

Northwestern | Asian Languages and Cultures

Faculty News



David Boyk, Assistant Professor of Instruction for Hindi Urdu Language, published an article, "Nationality

and Fashionability: Hats, Lawyers and Other Important Things to Remember" in the journal *South Asia*.



In the spring, Associate Professor and Chair **Laura Brueck**, along with Associate Professor of English, Ivy Wilson, was

awarded a two-year grant from the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs through their new Idea Incubation Process to establish The Race, Caste, and Colorism Project (RCCP) at Northwestern. The aim of the RCCP is to cultivate a global network of scholars, artists, writers, translators, and activists to help foment an institutional and intellectual shift in the ways we think about localized manifestations of caste and casteism, and race and racism, as in fact part of a global semiotics of colorism. Plans for the years

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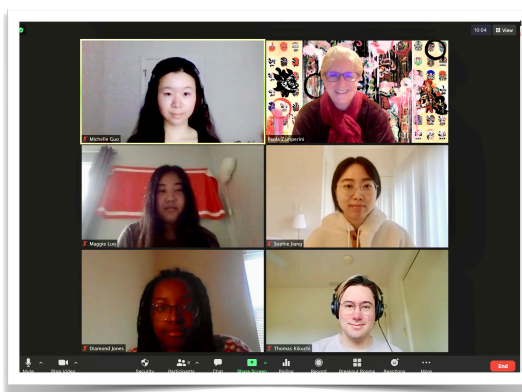
A Message From the Chair

There is no doubt that 2020-2021 brought many challenges to all of us, students, faculty, and staff alike. As we reflect back on those difficult months, and share this newsletter on the cusp of a new school year, we find ourselves with much to celebrate, and to anticipate. Despite our physical isolation from one another, our students nevertheless honed their language skills, grappled with challenging texts, conducted independent research, and wrote original theses. Our faculty members pivoted with enthusiasm and compassion and took their curriculum digital, discovering along the way new possibilities of connecting our students with scholars, artists, activists, and other students from countries all over the world. Faculty and students alike won prestigious fellowships, published their research, and worked together to maintain our community of learning. We can't wait to see our students again in the classroom in a few short weeks, but in the meantime, let's take one last look at last year and savor our many collective successes.

Laura Brueck, Chair

Congratulations Class of 2021!

We are so excited to congratulate all of our graduated students from 2021! We can't wait to see where your next adventures take you.



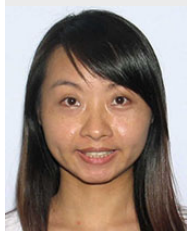
Professor Zamperini (top right) with ALC senior majors during their Senior Seminar class.

ahead include new course development and open-access pedagogical materials; lectures, dialogues, and conferences that will catalyze new interdisciplinary conversations on campus and beyond, and new initiatives in translation and publication. You can follow the RCCP on Twitter at @RaceCaste.



Corey Byrnes, Associate Professor of Chinese Culture has been named a 2021–2022 fellow at the

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard University, joining a group of artists, scientists, scholars, and practitioners for a year of research and interdisciplinary exchange.



Chin-Hung Chang, Assistant Professor of Instruction of Chinese Language, was invited to present

the Writing Proficiency Test Rater Certification at Northwestern's Council on Language Instruction in order to help other language faculty understand the theory and practice of language assessment. She also organized a language exchange program for intermediate Chinese classes with English learners from National Chengchi University in Taiwan. This

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Our Growing Graduate Student Community

Our graduate student community in ALC continues to grow in partnership with the Program in Comparative Literary Studies (CLS). Students pursuing PhDs in CLS choose a “home department” where they complete coursework and field exams, and from among whose faculty they seek mentorship. Over the last several years, the number of applicants to CLS seeking a home department in ALC has grown exponentially. Here is a peek at what our graduate students are up to!

