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Monday, February 20th, 2017

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The Update

*A bi-weekly roundup of news in the [Department of Asian Studies](#)
for our Students, Faculty and Staff*



In Memoriam: John Forman Howes, 1924-2017

 The Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia was saddened to learn earlier this week that Dr. John Howes, Professor emeritus in the Department, had passed away over the weekend on February 4th at the age of 92. He died at peace in his sleep, surrounded by family.

John Howes was a founding member of UBC's Department of Asian Studies, which he joined in 1961 after earning his doctorate from Columbia University. Professor Howes was instrumental in nurturing the phenomenal growth and success of Asian Studies at UBC, and enjoyed a long a distinguished career as a specialist in Japanese history and religions. His best-known research contribution will forever be his definitive biography of Uchimura Kanzo: *Japan's Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzo* (UBC Press, 2006), a project he worked on for most of his professional life and finished in retirement. During his 30 years of active teaching and research, Professor Howes was at the forefront of Canada-Japan cultural, educational and people-to-people relations. Professor Howes inspired countless young Canadians to dedicate their careers and lives to the Canada-Japan relationship in one way or another and many of his 'deshi' or former students hold leadership positions today in the Canadian Japanese community, and/or work in positions at the interface of Canadian and Japanese education, business, industry, diplomacy, etc.

Arrangements have now been made for a funeral in a place that was very dear to John Howes heart. Please join the family and their many friends at 2 pm on Saturday, March 18 at Christ Church Cathedral, 690 Burrard St, Vancouver.

The link for online giving to the John Howes Lecture is: <http://support.ubc.ca/howes-lecture>

[More information >>](#)

Alumnus Gary Matson Receives a Certificate of Commendation for his Great Contributions Towards Canada-Japan Relations

 Mr. Gary Matson, who earned both his BA ('72) and MA ('82, in Modern Japanese Literature) from UBC Asian Studies and his LLB in 1985, was honored by Consul-General Asako Okai of Japan on February 16, 2017 with a Certificate of Commendation for his "great contributions to promote mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Canada".

Gary has been a steadfast friend and supporter of the Department, and was one of the deshi of the late Professor John Howes who took the lead on creating the endowment for the annual Howes Lecture in Japanese Studies. But more to the point of the Commendation, Gary has been a loyal and beloved servant of just about every community organization and institution

working at the intersection of British Columbia, Japan, and the Nikkei community. Nikkei community elder and leader Gordon Kadota recounted some of Gary's many accomplishments on behalf of the BC Japanese community before leading the group of well-wishers in a well-deserved "kanpai".

Omedetō gozaimasu!

Summer Course Schedule Now Online!

Summer courses have now been posted on the SSC. In addition to some of our most popular courses, like [History of Chinese Cinema](#), [Introduction to Japanese Cinema](#) and [Korean Popular Music in Context](#), we will also be offering beginner language classes for [Chinese](#), [Japanese](#), [Korean](#), and [Cantonese](#).



[View all courses Asian Studies is offering this summer >>](#)

Professor Leo Shin Interviewed on Omni News

Professor Leo Shin was interviewed on Omni News about his new course on the history of Hong Kong and his aspirations for the new [Hong Kong Studies Initiative at UBC](#).



[Watch the interview >>](#)

Dr. Edward Slingerland named a Distinguished University Scholar



- Photo by Martin Dee

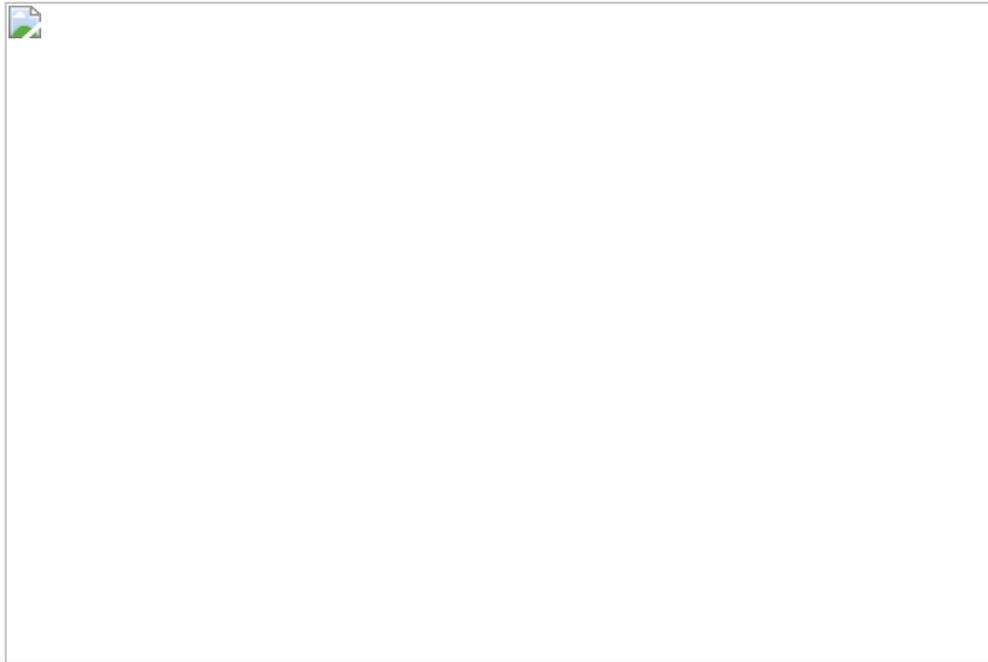
Congratulations to Dr. [Edward Slingerland](#) on being named a Distinguished University Scholar!

