

KU | Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures

2025 Winter Newsletter



Chair's Message

Dear EALC Faculty, Lecturers, GTAs, Staff, Students and their Families, and Alumni,

Welcome to the 2025 East Asian Languages and Cultures Annual Newsletter!

As incoming Chair, I would first like to acknowledge the wonderful work of our previous Chair, Faye Xiao, who steered us successfully through the pandemic and greatly strengthened the department with the hiring of Linda Galvane and Eun Ah Cho (to mention just a couple of her many contributions). And we are also very grateful to Yan Li, who kept everything running smoothly as Interim Chair in the fall of 2024.

This year, we were very fortunate to be able, with support from the College, to convert Thomas McDonald's position to Assistant Professor. Along with the hire of Linda Galvane in fall 2023, this has brought the Japanese section back up to strength after the retirement of Maggie Childs and Elaine Gerbert. Thomas' PhD is in Comparative Literature from Stanford, and his research now focuses on modern and contemporary Japanese literature in a comparative context. He is working on a monograph on the Japanese-Korean writer Lee Yangji. Thomas is teaching and developing a wide range of courses for EALC, including "Translating East Asian Languages" which attracts students from all our concentrations.

I'm also very pleased to report that Yuka Naito was promoted to Associate Teaching Professor this year. Yuka worked tirelessly to keep the Japanese section on an even keel during the years it was understaffed and continues to teach and oversee Japanese language classes, working with Linda and Thomas to further strengthen offerings in Japanese language and culture in EALC, and promote Japanese culture in the region.

All our faculty have been hard at work this year with their teaching, research, and service. Eun Ah Cho and

Linda Galvane have been settling into their positions here in EALC and greatly contributing to the teaching and research of the department. Individual faculty achievements are reported in more detail below. Here I'll just mention that Faye Xiao, after stepping down as Chair, took up an Honorary Visiting Fellowship at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and has been working on her third monograph and giving presentations at many different venues on various aspects of her research. Kyoim Yun has continued to develop her "Happiness in East Asia" course which is proving to be very popular among students from all the KU schools. And a special shout out to our most senior colleague, Keith McMahon, who this year received the Society for Ming Studies' award for the Best General Book in Ming Studies for 2023 for his book *Saying All that Can be Said: The Art of Describing Sex in Jin Ping Mei*.

This year, as in past years, EALC has relied on several highly qualified and experienced lecturers, among them Yue Pan in Chinese, Misae Nishimura Daldorph in Japanese, and Minjoo Hwangbo in Korean, along with many excellent GTAs, to allow us to offer a full range of lectures and drills. And our Administrative Associate, Rosalyn Lucas, has kept not only EALC but also the French and Italian department running smoothly during several transitions this last year.

EALC continues to have very healthy numbers of students majoring and minoring with us. This year's Honors and Graduation Ceremony was a very happy and well attended celebration of our students, moving to a larger room in the Kansas Union to accommodate all the students and their families and guests.

Our MA program continues to successfully train graduate students. This year Xingning Luan was the recipient of the Outstanding Master's Thesis Award from the College Office of Graduate Affairs, and we welcomed

several new MA students this fall to the program. We are working on expanding our MA program in the coming years and have been publicizing the program – take a look at our new flier at the end of the newsletter!

Throughout the year, EALC's dedicated and diligent students have been hard at work in the classroom while also taking opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in other ways, such as attending speech contests and study abroad programs. Our students had great success at Korean and Japanese speech contests this year, and Quin Dotzert represented the US at the Quiz on Korea, travelling to Korea in the summer to take part in the televised show!

We are very happy to now offer students two EALC-affiliated study-abroad programs. One is the "Japan: Then and Now" program, that was relaunched by Yuka Naito last year. Yuka led the program again this summer, visiting many cities, including Lawrence's sister city of Hiratsuka. And this summer was also the second offering of our 8-week program at the National Sun-Yat Sen University in Taiwan, where EALC students took part in an intensive Chinese-language program while also enjoying many cultural activities. One student described the trip as "one of the best experiences I've had in my life!"