Maria Romanova (beginning Fall 2021) received her BA in Chinese from University of Oxford, and began her MPhil in Cultural Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong after two years of graduate study at Peking University. Her proposed research is centered on environmental memory and permafrost, focusing on the borderland area between Northeast China and Siberia (Russia). She is also interested in critical theory, art practices in post-socialist states, new materialism, decolonial thought and its applicability to the study of Siberia/Northeast China, Siberian indigenous ontology, and eco-criticism. Her previous academic research projects include Sino-Soviet cultural exchange in Republican China (1920-30s), as well as independent/alternative art spaces and their practices in post-socialist China. She has also recently completed an independent research project in collaboration with the Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong, where she looked at Sino-Soviet Art Exchange and Socialist Realism in the 1950s.

Soumya Rachel Shailendra (beginning Fall 2021) is a former student of Literature and Drama at Bennington College, Vermont. Originally hailing from Delhi, Soumya's academic interests include postcolonial studies, critical race studies, Dalit studies, affect theory, and Black diaspora studies. Her postgraduate research compares the politics of lamentation and memorialization in Dalit and African-American narratives. She has been an active student member of the Mellon Consortium on Forced Migration, Displacement, and Education (CFMDE). She has previously interned at The Indian Express and the University of Hawai'i Press.

Kang Kang (Connie) is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literary Studies with a home department in Asian Languages and Cultures and a Mellon Fellowship in the Comparative Race and Diaspora cluster. Her research interests include post-revolutionary and post-

program aims to leverage students' speaking ability and cultural knowledge. Professor Chang also led the summer language exchange program for interested students from intermediate Chinese classes, in partnership with the Applied English Department at Sanchung Vocational High School in Taiwan. This program offers extra language exposure for students to cover the gap before Fall classes resume.



In June, **Ya-Ching Hsu**,
Lecturer of
Chinese
Language and
Jingjing Ji,
Assistant



Professor of
Instruction of
Chinese
Language
conducted a
workshop
on *Diversity,*
Equity and

Inclusion (DEI) in Chinese Heritage Language Education for the Chinese Language Teachers Association. About 140 Chinese language instructors participated. Ji shared the curriculum design of her Chinese 115 class (first-year Chinese for heritage language learners), focusing on the unit about AAPI heritage month. She showcased the pedagogical utilization of the PBS documentary *Asian Americans* and ways to extend learning beyond the classroom to local communities where

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socialist affect, documentary/ethnography and fabulation, performance and popular media, translation, and the material and imagined structures of racial/ethnic solidarity and antagonism. Inspired by Afro-pessimist thinkers and practitioners, she hopes to work on "Sino-pessimism" as a critical idiom to destitute the "Chineseness" in historical experiences of Chinese modernity.

Connie received a BA in Comparative Literature and Society from Columbia University in 2015. She is an editor of the Guangdong Times Museum's journal *South of the South* and has written for *Artforum China*, *ArtReview Asia*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *LEAP*, and other publications. Her work as an artist, critic, and translator can be viewed here <https://kangkang.fyi/>

Ishan Mehandru is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literary Studies, with a home department in Asian Languages and Cultures. He is interested in reading the ways in which masculinity is constructed in women's writings in Hindi-Urdu literature. Prior to joining Northwestern University, Ishan worked at the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality at Ashoka University, conducting workshops for students across colleges, and facilitating research on feminist media studies. Before that, he was a part of the Young India Fellowship and received a BA in English from Hansraj College, University of Delhi. He is interested in researching the relationship between standpoint politics and literary imagination, seeing how memoirs and fictions contribute to the formation of political archives and desires.

Sihan Wang is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literary Studies with a home department in Asian Languages and Cultures and a fellowship in the Global Avant-Garde and Modernist Studies graduate cluster. She received her B.A. in Chinese Literature in 2015 from Sichuan University, her M.A. in Comparative and World Literature in 2017 from University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, and has worked as an editor for the *Zhejiang University Journal of Art and Archeology*. Her general research interests include modernist literature in Republican China and global modernism.

Faculty Focus: **Thomas Gaubatz**, Assistant Professor of Japanese Literature and Culture



Tell us a little about your path to becoming a professor.