This prestigious distinction recognizes exceptional members of our faculty who have distinguished themselves as scholars in research and/or teaching and learning, or who have the potential to demonstrate such leadership. The award runs for five years and is renewable for another five years.

The monetary award associated with a Distinguished University Scholar has two components: A one-time \$20,000 research award and a \$20,000 per annum salary stipend, payable for the duration of the award period.

Dr. Christopher Rea's Latest Book Awarded the Joseph Levenson Post-1900 Book Prize

Congratulations to [Dr. Chris Rea](#) for being awarded the Joseph Levenson Post-1900 Book Prize (China) by the Association for Asian Studies for his latest book, *The Age of Irreverence: A New History of Laughter in China* (California, 2015).



The Merlin Foundation, established by the late Audrey Sheldon, awards the prizes the English-language books that make the greatest contribution to increasing understanding of the history, culture, society, politics, or economy of China.

[Details >>](#)

2017 Wat Lecture: Living the Cultural Revolution— Impact Events and the Making of Cultural Memory

Why is it that for a while in the early 2000s, Mao's portrait dangled in almost every taxi? Why is it that Mao's image is to be found everywhere today, in high-market as well as popular accessories? Why do numerous Chinese websites feature memories of producing and consuming Maoist propaganda art? In addressing these questions, Barbara Mittler will argue that the Cultural Revolution was an "impact event" that touched not only those who have written about it—intellectuals, the well-off, the middle class—but everyone down to peasants and workers. The Cultural Revolution was there for—or against—everyone.

 Guest speaker Prof. Dr. Barbara Mittler is Professor of Chinese Studies at the Institute of Chinese Studies at the University of Heidelberg and Director of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies—Asia and Europe in a Global Context.

Wednesday, March 15th, 2017

6:00pm Reception

7:00pm Lecture

Auditorium, Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall

Free and open to the public – registration required

[Details>>](#)

Colloquium on Religion, Literature and the Arts

Hosted by Dr. [Anne Murphy](#), this colloquium will feature different speakers every other week throughout Term 2.

Tuesday, March 14th, 2017

[Special Undergraduate Presentations](#)

