

Northwestern | Asian Languages and Cultures

Faculty News



David Boyk,
Associate
Professor of
Instruction of
Hindi Urdu
Language, and
Assistant
Professor Daniel

Majchrowicz received an Open Educational Grant for an open-access online textbook called *Zer o Zabar: Urdu Literacy Through Hindi*.



Laura Brueck
has been
promoted to
Full Professor.
She continued
to co-lead the
Race, Caste,
and Colorism

Project with Ivy Wilson in the Department of English. This last year they brought a range of scholars, poets, and activists to campus and hosted a seminar on Race and Caste at the American Comparative Literature Association annual conference in Chicago. They also partnered with the Chicago-based arts collective, SpaceShift, to create and host a six-week pop-up artists' workshop and gallery on Devon Avenue in Chicago. Called "Starlight," it was a public space for events, teach-ins, concerts, art-making classes, film screenings, and literary readings, all built around the theme of race and caste.

A Message From the Chair

It has been another great year for ALC. Look inside these pages for news about our dynamic community: graduate students presenting research and contributing to the scholarly community in a host of creative ways, undergraduate students exploring cultures and battling in language competitions, and faculty being awarded grants and giving lectures all over the world. And believe it or not, we rounded out the year with a celebration of our tenth birthday! Finally, check out the new faces around the department as we move into our second decade and continue to grow our dynamic community.

Laura Brueck, Chair

Congratulations Class of 2023!



Professor Daniel Majchrowicz with ALC senior major Salma Paredes.

We are so excited to congratulate all of our graduated students from 2023! We can't wait to see where your next adventures take you.



Chin-Hung Chang, Associate Professor of Instruction of Chinese Language was accepted to 2023 Educational Technology Fellows program to implement learning technologies

and ChatGPT in her Chinese 211 class. Her collaborative work with the Teaching & Learning Technologies team on this project on integration of learning technologies and Universal Design Learning (UDL) has been accepted to present at the AECT conference in October 2023.



Li-Cheng Gu, Professor of Instruction of Chinese Language, presented a paper entitled "Copycat: How to Improve Writing through Appropriation" at the 30th International Conference on Chinese

Language Instruction at Princeton University in April 2023.



Wen-pin Hsieh, Assistant Professor of Instruction of Chinese Language, was invited to the 2023 CLI Winter Workshop to present "*International Collaboration on L2 Virtual Exchange: The*

Northwestern-Taiwan Partnership for the Chinese Language Program". He reported the experience of brainstorming and decision-making about program design as well as the techniques of maintaining relationships with international partners and ensuring reciprocity for long-term collaboration.

Wen-pin spoke at the Mandarin Center of National Chia-Yi University (Taiwan) and the students of the Dept. of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language at that university. He reported the rewards and challenges of an overseas teaching career, discussed the required skillset and mindset for intercultural success, and presented the potential paths toward and resources that support such a career. Continued next page

New Faculty Faces in 2023-2024



Yangtian Luo, Assistant Professor of Instruction, specializes in Chinese Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, and holds a Ph.D. in Chinese Linguistics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Before joining Northwestern, she was a Lecturer of Chinese at Lawrence University, an M.A. Fellow in Chinese at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, and an Instructor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. These roles helped her refine

her teaching skills and expand her understanding of

language and cultural studies. Yangtian's commitment to teaching has been recognized with the Honorable Mention Early-career Teaching Award at Lawrence University and the Honored Instructor title at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Yangtian's publications include works in the *International Journal of Chinese Linguistics* and a study examining the impact of COVID-19 on Chinese L2 learners' motivation. Her ongoing research revolves around a multi-modal Chinese text corpus focusing on Speech Respiration, an exploration aimed at understanding the complexities of learning Mandarin. By investigating the correlation between the prosodic features of Mandarin Chinese and respiratory rhythms in speech activity, Yangtian hopes to advance teaching methodologies in Mandarin.



Melissa Macauley, Professor of Global History and Asian History, will become the Chair of ALC for a three-year term beginning September 2023. Melissa specializes in late imperial and modern Chinese history, 1500 to 1958. Her research focuses on such topics as the interrelated history of southeastern China and Southeast Asia; colonialism and imperialism in East and Southeast Asia; and legal culture in Chinese social history. Her recent book, *Distant Shores: Colonial Encounters on China's Maritime Frontier*, was published by Princeton University Press in

2021 and received the Bentley Book Prize from the World History Association in 2022 (the China Times Publishing Co. will publish a Chinese translation in 2023). Her first book, *Social Power and Legal Culture: Litigation Masters in Late Imperial China*, was published by Stanford University Press in 1998 (a Chinese-language version was published by Beijing University Press in 2012). She currently is writing a comprehensive history of the South China Sea, tentatively titled *A People's History of the South China Sea*. As part of that larger project, she is focusing on a shorter monograph on how Sino-American relations were shaped by the historical experiences of the two countries in Southeast Asia.

Appointed by the Vice President for Int'l Relations, he participated in the "Discover Taiwan/Global Engineering Trek 2023" program. Wen-pin led a group of Northwestern students and faculty/staff members to Taiwan that aimed to celebrate Northwestern's new strategic partnership with National Taiwan University and facilitate understanding of the country's history, culture, as well as its technological, economic, and geopolitical role. He organized events that allowed for a better understanding of Taiwan's ethnic diversity, religions, democratizations, and endeavors in sustainable development.



