

Pacific and Asian Studies

University of Victoria 2012-13 Newsletter

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Challenges and Changes in PAAS

It's no secret amongst those of us in higher education that current economic conditions have created challenges for all branches of the university system. Few of those branches are feeling external pressure to justify their existence to quite the same extent that the Humanities are—and yet at the same time few of those branches have the same vitality, history, and intellectual breadth in which this foundational root of the modern university takes pride.

The Humanities provide their students with training in academic skills unobtainable anywhere else: in research and rhetorical skills, of course, but also in languages and communication arts, philosophy and analytical thinking, textual analysis and logic, the ability to evaluate competing ideas and discover ways of reconciling antithetical view points, appreciating narratives of all kinds and engaging with the complex relations and arguments those narratives make about

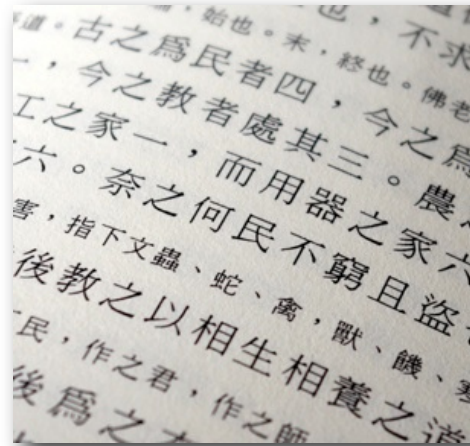
their social, ideological, and historical contexts. The Humanities, it is clear, provide their students with the skills they need to achieve their life goals both within and beyond the academy, in all manner of pursuits, either corporate, academic, diplomatic, or more.

With this in mind, the

Department of Pacific and Asian Studies is very pleased to announce the creation of two new program options: *Certificates in Language and Cultural Proficiency*, in either

Chinese or Japanese. These certificates are each 10.5 units of concentrated training in introductory Chinese or Japanese, covering language, narrative studies, history, religion and philosophy, and other cultural issues, to give students whose Majors may constrain their elective choices an opportunity to advance their global citizenship and enhance their knowledge of Asia.

Pacific and Asian Studies is proud to offer these new Certificates in parallel with new



programs available in three other departments in the Faculty of Humanities: French, Germanic and Slavic Studies, and Hispanic and Italian Studies. Cooperation between these units has permitted us to develop, propose, and receive approval for these Certificates in record time—and now, they go live in September, 2013.

Innovative curriculum development like this will become increasingly important as the university adapts to its changing circumstances. PAAS is proud to be at the forefront.

Changes, 2

Goodbye and Hello!

There have been some personnel changes in PAAS recently, as Joanne Denton, our Graduate Secretary, has moved on to a position in the Department of Political Science, and Leanna Wong has joined us, being shared between PAAS and the Department of French. While we'll all miss Joanne after her nearly ten years of service, we certainly wish her every success and happiness in her new department—and we all welcome Leanna as our newest departmental member!

News from Our Students on Exchange



Photo by Ye Jin Jeong

Ye Jin Jeong: Hi everyone, nice to meet you. My name is YeJin Jeong and I am majoring in Pacific Asian Studies. Right now, I am in Japan, in Nagoya

city, taking part in an Intensive Summer Japanese Program at Nanzan University.

My first impression about Japan is that there are lots of temples and shrines. In Japan, there are various kinds of structures and figures which are closely related to Japanese beliefs. Superstition is very wide-spread in Japan and it can be found every where such as traditional castles, gift shops or even in private homes.

For example, the picture above is Nagoya castle. On the top of the castle, there are two figures of fish which represent the God of Water. These figures exist in other wooden castles of Japan as well while the Japanese people used to believe that the “fish god” would prevent the castle from burning down in a fire.



Photo by Ye Jin Jeong

During my stay in Japan, I am looking forward to finding out more about traditional Japanese beliefs and the relationship between their faith and daily life.

Generous UVic Students on the Rescue to a Stranded Victorian UVic Students Help!

Mika Kimura: A big THANK YOU to Lawrence Edmunds and Elizabeth.

Can you imagine yourself stranded in the country where you do not speak its language, without a passport?

One spring morning, I found a little note written by my friend on Facebook. The note said “My

daughter is stranded in Shanghai without her passport, lonely and sad.”

