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The Update

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



Sunera Thobani Honoured for Standing Up Against Islamophobia

On March 11th, Associate Professor Sunera Thobani of the Department of Asian Studies and Institute of Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice was honoured as part of the Hands Up Against Racism campaign for her human-rights work.

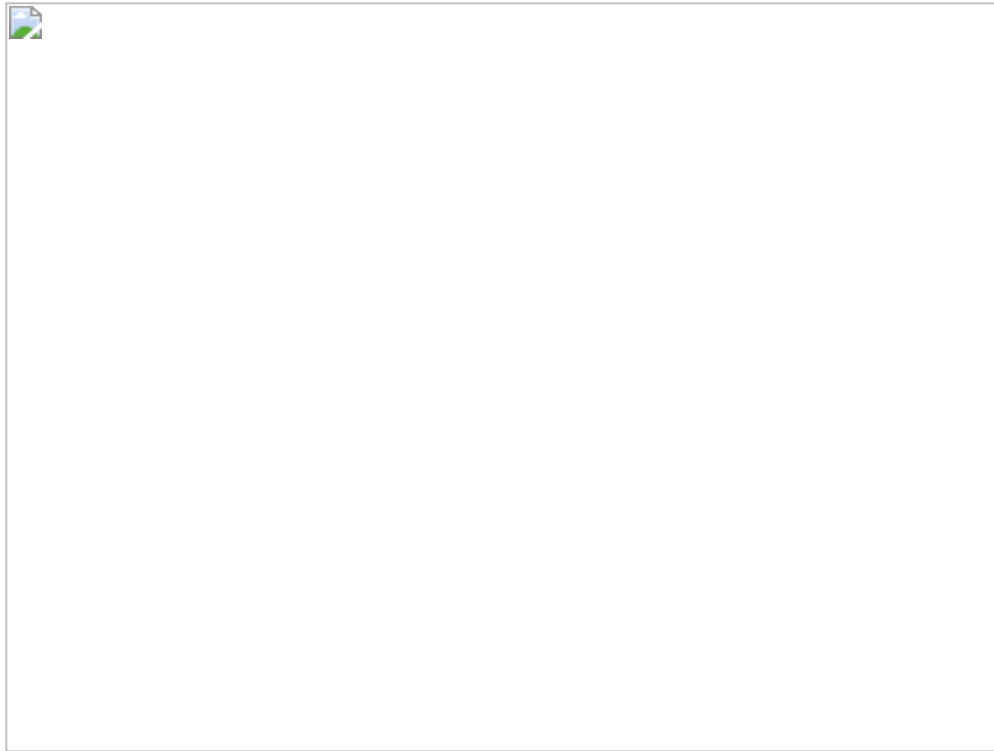


[Read the full article here>>](#)

2017 BC “Chinese Bridge” Mandarin Speech Contest for University Students

On Saturday, March 11, the BC “Chinese Bridge” Mandarin Speech Contest for university students was held at BCIT. The topic of this year's contest required students to talk about their individual stories with China, their experience learning Chinese, and their passion for Chinese culture. Forty eight students from eight post-secondary institutions over British Columbia participated in the contest. Out of the 11 prizes in total, UBC students won 6 of them.