12:30pm

Room 604, Asian Centre

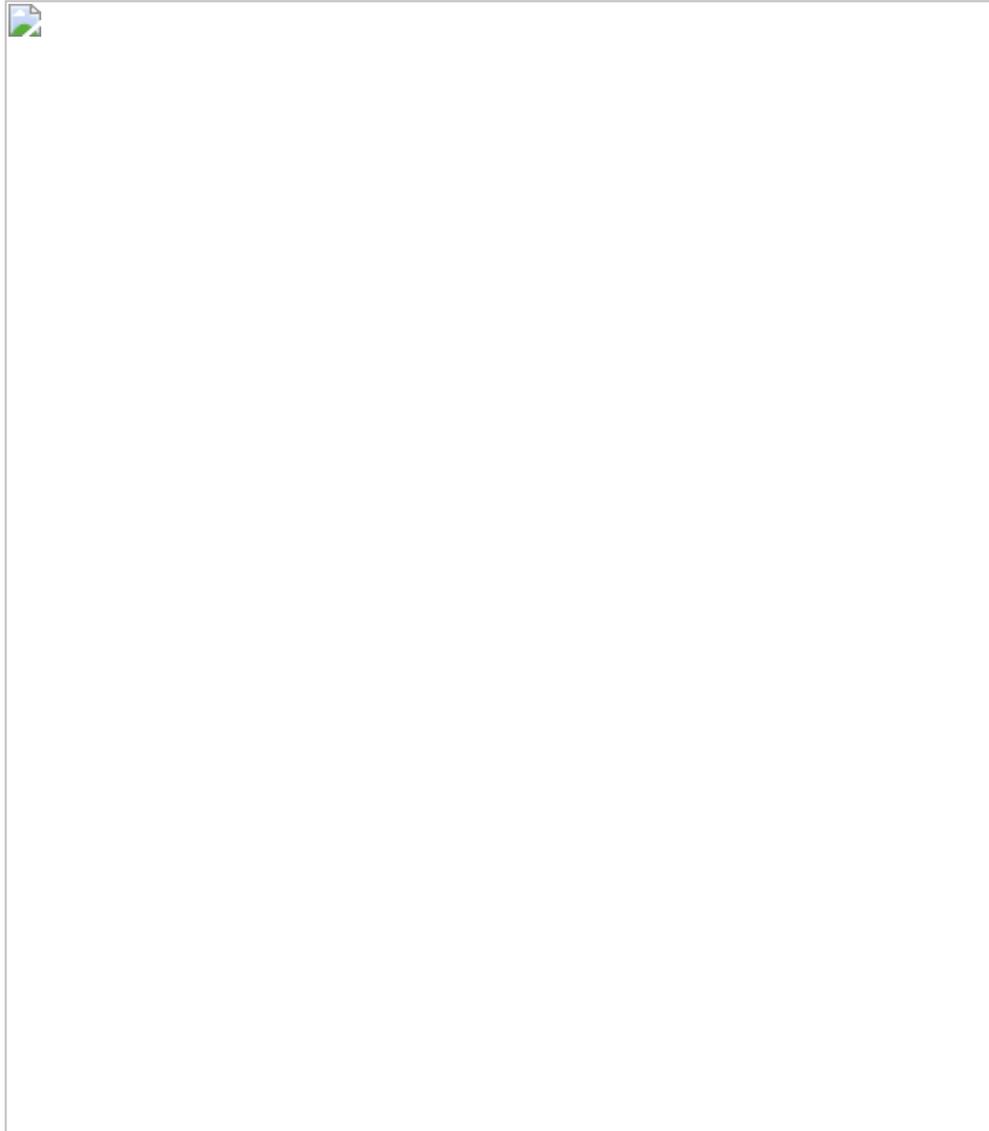
Tuesday, March 28th, 2017

Old Stories in New Forms: Mapping a Medieval Japanese Buddhist Purgatory onto a Modern

Urban Ghetto
With [Dr. Jessica Main](#)
12:30pm - 2pm
Room 604, Asian Centre

South Asian Canadian Histories Launch Inaugural Project, Host Closing Reception for "Mending Cracks" Exhibition

Join the South Asian Canadian Histories Association for the launch of their inaugural project marking Canada's 150th Anniversary, with a special Canadian heritage funding announcement. This event is also a closing reception for the thematically related exhibition, "Mending Cracks" by Raghavendra Rao K.V., in the Asian Centre Lobby.



Thursday, March 2nd, 2017
5:30pm
Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall

[Details >>](#)

Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference 2017

This day-long conference will be held on Saturday, March 11th, 2017 at the Asian Centre Auditorium on the University of British Columbia – Vancouver’s main campus. Over the course of the day, participants in the conference will present original research, receive feedback on their papers or presentations, and hear other scholars present their own work.

For all inquiries, contact gradcon2017@gmail.com

 **Saturday, March 11th, 2017**

9am-4:30pm

Asian Centre Auditorium

[Details>>](#)

2017 BC Japanese Speech Contest

The Annual British Columbia Japanese Speech Contest is open to British Columbia and Yukon residents who speak Japanese as a foreign or second language. The 2017 Contest will be held on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at the Asian Centre, University of British Columbia.



[Details >>](#)

Deadline for 2017 Korean Speech Contest is coming up!

The deadline to apply for the 2017 Korean speech contest is March 13, 2017.



[Visit the consulate website for more details >>](#)

Korean Studies Visiting Scholar Seminar with Professor Heejung Kang (Sogang University)

“조선전기 불교미술의 후원자들 (Patrons of Buddhist Art in Early Joseon)”

“유교국가 조선의 불교미술 르네상스 (Buddhist Art Renaissance in 17th-century Confucian Joseon)”



Thursday, February 23rd, 2017

Speaker: Professor Heejung Kang (Sogang University)