Jingjing Ji, Associate Professor of Instruction of Chinese Language, won the 2023 MAFLT LCTL Best Innovation Award for her project that utilized technology to promote meaningful and active interactions

among novice Chinese learners. This award offered by the National Less Commonly Taught Languages Resource Center was presented at the 27th annual conference of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages in Chicago.

Jingjing was awarded the Provost Grants for Research in Humanities, Social Sciences and the Arts. These grants "recognize the truly excellent research and creativity of Northwestern's faculty." With the support of this grant, Jingjing will conduct research on heritage maintenance within Chinese immigrant families, with a focus on their family language policies.

Collaborating with Yan Liu, Grace Wu, and Min-min Liang, Jingjing published a Chinese textbook for heritage beginners, titled 传承中文 *Modern Chinese for Heritage Beginners*. The book aims to serve as a stepping-stone for Chinese heritage students' future Chinese learning, inspiring them to reflect on their identities, learn Chinese American history, and embrace their cultural heritage.

Jingjing is currently working on another textbook project. She and ALC incoming faculty member, Yangtian Luo, received a Northwestern 2023 Open Educational Resource grant to develop a flexible, inclusive and multimodal textbook for advanced Chinese courses.

Grad Student News

Kang (Connie) Kang served as the Graduate Assistant of the Climate Crisis + Media Arts Buffett Working Group and oversaw the inaugural run of the CC+MA Fund for climate-related film and media art projects. She presented at the American Comparative Literature Association annual conference in Chicago and served as a discussant at the Association of Asian Studies in Asia conference in Daegu, Korea. She received several travel and language grants to pursue summer language study in Japanese at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan, and an award from the University of Kansas to begin remote Uyghur language study in the Fall of 2023.

Ishan Mehendru presented at the 50th Annual Conference on South Asia at UW-Madison, paper title: "From blind spots to bad spots: Masculinity in Ismat Chughtai's "The Mole" (Til)". He also contributed a chapter to *Literary Representations of Pandemics, Epidemics and Pestilence* (Routledge India, 2022, ed. Nishi Pulugurtha), "[Forgetting Difference: The Plague in Hindi and Urdu Literature](#)".

Maria Romanova Alongside completing another year of PhD coursework requirements in ALC/CLS, Maria presented their work at the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) in Chicago. Their paper, "Re-Wilding Siberia: Ruinous Landscapes and Permafrost Protection at Pleistocene Park" formed part of the panel titled "Life in Ruins: Inhabiting Empire's Sacrifice Zones." Over the summer, they will also be attending the Harvard Institute for World Literature in Boston, where they will connect with leading scholars and researchers in the field to discuss new directions in World Literature. In the coming year, they are looking forward to presiding over a panel at Modern Language Association (MLA) taking place in Philadelphia in January.

Soumya Shailendra co-founded and conceived, Translators Adda, a public facing translation workshop, with Ishan Mahendru through the Kaplan Public Humanities Graduate workshop. The workshops titled, "Translating Caste" and "Translating Sex" were hosted at the Haymarket House, and were well attended by our Northwestern community and members of the general public. Additionally, she presented papers at the Annual Conference on South Asia, American Comparative Literature Association, and Translation Practices Across Institutional Border symposium at Northwestern.

Faculty Focus: **Laura Brueck**, Professor of South Asian Literature and Culture



Graduate students Ishan Mehandru and Soumya Shailendra with Professor Brueck at the Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in October 2022.

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

I always wanted to be a teacher of whatever grade I was in at the time (a kindergarten teacher in kindergarten, a third-grade teacher in third grade, etc.), though this decidedly fell by the wayside in middle school! Eventually I went to a women's college (Smith College in Northampton, MA) and fell in love with the idea of being a professor as I listened to my own professors lecture in courses I'd chosen myself for the first time, and as we sat in circles discussing literature and history and religion under the trees in the quad on beautiful days. It all seemed so idyllic, though I could not imagine how I would ever know enough to speak for an hour and a half on any given topic even once, let alone day after day! Little did I know that eventually it would become much harder to *stop* myself from talking than it would be finding enough to say...

I double majored in Religion and Comparative Literature as an undergraduate; my second language was French, which I'd been studying since the 8th grade. When I spent my junior year of college at the University of Geneva, I had finally reached a level of language fluency that made me feel (almost) completely at ease in any situation and the sense of freedom I found in hopping on a train every weekend to explore somewhere new was completely transformative. I credit that experience with giving me the confidence to apply to PhD programs in Asian Studies the following year, embracing a growing interest in India that was emerging primarily in the classes I took as a religious studies major. I didn't know an Indian language, indeed hadn't yet even traveled there. But something was drawing me towards it.

In graduate school at the University of Texas, I tried to make up for lost time (though in truth there was no lost time because in fact the choices I'd made in college had brought me here). I immediately jumped into intensive language study: Hindi, Urdu, and Sanskrit. I traveled to India every summer, doing immersive Hindi language study, making friends and building connections, and exploring as widely as I could. I remembered a class – literally one class session, within a full semester course – in my senior year of college when we read a few English translations of Dalit Panther poetry, a radical anti-caste literary and social movement of the 1970s. I remembered being astounded at its aesthetic and political vibrancy, at the way it exploded many of my then ill-informed ideas of what Indian literature was “like.” Though I could find very little scholarship about Dalit literature – in Hindi, certainly but also in any other Indian language – I figured there had to be more out there and it just hadn't been translated yet or accorded the attentions of the ‘academy’ and I started looking for and collecting everything I could find.