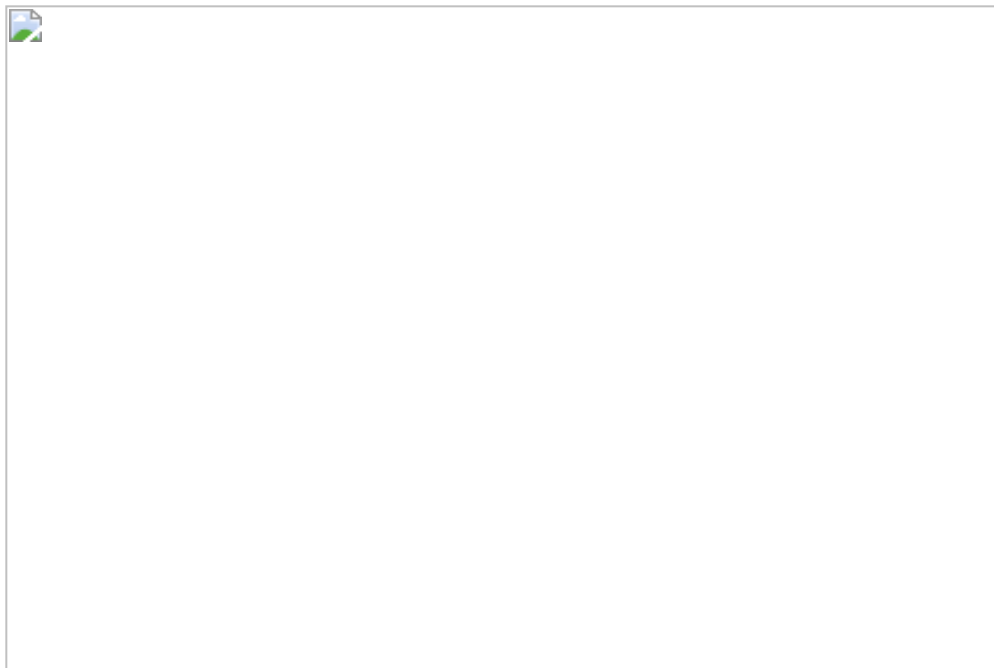
Congratulations to all the prize winners and every UBC student who participated in the contest!



[See the awards given to UBC students here >>](#)

29th Annual BC Japanese Speech Contest

Nineteen students from UBC were selected as the finalists to participate in the 29th Annual BC Japanese Speech Contest held at the Asian Centre on March 4th. At this provincial level, 10 of the 19 UBC students won awards at various levels. Of these 10, Mason Leung, Jack Hwang, Cynthia Carty, and Jeremy Sit won the first prizes in the Beginner, Intermediate, Advance and Open categories respectively, and continued on to present their speeches at the Canada National Japanese Speech Contest on March 18th, 2017.



[Details >>](#)

UBC Student Wins First Prize at Toronto Korean Speech Contest

On March 11, Clarisa Madilao, a KORN 302 student, won the first prize in the 2017 Toronto Korean Speech Contest and Quiz advance category. For her first place speech, she was awarded a galaxy tab and free admission to a summer Korean program at Seoul National University. The same day, Ms. Madilao won the third prize in the Quiz Contest as well. The event was hosted by the Centre for the Study of Korea at the University of Toronto, the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Toronto and the Korean Education Centre in Canada.



[See Ms. Madilao's winning speech here >>](#)

A Third Gender: Beautiful Youths in Japanese Prints

Originally from an exhibition, co-curated by Dr. [Joshua Mostow](#) and previous student, Dr. Asato Ikeda, at the Royal Ontario Museum, Dr. Ikeda has now brought the show to New York where it is currently showing at the Japan Society. The New York Times recently featured the exhibit in an article titled "When Japan Had a Third Gender."