My path was far from direct. In college, I had a STEM major (mathematics) that I had fallen into for the wrong reasons—a set of common enough assumptions regarding the relative legitimacy of the sciences and humanities—and that I neither cared about nor meaningfully understood. Like many of my students now, I studied the Japanese language on the side as an intellectual and social outlet. I was fortunate to receive a MEXT scholarship from the Japanese government to study for a year at Kyushu University, and through my time there I developed an interest in Japanese literature, history, and culture. When I came back to my own campus, I spent my last few quarters taking all the classes I could, and found mentors who cultivated the humanistic curiosity I had starved for so long. After having spent most of my college years blindly groping toward a sense of academic purpose, the fleeting experience of studying things I cared about among a community of friends, peers, and mentors was so intoxicating and intellectually invigorating, so thoroughly changed how I see the world, that I knew that I wanted to follow the academic path as far as I could. Even today, my sense of purpose as a professor continues to be shaped both by the frustration of knowing how easily the opportunities of a university education can be left unrealized, whether through well-intentioned careerism or simple lack of direction, and by the revelatory

experience of seeing how college can transform a mind and a life and a person when it nurtures curiosity and interest into knowledge and passion.

What is your favorite course to teach, and why?

I enjoy all my courses, but one that I take particular pleasure in is The Novel in 19th-Century Japan. The 19th century saw truly radical transformations in Japanese prose fiction, as the diverse and formally heterogeneous genres of late Edo-period popular fiction were adapted, repurposed, or simply abandoned in favor of new forms of fiction modeled on the Western novel—and all forms of prose fiction, even in retrospect, came to be known as ‘novels.’ Working through the magnitude of these shifts is great fun, in part because the earlier material is so totally different from anything the students have ever seen. But the course also asks students to think critically about the concept of the novel itself. Is a concept like ‘the novel’ a universal category describing texts with certain formal characteristics, or is it culturally and historically specific—why not ‘The 19th-Century Japanese Novel?’ What (whose) concepts get to act as universals, and what is at stake in how they have been adapted and translated from one context to another? Even more fundamentally, what is the relationship between literary theory and literary form? These are the questions I ask my students, but they were also the questions that Japanese writers were asking at the time as they struggled to make sense of (and make art with) a new conceptual vocabulary brought about by the cultural hegemony of the West. My upper level courses are generally structured by these questions of method, throwing into question the concepts and categories that we use to apprehend the things we study, and questioning the assumptions and politics concealed within our basic terms. More selfishly, the course is also an excuse to show off my (still modest) collection of antiquarian books.

What are the big questions that animate your research?

The honest though unsatisfying answer is that I am careful with big questions because, to put it somewhat glibly, the question of my big questions begs the question of which questions get to be big ones, and—this is the critical point—who decides? The questions I bring to my materials—for the most part, literary texts from 17th- to 19th-century Japan—are different from the questions a reader of the time would have brought to them, and while I don’t consider it my job to defer entirely to that reader, it’s the interplay between their questions and mine that ultimately interests me. In my teaching, I caution students against glossing over the particularities of the text in favor of that which seems universal simply because it reflects concepts

Gaubatz continued..

that they recognize, and this is an ethos that I try to respect in my own research as well—to begin with small questions, historically specific ones, and to keep reading and thinking around and through them until they begin to reveal deeper problems. That said, in a very general sense my research is concerned with the interplay between social structure and cultural representation, and, from a methodological perspective, between social and literary history. How are emerging forms of social subjectivity given expression in literary form, and what is the role of new forms of media, including literature, in giving shape to new (and newly mediated) forms of subjectivity? I'm also interested in the city, in its diverse historical forms, as a space in which these issues play out—where social boundaries are simultaneously rendered palpable and thrown in to question, and where cultural representation and media circulation play important roles in making sense of a complex and dynamic social world that transcends individual experience or empirical observation.

What projects are you working on now, or want to work on in the future?