Many moments of my path to becoming a professor have been shaped by serendipity, and I try to stay watchful for and open to these, even now. The summer after my second year of graduate school I was studying Hindi with the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) language program in Udaipur, Rajasthan. I had arrived there with a stack of books I'd picked up in Delhi, mostly Hindi language short stories written by authors who identified as Dalit, and who identified their literature as anti-caste. One day before a one-on-one reading tutorial, I chose a

Brueck continued..

story from one of these books – an anthology of Dalit women’s stories – at random. When I finished reading through it with my teacher, he looked at the author’s name and told me she lived there, in Udaipur! He gave me her address, and the next day I took an auto to her house, knocked on her door, and explained in my fractured Hindi who I was. Her name is Kusum Meghwal; we became fast friends that summer, and her large oeuvre of work became the subject of my MA thesis. It was an easy progression then to shift to Delhi and immerse myself in the vibrant community of contemporary Hindi Dalit writers there, a community Kusum had first given me access to. Throughout my years of research and writing on this subject – in India and in the U.S., for my dissertation and later for the book it would turn into (*Writing Resistance: The Rhetorical Imagination of Hindi Dalit Literature*) and for my ongoing work in this field which now increasingly engages the literatures of both caste and race – I’ve been incredibly grateful for the generosity of the writers and editors and scholars and publishers who have shared their archives with me, patiently answered my questions, given me permission (and endless assistance) to translate their work. This has been the greatest gift of the path I both chose and happily fell into, and now as a professor I do my best to emulate the graciousness and generosity I’ve been shown to those I’m now in the exceedingly privileged position to help.

What is your favorite course to teach, and why?

This is a hard question to answer! There are so many courses I love to teach. The course I’ve taught most frequently at the undergraduate level is a course called “Living Indian Epics.” It is a course about the ancient Hindu epic *The Ramayana* in which Rama – son of a Hindu king from Ayodhya in North India – travels the length of the subcontinent searching for his wife Sita who has been abducted by Ravana, the ‘demon’ king of Lanka. It’s a story that is more than two thousand years old, and from its origins to today has been told and retold in innumerable diverse iterations and used from the very beginning to consolidate specific, if changing over time, ideas about community and polity in India. It is a class in which we seek to understand the power of narrative to consolidate ideas about society, to form norms of inclusion and exclusion, to both minoritize and, when approached subversively, to imagine new forms of inclusion and expansiveness. It is a course where students may come in either knowing almost nothing about the epic or having grown up with it, but inevitably everyone leaves with a radically different understanding than the one they walked in with.

At the graduate level I have loved teaching a course for the Program in Comparative Literary Studies (in which I am also a core faculty member) called Translation in Theory and Practice. It is a course in which we read various theories of translation from a variety of perspectives – linguistic, structural, postcolonial, queer, and more. We also workshop each other’s translations, which is the best part of the class. Everyone is working in different languages but there is a way to structure the workshop so that we can all weigh in on each other’s and it’s always fascinating, energizing, and fun. The students in that class have run with it in such exciting ways – one student organized a symposium around translation and some others have created a translation workshop that meets in Chicago and is open to the public. It has been very inspiring!

What are the big questions that animate your research?

My research goes in many directions, but generally it revolves around the role literature plays in social change. I am interested in language, translation, and how people manipulate language and literary aesthetics in narrative to make meaning out of their worlds. I am interested in how stories circulate, how they empower, and how they can contribute to the shaping of new realities. I am interested in how people use writing and other forms of aesthetic expression as a vehicle for social and political critique, and as avenues to reclaim identities

Brueck continued..

otherwise shaped by external forces. I am invested in translation as a method to amplify the power and reach of storytelling. Buffett Institute for Global Affairs and through this collaboration have become increasingly invested in comparative practice to tease out the nuances of language and narrative form as avenues for a politics of liberation – both individual and communal. I am interested in the ways that race and caste – as social constructs – are both similar and different, and I’m especially interested in the ways that anti-racist and anti-caste aesthetics can inform and empower one another.



Laura and Soumya outside Turin, Italy where both presented papers at the European Conference on South Asian Studies in July 2023.

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

I have a lot of projects – probably far too many – percolating! I am currently writing a book on Indian detective fiction I’m tentatively calling *Indian Pulp: The Local and the Global in Indian Detective Fictions*. This book explores novels, films, television adaptations, online fan cultures and more across Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and English in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I am also currently co-editing (with Praseeda Gopinath, SUNY Binghamton) *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial and Decolonial Literature*, which will hopefully be out in 2024. I am also co-editing (with Ivy Wilson and Emily Maguire, in the Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese) another scholarly anthology, *Race and Caste*, which will bring together many of the papers and presentations that the Race, Caste, and Colorism Project has generated over the last few years. Finally, I am working on a second volume of translations of the Hindi language short stories of Ajay Navaria, whose first translated collection called *Unclaimed Terrain* I published in 2013 with Navayana Publishers in Delhi, India.

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

Since its founding in 2013, ALC has emerged as the nucleus of a much larger interdisciplinary expansion at Northwestern of faculty, students, research, programming, classes, and more focused on Asian languages, cultures, histories, religions, and humanities. It’s an exciting time for Asia at Northwestern, and I think the task we have before us now is to make sure we don’t isolate it in one department, but rather work with our colleagues in collaborative ways to integrate the study of Asian literatures, politics, and languages across multiple disciplines. In ALC, we will continue to provide the critical site for developing language competency and fluency in multiple languages from East to South Asia. We must also ground our expertise in Asian humanities with an understanding that it is not a distant, isolatable object of our study, but a set of cultural and political formations, literatures, medias, and communities that engage and overlap and inform other political formations, narratives, and communities around the world. We must strive to balance the situated and linguistically competent expertise of area studies with the intellectual theories and methodologies that inform the other disciplines of study in the university to grow Northwestern together into a leading center in the U.S. for the integrated study of Asia.