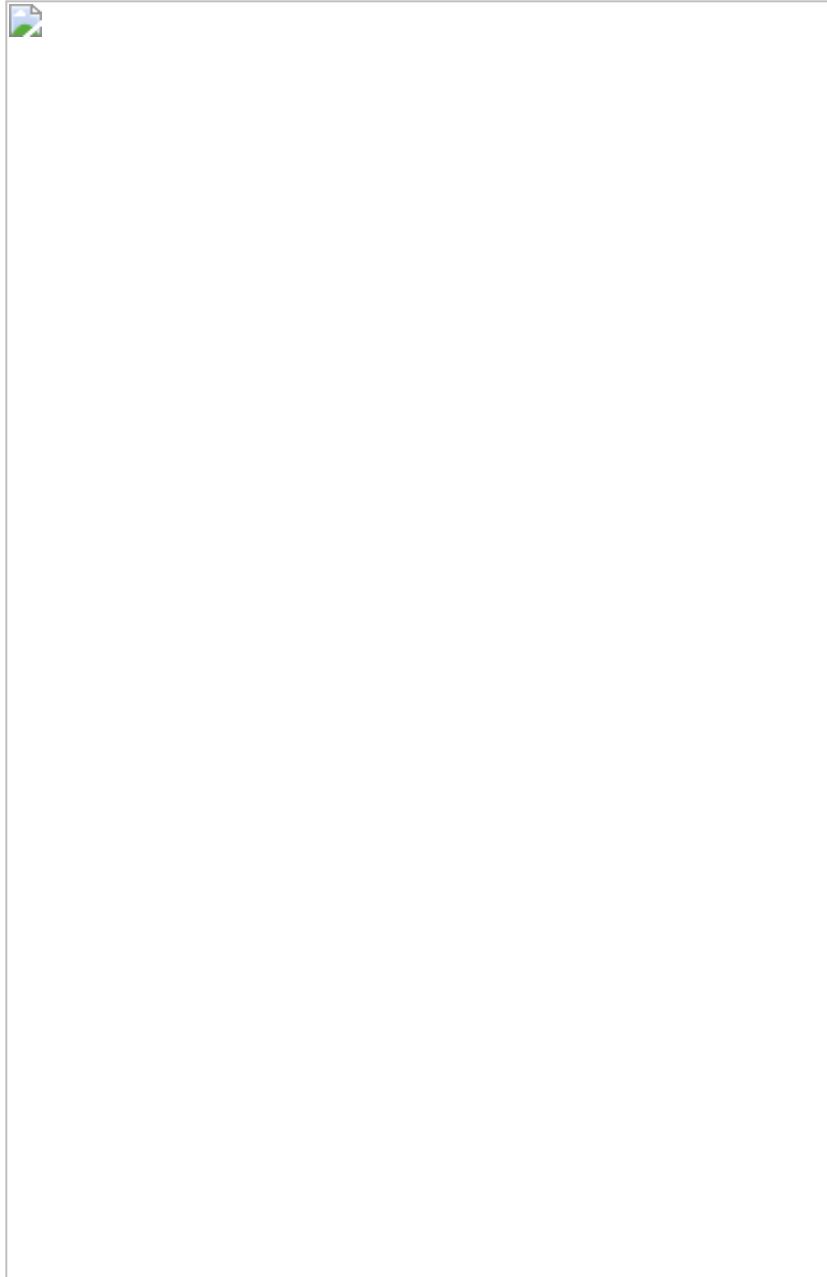


Detail of "Two Couples in a Brothel" (1769–70), by Suzuki Harunobu. Credit: Royal Ontario Museum; Photo: Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times.

[Read the New York Times Article >>](#)

Symposium: What is China?

Professor Ge Zhaoguang, Professor Wang Fansen, and Professor Dai Yan will each give a lecture on an individual topic and then lead a discussion. Topics covered include the discourse on "China," the self-image of imperial China, and Chinese literature.

**Thursday, March 23rd, 2017**

4-6pm

Fairmont Social Lounge, St. John's College

[Learn more about the lecturers and RSVP here >>](#)

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 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

2017 Korean Speech Contest

 **Saturday, April 1st, 2017**

1pm - 5pm

Multi purpose room, Liu Institute for Global Issues, 6476 NW Marine Dr, Vancouver

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

A Walk in the Night with Zhuangzi, Singing Songs of the South

The "Fan wu liu xing" (All things flow into form) is a Warring States manuscript now stored at the Shanghai Museum. Taking cue from this text, particularly the discussion surrounding a key formulation about "the mind prevailing over the mind," this paper argues for a new reading of a difficult passage in Zhuangzi "Da zongshi" (The great and venerable teacher), showing that it not only parallels the description of a spirit journey in "Yuanyou" (Far roaming) of the Songs of the South, but is also a detailed account of the different stages of the process of self-cultivation. Such an interpretation situates the newly recovered "Fan wu liu xing" in the context of Pre-Qin intellectual history, cuts across conventional boundaries of Confucianism versus Daoism, poetry versus philosophy, and ultimately reminds us that the act of reading is never insulated from the linguistic details of the text.