I'm currently working to finish a manuscript on literary representations of urban identity and community in Japan from the late 17th to mid-18th century. This was the moment that saw the formation of an urban merchant class in Japan, and my research is concerned with how the forms of identity and notions of selfhood that emerged around that class were intertwined with new textual practices: namely, with the circulation of woodblock-printed media through a commercial marketplace. One related topic that's drawn my attention over the long years working on this project is the emergence of norms of fashion and conduct that crossed boundaries of class, status, and geography. The commercialization of the woodblock print enabled the creation of new communities of taste and with them new social formations: the 17th and 18th century saw the rise and fall of a series of social and literary types that represented evolving ideals of urban masculinity, all roughly translatable as 'sophisticate' or 'connoisseur' and roughly comparable to the European dandy (or, from a more contemporary perspective, the American hipster). Readers consumed print media in part to become sophisticated themselves, but the catch is that, as soon as taste can be grasped by anyone who can read, its nature and value changes: the desire for sophistication gives way to anxieties over authenticity and imitation that are fundamentally intertwined with the media of print itself. In my next project, I plan to use these figures and the discourses around them as a means of excavating the early modern experience of confronting a new media ecology and with it a new cultural economy of information.

How do you see the role ALC has to play at Northwestern?

There are a number of roles that ALC plays, but I'll speak on the level of undergraduate education. Coming off a year of research leave, I've been reflecting on how much I miss teaching, and on what our department does for its students. This is in part shaped by my ambivalent feelings about my own college experience, but I have the distinct impression that few students have a strong sense of intellectual community: that the social experience of college takes place in residential and extracurricular life rather than in the classroom or through a department. The exception that I see is in our language programs: I'm constantly impressed with how extraordinarily effective our language faculty are at cultivating a sense of community among students of diverse backgrounds and goals. It's largely thanks to the language programs that ALC has so many impassioned minors, and in many cases it's through language study that students begin exploring everything else we do as a department—I'm speaking from experience as well, as it was language study that first seduced me, as an alienated STEM student, into the humanities. Again, this is thanks to the incredible and tireless work that our language faculty do in creating a sense of community and shared purpose that transcends any single course. Going forward, I'd like to see us build the same at the departmental level, integrating the close-knit communities of all of our language programs and regional tracks to create a sense of place, an academic home that gives our students a sense of direction and allows them to see themselves as part of an intellectual community alongside faculty. Convert the impassioned minors into impassioned majors!

Why Asian Languages and Cultures makes a Good Double Major

Asian Languages and Cultures graduated its first Majors in 2016, and students' enthusiasm for dedicating a big portion of their undergraduate career to the honing of advanced Asian language skills and the in-depth exploration of Asian literatures, media, and cultures has continued to grow over the last five years. One of the things we have learned over the years from teaching and advising our Majors, is that many of our students choose to double major in ALC and something else. Recently, we asked some of our current students and recent graduates why they chose ALC as a part of a double major.

Thomas Kikuchi, ALC and Psychology, Class of 2021

It honestly came down to the fact that I just enjoyed it and had fun doing all the assignments and learning about a lot of cool points of culture. While I am part Japanese, I felt that there was more I could learn about in terms of culture and how I could be exposed to more than just what I knew from growing up. Also, the professors I had in the ALC department made me feel very welcome. In general, my ALC courses forced me to think differently and opened me up to all kinds of things. My other major in Psychology did not have as much room for creative writing and analysis, and learning in a different discipline expanded my abilities to write. In ALC, I was constantly exposed to different parts of culture, not just in Japan but around other parts of Asia, and I think that information helped me expand my worldview that would then translate back into the other parts of my school life.

I have been trained to be open and even interested in learning about other cultures that aren't just my own. ALC has taught me to look at different perspectives and how to look deeper past common knowledge or popular movements and really understand the mechanisms that are behind them. In this way, I think it's helped me look at bigger picture scenarios and understand more deeply how to assess information and relate to others. It's also taught me to be cautious moving forward and how to create autonomy within myself. In this way, I wish to use this understanding in whatever I chose to do, whether it's working in Psychology or in a completely different field, and help others approach the world similarly.

