Chinese was unimaginable as at Brown our one-on-one sessions are only fifteen minutes. As the program progressed, I became excited for my one-on-one conversations since I felt my Chinese got better and I began to know the teachers a little more. I developed some really special and close relationships with our Chinese teachers since many of them were graduate students concentrating in teaching Chinese as a second language or education. Since I am a junior and the Chinese



university system works on approximately the same timeline, my teachers were not that much older than us.

The texts discussed during third year Chinese touched on topics very relevant to contemporary college students. Nationalism, politics, gender equity, and economic development were all heavily discussed in our text and challenged us to think about the ample differences between China and the United States. These topics were interesting because we could all discuss and debate them in high complexity using English but using Chinese I think pushed our language limits but also taught us important vocabulary that would be important if we used Chinese in our future career. Princeton in Beijing was also my first time learning Chinese in a more content heavy way in that it was more comparable to a history or sociology class. It wasn't just about learning the new vocabulary but the actual content of what we were learning.

By the end of this program, I felt more confident in my Chinese speaking ability than my Spanish speaking ability (I studied Spanish from Kindergarten to 11th grade). I met people from all walks of life and each one of them was interested in the Chinese language for a different reason. Overall I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to be able to study abroad in Beijing, learn more about my culture, and meet some incredible people. I am so thankful for those who helped me financially and I am excited to continue learning Chinese at Brown as a student in CHIN0700 in addition to hopefully continuing the friendships I made with my classmates and teachers.

There were so many new experiences for me that have left a lasting impression and in this section I would just like to speedrun through a couple of my favorite moments I had during my two months in China.

Gym - As a D1 gymnast at Brown University I really wanted to find a workout gym to continue my strength and conditioning while away. The gym I found was truly such an interesting place where I got a glimpse into how fitness plays a role in the lives of Chinese people. It was really funny trying to speak with the fitness instructors in Chinese since I didn't know any of the muscles like the shoulder, bicep, or quadricep. They had a lot of patience with me and we got through my complimentary private lesson using a translation app.

Shanghai - Between our four week semesters, we got a 4 week vacation where the program encouraged us to go to a different city. Me and some of my friends took a 2 day trip to Shanghai, the economic capital of China. It was the epitome of large skyscrapers and lots of transnational companies. We went to the famous Yu Garden, Shanghai's The Bund, and Nanjing Road. I got a glimpse into the traditional architecture alongside the cutting edge high technology that China currently has.

Suzhou - After Shanghai I went to Suzhou for a day in a half solo adventure. It was really fun traveling alone, managing the public transportation, and finding fun little things that aren't that commonplace in the US. For instance, right outside of my hotel, which was 14 dollars for one night, they were filming a movie. Very cool opportunity.

Beijing Evening - This performance was the penultimate thing to Princeton in Beijing and it was so much fun. Every performance was in Chinese and I soon discovered among the 100 or so students that some were extremely talented singers and dancers. It was also the first time



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hearing jokes in Chinese and being able to understand them which was cool. My favorite part was that everyone from second year Chinese to fifth year Chinese were able to enjoy the performances together. It was a great way to showcase everyone's talents and enjoy time together for the second to last time while in Beijing.

Chinese Language Tables - Something unique that Princeton in Beijing did was that every week two or three students would go out to a restaurant and eat together with a teacher. This was such a fun way to learn more about Chinese cuisine and speak more informally with our teachers. Plus knowing how to order food and look at a menu is definitely an important skill to have when learning a foreign language. Some of the best food I had were sweet and sour pork, this huge hotpot with beef stew and vegetables and these amazing stir fried noodles.



Benjamin Herdeg

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the East Asian Studies Department for funding my summer of intensive Chinese language and culture study in Beijing. After two years of Mandarin classes, I already spoke the language with some ease before arriving in China. However, the progress I made during the two months I was there was truly remarkable. I owe this improvement to the CET Beijing program and its rigorous language pledge, which all students were required to follow. As for my academic life in China, it consisted of over four hours of language classes each day plus nightly homework, weekly essays and exams, and various cultural activities. Though my schedule constantly felt hectic, I can confidently say that I made the most of every aspect of this experience.