**Wednesday, May 17, 2017**

3pm - 5pm

Room 604, Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall

With speaker Kuan-yun HUANG (Tsing Hua University, Taiwan).

[Details >>](#)

Photos: The 2017 Yip So Man Wat Memorial Lecture

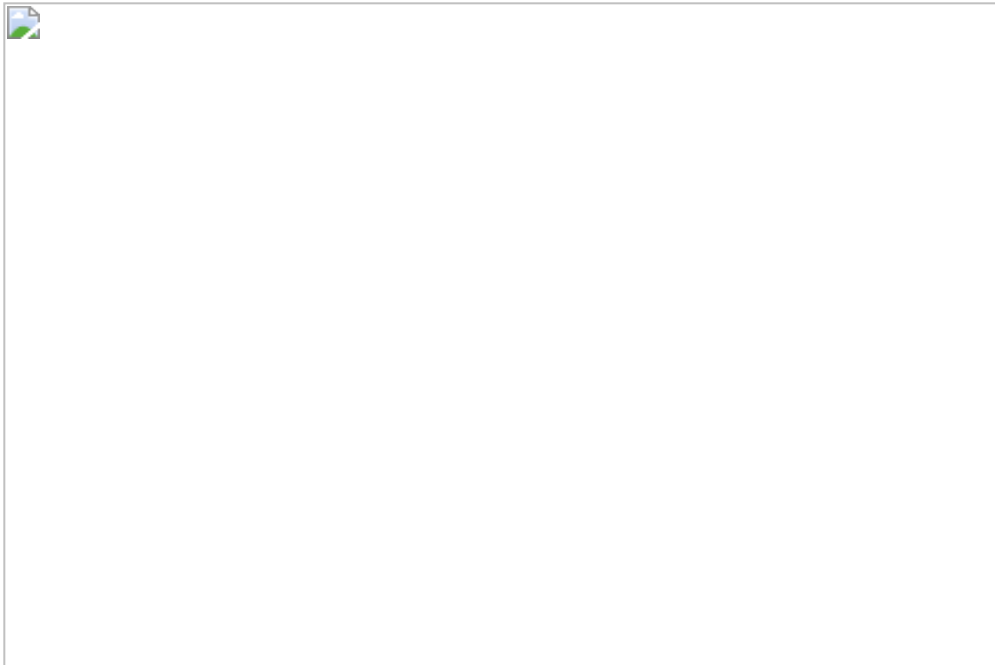
On March 15th, guest speaker Dr. Barbara Mittler, from the University of Heidelberg, gave a talk to a packed auditorium titled "Living the Cultural Revolution - Impact Events and the

Making of Cultural Memory." In her presentation, Dr. Mittler discussed how the Cultural Revolution, a period in Chinese history known for its radical politics and negative impact, continues to permeate throughout Chinese popular culture today.

Photos:



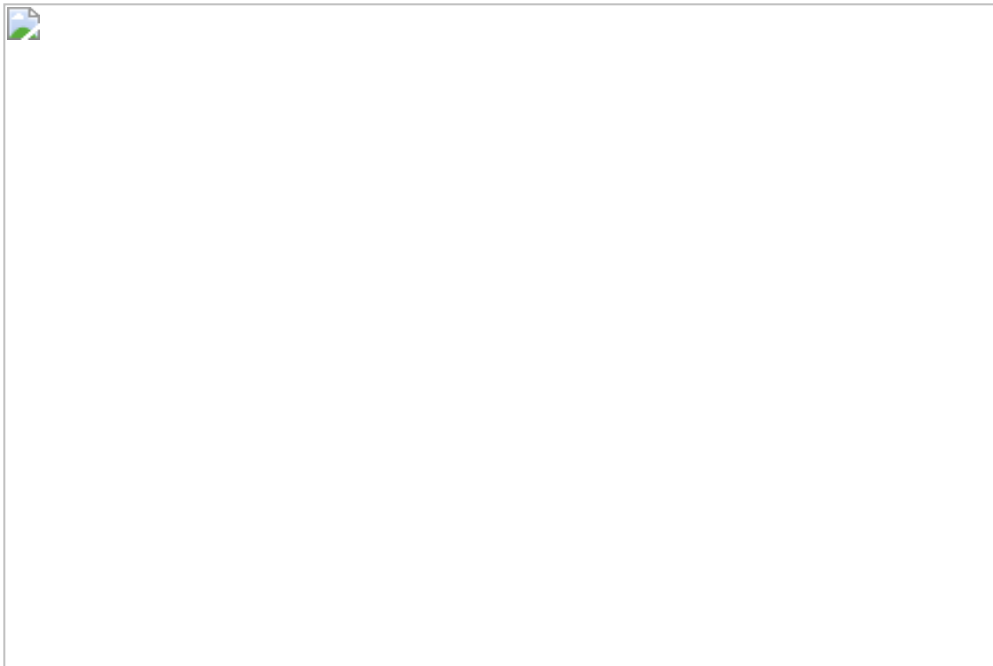
Dr. Mittler in front of audience



Asian Studies graduate students during the opening reception



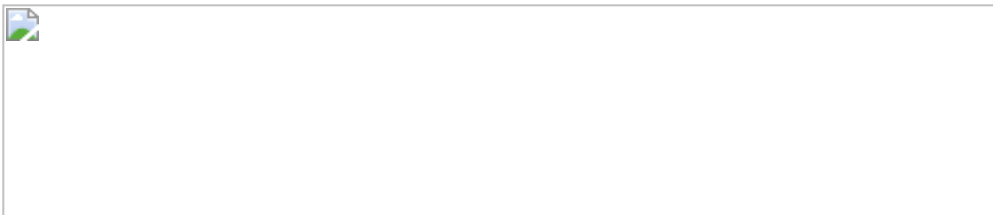
The lecture was attended by mix of students, alumni, faculty and even members of the general community that had experienced the cultural revolution first hand



Dr. Mittler with Messrs. Alex and Chi Shum Watt, whom without the Wat lecture would not be possible

[View a full gallery of 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.

[Modern and Open Relationships Experiences Study \(MORE\) Survey](#) is asking for participants. Fill out the survey [here!](#)

[The Government of the Republic of Korea, through the National Institute for International Education Development \(NIIED\), offers two scholarships for study or research at the Master's or PhD level in Korean studies, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, and other fields of study. Scholarships are tenable from September 1, 2017. Apply by the end of today, March 20th.](#)

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

[Apply to study the Global Institute for Leadership and Management Development \(GILMD\) summer course at the University of the Virgin Islands St. Thomas Campus from . Applications due by March 27th, 2017.](#)

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

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

[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

March 13th – May 31st, 2017

[New Exhibition: Double Exposure](#)

Asian Centre (1871 West Mall) & Rare Books and Special Collections (1961 East Mall)

Tuesday, March 21st, 2017

[Gendered Vulnerability Under Expansion of Rubber Plantation in Luang Namtha, Laos and Northern Shan State, Myanmar](#)

11:30am - 1:30pm

Room 351, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

Tuesday, March 21st, 2017

[Individualization of War](#)

12:30pm – 2:00pm

Liu Institute for Global Issues – Multipurpose Room

Tuesday, March 21st, 2017

[Study in Japan](#)

5:30pm - 7:pm

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

Wednesday, March 22nd, 2017

["Resilience in the Margins: Grassroots Women's NGOs, Feminist Expertise, and a New Paradigm for Japanese Post-Disaster Reconstruction"](#)

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Asian Centre Room 604

Thursday, March 23rd, 2017

["Borders in the 21st Century" Panel](#)

5pm - 7pm

Henry Angus Building, Room 9/F, 2053 Main Mall

Thursday, March 23rd, 2017

[Dr. Bejoy K Thomas – Whose water? Challenges and complexities in wastewater reuse in peri-](#)

[urban Bangalore, India](#)

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Aquatic Ecosystems Research Laboratory, AERL 120