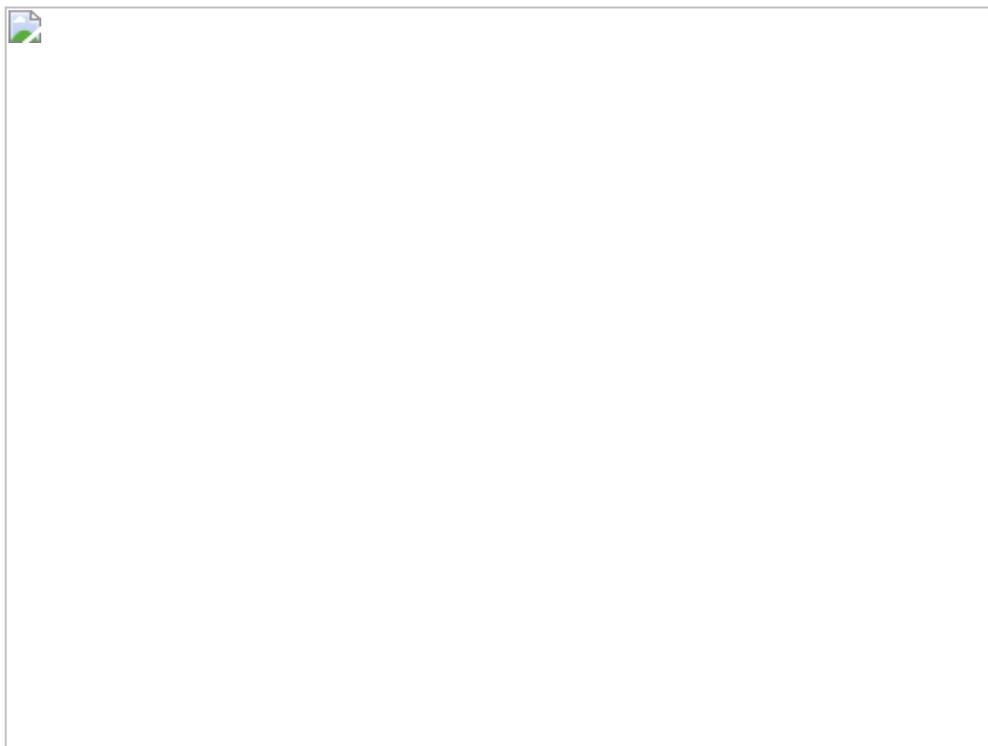
3pm - 6pm

Room 604, Asian Centre

Open to the public. All are welcome.

Language: Korean (한국어)

[Details >>](#)

**2017 One Asia Forum/Korean Studies Lab Conference:
The Imjin War in Premodern East Asia and its Aftermath****March 10th - 11th, 2017**

8:15am - 4:00pm

Westpoint Room, University Golf Club, 5185 W 10th Avenue

Language: Korean and Japanese (한국어/日本語)

Free to attend but registration required by February 25: Please send your RSVP to Jiyoung Suh at jiyoung.suh@alumni.ubc.ca[See the event program and more details>>](#)

The Shikoku Pilgrimage: Its History, Culture and Traditions

As part of the One Asia Forum talks hosted by Dr. Nam-lin Hur, Professor Moreton will present some tales about cures and punishments that, in some cases, have been overlooked yet strongly influenced the faith of the local people in the past. Guest speaker David C. Moreton is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Tokushima. He graduated from the Department of Asian Studies, UBC (BA, 1995; MA, 2001).

Monday, March 13th, 2017

3-5pm

Room 604, Asian Centre

[Details>>](#)

Featured Course: The Science of Religion, a UBCx course

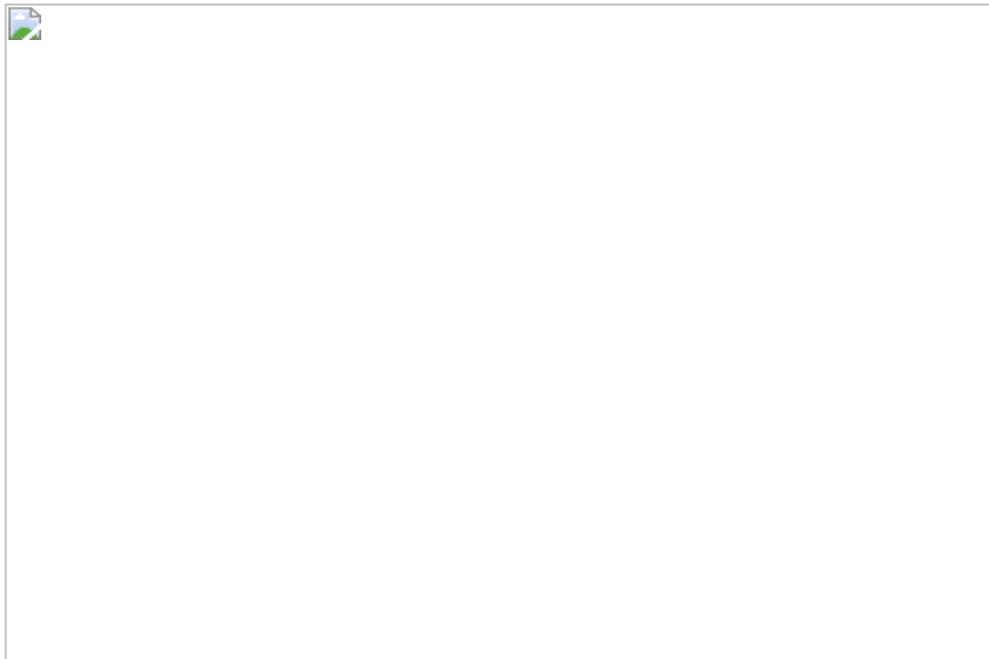
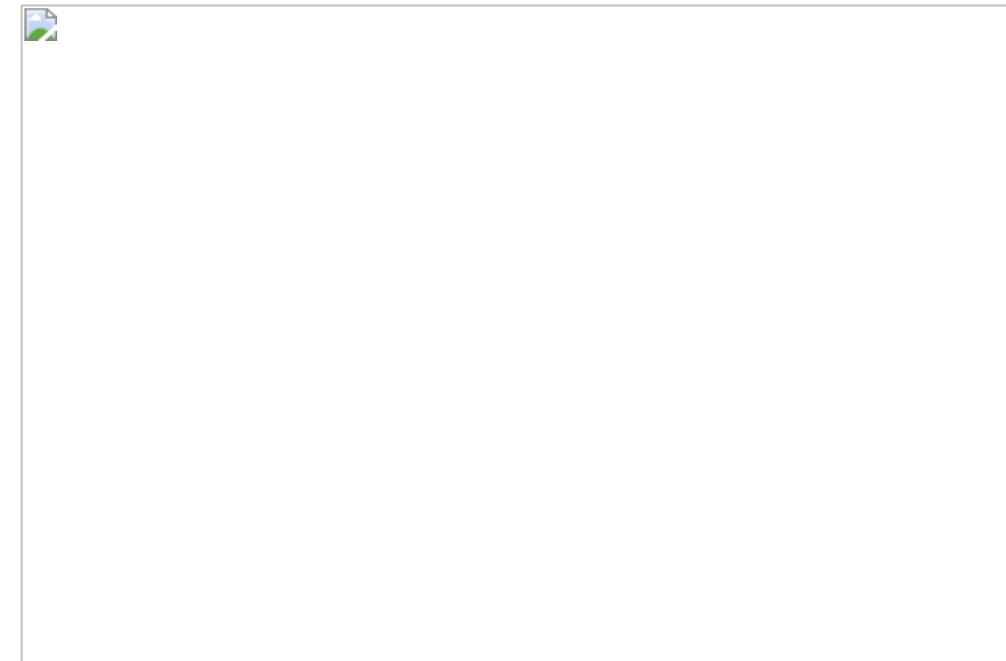
 [Dr. Edward Slingerland](#) will be co-teaching a new UBCx course beginning on March 14th, 2017.