Department Events and Co-Sponsorships

Northwestern | Asian Languages and Cultures

Postcolonial Vengeance: Transpacific Return of the Colonial Unconscious

Taking the recent publication of the transnational, multilingual, and interdisciplinary volume *Theorizing Colonial Cinema: Reframing Production, Circulation, and Consumption of Film in Asia* (2022) as a point of departure, this talk navigates the transpacific return of repressed postcolonial memories in Asia and beyond.

Yanyoung Aimee Kwon is a multilingual author, translator, and scholar based in Durham, North Carolina and Seoul, South Korea. Her publications include *Intimate Empire: Collaboration and Colonial Modernity in Korea and Japan* and *Transcultural Film Coproductions in the Japanese Empire: Antinomies in the*

Thursday
March 9th
3:30pm-5pm

China, 1901: The World's Oldest Stereo Recordings?

Tuesday, April 18
3:30-5PM
1920 Campus Dr.
Annie May Swift, Helmerich Auditorium

RSVP HERE

Friday April 28, 4:00-5:00pm
Kresge 1515

GENDER AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN JAPAN

DIANE WEI LEWIS

Professor of Film and Media Studies
St. Louis

Northwestern | Asian Languages and Cultures

Manga Artist Maekawa Kazuo on Manga Art, Industry, and Education

March 31, 2023
3:30pm - 5:00pm
Kresge 1515

CROSSINGS

INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST PEACE ACTIVISM IN KOREA

APRIL 21, 2023 / 2 - 6:30 PM / LOCATION TBD

DEANN BORSHAY LIEM
Award-winning filmmaker, director, producer, writer
Women, War, and Peace (2012)

CHRISTINE AHN
Award-winning filmmaker and executive director of Women Crisis Center

SUZY KIM
Award-winning filmmaker, producer, and executive director of Women Crisis Center

DANIEL KIM
Associate Professor of English and American Studies, Boston University

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EDUCATING GIRLS IN RURAL PAKISTAN

Dr. Carla Petevich
Professor of History, Urdu, and Women's Studies, Montclair State University and KIP, member of the executive board of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which is dedicated to expanding girls' education in underserved parts of Pakistan. She will be in conversation with Loretta Brown, M.Ed., Ph.D., Northwestern's award-winning teacher and author of *Building a Life and Career* (2018).

12 pm
Friday, April 21
University Hall 102

Dissecting the Stage: Archival Traces of Spectacle and Performance in Early Modern Japan

Melissa Van Wyk
University of Chicago

Friday, February 24
3:30-5:00
Harris Hall 108

This presentation will address theater's participation in the pleasure and play of knowledge in early modern Japan by emphasizing the centrality of kabuki's spectacular elements to its dramaturgy and by demonstrating how the adoption of techniques and aesthetics from the West shaped the development of the theater.

"Walker series" screening & conversation: Tsai Ming-Liang + Lee Kang-Sheng

Center for Global Culture and Communication in collaboration with Race, Casts, and Colorism Project, Black Cinema, MFA in Documentary Media Program, and The Hoffman Visiting Artist Program presents:

Anand Patwardhan

A Retrospective

October 28-31, 2022

Film screenings and conversations with Anand Patwardhan, India's preeminent documentary filmmaker.

FRIDAY, OCT 28
Bombay: Our City (1985)
Time: 1pm
Location: John J. Louis Hall, Room 119
Jai Bhim Comrade (2012)
Time: 5pm
Location: Block Museum of Art

SATURDAY, OCT 29
Reason (2018)
Time: 12:30pm
Location: Block Museum of Art

MONDAY, OCT 31
Baranada Diary (1995)
Time: 5:30pm
Location: McCormick Foundation Center, Room 3-127

Join us for a session on

Translating Sex

Carla Petevich
Translator,
When Men Speak as Women

April 22nd, 12 pm
Haymarket House

TRANSLATION TRANSMISSION

LOTSAWA TRANSLATION WORKSHOP

October 13-16, 2022 • Northwestern University

LUCE / ACLS

TSADRA FOUNDATION

Whither Comparative Literature?

Since at least the 1950s, individual scholars and institutions American Comparative Literature Association have engaged in rituals of self-reflection and, sometimes, self-flagellation. The history of comparative literature's various origins and prescribed standards, often against the backdrop of difference, claimed to offer distinctive practices, or called for the literature. Comparative literature has, it seems, taken many of its disciplinary forms, but has been repeatedly called into question. Is it a discipline that refuses to be disciplined and that remains to this day a mere theme? And if there is still a theme, where is it? Is it in the past? Is it in the future? Is it in the present?

Monday, November 7, 4:30-6
1515 Kresge Hall

Reception to follow

Please join the *Comparative Literary Studies Program* for a conversation on the *future of comparative literature* featuring:

Huan Suany (University of Chicago)
Harris Feinold (NU)
Jeong Eun Annabel We (NU)

Modulated by Chris Bush and Corey Byrnes

Course Enrichment

Weinberg College Course Enhancement Grants are intended to assist faculty in enriching the content of their undergraduate courses. Here are a few of the activities from this year.