My friend’s daughter, Vanessa, was on her way to Nepal via Shanghai. When she arrived at Shanghai, her passport mysteriously disappeared. If she had a plane ticket leaving the country, she could have received a temporary document within a few days. However, since she had lost her connection to Nepal, which was scheduled to leave Shanghai on that same day, she needed to stay in Shanghai to order a temporary passport—a process which might have taken up to two weeks. Feeling lonely, sad and frustrated, she had to stay in a city where she knew nothing and no-one.

When I read my friend’s note, I felt helpless, as I do not know anyone in Shanghai. But soon I remembered that every year we send our students to Shanghai as exchange students. When I talked to Dr. King about the situation, Dr. King kindly sent an email message to those students. And amazingly within a day, I got a reply back from two students, Lawrence Edmunds and Elizabeth, kindly agreeing to help Vanessa. Lawrence and Elizabeth contacted her by email, talked with her on the telephone, and took her out in Shanghai without any hesitation. By the time Vanessa had her temporary passport ready, she had had many chances to explore Shanghai, and started to love being there. In the end, she changed her plan. She went to Nepal and returned to China to explore there more.

When this incident happened, personally I was amazed—I really appreciated these students’ kindness and generosity toward my friend’s daughter. But not only that—these students also made me realise again how our students can be a great help for our community. And they made me proud of the students in our department, and made me feel the greatest pleasure to be able to meet

these students through the courses and to have the chance to be able to teach them.

Because of them, the difficult time in Shanghai for Vanessa was magically turned into a fun and happy memory for her.

Thank you, Lawrence and Elizabeth. You are true heroes for my friend’s family and me!

Completed MA Students

Ruji Auethavornpipat: “Revealing China’s Hegemonic Project in Thailand: How the Confucius Institute Furthers the Chinese State’s International Ambitions”

Natasha Fox: “Sexuality and Ambiguity at Girlfriend, a Contemporary Tokyo Women-Only Dance Party.”

Gillian Herlinger: “Yellow Horde, Forbidden City, and Fertile Earth: How Early 20th-Century Western Fiction Imagined China through the Kaleidoscope of Exoticism, Modernity and Imperialism.”

Jessica Ly: “Contemporary Perspectives on Vietnamese Medicine Among First Generation Vietnamese Refugees in Victoria, Canada.”

Daymon Macmillan: “Traversing the Periphery: Focalisation in Cen Shen’s Frontier Settings Within the Context of Chinese Frontier Poetry.”

Mark Morrison: “Commentated Into His Own Image: Jin Shengtan and His Commentary Edition of the Shuihu Zhuan.”

Chihiro Saka: “Mediating Between the Religious World and the Masses: Picture Deciphering by the Itinerant Nuns of Kumano.”

Jason Wolf: “Damming the Mekong: The Social, Economic and Environmental Consequences of the Nam Theun 2 Hydroelectric Project.”

Continuing MA Students

Sherri Carbullido: Contemporary Japanese Aesthetics and Cinema

Madeline Holden: Southeast Asian Area Studies

Hajime Kataoka: Contemporary Japanese Studies

Mayo Kawaguchi: Contemporary Japan

Rita Livshits: Contemporary Japan

David Long: Contemporary Indonesian Drama

Yang Bai: Chinese Literature

Congratulations, good luck, and best wishes to all our MA students!

An Opportunity to Help

Pacific and Asian Studies Student Research and Exchange Fund

The Pacific and Asian Studies Student Research and Exchange Fund is now entering its fifth year. In the first year, the fund received over \$3000.00 in donations. Recently, however, we have received no new contributions, and our drive to raise an initial endowment of at least \$10,000 remains stalled with the fund hovering just below \$2400.

This fund is intended to help Graduate and Undergraduate Students alike to be able to travel to the Asia and Pacific regions in order to undertake advanced language training and carry out thesis research and other kinds of critical study projects. Many of our alumni can easily recognise the value of such “first-hand” experience.

Please consider donating to our Student Research and Exchange Fund. No matter how small the amount, every bit will help us reach our initial goal of a \$10,000 endowment.



Dancers in the Tanabata Festival, Tokyo, Japan.

Photo by Timothy Iles

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