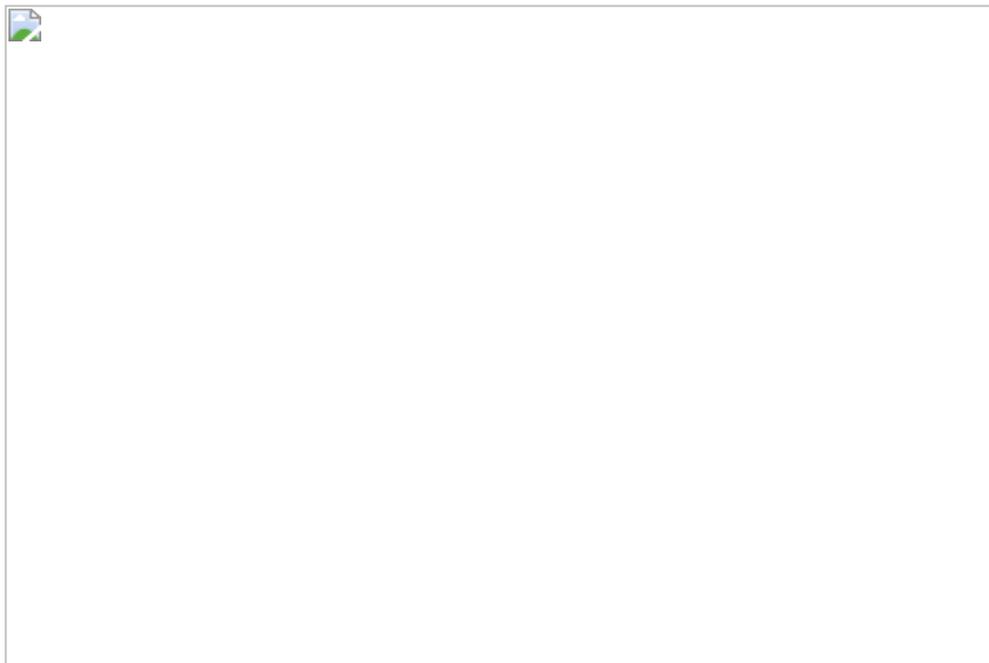
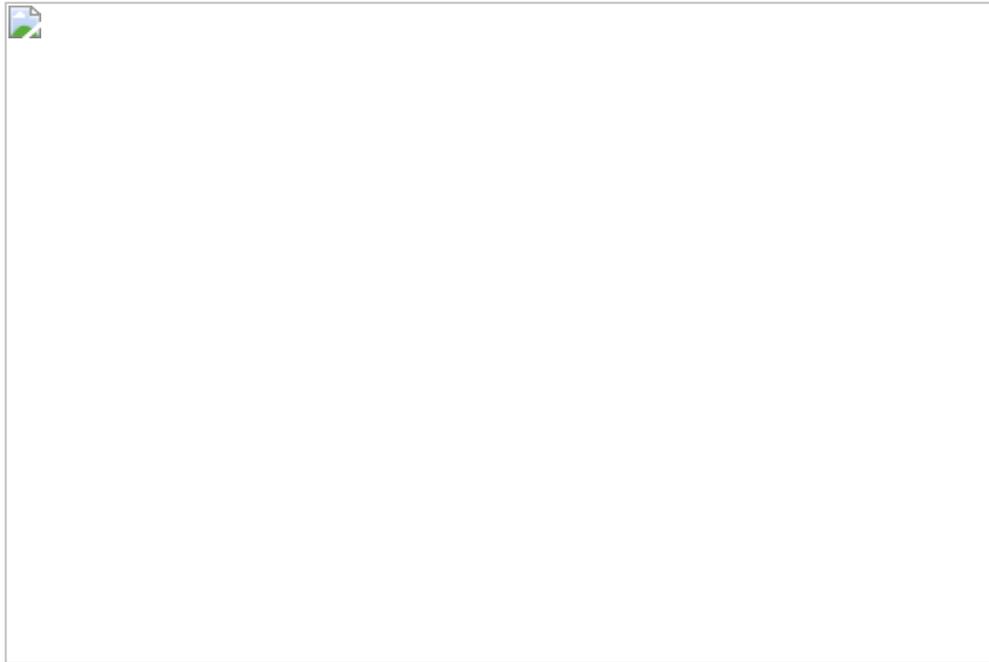
The course is based on the idea that religion is a naturalistic phenomenon — meaning it can be studied and better understood using the tools of science. Religious belief and practice emerge naturally from the structure of human psychology, and have an important impact on the structure of societies, the way groups relate to each other, and the ability of human beings to cooperate effectively.