Needless to say, my learning also extended beyond the classroom. I took advantage of opportunities to explore Beijing—a city that seemed endless in every way—almost daily. Whether it was biking, taking the subway to new neighborhoods, dining at incredible restaurants, or strolling through local parks with American and Chinese friends (and meeting new people along the way!), I was constantly on an adventure. Despite the novelty of everything, I never felt overwhelmed. The welcoming spirit of those I met made me feel secure and embraced.

Although I grew to love Beijing, some of my favorite moments were spent traveling to other cities in China. The program organized trips to Chengdu and Shanghai, and thanks to China's extensive high-speed rail network, my friends and I were also able to visit Suzhou and Tianjin. Each city had its own unique culture, cuisine, and climate, all of which I thoroughly enjoyed. While I'm excited to return to Providence and continue my language studies at Brown, leaving China and the friends I made was very difficult. Reflecting on all that China has and all I didn't have the chance to do made my departure bittersweet. However, a new friend taught me an

expression that perfectly captured my feelings: “Leave a little regret to come back to.” This mindset helped me during my final days, and I look forward to returning to China and picking up right where I left off.

Jordan Lac

I spent this past summer studying Chinese through CET Shanghai, a US-based program, at Donghua University in Shanghai, China. It was an incredible experience and I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to continue my Chinese studies in a place where I could simultaneously be completely immersed in the Chinese language and culture. My language class was much smaller than the classes at Brown and through the more individualized attention I had from my teacher, I became much more confident in my language skills as the summer went on.

I also had the opportunity to take an elective, Politics and Governance in China which was taught by a political science professor from Shanghai Jiaotong University. I have studied Chinese politics at Brown, but it was a special experience to learn about this topic from the eyes of a Chinese scholar who had insights far beyond what can be gleaned by American scholars who have not spent their entire lives and career in China.

Something unique about CET Shanghai is that we are paired with a local Chinese university student as our roommate. I became close friends with my roommate Yifan this summer and she helped me gain a much deeper understanding of Chinese culture and Chinese people. She shared her favorite foods from her home province of Hebei, gave me a newfound appreciation for the Chinese ping pong team, taught me how to say things with a Northern Chinese accent, and helped me understand the complexities and pressures of life as a young person in China. I was able to share with her my love for

mahjong and spicy food, a deeper understanding of the American political process, and a realization of how expensive living in the US is.

I'm beyond grateful for my experiences this summer and for Brown EAS' support in giving me the opportunity to go. I feel that both my Chinese language skills and my understanding of Chinese culture have grown significantly in the past couple of months.

Ross Williams

I didn't know what to expect when disembarking a 14-hour plane ride at Narita International Airport. While I'd wanted to travel to Japan for years, this was actually the first time I'd been out of the United States. As a solo traveler the journey felt slightly overwhelming, but as soon as I saw the signs everywhere welcoming me to Japan, that apprehension began to fade away. Breezing through customs, I was officially accepted to a land halfway across the world. The last vestiges of apprehension were replaced by excitement as I looked forward to continuing my journey to Doshisha University to attend the Kyoto Consortium of Japanese Studies (KCJS).

The moment I walked into the arrivals terminal, I was approached by an interviewer for a Japanese TV station:

“Why did you come to Japan?”

“What about studying Japanese appeals to you?”

“What are you going to be doing while you're here?”

The questions came as quickly as I answered them, and they would frame the entirety of my trip. What did I want to get out of my time here? Well, furthering my Japanese studies went without saying, but the rest would be supported by wonderful memories I'll be hard-pressed to forget.

Of course, I wasn't doing this program alone. Those I met in my program became fast friends. As I went through the orientation process for the program, I started to feel out of my depth: would I really be able to do this for two whole months? Those fears were soon assuaged when I began to talk to other people in the program: everyone else was just as nervous as I was, and we were all going to get through this together. From studying together for hours after class to journeying across Kyoto and elsewhere in Japan, the world became a lot more welcoming when I was with them. From the start, we experienced Japan's rich cultural offerings together,



from temples to Japanese comedy to even festivals such as Kyoto's Gion Festival and Osaka's Tenjin Festival.