The discontinuation of FLAS and Title VI funding in the fall was a blow to our students and programs, but, with the support of the College and the Center for East Asian studies, we were able to continue our Uyghur and Tibetan course offerings and support FLAS recipients this fall. Uyghur and Tibetan courses continue to attract strong enrollment, with over 40 students this fall in these classes.

After graduation our students go on to many varied and interesting jobs – I would encourage you to visit our Alumni Voices page to see some of their stories: <https://ealc.ku.edu/alumni-voices> . If you are an alum and have not contributed your story, please do so!

We were pleased to welcome back one such alumnus, Chris Horton, in October this year. Chris has worked as a journalist in mainland China, Hong Kong, and now reports from Taiwan. He spoke about his new book, *Ghost Nation*, and held a separate careers session for students interested in working in East Asia or journalism after graduation.

And, finally, a very big "Thank You" to those generous alums who have made gifts to the department this last year – your support is greatly appreciated!

Best wishes for the Holiday season and New Year!

Crispin Williams

Faculty Achievements



In 2025, Eun Ah Cho presented several strands of her ongoing research at major national conferences. At the Modern Language Association convention in New Orleans, she delivered a paper titled “Gendered Violence In 2025, Eun Ah Cho presented several strands of her ongoing research at major national conferences. At the Modern Language Association convention in New Orleans, she delivered a paper titled “Gendered Violence and Literary Vengeance in North Korean Defector Survival Literature.” For the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting in Columbus, she organized the panel “Reconceptualizing Border Feminization: Economy, Gender, and Violence on the China–North Korea Boundary” and presented her paper “Female Face of Border.” She was also invited to the Marist Asian Studies Conference, where she gave an engaging presentation on “Counter-North Korea” and participated in a roundtable discussion.

Alongside these presentations, Eun Ah advanced her second research project and published the critical essay “Smell of Dignity: Memory and Representations of Persons with Dementia” in *Critical Asia Archives: Events and Theories*. She was also invited to review We Jung Yi’s *Worm-Time: Memories of Division in South Korean Aesthetics*, and her review appeared in the *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Eun Ah taught Modern Korean Fiction and Film, Cultural History of Korea, and Modern Korean Texts 1 and 2. She collaborated with the Spencer Museum of Art to provide students with a guided tour of Korean artifacts for their creative writing assignments and organized a virtual Q&A with Dr. Ju Hui Judy Han (UCLA) on her book *Queer Throughlines*, offering students direct engagement

with contemporary scholarship.

Her service contributions included organizing a successful public screening of the Korean independent film 3670, followed by a discussion with its director. The event offered audiences a rare opportunity to engage with a film that had just been released in Korea and was beginning to receive recognition at international film festivals. She presented “Topics of Korea” at a K–12 instructor workshop during the KC Arirang Festival, supporting Korean studies outreach and curriculum development.

With strong support from her students, Eun Ah received the J. Michael Young Academic Advisor Award in recognition of her commitment to undergraduate advising. She also received a new course development grant from the Center for East Asian Studies, and was awarded an AI Literary Grant to support research and pedagogical innovation.



In 2025, Linda Galvane presented her research at three conferences, one of which was supported by a travel grant from KU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Most recently, in November, at the Association of Japanese Literary Studies conference at the University of Chicago, she presented her work on Japanese toilet maker TOTO’s literary and media connections (“Contingent Flows of TOTO Machine”). In July, she presented her work on a fantasy novel about an Edo-era waste collector at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) Biennale (“Excremental Atmospherics: Bodily Waste, Ecological Networks, and Gendered Biopolitics in Fujita Masaya’s *Bags Sacks of Shit*, 1995”). At the “Japan in Communist Europe” symposium (Tokyo University

of Foreign Studies and online, March), she presented her work on the Japan-related travel writing and literary imagination of a Latvian novelist (“In Hindsight Between the Lines: Traversing (Soviet) Latvia and Japan in the Writings of Zigmunds Skujiņš”).

At KU, Galvane served on the programming steering committee (supported by Title VI) for the “Digital Age” symposium organized with CEAS, and she organized a panel about Japanese literary creativity at the intersection of technology, literature, and media for the May event. She was also a Digital Humanities Fellow at the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities and presented her developing digital project on Japanese toilet *senryū* (comic verses) at the 2025 Fellows Symposium. In May, she presented her poster about her updated course “Japan’s Literary Legacy” at KU’s Center for Teaching Celebration of Teaching event.