[Register here >>](#)

Photos: 2017 Asian Studies Careers Night Recap

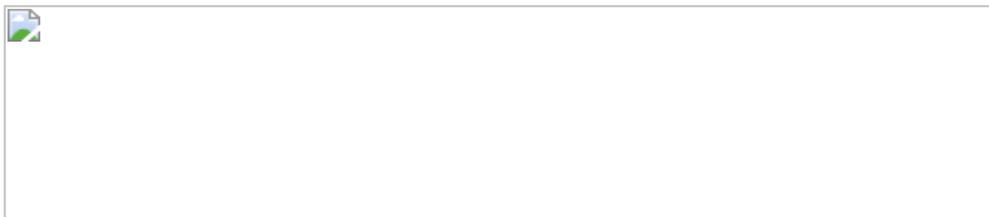
Thank you to all who attended this year's Asian Studies Careers Night, as well as to Ambassador Joseph Caron and our alumni who were willing to share their advice and experiences.





[See more photos here >>](#)

Student Opportunities



[Paid Communications Internship at First Steps. First Steps is a Christian organization committed to preventing child malnutrition in North Korea through programs that provide essential nutrients to young children. Think you'd be a good fit? Please click here to see the job description.](#)

[APF Canada Seeks Students, Young Professionals for Asia Pacific Youth Council. Apply by February 20th.](#)

[UBC Vancouver Summer Program - "The World of Manga and Anime: From Writing to Theory." Runs from July 15th - August 15th, 2017.](#)

[For CNTO 401 Summer Students: Go Global Seminar - The Heritage of Chinese Migration - The Village Fortress/Mansions of Kaiping in Guangdong, Kaiping & Hong Kong, China](#)

[Anamesa, a graduate students' journal based at New York University, is pleased to send out the new Call for Submissions for our Spring 2017 issue. This issue's theme is Subversion. The submission deadline is February 26, 2017.](#)

[2017 Huayu Enrichment Scholarship. Application due February 31st.](#)

[2017 Taiwan Scholarship. Application due February 31st.](#)

[Study Abroad in Japan: Summer Program at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University \(APU\). The Gateway Program offers intensive Japanese language courses from beginner to intermediate level. Apply by March 1st, 2017.](#)

[The Asian Conference on Education & International Development 2017 theme is "Educating for Change." Call for Papers deadline is from Sunday, March 26 to Wednesday, March 29 2017](#)

[For September 2017, the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Victoria, Canada, welcomes applications for postgraduate students to work on the themes and subjects listed here. Apply soon!](#)

On-Campus Events

Sunday, February 26, 2017

[International Institutions: 国際公務員就職ガイダンス](#)

3pm - 5pm

Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Monday, February 27th, 2017

[The Flow and Ebb of Canadian Development Efforts in Nepal](#)

5-7 pm

C.K. Choi Bldg, Room 120

Tuesday, February 28, 2017

[Globalization, the State, and Foreign Labour Policy: Japan in Comparative Perspective](#)

12:30pm - 2pm

Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Wednesday, March 1st, 2017

[The Rise of the Anti-Establishment: Where do we go from here? With Robert Reich](#)

6:30pm - 8:30pm

Old Auditorium, 6344 Memorial Road V6T 1Z2

Wednesday, March 1st, 2017

[Culture/Diplomacy: A Celebration of Artists Shaping Canada's Relationship with China \(Presented in partnership with the Vancouver Art Gallery\).](#)

7pm - 9pm

Queen Elizabeth Theatre, 650 Hamilton Street

Friday, March 3rd, 2017

[Counterintelligence in Recent South Korean Film](#)

3:30pm - 5pm

Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Saturday, March 4th, 2017

[Talk to me About Asia - Student Experience Abroad Conference](#)

9:30am - 3pm

Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre, Jack Poole Hall, 6163 University Blvd

Monday, March 6th, 2017[Japan's New Security Partnerships - the 'Special Relationship' with Australia](#)

12pm - 1:30pm

Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Tuesday, March 7th, 2017[Implementing the Paris Agreement: Are We On The Right Track?](#)

