



# ASIAN STUDIES



## Asian Studies Program in 2016-17

The Asian Studies Program (ASIA) begins its sixth year at UMBC and has moved into new quarters on the 5th floor in the renovated Fine Arts Building (South wing).

67 students (49 majors and 18 minors) are enrolled in the program as of summer 2016.

It is ASIA's mission to serve as a truly interdisciplinary program. This past academic year ASIA connected with more than a dozen other departments, programs and centers, as detailed below:

Sept. 3, 2015: Cosponsored a public reception with the state of Maryland sister state programs from South Korea, China and Japan in welcoming the First Lady of Maryland, Mrs. Yumi Hogan. ASIA worked closely with Maryland officials from the Department of State in organizing this event. As a result of this effort, Director Vaporis was invited to become a member of the Anhui (China)-Maryland Sister State Committee to work on educational exchanges between Anhui and Maryland.



Asian Studies students at the reception for Maryland First Lady Yumi Hogan (9/3/2015)

October 17, 2015: Asian Studies co-sponsored with the Department of History "UMBC's 1st Symposium on Asian History/Asian Studies" for faculty and students in the Chesapeake Bay region. Over 50 people, including area secondary school teachers, attended the Saturday morning event.

April 13, 2016: Asian Studies co-sponsored (with Visual Arts and Gender and Women's Studies) the Humanities Forum with Ram Devineni, filmmaker, who spoke on: Can A Comic Book Superhero and Rape Survivor Change Attitudes Toward Sexual Violence?

April 18: Cosponsored (with the Department of English) a reading by Vietnamese-American poet Ocean Vuong.

April 21: Asian Studies was the principal sponsor, along with cosponsors Department of Geography and Environmental Systems and the History Department, of a lecture by Brett Walker, "Natural and Unnatural Disasters: 3/11, Asbestos, and the Unmaking of Japan's Modern World."



Dr. Constantine Vaporis, Asia Studies Program Director

## Fall 2016 News Welcome Back Event

On August 31, the first day of classes, the Asian Studies Program will be hosting a Welcome Back reception for students, faculty and staff in its new home, in our conference room, FA 558 South, on the 5th floor of the Fine Arts Building. Please be sure to use the elevator closest to the Engineering building, as the two fifth floors do not connect.

### Asian Studies Student Wins Award for Study in Taiwan

This past spring Nathaniel Wong, an Asian Studies major, won a Huayu Enrichment Scholarship from the Taiwan Ministry of Education (TECRO) to study intensive Mandarin in the Republic of China (Taiwan).

### Other Activities

The Asian Studies Program continues to work with **Modern Languages and Linguistics** as well as the **Dean's Office** to support the offering of courses in Hindi. We are also working with the **Department of Philosophy** and the **Dean's Office** to support the offering of courses in Asian philosophy. Lastly, this coming spring ASIA will sponsor a new course on Hinduism, a first at UMBC.

ASIA continues its mission to bring the arts of Asia to UMBC by offering classes in Indian dance by renown dancer Shobha Subramanian together with our co-sponsor, the **Dance Department**. Asian Studies is also co-sponsoring classes in Gamelan with the **Music Department**. Asian Studies students play an integral role in UMBC's Gamelan Ensemble, which held its first performance on campus on April 22. (Please see photo below).



## Congratulations to our Spring 2016 Graduates!

Our largest graduating class yet — 14 students!



**Back row, from left:** Benjamin Zimmer, Rachel McCloud, Matthew Lee, (Dr. Constantine Vaporis), Lindsey Johnston, Hannah Goldberg, Nicole Acocella

**Front Row, from left:** Vicky Yao, Karen Lao, David Csiszar, Kayla Barrett

**Graduates not in photo:** Megan Cheng, Ashley Jennings, Rebecca Lewis, John J. Miller, Whitney Phipps

### Student Research

In addition to encouraging UMBC students to attend our symposium in Asian History/Asian Studies this past fall, ASIA has also supported student research this year by sponsoring three Asian Studies students' participation in the Bard College Conference on the Environment in Asia. Director Vaporis worked with all three students on independent studies (ASIA 400), in which they further developed that research. These same three majors— Benjamin Zimmer, Kayla Barrett and Julian Tash—and one minor—Jennifer Christhilf—also presented this past spring at URCAD, UMBC's Undergraduate Research Day.



Benjamin Zimmer presenting his research on North Korea at URCAD.

## Exciting Early 2017 Event

Asian Studies is working with the **Library Gallery** to bring a unique exhibition of almost forty contemporary paintings from Myanmar to UMBC in January 2017 (see below for an image of one of them). The exhibition will run until Spring Break and is entitled "Freedom and Fear. Painting Myanmar in a Time of Transition." The official opening of the exhibit will feature a lecture by Professor Christina Fink (GWU), on February 1, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in the Library Gallery. Dr. Fink will give a contextual talk, "Myanmar: Perspectives on a Society in Transition."

This event is free and open to the public.



"Novitiation Ceremony," by Myanmar artist Satt Aung.

## New Books by Asian Studies Faculty

Tamara Bhalla: *Reading Together, Reading Apart: Identity, Belonging, and South Asian American Community*, University of Illinois Press, 2016.

Meredith Oyen: *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S.-Chinese Relations in the Cold War*, Cornell University Press, 2015.