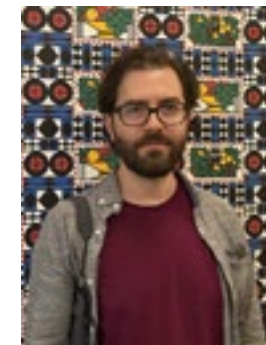
Supported by the Hall Center Faculty Research Travel Grant and the Faculty International Research Travel Grant from the Center for East Asian Studies, Galvane conducted research at the National Diet Library and the Abnormal Museum in Tokyo over the summer. On her days off, she visited the EXPO in Osaka and attended several traditional Japanese performances, which she cannot wait to teach in her spring courses. To further develop her premodern Japanese language (*bungo*) skills, she also participated in her second *Kuzushiji* (Japanese cursive writing) workshop online.

Her *mokuhanga* (woodblock) print “Kappa Calling X” received an Honorable Mention in the Awagami International Mini-Print Exhibition and was exhibited this fall at the Inbe Art Space in Yoshinogawa City, Japan.

In outreach, she once again led a tanka composition workshop at the Kansas City Japan Festival in October and served as a poetry judge for the 27th Heartland Japanese Language Contest in March. She also continued hosting the monthly East Asian Literature Book Club at Wescoe Hall, summarized elsewhere in this newsletter on page 18.



The mokuhanga, “Kappa Calling X”.



Thomas McDonald was promoted to Assistant Professor in the EALC this year. He participated in KU’s Digital Age Symposium in April, presenting on the use of artificial intelligence in Kudan Rie’s 2024 Akutagawa Prize-winning novel *Sympathy Tokyo Tower* (東京都同情塔) and is currently developing this talk into an article. McDonald also delivered two talks on the subject of his book project, the Japanese-Korean writer and dancer Lee Yangji (李良枝, 이양지), one at KU in April and another at the Japan Studies Association at Johnson County Community Community in October. Over the summer, McDonald worked on this research in Japan and Korea, which included visiting the Osaka Korea Town Museum and several music and performance events in Seoul. Alongside this ongoing research, McDonald put energy into course development this year, receiving a grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to work on the asynchronous online 8-week course, “Eastern Civilizations.” He also created and taught advanced-level “Business Japanese” in Spring 2025 and is currently revamping “Introduction to Contemporary Japan” to be taught in person in Spring 2026. McDonald is eager to see the final projects in “Minorities in Japan,” which students are developing in

an array of intercultural, transdisciplinary, and creative directions, and he is proud of the work that students in “Translating East Asian Languages” (Fall 2025) have been putting into their poetry translation showcases, having been translating from a Japanese-Korean-Chinese trilingual anthology of contemporary renshi (連詩, or linked collaborative poetry). Beyond East Asia, McDonald published in Slovene Studies a sample of translations of Austrian-Slovene poetry and an article titled “Into a Language that is Not” based on work done with a residency grant from the Slovene Society of Literary Translators in May 2023.



Keith McMahon presented a paper at a panel for the annual Association for Asian Studies conference in Columbus, Ohio, in March 2025. The panel was entitled, “Eunuchs in Chinese History: Identities, Fantasies, and Legacies,” and his talk was “The Potent Eunuch, Revisited,” which was an update of an article published in 2014 in light of research done by others since. He revised and expanded the paper for publication in the journal *Nannu: Men, Women, and Gender in China* (vol. 27). At the same conference, he was the recipient of the award by the Ming Studies Society for the Best General Book in Ming Studies for 2023, *Saying All That Can Be Said. The Art of Describing Sex in Jin Ping Mei* (Harvard Asia Center, 2023). In May he gave a talk in Chinese on “My Research Methodologies” at Beijing Foreign Languages University. He submitted a book review for the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, about *Khitan and Mongol Imperial Women in the Chinese Imagination. Ming Fantasies about Conquest Dynasty Harems* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2025), by Olivia Milburn. He continues a longer project, “The Cosmos Is One Big Room,” about the sixteenth-century novel *Journey to the West*, which discusses Sun Wukong’s character in terms of categories of being, the novel’s religious and cosmological context,

the concept of authority, Sun Wukong and masculinity, and the role of Daoist internal alchemy in the allegorical reading of the novel.