12pm - 2pm

Multipurpose Room, Liu Institute for Global Issues, 6476 NW Marine Drive

Thursday, March 9th, 2017[Student Master Class with Homa Hoodfar](#)

12pm - 1pm

Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre, Jack Poole Hall

Friday, March 10th, 2017[MPPGA Global Policy Project Symposium](#)

10am - 1pm

Multipurpose Room, Liu Institute for Global Issues, 6476 NW Marine Drive

Friday, March 10th, 2017[Contested Governance, Competing Nationalisms, and Disenchanted Publics: Kashmir beyond Intractability?](#)

2:30pm - 4pm

Auditorium, Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall

Monday, March 13th, 2017[Women's Empowerment, Leadership, and Challenges in Greater Central Asia](#)

12pm - 2pm

Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Thursday March 16th, 2017[The Politics of Race, Diversity and Settler Colonialism](#)

8:30am - 5:30pm

Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre, Jack Poole Hall, 6163 University Blvd

Friday, March 24th, 2017["Where is Korea Going?" - Thoughts from Korea's Leading Philosopher](#)

11:30pm - 1:00pm

Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Off-Campus Events**Jan 23rd - Feb 28th, 2017**[The Antiques of the Qianlong Period - A Poly Art Gallery Showcase](#)

Hours vary depending on the day

#100 - 905 West Pender, Vancouver, BC

February 4th - April 30th, 2017[Rock, Paper, Scissors exhibition by Cindy Mochizuki](#)

12pm - 3pm

Nikkei National Museum, 6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby

Wednesday, March 1st, 2017[Culture/Diplomacy: A Celebration of Artists Shaping Canada's Relationship with China \(Presented in partnership with the Vancouver Art Gallery.\)](#)

7pm - 9pm

Queen Elizabeth Theatre, 650 Hamilton Street

Tuesday, March 21st, 2017[Mongolian Cultural Evening featuring "Khusugtun"](#)

7pm - 9pm

Heritage Hall Vancouver BC, 3102 Main Street, Vancouver

Thursday, February 23rd, 2017[Does Confederation Matter? Canada and its Regions](#)

6:30pm

Rosalie and Joseph Segal Room (1420-1430), Harbour Centre, 515 W Hastings St Vancouver, BC

Sunday, February 26th, 2017

[Japanese Canadian Vegetables & Flowers Block Printmaking](#)

12pm - 4pm

Nikkei National Museum, 6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby

Ongoing to March 31st, 2017

[Exhibition - Hong Kong: Heroes of the Dark Years](#)

Tuesdays to Sundays, 10am - 5pm

Chinese Canadian Military Museum, 2nd floor, 555 Columbia St., Vancouver

Meet our Students - Kiran Sunar - Ph.D. Punjabi Cultural History/Literature

 **Tell us a little about yourself, your background and how you became interested in Asian Studies?**

I am a second year PhD Student in the Department of Asian Studies with a focus on South Asian Studies, and more specifically, the region of Punjab, an area that spans across the contemporary borders of India and Pakistan. My research engages the study of gender, sexuality, and the fantastical looking at the multilingual cornucopia of literary traditions in the early modern period (16th to 18th century) and their interactions with each other.

I completed my MA at UBC in English Literature working on South Asian masculinity in South Asian Canadian and British diasporic literature, and my BA (Jt Hons) at McGill University in Religious Studies (with a focus in Asian Religions) and Gender Studies.

I grew up in Vancouver, BC to remarkable parents of Punjabi ancestry who had been raised in Britain; this hybrid sense of belonging left me with a lot of questions about my own histories. I knew so little about where I came from, and I believe that knowing our histories is necessary to knowing who we are. I have always loved to read and so, I began to ask the question of: who is the Shakespeare of Punjab? What about the Punjabi Yeats? Why weren't South Asian literary traditions as valued as the literatures of the West? If we don't value these traditions and insist upon them as worthy, they will no longer exist and we will lose rich systems of knowledge, ones that we have much to gain from.

I am also a writer of fiction and poetry; I completed a diploma in Creative Writing at the SFU's The Writer's Studio and I have a novel underway entitled Nerve. It is a love story set in our contemporary moment between a young Punjabi woman and an embodied land curse that has followed the woman's family from India to Mission, BC. My creative work is informed by some of my research questions and vice versa.

Why did you choose the Asian Studies program at UBC? Was there an aspect of the program or location that was particularly attractive to you compared to other programs in Canada or internationally?

Where else can you find a program that is pan-Asian, interdisciplinary but with a breadth of disciplinary focuses, the strongest Punjabi language and literature program in North America, phenomenal representation of South Asian students, and a commitment to North Indian cosmopolitan language education (offering both Sanskrit and Persian!)

I chose UBC's Asian Studies because I wanted to work with Dr. Anne Murphy, a leading scholar in Punjab Studies. Dr. Murphy is intellectually rigorous, dedicated to Punjab Studies, and committed to the community. It is incredibly important to find a PhD supervisor who has time for you and will guide you in alignment with your goals and strengths. Further, I often see scholars who work cerebrally, but who do not engage on the ground. I think community work and involvement is a necessary ethical responsibility if you are doing work on Punjab (or anywhere in South Asia) because you are writing about a community that exists and has a voice (many voices, for that matter). Having a supervisor who is committed to this principle was very important to me.