As the program progressed, I found myself acclimating further to life in another country. Thanks to our biweekly cultural exchanges with actual Japanese college students, I found myself learning more about Japan than I ever could have from just staying home. The ability to immerse myself in Japanese culture reaffirmed my desire to continue learning the language so I might experience even more of what I couldn't while I was there. In fact, thanks to my experiences this summer, it's not an understatement to say that my trajectory in life could be taking a massive turn.

While my major field of interest is computer science, I've also always had a passion for education and of course studying the Japanese language. The JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program would allow me to take a year (or more!) to teach English

to Japanese students, and having lived in Japan for an extended period now, I'm more sure than ever that I would want to participate in it. From there, when I return to the world of computer science, I'll be continually searching for ways to integrate my study of and proficiency with Japanese into my professional life. Perhaps one day I'll work in Japan, helping to bridge American branches of a company with the Japanese ones.

I don't yet know what my future holds, but I'm incredibly excited to see where my path leads me. This experience would not have been possible for me without the gracious support of the East Asian Studies department's fellowship, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Moe (Yameng) Zhang

My Japanese class was an integral part of my study abroad experience, conducted entirely in Japanese with a small, tight-knit group of students. The small class size allowed for individualized attention and dynamic participation, which significantly contributed to the supportive atmosphere. My sensei, Professor Nakata, was not only highly skilled but also incredibly encouraging, creating a classroom experience that, while intense, was deeply rewarding. Through a rigorous focus on conversation, grammar, and cultural context, my Japanese proficiency improved dramatically over the course of the semester.

During my study abroad in Japan, I had the opportunity to visit Osaka, Uji, and Kinokasa Onsen with friends in the program, each destination offering a distinct experience. Osaka, known for its vibrant urban atmosphere and culinary scene, left a lasting impression when we explored the bustling streets of Dotonbori, sampling takoyaki and okonomiyaki from local vendors. Uji, renowned for its historical significance and green tea production,

provided a more serene experience as we visited the Byōdō-in Temple, immersing ourselves in its tranquil beauty while eating matcha curry(it was delectable!). Finally, Kinohaki Onsen offered a peaceful retreat from city life, where we onsen-hopped in yukatas. Each location, with its unique character and cultural offerings, contributed to a deeper appreciation of Japan's regional diversity.

The highlight of my trip was forging deep connections with the local Japanese community. Each week, I engaged in conversations with Doshisha University students, covering everything from political insights to their favorite food spots. Their warmth and hospitality shone through as they invited me to lunch, guided me to





temples and shrines, and shared their perspective of Japan with me. I also reunited with my Knox Exchange friend, Sachika, from JAPN 100 and JAPN 200. Over the course of three wonderful meetups, she taught me to prepare a mouthwatering salmon dish and delicious warabi mochi, and we explored charming cafes together. It was truly enriching to experience Japan through her eyes. In addition, one serendipitous encounter on a train introduced me to a retired Japanese couple. Our brief chat blossomed into a friendship, and they graciously invited me to lunch—twice! This unexpected connection was especially meaningful, offering a glimpse into Japan from the perspective of an older generation. I am still in contact with them now and have been sending them pictures of the US as they've never been in the past. These encounters, each unique and heartfelt, made my journey unforgettable.

In conclusion, my study abroad experience in Japan was nothing short of transformative, both academically and personally. The opportunity to engage with local students and residents offered an invaluable cultural immersion, deepening my understanding of Japan's social dynamics, traditions, and values in ways that extended far beyond the classroom. Each interaction, whether with university peers or the older generation, provided unique insights into the complexity and diversity of Japanese life. The unforgettable friendships and experiences gained during this time have left an indelible mark, shaping both my academic pursuits and personal growth. I will be back in Japan soon!

Aimee Zheng

This summer, I had the once-in-a-life time opportunity to study abroad through the International Chinese Language Program (ICLP) at National Taiwan University. In Chinese, there is a phrase known as “大开眼界,” which, in English, translates roughly to “eye-opening,” giving someone a new perspective on life and themselves; As I reflect back on my experiences in Taiwan this summer, there is no better phrase to describe it.

Each day, I attended four hours of classes and spent, on average, six to eight hours on my three courses: Chinese Thought and Society, News and Views, and Taiwanese History and Culture. At the end of each week, I was tasked with writing 600-800 character essays on subjects ranging from Ancient Greek religion, India’s Caste System, and the impact of social media on our health, using the characters and grammar I learned in my three classes. In addition to the regular homework assignments, I also had final exams for each of my classes; one of which was a speaking exam, and several written exams.