To celebrate Spring festival, also known as Chinese New Year, Professor **Jingjing Ji** helped her Chinese 111 students make and paste couplets to express new year's wishes, prepare and hand out red packets, and made dumplings together.

Professor **Chin-Hung Chang** took her Chinese 211 students on a field trip to Happy Lemon. Students learned the phrases for customization by ordering their drinks, such as the amount of ice, sugar, and size. The bubble tea experience was also a great discussion topic in class. Prior to the field trip, Prof. Chang had students explore the tea culture, contemporary tea shops in Taiwan, and how bubble tea is popularized in the world.



Professor **Jili Sun** invited professional calligrapher James Fei to introduce Chinese calligraphy arts and to offer a hands-on initiation of calligraphy writing.

Prof's **Eun Hee Kim** and **Yan Zhou** both hosted events for students to learn first hand how to cook and experience traditional Korean and Chinese food.





Eun Hee Kim,
Assistant Professor
of Instruction of
Korean Language,
presented
"Collaborative
Writing in an
Advanced Korean
Language Classroom" at the annual
American Association of Teachers of
Korean (AATK) conference.



Ihnhee Kim,
Associate Professor
of Instruction of
Korean Language,
has delivered two
speeches as an
invited speaker. At
the faculty
workshop at

Defense Language Institute, July 2023,
she showcased various ways of
implementing project-based learning
that effectively promote language
learner ownership. At the lecture for
Korean studies at Arizona State
University, September 2022, she talked
on cultivating intercultural competencies
through a focus on historical women
artists.



Rami Nair, Professor
of Instruction of
Hindi-Urdu
Language co-chaired
with Katia Viot-
Southard (French
and Italian) the very
successful Chicago
Language Symposium

on "DEI in the World Language
Classroom" held on April 29th, 2023 at
Northwestern. Rami will be taking on an
additional role in AY24 as ALC's next
Director of Language Programs. Her
Hindi-Urdu 111-2 course was nominated
for the Northwestern Canvas Hall of
Fame which is an award created by
Northwestern IT and nominated entirely
by students to recognized exemplary
courses in three categories; most
innovation course site, best use of
lecture videos/recording and excellence
in DEI/accessibility.

ALC IS TEN YEARS OLD!

It has been amazing this year to take a moment to look back at how far we have come in the last decade, even as we continue to grow into the future. We came together with our colleagues across the university on May 8, 2023 to celebrate our anniversary, celebrating in particular the expansion of our language programs, the creation of our undergraduate curriculum, the development of our cohort of dynamic graduate students, and the extraordinary achievements of our faculty. Read on for an article about ALC's last ten years and some photos from this exciting event.

Article posted by Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences on May 9, 2023

Over the last decade, [Laura Brueck](#) has been in perpetual motion.

Since arriving at Northwestern University's Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences in 2013 as an associate professor of South Asian literature and culture, Brueck has played an instrumental role in the development and evolution of the [department of Asian Languages and Cultures \(ALC\)](#) throughout its entire decade-long existence.



"It's been a breathless 10 years of hiring, recruiting, and developing courses, of constantly building and thinking about the next thing," says Brueck, who has served as ALC department chair since 2016.

On May 8, however, Brueck took a much-deserved moment of pause and reflection at ALC's 10-year anniversary event inside Scott Hall's Guild Lounge. Alongside colleagues, students, and campus partners, Brueck celebrated the department's 10-year run and its steady climb into a recognized force in Asian humanities education, scholarship, and research.

"It was a great opportunity to pause and celebrate all that we have accomplished while also looking ahead to the opportunities that remain," Brueck says. "We also wanted to make sure to thank a host of other people who have supported us along the way."

The origins of a department

ALC's story begins with the foresight of former Weinberg College Dean Sarah Mangelsdorf. Recognizing Northwestern was falling short of its potential in the study of Asian languages, history, religion, and culture, Mangelsdorf assembled a planning group to envision what a potential department of Asian languages and cultures might look like.

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Jili Sun, Associate Professor of Instruction in Chinese Language, presented at the Chinese Language Teachers Association, the Association for

Intercultural Communication and Midwestern Psychological Association on topics of bilingualism, Chinese heritage preservation and community building in North American context, recreation of Chinese mythology in Chinese as second language teaching.

Another paper was accepted for July in the *16th International Conference on Chinese Language Pedagogy on topic of Folklore Culture in Teaching Chinese As a Second Language*

The following article was published: *"Women's Figures in Shi Wei and Shan Yan's Literary Works: Reconstruction of the Self Identity in A New World"* (December 2022 issue) *Asian Cultures* pp.44-52

Jili also organized a calligraphy workshop with the intervention of a professional calligrapher and 3 Chinese dumpling making workshop for students.



Jeong Eun Annabel We, Assistant Professor of Korean Literature and Culture, presented at the Caribbean Philosophical Association

Conference, Association for Asian Studies Conference, and the Association for Asian American Studies Conference. She also gave a talk at the University of Chicago, led a seminar at the Newberry Library's Teacher's Consortium, and hosted two events—a public talk by Professor Nayoung Aimee Kwon, and a film screening of *"Crossings"* (2021) and public panels by Deann Borshay Liem, Christine Ahn, and Suzy Kim.

At a time when other colleges and universities across the U.S. were minimizing the liberal arts and humanities, Mangelsdorf's eventual decision to establish ALC was a particularly bold and enterprising one.

Spurred by a \$750,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation, Northwestern launched the department in 2013 and hired its first tenure-line faculty – Brueck and Paola Zamperini, a noted scholar of Chinese literature and culture.