Ingrid Cheung, ALC and Biomedical Engineering, Class of 2022

I am majoring in ALC for a few reasons. First, I am broadly interested in the subject material due to my own heritage as well as the friends I have made who come from Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese backgrounds in high school. As I have made more friends from various AAPI backgrounds and heritages in my Northwestern experience, my interest in the subject matter is furthered. Second, I generally love learning about different cultures and languages, so I wanted to still incorporate this into my undergraduate education despite the fact that it is not required in my engineering degree as a McCormick student. Finally, as my interest in the subject matter has grown, I am seeking to combine this interest with my engineering discipline by looking at opportunities for research abroad, particularly in South Korea. Although U.S. institutions are renowned for a reason, South Korean universities and institutes should not be overlooked for their research output and influence either, especially in the biomaterials field. I have come to personally value interdisciplinary collaboration as well as collaboration beyond language barriers, so I hope to use the knowledge I have gained in the South Korean language and culture in my studies to help me become a great research collaborator with folks in South Korea after earning my PhD.

For engineering students especially, I think it is especially important to double major in a field in the humanities because ultimately, what we do as engineers, researchers, and scientists is solve problems for humans. It is in studying these subjects in a way more deeply related to cultures and civilizations that we can understand these humans who are our clients further and remind ourselves how we are part of a bigger society from which STEM fields are not isolated.

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students advocate for marginalized groups. Hsu shared her second-year Chinese 125 curriculum design for heritage language learners, highlighting the importance of embedding relevance and empathy into the curriculum to raise awareness of social justice. The curriculum helped students develop their critical thinking skills and fostered a positive environment for them to research and advocate for current social issues.



Yanting Li, Lecturer of Chinese Language, served as the **co-chair** of the Council on

Language Instruction's Sub-committee on Orientation and Meetings, and has also sought to introduce Chinese culture to the wider community at Northwestern by becoming a **fellow** of the Residential College for Cultural and Community Studies.

Li's research focuses on language pedagogy and computational linguistics. During the past academic year, she gave 3 pedagogy-related presentations and will present again at the upcoming 2021 annual meeting for the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Sydney Smith, Asian Languages and Cultures and Computer Science, Class of 2022

I transferred to Northwestern so that I could double major in Korean, and because I wanted to take more rigorous Korean classes. The ALC major has a large language focus, so with my language experience, it wasn't daunting to take on. By double majoring, I feel like I'm really making the most out of my college experience. It can be quite busy, but I love taking classes in very different areas. Every ALC class I've taken has been excellent. It's hard to say now how Computer Science and Korean intersect. There's government work, and education tech (for language-learning specifically). Actually, my current internship is at a Computer Science education company. For now, I'm pursuing government language scholarships like the Critical Language and Fulbright (ETA) scholarships. Both government and educational sectors appeal to me and by double majoring, I am preparing for both.

Midwest Speech Contests

Ten Chinese language students participated in the **Midwest University Chinese Speech Contest** on Sunday, May 30, competing against other students at universities in six different Midwestern states. In the 2nd year group, **Khantey Lim** won the First Prize, and **Phillip Bragg** and **Sydney Smith** won second prize. **Katrina Kuntz** won third prize. In the 3rd year group, **Abigail Zuercher** won second prize. In the 3rd year heritage group, **Alice Qiu** won first prize, and **Annie Cao** won second prize. In the

4th year heritage group, **Michael Ma** won first prize, **Maggie Luo** won second prize, and **Ethan Wu** won third prize. Congratulations to all our students!



At the 2nd annual **Midwest**

Korean Speech Contest, our students competed among 49 finalists from beginning through advanced levels from 19 colleges and universities. **Monet Menard** won the highest award in the beginning level and **Sidney Smith** won an award for excellence in the advanced level.



Daniel Majchrowicz, Assistant Professor of South Asian Literature published several academic articles this year, including

"Malika Begum's Mehfil: Retrieving the Lost Legacy of Women's Travel Writing in Urdu," in *South Asia: The Journal of South Asian Studies*, and "Fingernails Torn from Flesh: Intizār Husain, Rām La'l, and Travel Writing across the India-Pakistan Border" in the *Journal of Urdu Studies*.