Most nights, if I had time each day, I would watch TV and watch the latest commentary and analyses on Cross-Strait relations from 中视新闻 (CTV News), or other channels focusing on Taiwanese indigenous culture or world news. The knowledge I have gained through watching television as well as the interactions in my classes have been mutually beneficial to my understanding of the US-China-Taiwan relationship. I not only gained the ability to read and grasp advanced news articles/primary sources, express my own thoughts and opinions, but I have also gained a more tangible understanding of the relation between the Taiwanese government and its people, as well as how these policies directly impact Taiwanese people and China-Taiwan relations.

Beyond my classes, I also benefited immensely by listening to lectures by students and scholars. Mid-semester, students who are level 4 and above were required to memorize a Chinese essay that they have written in class, and present it to other ICLP students. Students shared their knowledge, thoughts, and opinions on a

wide variety of topics, ranging from a student's own discovery of a new mathematical theorem regarding fractals, to Chinese film history, to more lighthearted topics like a student's dissection of Minion language (Minionese from Despicable Me). I also attended two lectures in Chinese by National Taiwan University Professors. The first one addressed the future of Cross-Strait stability, and the second explored Taiwanese music and diaspora. The lectures, talks, and interactions I have had with students from diverse backgrounds have further fed my desire to understand the relationship between humanities and politics and the multifaceted ways they impact each other.

Outside of class, I decided to explore the nooks and crevices of Taipei City, learning to live in the moment and appreciate the



beauty and strangeness all around me. I further developed my love of film photography on the side, snapping pictures of street signs, temples, and mountains. During the long weekend, I visited Tamsui, experiencing its renowned sunsets, and trying street food such as icecream with peanut butter paste and fried sweet potato balls. I also went on a hiking expedition to 阳明山 (Yang Min Shan) with my aunt, the morning fog shrouding the majestic trees and lush mountains are a sight I will never forget. The last two weekends, I visited a few museums including the National Palace Museum, National History Museum, and National Center of Photography. One thing I found truly fascinating was the historical and cross-cultural evident in many of these artifacts and my surroundings. For instance, seeing a Tang Dynasty vase in the shape of a Greek amphora, or learning that the National Photography Museum's building was previously used as the base for a Japanese shipping company deepened my appreciation for cross cultural interactions that have shaped Taiwanese society and its modern culture.

Studying abroad has broadened my worldview, making me a more curious student, a more empathetic listener, and a lifelong learner. During my time in Taiwan, I met incredible students, teachers, and educators, some who share my interest in international and public affairs, while others are passionate about topics I have never even considered exploring. Nevertheless, we were all united by our love for learning the Chinese language and gaining a deeper understanding of each other and the world.

As I return to the US, I still am left with a deep sense of longing, wanting to see more sights, taste more foods, and experience more of what Taiwan has to offer. Although I've been back in the US for more than a month, I will still carry with me the curiosity that goes beyond the classroom, influencing all that I experience and do. In the coming years at Brown, I will take more East Asian studies courses, and these knowledge and experiences I gained from



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Taiwan will have a great impact on my future studies and in life. I would like to express my sincere gratitude towards the East Asian Department and the generous donors of the Leach Fund for alleviating my financial burden and making this trip possible. I would also like to thank Jonas Trout who helped set up the logistics for the scholarship. I would also like to thank my East Asian History Professor at Brown, Professor Bossler, who first introduced me to the East Asian Studies Summer Fellowship and sparked my desire to understand more about East Asia, as well as my ICLP teachers, who were supportive of me every step along the way. I will carry these experiences with me as I continue on my journey of discovery at Brown.

ALUMNI NEWS

Class of 1977

Linda Jaivin

I've written a short history of China's Cultural Revolution, *Bombard the Headquarters*, which will be published by Old Street Publishing in the UK in April 2025 and Black Inc in Australia in June (and hopefully in the US as well - watch this space). It follows up on my 2021 *The Shortest History of China* which has also been published internationally (by those two publishers and *The Experiment* in the US) including just under twenty foreign language editions.