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

Friday March 24th, 2017[Symposium: Missionary Photographs of Meiji-Taisho Japan](#)

12pm - 4pm

Lillooet Room, Irving K. Barber Learning Centre

Monday, March 27th, 2017[All Our Father's Relations - UBC Screening](#)

5pm - 7pm

Frederic Wood Theatre, 6354 Crescent Road

Wednesday, March 29, 2017[Rebalancing Competing Values Relating to the Right to be Forgotten and Users' Rights: Toward a New Conception of Rights in the Age of AI, IoT, and Robotics](#)

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Room 106, Allard School of Law, 1822 East Mall

Thursday, March 30th, 2017[Health Care for 1.3 Billion: Successes and Challenges in China's Health System Reforms](#)

12:30pm - 2:00pm

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

Friday, March 31st, 2017[Australia & Canada in the Trump Era](#)

11am - 12:15pm

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

Friday, March 31st, 2017[Dr. Albert Park, Claremont McKenna College, "Environmental Anarchism: Agriculture and Social Renewal in Modern Korea"](#)

3:30pm - 5pm

Room 120, C.K. Choi Building

Off-Campus Events

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

7pm - 9pm

Heritage Hall Vancouver BC, 3102 Main Street, Vancouver

Wednesday, March 29th, 2017["City State to Harbour City": An afternoon with two local Singaporean writers](#)

5:30pm - 7:30pm

APF Canada's Vancouver Office, 9th Floor - 675 West Hastings St.

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

Asian Studies Faculty Spotlight Interview: Dr. Thomas Hunter

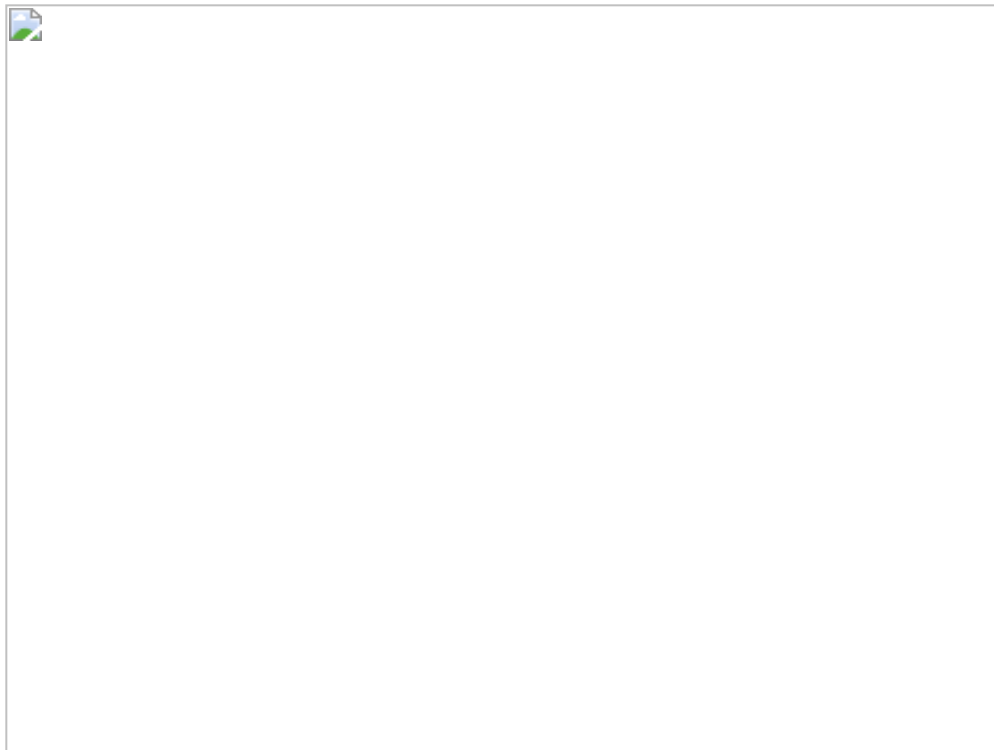
A new series where we ask our instructors about their early lives, career development and proudest accomplishments. This interview features Dr. Thomas Hunter, Professor in Sanskrit and South-Southeast Asian Studies.