Jili Sun, Associate Professor of Instruction of Chinese Language presented two papers this year: "The Acquisition of 'LE' by French

Speakers With Chinese as Second Language: An interdisciplinary reflection" for the 32nd North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics in Sept 2020 and "'Bao': Chinese Heritage Students' Special Angle To View Their Chinese Cultural Heritage" for the Chinese Language Teachers Association's Annual Conference in April 2021.

New Faculty Faces



Dahye Kim, Assistant Professor, received her Ph.D. in Korean literature from McGill University in 2020. Her research and teaching interests include modern Korean literature and culture, critical approaches to media history, and the cultural dimensions of communication technologies in East Asia.

A key aim of her research is bridging literary studies and media studies. She is especially interested in changing the significance and

signification of literature and literacy in the evolving media studies landscape. Currently, she is at work on her manuscript that is tentatively titled *Techno-fiction: Science Fictional Dreams of Linguistic Metamorphosis and Informatization of Korean Language*. She has published on a wide range of topics, from colonial era Korean literature to graphic novels (manhwa).

Jeong Eun Annabel We, Assistant Professor, received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and a certificate in Women's and Gender Studies from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, and her B.A. in English, Comparative Literature, and Critical Theory from Northwestern University. Her research examines decolonial connections across the Pacific in modern South Korean fiction and culture writ large. Her monograph in progress examines portrayals of movement in Korean speculative fictions. She has written for *Cultural Dynamics*, *ACTA Koreana*, *GLQ*, and *Decolonising the University*. Starting this Fall, she will be serving as a faculty sponsor to an undergraduate research group she co-founded during her time at NU: the Critical Theory Undergraduate Research Workshop, now led by ALC minor, Nicholas Corvino. Jeong Eun/Annabel is simply thrilled to return to her alma mater after eight years and hopes to enrich the intellectual community that shaped her.



Department Events

Nineteen students from Meijo University in Japan hosted twenty-one Japanese language students from Northwestern University in May 2021 for a two-and-a-half-hour virtual exchange. Hosts presented on the theme of “Small Steps That Can Better Our Well-being” and students discussed related themes in both English and Japanese.

To help raise students’ interest in Korean studies, **Ihnhee Kim** invited Frank Chance, Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania, to introduce Korean arts in history through a collection of portraits primarily from the Joseon Dynasty Era (1392~1945). The in-depth analysis of the representative Joseon portraits gave the audience an opportunity to understand the shifting world views of Korean society over several hundred years.

In an event organized by graduate student **Connie Kang** in conjunction with **Patrick Noonan**’s class “Art and Activism in Modern Japan,” political theorist and anticapitalist activist Sabu Kohso discussed his latest book *Radiation and Revolution*, published by Duke University Press in Fall 2020, in which he argues for the imperative of abolition of the global nuclear regime. Through an analysis of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster that illuminates the relationship between nuclear power, capitalism, and the nation-state in the postwar Japanese context, he reveals nuclearized capitalism as an organizing principle of the global order and the most effective way to simultaneously accumulate profit and govern the populace. Joining him in conversation were activist and philosopher Franco “Bifo” Berardi, and Professor Thomas Lamarre, scholar of Japanese media studies at the University of Chicago.

So Hye Kim invited Sang-Woo Kang for a film screening and discussion of his film *Kim-Gun, or Mr. Kim*, one of the most important Korean films of 2019, and a film that poignantly illuminates how cinema plays a pivotal role in the field of mnemonics and the social memories of contemporary South Korea. The documentary revolves around the identity of a young man from a photograph taken during the 1980 Gwangju Democratic Uprising. Though brutally suppressed at that time, the events of Gwangju inspired a nation-wide democratization movement that would eventually come to epitomize the late 1980s in South Korea. Nonetheless, one prominent right-wing commentator has continued to assert that the Gwangju Uprising was not a democratic movement but a communist riot caused by North Korean infiltrators, claiming the man in the photo to be a North Korean special agent now celebrated in Pyongyang as a national hero. Accordingly, the filmmaker, Sang-woo Kang begins an arduous search for this young man’s identity and finally finds someone who recognizes him as “Mr. Kim.” By attending to politically contentious subjects, the film becomes the main battlefield not only against forgetting, but also on questions of how to remember.