If anyone is going to be in London on 29 April 2025 and wants to attend the launch (which will also be for another short book, on the death of Stalin, by the fantastic Sheila Fitzpatrick), please drop me a line c/o my agent, Left Bank Literary: <https://leftbankliterary.com/contact> It would be great to see some fellow Brown East Asian studies people there.

My website is www.lindajaivin.com.au if anyone wants to see what else I've been up to.

Class of 1986

Dawn Kopel (nee Weiner)

As a proud graduate of Brown University's East Asian Studies department (from when it was an "interdepartmental major"), I am happy to report that I am an active clinician in the world of outpatient gynecology. I specialize both in general ambulatory gynecology as well as vulvovaginal disorders. Recently I attended the ISSVD World Congress in Slovenia, which was a fantastic educational and fellowship experience. While there I was surprised with a Meritorious Service Award by the board of ISSVD for co-moderating our international enquiry platform.

Michael Justin Lee

I am establishing a new charity, named “Angels in Absentia,” to combat global child sex trafficking. It’s estimated that over 20 million children worldwide are being trafficked. That’s more than the populations of more than 170 of the world’s countries. The anguish and pain their families are undergoing is impossible to comprehend.

Angels in Absentia is a Federal 501(c)(3) charity based near Washington, DC, that will be dedicated to raising awareness of the evil of global child trafficking and to funding the work of major rescue organizations. With all necessary processes almost completed, Angels in Absentia is anticipated to launch on November 1, 2024. The charity’s theme song, also named “Angels in Absentia” and its accompanying music video will be released onto all the world’s streaming platforms on the day of the charity’s launch. It gently tells the tragic story of global child sex trafficking and is also a musical prayer of hope for these children and their families.



Michael Justin Lee, CFA
President and Founder

michael@angelsinabsentia.org
www.angelsinabsentia.org

I ask for donations of any amount to join the fight against this global scourge. Donations are tax-deductible for those in the United States. I am attaching a copy of my business card which has the necessary QR code and web address for donations.

Please be assured that as a Chartered Financial Analyst and former professor of Finance, I will maintain proper and strict stewardship of the funds. Your money will not be misused or wasted. Expenses for the establishment and operations for “Angels in Absentia” will be kept as low as possible and Federal IRS Form 990 filings will be publicly available to confirm this.

Angels in Absentia is determined to do its part making global child sex trafficking a crime of the past. Let us together help free these beloved children from captivity.



Brian Palmer

I have spent most of the last decade in Virginia after years of international reporting, including a stretch in Beijing as US News & World Report's bureau chief and three trips to Iraq as an independent journalist. In 2012, after visiting the graves of my great-grandparents in Williamsburg, VA, which happen to be located on a top-secret Department of Defense installation, I stumbled onto a chapter of the American past I knew next to nothing about.

I learned that both Mat Palmer and Julia Fox Palmer, my great-grandparents on my father's side, had been enslaved. Records that my wife, Erin Hollaway Palmer, and I found showed that both had escaped bondage before the end of the Civil War. They were among the roughly half million African Americans who self-emancipated. Mat and Julia joined the US effort to end slavery—Mat by joining the United States Colored Troops, the segregated arm of the US Army; Julia and her family, we think, by working for soldiers and growing crops on land confiscated from a Confederate sympathizer

by the Federals. Mat and Julia's lives are barely documented, as is the case with most Black folk who were legally property until 1865. So one sometimes finds the only or few records of their existence in segregated cemeteries, usually overgrown and long-abused.

My reporting, my career, and my life have therefore been directed into the documentation of historic African American cemeteries, those laid to rest there, the communities they built, and all they achieved. Erin and I have also devoted the last decade to the physical reclamation of East End Cemetery, founded in 1897, here in greater Richmond. You can't learn the history if you can't get to the plots and the stones, so we clear them, one at a time.

In 2018 I won a Peabody Award with my colleague Seth Freed Wessler for our audio story about public funding for Confederate sites, which were subsidized for more than a century across as



African American sites of memory—and communities—were starved of public resources. Most recently the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts mounted an exhibition of my cemetery photographs with fellow Richmonder Susan Worsham called Home/Grown. The show is up through April 2025, so please stop by if you're in the neighborhood.