Fan Yang: *Faked in China: Nation Branding, Counterfeit Culture, and Globalization*, Indiana University Press, 2015.

## New Assistant Professor of Chinese History Joins UMBC



Dr. Song holds a BA in Chinese Language and Literature from the University of International Relations (China), a M.Sc. in Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics and a Ph.D. in Chinese History from the University of Chicago. He recently completed his third year as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow (and in 2013-2014 also as an SSRC fellow) at Vassar College. Dr. Song is an especially promising historian of Chinese History, Inter-Asian History, and Transnational History. A native of China, he is fluent in Mandarin Chinese, with research knowledge of Japanese and Korean. His research is based on work in Chinese, Korean and Japanese archives.

## Faculty News

**Bambi Chapin:** Dr. Chapin received funding from an NSF grant through UMBC in 2015-16 to concentrate on establishing new lines of research focused on Sri Lankan heritage families in the U.S. and in Sri Lanka. As part of this, she spent January 2016 in Sri Lanka conducting field research on mothering and childbirth, which built on her previous work there. Over the year, she plans to develop these new lines of research, presenting preliminary results on the socialization of mothers at the Annual Conference on South Asia in Madison, Wisconsin in October as well as a paper at the American Anthropology Association's Annual Meeting in November.

# Faculty News Continued

**Tamara Bhalla:** Dr. Bhalla's book *Reading Together, Reading Apart. Identity, Belonging, and South Asian American Community* will be published this November (2016) by the University of Illinois Press.

**Amy Bhatt:** Dr. Bhatt was featured in KCTS-9 Documentary: <http://gwst.umbc.edu/news/?id=54931>, and she presented talks at the following conferences: "Our Stories: Telling Stories of South Asian America through Digital Media," at the Association for Asian American Studies, Miami, FL.; "Gendered production of privilege and vulnerability in the context of neoliberalism," at the National Women's Studies Association, Milwaukee, WI; "Paradoxes of Precarity: Transnational Vulnerabilities and Resilience," at the National Women's Studies Association, Milwaukee, WI; "South Asians in (North) America: The Study of Pre and Post 1965 Migrations-," at the Immigration History Research Center, Minneapolis. Dr. Bhatt also published a chapter entitled, "Resident 'Non-Resident' Indians: Gender, Labor and the Return to India" in *Transnational Migration to Asia: The Question of Return*, ed. Michiel Baas. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2015, pp 55-72.

**Brian Grodsky:** His new book will be published with Rowman & Littlefield in early August, entitled, *The Democratization Disconnect: How Recent Democratic Revolutions Threaten the Future of Democracy*. Dr. Grodsky attended the Japan Studies Association Freeman Foundation Summer Institute, University of Hawaii, May/June 2016.

**David Mitch:** Attended the Japan Studies Association Freeman Foundation Summer Institute, University of Hawaii, May/June 2016. He organized and presented at a session entitled "Diverse Routes to Schooling for All" at the 2015 World Economic History Congress held in Kyoto, Japan in August, 2015. He also served as a discussant at the meeting of Anglo-Japanese Historians conference held in Osaka, Japan in August, 2015;

**Manil Suri:** Has written two op-eds on India for the New York Times (See the ones on Mar 15, 2016, Aug 3, 2015, and Jun 19, 2015 at <http://www.nytimes.com/column/manil-suri>). In addition, his play, "The Mathematics of Being Human" was performed in New Delhi at the US Center by Atelier Productions, with an excerpt performed in Mumbai (both in January, 2016). Dr. Suri was an invited speaker at the Jaipur Literary Festival in Boulder (Sep, 2015) and at the Lit for Life book festival in Chennai, India (Jan 2016).

**Constantine Vaporis:** was selected for ASIANetwork's Speakers Bureau, 2017-19. (ASIANetworks is a consortium of 160 colleges and universities with Asian Studies programs). He served as an Instructor for two three-day courses entitled "Asia Pacific" for the National Geophysical Intelligence Agency, delivered at NGA headquarters, Springfield, VA and St. Louis, MO, July 2016; presented "The Edo Man and the Satsuma Sweet Potato. Early Modern Travel through a Japanese Prism," an invited lecture for the inaugural lecture series for the Center for Integrated Study of Japan, University of Pennsylvania, November 12, 2015, published an article, Mapping the 'Arms and Legs of the Realm; in Kären Wigen, Fumiko Sugimoto, and Cary Karacas, ed., *Cartographic Japan: A Reader*. (University of Chicago Press, 2015); and published "A Trip to be Remembered: Obama in Japan and Vietnam" in *The Conversation*, May 25, 2016.

**Fan Yang:** Dr. Yang's book, *Faked in China: Nation Branding, Counterfeit Culture, and Globalization*, was published by Indiana University Press in November 2015, as part of the Global Research Series funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Her article, "Under the Dome: 'Chinese' Smog as a Viral Media Event," appeared in the journal *Critical Studies in Media Communication*. She also contributed a chapter, "The Chinese Dream: A Global-national Ideological Formation," to the edited volume *Commercial Nationalism: Selling the Nation and Nationalizing the Sell* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). In addition to delivering a book talk at the College of William and Mary and presenting papers at several conferences, Dr. Yang also conducted a seminar, "China and/in Globalization," at the Third Association for Cultural Studies Institute 2015: Precarious Futures, Bloemfontein, South Africa in December, 2015.