Yuka Naito was promoted to Associate Teaching Professor in August. She developed an online Elementary Japanese course for the summer, which was unfortunately canceled due to low enrollment. However, she successfully led the summer study abroad program, *Japan: Then and Now* for two consecutive years, taking 16 students along to Yokohama, Tokyo, Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, Fukuoka, and Nagasaki alongside a GTA, Ami Kitada.

She is currently exploring ways to increase awareness of East Asian content among KU students across various fields to boost enrollment and engage the broader community, while also deepening cultural understanding among students enrolled in Japanese courses. To achieve the first goal, she proposed a First-Year Seminar centered on Japanese food culture, which has been approved to offer in Fall 2026. Also, she is chairing a committee to host the 28th Heartland Japanese Language Contest at KU in March, 2026. In addition, she presented at the World Languages Fair to high school students, highlighting fascinating aspects of the Japanese language, and participated in multiple outreach events. For the second goal, she continually works to incorporate cultural components into language classes. Recently, she served as a panelist at the Course Internationalization Symposium hosted by the KU Center for Teaching Excellence, where she shared strategies for integrating COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) and hands-on Japanese cooking projects into advanced-level Japanese courses to enhance students’ cultural understanding.



Ji-Yeon Lee coordinated the Korean Culture Day in Kansas event in March, co-hosted by the Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles, King Sejong Institute Center U.S.A., and KU’s Center for East Asian Studies. The event attracted over 500 attendees and is featured on page 8. As Korean Language Coordinator, she presented “What Makes a LCTL Program Thrive? Insights from a Longitudinal Case Study of a Korean Program” at the 2025 Symposium on Language Pedagogy in Higher Education (SOLPHE), highlighting two decades of growth of our Korean language program through curriculum innovation, student engagement, and strong institutional support. She also delivered interactive lectures on Korean language and culture for K–12 teachers at the 2025 KC Arirang CEAS K-12 Educator Workshop held at UMKC in September and for high school students at KU’s World Language Fair in October.



Yan Li’s current research focuses on program development and Chinese grammar. She attended the 2025 Chinese Language Teachers Association Annual Conference in New York City on May 9 and 10, where she presented at a roundtable titled “Enhancing Recruitment and Retention in Chinese Language Programs: Challenges, Strategies, and Future Directions.” She is also working on several projects that examine serial verb constructions, alternative questions, and Chinese sentence-final particles. Her new textbook project, *Chinese Made Clear*, co-authored with Dr. Yue Pan, received an Open Educational Resources grant. Drawing on her twenty-four years of experience in teaching Chinese, the project aims to provide a clear, step-by-step textbook for beginning learners that is freely accessible to all students of Chinese. The textbook introduces new

material in a gradual, well-organized way, with careful attention to repeating vocabulary and grammar. It reflects current developments in the language, helping students acquire Chinese effectively without feeling overwhelmed.

In Fall 2025, she worked with the KU Center for Online and Distance Learning to redesign her online course, EALC 353/553: *Language and Society in East Asia*. This effort improved its structure, instructional materials, and student learning experience.

At the beginning of this year, she took on the role of Director of Undergraduate Studies. In this position, she chaired the department’s Capstone and Curriculum Development Committee as well as the Degree-Level Assessment Committee. She spent considerable time on the department’s detailed degree-level assessment, supporting program review and curriculum development efforts.



Events

Korea Culture Day in Kansas



On March 29, KU hosted its first-ever Korean Culture Day in Kansas, a vibrant celebration of community and culture! More than 500 KU students, faculty, staff, and local residents gathered at the Kansas Union to experience Korea's beauty and traditions. Guests enjoyed trying on colorful hanbok, learning Korean calligraphy, playing a variety of traditional games, tasting an assortment of K-snacks, and winning prizes. The event also featured an exciting Taekwondo demonstration, multiple K-Pop dance performances, a lively random dance session, and a wonderful music performance by our own Korean instructors, Dr. Minjoo Hwangbo (bass) and Grace Park (violin), which added a special touch to the celebration.