Zamperini, the ALC's founding chair, and Brueck then got to work. They led faculty searches and developed curriculums for undergraduate and graduate students. While courses from the existing Program of African and Asian Languages and the Asian and Middle East Studies Program transferred into other departments, many others found a home at ALC.

Zamperini and Brueck focused on creating a department rooted in Asian humanities, crafting a contemporary model of Asian Studies distinct in U.S. higher education. They thought carefully and strategically about incorporating various Asian languages, arts, and media into a diverse humanistic study and cultivating a truly interdisciplinary study of Asian humanities.

"We wanted to build a department, a community of faculty, and a curriculum that encouraged study of language and place as well as Asia's interactions with the broader world," Brueck says.

A spirited and focused evolution

Over the last decade, ALC has emerged a leader in the study of comparative Asian culture, sharpening and broadening its curriculums, adding to its constellation of scholars, and enlivening partnerships with complementary Weinberg College departments and programs.

From Brueck and Zamperini being ALC's lone tenure-line faculty in 2013, the department now hosts eight such faculty members studying and teaching courses covering the diversity and richness of Asian literatures and media cultures.

In particular, ALC has increased its language faculty significantly while also adding rigor and depth to its curriculum and course offerings. The two-year Hindi curriculum, for instance, has sprouted into a four-year Hindi-Urdu curriculum, while the department now teaches up to five years of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

"We shifted the curriculum as we've learned what students wanted and needed," Brueck says.

Meanwhile, a grant from the Korea Foundation recently enabled the department to hire two faculty – Dahye Kim and Jeong Eun Annabel We – who specialize in modern Korean literature and cultural studies. The presence of Kim and We has elevated ALC's national profile in Korean studies and positioned the department to better address swelling student interest in Korean culture.

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Brueck says ALC's growth has been fueled by collaboration with other Weinberg College departments, such as the Department of History and the Department of Religious Studies, as well as programs like Comparative Literary Studies, which has been an increasing source of many of ALC's PhD students. Institutes like the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs and the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities as well as campus offices like Foundation Relations have also contributed to ALC's spirited evolution.

"We don't exist in isolation, and we're strong as a department because of our many partnerships at Northwestern," says Brueck, who notes an uprising in Asian-focused scholarship and research across Weinberg College.

A bright future

With ALC hitting double digits, Brueck looks to keep the momentum going.

In the coming academic year, the department will introduce a speaker series examining the direction of Asian humanities over the coming decade. Brueck calls the series an opportunity to establish Northwestern as a nexus of dialogue about the future of Asian humanities.

"We, of course, want to strengthen our department, but we also want to contribute to the broader world of Asian Studies and develop ourselves as an innovative leader in the interdisciplinary and integrated study of Asian humanities and languages in the 21st century," Brueck says.

In addition, ALC is looking to expand its language offerings, including supporting a nascent Tibetan language and literature curriculum and exploring potential courses in Southeast Asian languages. Department leaders also aim to further enhance a robust undergraduate curriculum in Asian humanities as well as a thriving PhD program with particular strengths in comparative caste studies and the environmental humanities.

"We have a lot of room to grow and are excited by what the future might bring," Brueck says.



Photos by Justin Barbin



Noriko Taira Yasohama, Professor of Instruction of Japanese was elected as the president of the Illinois Association of Teachers of Japanese (IATJ) in January 2023. This

year, she organized two in-person workshops for K-16 teachers of Japanese in Illinois and neighboring states. She will continue her effort to provide various professional development opportunities and to facilitate articulation among Japanese teachers in the area. For the upcoming workshops, she has secured grant by the Japan Foundation in Los Angeles. Noriko was appointed as the inaugural co-director of [the Weinberg Language Resource Center](#).

Starting fall 2023, she will take the leadership role in building of the new center. While some of her time will be allocated for the co-director work, she will continue teaching Japanese in ALC. Very busy years ahead of her.



Yan Zhou, Assistant Professor of Instruction of Chinese Language, along with Jingjing Ji, won the Open Education Resource (OER) grant for our project on developing authentic

and accessible first-year Chinese reading materials. With a diverse and scaffolded collection of reading materials, this project aims to enhance students' reading skills, cultural awareness, and overall language proficiency.

Yan presented a paper on how Mandarin speakers make promises in conversations at the 6th International Conference on Conversation Analysis in Brisbane, Australia. This project has implications for teaching interactional competence to students of Chinese as a second language. In June, she completed a two-week training series, the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview training and the Mellon Test Design and Development workshop, both hosted by the University of Chicago Language Center. I will apply the methods learned in the workshop series to enhance curricular and assessment design in my Chinese courses.

5th Annual Phyllis Lyons Lecture in Japanese Studies



Thomas Gaubatz, Phyllis Lyons, Sharalyn Orbaugh, Patrick Noonan

Sharalyn Orbaugh is Professor of Japanese Literature and Popular Culture and Head of the department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia.

Emotion and Entertainment in the Wartime Mobilization of Japan's Empire.

Exploiting hate in order to reinforce boundaries between "valorous us" and "demonized them" is often identified in studies of propaganda as the primary affective mode, particularly in the context of World War II. An examination of kamishibai (literally, paper theater), one of the most widely dissemination forms of propaganda in Japan's empire in the 1930s and 1940s, reveals a different affective structure in plays created both for the home front and the colonies: the insidiously persuasive power of exploiting love and blurring boundaries between self and other. This presentation looks at the illustrations and scripts of kamishibai plays performed in Japanese, Korean, and Chinese between 1938 and 1945 to trace patterns of affiliation, attachment, and love, used in the service of marshalling support for Japan's efforts to assimilate and militarize its colonies and occupied territories.