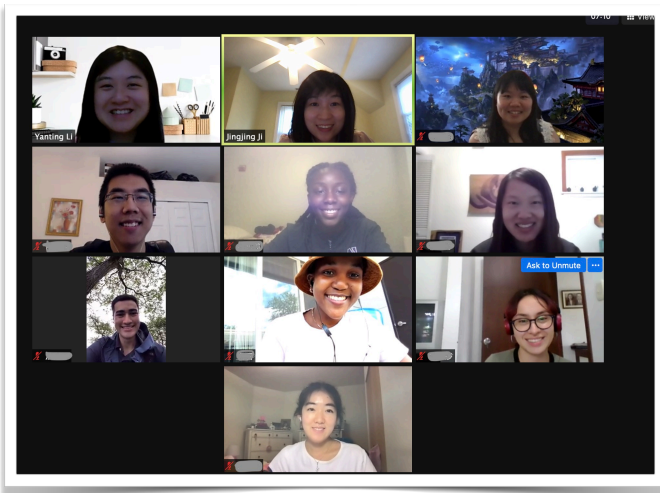
In April, **David Boyk** conducted a virtual event with the famed Indian filmmaker and composer Vishal Bhardwaj. Bhardwaj is a versatile artist who is best known for his three films based on Shakespearean plays: *Maqbool* (adapted from Macbeth), *Omkara* (Othello), and *Haider* (Hamlet). Boyk showed *Maqbool* in his class on Cities in South Asia, and a number of students contributed their own questions to a discussion that touched on adaptations and artistic constraints, collaboration and the creative process, and the lure of gangster films, among other topics. Bhardwaj’s virtual campus visit was organized by Masi Asare (Performance Studies and Theatre) and supported by the School of Communication, the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, and the Center for International and Area Studies’ South Asia Research Forum.

In May, **Laura Brueck** and Ivy Wilson, with the support of the Program in Comparative Literary Studies and the South Asia Research Forum, hosted a public conversation over zoom with Dr. Suraj Yengde of Harvard’s Kennedy School, and the author of *Caste Matters*. In this conversation, which included several questions posed by students in Brueck’s spring course, “The Politics of Exclusion: Caste and Race in India and the United States,” Yengde stressed the historical connections between Dalit and Black socio-political and intellectual activist movements, and made a case for the ongoing importance of solidarity between the two communities. You can watch the video of the discussion at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjzA2qVVcUg&t=341s>.



Dr. Suraj Yengde

In The Language Classroom



Last summer, **Jingjing Ji** responded to her students' isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic by creating a voluntary summer movie club for students in her spring quarter Chinese 111 class. The club provided students with an inclusive learning community with social and emotional support, and received highly positive feedback from participants. Building on this, this summer Ji and **Yanting Li** scaled up the project and made it open for the entire Chinese language program. They watched one movie per week and then met online to discuss the political ideology, social issues, and cultural context reflected in each Chinese film. The project was supported by a Weinberg Summer Teaching-Curriculum Grant.

Hong Jiang also received support from a Weinberg Summer Teaching-Curriculum Grant in order to create an inclusive learning environment by adopting project-based language learning in the second-year Chinese language program. She plans to develop three student-led projects, one for each quarter of an academic year: a Chicago tourist guide for Chinese travelers, a study of how COVID-19 affected and changed the way Chinese New Year was celebrated in China and Taiwan in 2021, and a unit on climate change and its impacts. These projects will address students' needs by giving them choices to investigate an area related to the general problem, and by providing them the opportunity for collaboration. The project is expected to enhance student engagement, experience and self-efficacy in the second-year Chinese course.