The generosity of the Asian Studies faculty is extraordinary. They give their time, energy, and knowledge willingly. I have had incredible guiding conversations with Dr. Adheesh Sathaye and

Dr. Sharalyn Orbaugh, rigorous and fun language training from Professor Sukhwant Hundal, Dr. Tom Hunter and Dr. Mozghan Zolfi, and more recently, amazing pan-Asia training on China with Dr. Christopher Rea and Dr. Alison Bailey. The instructors in Asian Studies are committed to the education of their graduate and undergraduate students, and also their wellness as students and future as well-rounded scholars. This is a style of faculty support that is rare, in my opinion. The pearl lays in UBC's Asian Studies!

I am grateful to be a guest on Musqueam land. There is a history of Punjabi settlers in BC and it is wonderful to be a part of the city's growing South Asian population. This allows for incredible classes with many passionate undergraduate students who have great aptitude in South Asian languages. Vancouver is a wonderful place to live. It is a beautiful, diverse, liberal city with the best food and striking natural beauty! UBC is home to phenomenal interdisciplinary, international on-campus graduate residences and I am lucky to call one of them, Green College, my home. With the College offering lectures on a variety of topics, and a diversity of residents including graduate students, postdocs, and visiting scholars, I am a part of a vibrant community of thinkers perched on an edge overlooking the Pacific Ocean with a family of eagles that fly overhead. It really is the dream!

Could you explain to a non-expert what you are researching and why it is important?

My work responds to a contemporary moment rife with islamophobia, homophobia, and gender-based violence by drawing on a past that had different parameters. I examine the relationship between gender, sexuality, and the fantastical in texts that had Hindu and Muslim and Sikh sentiments woven together. Delving back into the early modern, we encounter a completely different world of religious interactions than what we know today. I ask how the fantastical works in early modern South Asian literatures as a site of liberation and a way to contend with violent and difficult pasts. What are the stories people were telling each other 400 years ago? I hope my work will catalyze different understandings of the past and our sense of the present.

As a graduate student, what are your main activities?

At this juncture, I am immersed in my coursework, which includes the study of multiple languages (Persian, Punjabi, and Sanskrit), and a variety of theory and subject courses from mind-stretching seminars on questions of the cosmopolitan and vernacular to a requisite preparatory seminar on professional development created by department faculty where we workshop everything from conference abstracts to course syllabi in preparation for our job market portfolios. I take area courses where we read Punjabi literature, poetry, theatre, and Sikh scripture. Right now, I am also enrolled in this really cool seminar on the figure of the Chinese ghost! Beyond that, I work as a Teaching Assistant and engage in my residential college's activities (which includes everything from co-convening an interdisciplinary member series to going on ski trips!) I also spend time applying for grants and fellowships, as I believe this is an important muscle to develop in academic life. This summer, I will compile my lists for my comprehensive exams so I have begun to ruminate on that!

What has been the most memorable or impactful moment of your graduate experience?

Most recently, a number of graduate students in the Asian Studies Department planned a vigil at UBC to grieve those lost in the shooting at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec. This was an incredibly moving experience for me to be a part of and share with the wider UBC community.

There are also so many moments over the past two years to choose from: meeting incredible women in a small village in Punjab who are doing inspiring feminist work, reading beautiful 18th century Punjabi texts with other Punjabi students, organizing short film screenings and poetry events.

What are your goals (career or academic) once you've completed the program? And how is our program helping you achieve them?

My goal is to attain a professorship at a research institution in North America in South Asian Studies, Religions, or Literature. I want to share these incredible texts, cultural traditions, and histories with students and continue to have illuminating discussions for the rest of my life!

Can you give any advice to new students in our program or for students considering applying to it?

The day I was accepted to the program, I wrote myself a letter capturing how ecstatic I was, as well as a list of the things I would need to remind myself of as I hit bumps in the road. Reminders like: be grateful, embrace teamwork, stay curious, read as much as possible, stay humble, and remember the profound privilege of pursuing a PhD.

It is easy to become overwhelmed during the long stretch or to complain about the inevitable difficulties. Reminding yourself of the larger purpose of your work and being grateful for the opportunity to pursue it will be the lifeblood to staying grounded during the pursuit of a PhD.

More practically, make a five-year plan and follow it, find a supervisor you can trust and trust them, and apply for everything even if you think it is beyond your reach! You can't win an award you didn't apply for.

Finally, find intellectual and social kin across fields of study. I have an amazing group of peers who keep me inspired and cheerful. They can see the forest for the trees when I can't and so we help each other to avoid the hamster wheels of academic stress. We provide feedback on each other's work, share strategies, and celebrate our successes over delicious meals together.

We Welcome your Submissions

If you have a story that you would like featured in our biweekly update please submit your story [here](#) and it could be featured in the next Update!

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