Celebration!

The Japanese Language Program (JLP) of ALC inducted two graduating seniors to the Japanese National Honor Society (JNHS) Northwestern University Chapter. These seniors excelled in the upper-level Japanese language courses and met the criteria set by the American Association of Teachers of Japanese. A certificate and a red-and-white cord for graduation were presented to the inductees at the JLP's annual end-of-year picnic. Congratulations to **Peining Ja** and **Ubakum Mere**.



Eventful Year for our Japanese Program

Our students of Japanese had a very eventful year – Starting with an invited trip to Japan, we concluded the year with a dinner reception at the official residence of the Japanese Consul-General in Chicago.

In December, 23 students of Japanese language and culture were invited to KAKEHASHI Project, a program sponsored by the Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE). In the week-long trip, the students visited Tokyo and Minami-Aizu, Fukushima, which was hit hard by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake. The students used Japanese throughout the trip and tested how much they could communicate. The JICE local staff and the chaperones were impressed with the level of proficiency of the students. In Minami-Aizu, the students met with the town council members, high school students and had one-day home stay with local family. They saw daily lives of people affected by the 2011 first-handedly. The trip provided them an opportunity not only to learn about Japanese society, but also to reflect on their own lives and their society. In April, in cooperation with Office of the Vice President for International Relations, we invited Consul-General Tajima of Consulate General of Japan and had presentations by the KAKEHASHI returnees in the Kellogg Global Hub. After presentations, the students had lively conversations with Consul-General Tajima. Impressed with the students' enthusiasm to learn about Japanese language and culture, Consul-General Tajima invited students of ALC's Japanese Program to a dinner reception at his official residence in June. 18 students were treated with delicious and beautifully presented buffet dinner, specially prepared by the Consul-General's chef. Peining Jia and Ubakum Mere, our graduating seniors, gave remarks in Japanese. Consul-General Tajima took time to talk to each student and faculty member. He was very impressed with high level of our students' Japanese proficiency and their commitment to learn Japanese. The Consul-General learned how diverse our students backgrounds were and how well they were doing in their Japanese study. Our students and faculty members wrapped up the year very nicely. The series of the events will have a long-lasting impact to all students.



Dinner reception at the Consul-General's official residence



KAKEHASHI returnees' presentations

Related articles

- KAKEHASHI trip: <https://www.northwestern.edu/international-relations/news/2023/building-bridges-to-everlasting-friendships.html>
- KAKEHASHI returnees' presentations: E-Japan Journal June 2023 <https://t.e2ma.net/message/fwrueg/3i1n1tm>

Chinese Culture



In October, Chinese Language Program faculty members **Licheng Gu** and **Wen-pin Hsieh** along with students from Chinese 125 hosted an outdoor luncheon in the Kresge/Crowe courtyard to celebrate the Moon Festival with student representatives from U of C, Loyola, DePaul, Lake Forest College, North Central College and UIC. This is the first weekend after all the seven schools started. Students used a questionnaire in Chinese to talk with students from neighboring schools to swap experience in

learning Chinese. We had Chinese food from Lao Sze Chuan, a local Chinese restaurant in Evanston. Mr. Zhao Jian, the Chinese Consul General in Chicago came and congratulated students for participating the Midwest Chinese Speech Contest. He also brought mooncakes for dessert. Students from different schools presented talent shows of Chinese folk dance, Vietnamese folk dance, and Chinese songs.

Korean Culture

The Korean Language Program (KLP) hosted a culture night where Korean traditional culture was introduced. 61 students including 15 non-Korean language students participated and experienced dance, song, and calligraphy. Attendees are singing the song "Arirang" together.



KLP also hosted the 4th Annual Midwest Korean speech contest at Northwestern University. Over 100 people from 21 colleges and universities including 49 contestants of three levels, 29 teachers, and 34 friends /families/volunteers participated in the in-person festival. The event became a community of practice along with the opening remarks of the WCAS associate dean, Korean music performance, the K-POP dance of University of Chicago, and the support of Korean consulate general and Korean education center.

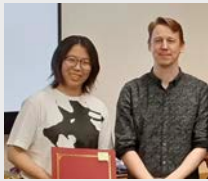


Student Awards

Refilwe Kebabireng was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Chinese Language and Culture.



Peinging Ja was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Japanese Language and Culture.



Ubakum Mere was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Japanese Language and Culture.



Jordan Hickey was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award in Korean Language and Culture.



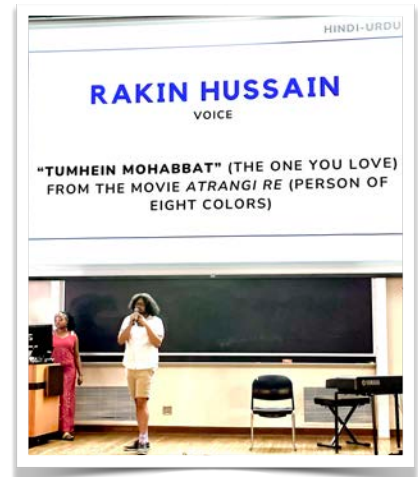
Economics major **Carolyne Geng** was awarded The Jock McLane prize for Best Paper.

Journalism major **Grace A Wu** won the Francis L.K. Hsu-John Henry Wigmore Senior Thesis Award.