The Northwestern Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Affairs and the Office of the Vice President for International Relations awarded **Licheng Gu** and **Wen-pin Hsieh** an International Classroom Partnering Grant for 2021-2022. Gu and Hsieh designed a program titled Cross-cultural Learning through Language Partnership and the partnership was between Northwestern and National Tsing Hua University. Due to the pandemic, Northwestern students could not travel to China, so there was a missing piece in the Chinese language curriculum. This project allowed for Northwestern students to engage with native Chinese language speakers from National Tsing Hua University. The objectives for this project were to create an opportunity for students to interact with language partners in Taiwan, teach each other on how to cook a favorite dish, explore cultural differences on academic achievement through interviews and lectures, make a presentation in both languages, and co-author a report in both languages. Pei-chih Lin, a leader in the internationalization of university education and a researcher in communications gave a talk entitled *Love, Hate, and Love: Our Family Relationships* in which she presented prominent features of family relationships in Western and Eastern cultures.



Professor Gu (top right) with students from Northwestern and National Tsing Hua University teaching each other how to cook their favorite dish.

Student Awards

Sophie Jiang was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Chinese Language and Culture. Sophie was also named to the 2021–2022 cohort of Schwarzman Scholars! Next year, Sophie will study for a master's degree in global affairs at Tsinghua University, in Beijing, China.

Carmen Fernandez was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Japanese Language and Culture.

Alex Rogers was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Japanese Language and Culture.

Aysha Asueva was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Korean Language and Culture.

Skylar Ladson-Gary was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Korean Language and Culture.

Saanchi Bhatia was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Hindi-Urdu Language and South Asian Culture.

The Jock McLane prize for Best Paper was awarded to **Rongzhen Zhou** a double major in Social Policy and History.

Winners of the Francis L.K. Hsu-John Henry Wigmore Senior Thesis Award are **Tara Shirvaikar** who is a double major in Electrical Engineering and Comparative Literary Studies and **Fiona Asokacitta** who is a double major in History and Art History.

A big thank you to our student workers who assisted us throughout the year. **Tomo Kanda** and **Ruogu Xu**. Many thanks to our SAB representative **Saanchi Bhatia**.

Senior Theses

Weinberg awarded Departmental Honors to two graduating seniors in 2021. In their senior year, students with a sufficiently high GPA and the support of a faculty member can opt to write a senior thesis in pursuit of departmental honors. Senior honors theses represent the culmination of an outstanding amount of work in language and cultural studies, as well as a rigorous year-long process of researching, writing and revising while working one-on-one with a faculty advisor.

Sophie Jiang's thesis, "Economies of Desire: Commodifying Male Bodies in 21st Century Chinese Commercial Culture," was directed by Professor **Paola Zamperini**. In his evaluation as second reader, Professor Corey Byrnes writes "Sophie's thesis is an ambitious attempt to come to terms with newly fluid conceptions of gender in contemporary Chinese popular and consumer culture. Centered primarily on Chinese "idol culture" and the commodification of xiao xianrou 小鲜肉 "little fresh meat" in very recent high end beauty advertising, "Economies of Desire" asks pressing questions about the commodification of feminized male bodies, the myth of female "empowerment" through consumption, and Mainland China's supposed "masculinity crisis."

Diamond Jones' thesis "Friends with a Girl Like Me: Girlhood in Japanese Horror Video Games," was directed by Professor **Patrick Noonan**. He writes, "Diamond's thesis is a nuanced examination of the figure of the shōjo (young girl) in independently produced horror video games of the early 21st Century. It is original not only in its attention to games—Mad Father, Misao, and Ib—that have received little to no scholarly attention in the fields of Japanese Studies and Game Studies, but also in its claims about how these games reconfigure the gender norms that commonly define modes of gameplay and interactivity within this genre of roleplaying games (RPGs). Diamond argues that these games empower young female figures with forms of agency so often denied them in major franchises within the genre, which has a profound effect on how players not only interact with the game but understand themselves as subjects in the twenty-first century."

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