Class of 1994

Neil Segal

In January, I will celebrate the 20th anniversary of opening Aikijuku Dojo, a Japanese cultural center, where I have expanded from teaching Aikido to include Kenjutsu, Japanese Language, Taiko and other cultural lessons and a Japanese cultural camp for children. I will also celebrate promotion to rokudan (6th dan) in Aikido. I appreciate Brown EAS for starting me on this lifelong journey.

Class of 2000

Stacy Smith

At times this year my work as a freelance Japanese interpreter took a bit of a hit due to the historically weak yen, which adversely affected the amount of travel from Japan. It was a good lesson on how we can't control macroeconomic factors no matter how much we might want to, and thankfully things have picked up recently. I was lucky enough to kick off 2024 with a rare work opportunity. I never imagined that my job would take me to France, but when an old client asked to hire me for an international arbitration in Paris, I was on the next plane! We'll see what the rest of the year brings, but I'm hoping it ends with a similar bang. Speaking of exciting travel, I'm looking forward to celebrating my 25-year reunion in person in Providence next year!

Class of 2009

Kimberly Kwok

Since graduating, my passion for East Asian culture and business has flourished in Hong Kong, leading me to establish several ventures. This year marks the one-year anniversary of my latest project, Acorn Playhouse – Hong Kong’s first family club. This unique space provides a dynamic blend of coworking facilities, an expansive playground, and a welcoming cafe, allowing parents to seamlessly integrate work, play, and quality time with their children.

Acorn Playhouse embodies my deep-rooted belief in holistic development and community building, a passion that also fuels my role as founder of Mighty Oaks International Nursery and Kindergarten, and Acorn Playgroup. These institutions prioritize character education and social-emotional learning for children aged 0-6, an approach recognized when Mighty Oaks received the “Most Prominent Nursery & Kindergarten” award in 2022.

In a testament to my commitment to fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration, I was honored to fly on the inaugural commercial flight of the C919, China’s first domestically produced passenger jet. I was even more thrilled to use this opportunity to bring a group of Hong Kong university students to Shanghai for an enriching internship program, sharing this momentous occasion with the next generation.

Class of 2015

Huilian Sophie Qiu

I currently serve as a Research Assistant Professor at the Northwestern Institute for Complex Systems (Northwestern University), where my research focuses on gender diversity in software engineering and the science of science. My work has been published in several top-tier conferences and journals, including Computer Human Interaction (CHI) and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). I have received several awards for my contributions to the field, including a distinguished paper award. I credit my interdisciplinary education in both EAS and computer science at Brown University as a foundational element that has significantly motivated my research interests. In my free time, I enjoy taking photographs of my pets, Mith and Mirk.



Class of 2016

James Konsky

I graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with my MBA in 2022 with a focus on entrepreneurship and Venture Capital. After two years in the VC world, I returned to St. Louis to lead a college preparatory company called College Preparation Station (www.CPSprep.com) that I originally founded with my mother (born out of Professor Danny Warshay's legendary class!). It has been an exciting experience to practice the entrepreneurship lessons that I preached as an investor, as we are in the process of scaling our impact to new geographies. If anyone has connections to or interest in spreading US college prep resources to Asia, please feel free to reach out to James@cpsprep.com.

On a personal note, me and my beautiful wife, Kaitlan, returned to Providence to exchange our wedding vows in June 2023. We are looking forward to hopefully settling down on College Hill with our family one day.

Emily Schell

This past Spring 2024, I graduated with my PhD in Developmental and Psychological Sciences from Stanford's Graduate School of Education. I just started a faculty position in the Psychology and Neuroscience department at the University of Colorado Boulder this fall. Much of my research continues to draw on what I learned in my East Asian Studies degree at Brown, as I am a cultural psychologist who studies cultural mismatches between individuals and their social institutions.



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2024-25

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 Kaijun Chen..... Associate Professor
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 Yang Wang Senior Lecturer, Chinese
 Aya Yamakawa Visiting Lecturer, Japanese

We want to hear from you!

Email eas@brown.edu and keep us in the know.

Please also contact us if you're interested in speaking to concentrators about what your degree in East Asian Studies has meant for you.

Campus visits or email welcome!



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