A big thank you to our student workers **Tomo Kanda, Angela Ma, Jinghan Stephanie Xu, Justin Kim** and SAB rep **Laura Shi**.

South Asian Culture

The Hindi-Urdu Language Program participated in the CLI Spring Language Festival in May 2023. Pictured is one of Prof. Rami Nair's students, **Rakin Hussain**, singing "TUMHEIN MOHABBAT" (The One You Love) from the movie *Atrangi Re* (Person of Eight Colors) at the festival's variety show.



Starlight. Looking in from outside at an evening of artist demonstration.

Northwestern Buffett's Race, Caste, and Colorism Project, co-directed by Professors Laura Brueck (ALC) and Ivy Wilson (English) partnered in Fall 2022 with the Chicago-based SpaceShift Collective to launch Starlight, a pop-up community arts space and artist workshop. Housed in a former jewelry shop on Chicago's Devon Avenue, Starlight was an immersive exhibition exploring the history and future of Black and South Asian solidarity in the city.

"It's an artist workshop, evolving art installation and radical community library all in one. It provides a space for Chicago-based South Asian and Black artists, along with faculty and graduate students from Northwestern, to convene, influence, and inspire each other to create new art objects that wouldn't otherwise exist, and develop perspectives, networks and communities that will sustain long beyond the six weeks of the installation itself," explained Brueck.

Starlight was conceived as a partnership between the Race, Caste, and Colorism Project and SpaceShift as part of their Ao Mil Baithen project, a community-based initiative that celebrates the arts and culture of South Asia and its diaspora. The space featured a reading nook, listening station, art-making and story-sharing opportunities, and a variety of community events, including artist-led workshops, open mic sessions, concerts and film screenings focused on the concepts of race, caste and colorism, and

South Asian Culture continued..

their effects on communities.

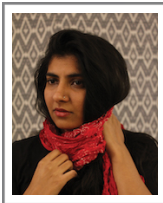
"In a city with a deep history of racial bifurcation, the Starlight art installation is not only a reminder of other long-standing communities in Chicago but a luminous call for the kinds of collectivities and connections that promise to both reorient how we see the 'international' here as well as recreate those very communities," explained Wilson.

"This task is enormous, but asking the right kinds of questions always brings us closer to imagining the kind of world we want to live in," added Soumya Shailendra, a PhD student in ALC and Comparative Literary Studies who served as a research associate on the project.



Graduate student Laiba Niaz Paracha and a friend listening to a record at the protest music listening station.

New Graduate Students in 2023-2024



Shamini Kothari is interested in the intersections between identity, affect and visual-literary culture. Their focus lies in questions surrounding power, caste and sexuality through the sensory in popular culture.



Dibyajyoti (Eamon) Lahiri is interested in narratology, illness narratives, Dalit studies, media studies, and the ecological humanities. He intends to study configurations of time and space in South Asian stories of epidemic, focusing on how they facilitate the articulation and resolution of the outbreak as a cosmological disorder, especially in the absence of a biomedical resolution.

Special Thanks to our generous donors Aug 2022-July 2023

Kelsey Joanne Allen-Niesen '19, American Online Giving Foundation, Inc., Mahesh Balakrishnan ('25 P) and Prerana Vaidya ('25 P), Allison Fleming Bryski '18, Grace Christie Chan '14, James C. Chen '08, Prathyusha Chenji '15, Helen S. Chung '98 ('26 P) and Joseph Chung '03 MBA ('26 P), Anonymous '16, '21 MA, Anonymous '19, Yan Fang '19, Clare Croghan Fisher '17, Nicolas Enrique Gonzalez Zapata '23, Steve K. Han '94, Sinian Hao '22, '22 MA, Alex He '22, Wilmer Ho '11 and Nicole Marie Ablondi '11, Ye-Eun G. Hong '19, Yeji Kathleen Hong '16, Anonymous '19, Junyoung Hwang, Anonymous '05, Anonymous '99, Erika Jang '08, Ramu Mundakizhi Kaladi '13 MA, Marie Y. Kim Ouyang '90 ('25 P), Barnabas P. Kim '18, Christine Jiyeon Kim '13, '23 MBA, Anonymous '18, Robert Y. Kim '94, Willy C. Lai '00, Herrick Lam '22, Nayoung Lee ('25 P) and Hyunjoong Hwang ('25 P), Stephanie K. Leung '02, Guobiao Li '17, Ashley Lim '16, Eric Andrew Liu '11, '11 MS, Christmann Jian Qi Low '21, Phyllis I. Lyons and Manuel Valdes-Cruz '79 MA, Runjie Ma '21, Nalin Rajaram Natrajan '14, '14 MS, Joshua Peng '14 MS, '16 MS, Joanne Thuy Anh Phan '22, Nadira Pranatio '23, Swathi Kancherla Rao '10, Neha Guddeti Reddy '16, Anonymous '10, Sumit Sablok '02 MBA, Schwab Charitable Fund, Richa Sehgal '23, Anonymous '22, Deborah Son '08, Henrikas Tankus '17, Edward Lelong Tao Zhu '22, Andrew Jason Thomas '11, Vishal Vaid '01, Samson Xusong Wang '19, '20 MS, Devon Rebecca Weiss '10, Eric L. Weng '98, Anonymous '14, William Chwen-Wei Yang '15, Anonymous '17, Shu Ning Yuan '21, Kristina Song Zhang '17, Tiffany Shing-Shing Zheng '18.