 **Can you explain to a non-expert what you research?**

My special area of interest is the relationship of the ancient literature of South Asia and the literature of ancient Java and Bali. This means that I look at the Indian “court epics” called *kāvya* that were composed in metrical Sanskrit and how they stimulated and influenced the development of the closely related *kakawin* literature of Java and Bali. In my writing and course development I look at these literary genres as one example among many cultural connections that can be traced between South and Southeast Asia – and indeed in the larger world of Asia. In recent years I have been interested in the broader cultural and economic networks of the Indian Ocean world, beginning with the period when Indian ideas about language, culture and society helped shape the early societies of Southeast Asia and extending through the periods of the Islamic trading states and colonization.

How and why did you start your journey in Asian Studies?

Oh so long ago! My paternal grandfather’s house was full of Chinese and Japanese antiques that were part of his earnings as a house carpenter in a West Virginia town favored as the vacation spot of Washington families who had profited from the “clipper trade” with the Far East. My father inherited a small collection of works on Japan by authors like Lafcadio Hearn (Koizumi Yakumo) and Ernest Fenollosa, and when I was 16 (and more than a bit of a rebel) he gave me a copy of the Isherwood-Prabhavananda translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. All of these pointed East and set the stage for the long and winding road of my journey into Asian Studies.

**What was the experience for you learning a second language?**

In 1998 I was lucky enough to win an FLAS Fellowship to study the Indonesian language at the University of Michigan. After three years of study, I attended a summer course located in the bustling city of Salatiga in central Java. This was a life-changing event. There is nothing like immersion in an unfamiliar society when you have just enough linguistic equipment to begin to make your way. If you like to talk and don’t mind making mistakes you can enter a new cultural terrain, first as a visitor and in time as more and more a part of a culture that once may have seemed strange and threatening.

Was there a point in your journey you struggled or questioned yourself? What happened?

The most difficult time in my journey came up in graduate school, as I struggled with feelings of anxiety about what kind of work I might be able to find with a degree in linguistics and a specialization in the languages and literatures of Indonesia. I had come into the field just after some very talented researchers and writers in the field and most of the good jobs were already

taken. Fortunately, I found work with a Study Abroad Program in Indonesia. While I hadn't intended to make that a long-term commitment I found that my training in languages gave me a leg-up in my work, as I could communicate on a nearly equal footing with local colleagues and friends. I stayed on in that work for over a decade, working with university age students who were going through the same cultural shocks and realizations that I had experienced not long before. There were indeed some moments of agony along the way, but I have never regretted the journey.



Is there a project that you are most proud of?

Helping to build the SIT Study Abroad Program in Bali, Indonesia. I started this work in 1989 with the hope and expectation that I could train local staff to take over my roles in the program. Since 2011 my wife and her staff of Indonesian language teachers and program

assistants have directed the program. When I look at their YouTube page (SIT Study Abroad Bali) I feel that my years working on the program were well worth the effort.

In class we study about events that shape Asia. Have you witnessed any such event firsthand?

I was in Indonesia during the student revolution that led to the fall of the New Order government in 1998. I lived on Bali, which was relatively quiet at the time, but we were constantly tuned to newspaper and media reports on events like the police shootings at Trisakti University in late 2007 and the pro-democracy march of May 14, 1968 when Sultan Hamengkubuwana, the traditional ruler of Jogjakarta, courageously led the student march protesting the continued leadership of former president Suharto. These events led to the "Era Reformasi" that followed and the unexpected lifting of constraints on free speech that we had experienced in the 1990s.



What change do you hope your work can make in the world?

My main hope is that by studying the past—both ancient and recent—students can gain a better understanding of the sources of modern dilemmas and conflicts, as well as the cultural resources that can help sustain us in times of trouble, and will enrich our lives in settled times.

[See this interview and more>>](#)

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!

Missed an Update?

All past newsletters may be found [here](#).



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