This event was made possible through the substantial support of the [Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles \(KCCLA\)](#), whose generous funding and commitment played a pivotal role, along with the contributions of [King Sejong Institute Center U.S.A.](#) and [KU's Center for East Asian Studies \(CEAS\)](#). Special thanks to our Korean instructors, student volunteers, and CEAS outreach coordinator Mego Londeen for their creativity and hard work. Korean Culture Day reminded us how cultural exchange enriches our campus and community.



Minjoo Hwangbo (left) and Grace Park (right)



From left: Catherine Blansett, Ji-Yeon Lee, Kyoim Yun, Sangwon Jung (KCCLA Director), Akiko Takeyama (CEAS Director), and Andrew Ha

Japanese Speech Contest



Our department proudly celebrates the outstanding accomplishments of our students at the 27th Annual Heartland Japanese Speech Contest, held on March 8, 2025, at Johnson County Community College. KU students made a clean sweep, winning across all the major categories. All of the winning students were enrolled in JPN 564, taught by Professor Linda Galvane, who is incredibly proud of them.

In the Japanese Speech category, Jean Duperon earned 1st place and delivered a speech in which he masterfully tied together his experience in Japan and his interest in the famous anime/manga Tokyo Ghoul in a thoughtful essay about change and acceptance. Jean also took 2nd place in the Audience Trivia Quiz, and it was great fun to watch him pull from memory various trivia facts learned in different classes. Jean, whose warm personality makes him a beloved presence among teachers and students alike, was gracious in expressing gratitude to his teachers: "I would like to thank all my Japanese teachers for teaching me up to this point. It would not have been possible without all their help, consideration, and careful

guidance." His readiness to take on any challenge was clear as he delivered his speech at the contest venue.

Kevin Reppar secured 2nd place in the same Speech category. Throughout his years at KU, he has demonstrated steady progress and disciplined determination, and his speech, in which he compared the importance of discipline and inspiration, reflected his character and excellent work ethic.

In the JLPT (N3 level) Grammar and Vocabulary Online Quiz, Aaron Moorman, who has shown particularly strong writing skills and consistent excellence in Japanese class, took 1st place.

We are so proud of all our students and once more congratulate them on their success!

Midwest Korean Speech Contest

Two Korean language students, Melia Whitney (KOR 108) and Henri Groves (KOR 564), won third place in the beginning and advanced levels, respectively, at the 6th Midwest Korean Speech Contest in Chicago. The contest featured 40 students from 19 Midwestern colleges. We are proud to celebrate this achievement as our program has earned prizes for three consecutive years.

Special thanks to GTA Quin Dotzert, who drove the students to and from Chicago and also won a preliminary round of [Quiz on Korea 2025](#), earning the honor of representing the USA. (His story is featured on page 14 of this newsletter.)



From left: Melia Whitney, Henri Groves, Quin Dotzert, and Lauren Atty

Study Abroad

Japan: Then and Now

This year's summer study abroad trip, "Japan: Then and Now," took place from May 21 to June 9 with 16 students participating.

During our first week, we spent a lot of time at and around Kanagawa University's Minato Mirai Campus in Yokohama. The professors and volunteer students warmly welcomed us and organized a variety of engaging activities. We joined English classes to exchange ideas, and experienced modern Japanese city life with Japanese students. We also enjoyed day trips to Tokyo and Kamakura, where we attended a *kabuki* play, explored bustling city centers, and wandered through charming traditional streets. A highlight for many was the 2-night homestay in Hiratsuka, Lawrence's sister city. The "Friends of Lawrence" volunteers and city officials greeted us enthusiastically, offering cultural activities, a city tour by charter bus, and even a meeting with the mayor!



We continued our journey westward aboard the *shinkansen* (bullet train) to learn more about Japan's

history and culture. We visited many temples and shrines in Kyoto and Nara, where there was an overwhelming number of foreign tourists (like us). Our timing coincided with the World Expo in Osaka, where we spent a day admiring the stunning architecture and cultural exhibits. Although the crowds made it difficult to enter many pavilions, the experience was still memorable.

