ABOUT THE PROGRAM

East Asian studies is an interdisciplinary program that seeks to give the student broad yet intimate knowledge of the history, politics, economics, art and language of the major areas of East Asia. Courses offer a full range of instruction in Japanese and Chinese, helping to create a foundation for careers in government, academics, international relations, international business, journalism, trade, finance, industry, law and diplomacy in the 21st century.

What makes the program distinctive?

The East Asian studies program is designed to expose students to a wide range of history, perspective and contemporary challenges relating to East Asia’s societies and culture. The program offers exceptionally strong and extensive courses relating to Chinese and Japanese language and literature. With the purpose of broadening, deepening and integrating our students’ understanding of East Asia, the program also draws on a wide range of Brandeis faculty in the social sciences, including anthropology, economics, history and politics, and in the humanities and creative arts, including art, music and religion.

FAST FACTS

Current number of majors and minors: 82

Number of faculty: 14

Can you minor in this program? Yes

Emphasis within the major: China and Japan, with some courses covering Korea and Vietnam

Popular second majors: anthropology; biology; economics; fine arts; health: science, society and policy; history; politics

Website: brandeis.edu/programs/eastasia
ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

Language study
Courses offer a full range of language instruction in Japanese and Chinese, including literature courses. Currently, the program is also offering courses in Korean language and culture.

Research opportunities
Our faculty members from a variety of disciplines are actively engaged with a range of research projects, involving travel and research in various East Asian countries and settings. We welcome research collaboration with students. In addition, a number of our seniors engage with the Senior Honors Program in which they devote two semesters of their senior year to an in-depth research project with the support of a team of our faculty.

Extracurricular events
The EAS colloquium organizes lectures throughout the year to introduce new research by experts in the East Asian fields. These lectures offer students the opportunity to learn from and interact with internationally renowned specialists.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Study abroad
EAS majors and minors have a wealth of options when it comes to studying abroad. Approved study-abroad sites for majors include China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Tibet and Vietnam. Scholarships are available to help students travel.

Student-run clubs
Brandeis has several student clubs to help students gain a better understanding of East Asian cultures. These clubs include the Asian American Students Association, the Japanese Students Association, the Korean Students Association and the Southeast Asia Club.

Social events
Students initiate weekly “language tables” to practice elementary to advanced Chinese and Japanese as well as introductory Korean. Students and faculty members have co-hosted movie nights, sushi-making and dumpling-making parties and other social events to deepen appreciation for East Asian customs and cultures.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Distinguished faculty
The EAS program features strong faculty members who encourage their students’ curiosity and help them to understand East Asian culture from many perspectives. Professor Aida Yuen Wong was a recipient of the Taiwan Fellowship awarded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ROC) (2015-16) and conducted research in Taiwan on modern ink painting. Professor Matthew Fraleigh received the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature (2011) and the University of Chicago William F. Sibley Memorial Translation Prize (2012). Professor Yui-Hui Chang is a composer in the Brandeis music department and won the 2008 Aaron Copland Award, a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship and a 2009 Radcliffe Institute Fellowship. Currently, she is working on a chamber ensemble piece combining Chinese and Western instruments. Professor Gary H. Jefferson, who is affiliated with the economics department and the International Business School, focuses his research on institutions, technology, economic growth and China’s economic transformation. He is an honorary professor at Wuhan University, China, Professor Ralph Thaxton, of the politics department, writes on political movements in rural China; his publications include “Salt of the Earth” and “Force and Contention in Contemporary China.”

AFTER BRANDEIS

Where are they now?
Recent grads include Yan Don ’08, Asia equities analyst at Bloomberg; Nadia Hemady ’05, MA’09, PhD candidate in Japanese media cultures and gender studies at Duke University; Christina Omori ’04, consumer market researcher at The Boston Globe; Michael Pitt ’10, epidemiology research assistant at Channing Laboratory, Brigham and Women’s Hospital; and Clarissa Stewart ’10, assistant language teacher in the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program.

Distinguished alumni
Robert Lipson ’76 is the co-founder and CEO of Chindex, a pioneering medical supply firm that runs hospitals in several Chinese cities. Shortly after graduating from Brandeis, she was employed in China by Sobin Chemical, coordinating marketing and sales of various equipment in China. After graduating, Tobias Harris ’05 worked for Keiichiro Asao, a Democratic Party of Japan member. A Japanese politics specialist, Harris has been published in The Wall Street Journal Asia and the Far Eastern Economic Review and has provided commentary for CNBC Asia, Bloomberg, BBC and NPR. Jesse Appell ’12, the founder of Laugh Beijing, is a celebrated intercultural comedian and consultant.

“Professor Matthew Fraleigh really welcomed each student into the world of classical East Asian poetry. His vast knowledge and passion for the subject material made each class fascinating to sit through — especially for someone like me, who has little understanding of East Asian studies. I enjoyed dissecting each poem in class. … The connections we made as a class were greater than my personal accounts of each poem.”

A former student on Fraleigh’s course “Classical East Asian Poetics”