In Nagasaki, we reflected on the theme of world peace, learning about the devastating impact of nuclear warfare. It was a somber but meaningful day, prompting deep discussions about war and peace—both past and present. Before returning to Yokohama, we spent our final day in Fukuoka where we visited Dazaifu Temmangu Shrine, a popular Japanese shrine dedicated to Sugawara no Michizane, the god of learning and scholarship and finally enjoyed a tranquil, old-fashioned boat ride through the old Yanagawa moat.

Our 20-day journey through Japan offered a rich blend of traditional and modern experiences.

I'm proud to share that every student grew in meaningful ways, broadening their perspectives and embracing the values of global citizenship. Here are some quotes from the students' themselves: "This study abroad trip taught me so much about Japanese culture and society, and it also helped me understand American traditions." "It wasn't just about seeing new places or trying new foods; it was about personal growth, overcoming challenges, and understanding a culture that, on the surface, seemed so different from my own." "This trip made me feel many assortments of feelings. I felt wonder, awe, dread, terror, warmth, belonging, hope, and inspiration. Each of these emotions, and the experiences that brought them on, had an insanely profound effect on me that I'm sure I'll continue to carry for years."

Thank you to everyone that helped to make this study abroad trip a great success!





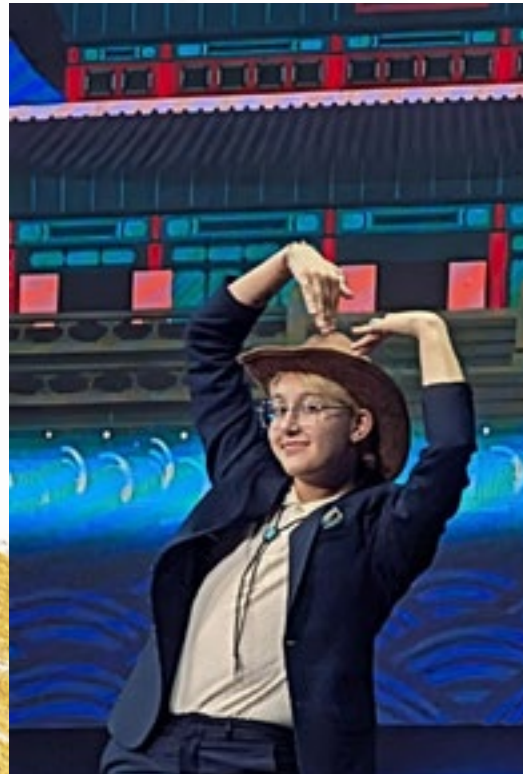
Summer in Taiwan



In summer 2025 16 KU students traveled to Kaohsiung, Taiwan for an 8-week intensive summer Chinese program offered in collaboration with National Sun Yat-Sen University (NSYSU). Students attended morning classes at NSYSU's Chinese Language Center conducted entirely in Mandarin Chinese and focused on developing foundational language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Afternoons featured structured cultural events, offering students opportunities to immerse themselves in the local culture. Participants enhanced their language proficiency, experienced Taiwanese culture, explored the region, and met new people. Many students described the program as "one of the best experiences of their time at KU."



Student Spotlights



Quinton

I am a first year MA student in the department focusing on Korean language and literature. I was fortunate to be the US representative for the 2025 Quiz on Korea, broadcasted on KBS World. This was a weeklong trip across Seoul with participants from 21 other countries sharing our knowledge and passion about Korean language and culture. I made friends from all over the world and was able to learn more about their cultures while we traveled together. While I experienced the many amazing sights of Seoul, such as N Seoul Tower, the most memorable part was the connections I made with the other participants. We all came together to share our knowledge and passion for learning Korean language and culture and in turn learned about each other's cultures along the way. The quiz show is available on [KBS World's Youtube channel](#).



Xingning

Congratulations to our grad student, Xingning Luan, for receiving the Outstanding Master's Thesis or Research Project Award from the College Office of Graduate Affairs! "Xingning's thesis focuses on Ma Xianglan, a renowned courtesan, painter, and poet of late Ming dynasty China, to explore how elite courtesans like her navigated the male-dominated literati world and the competitive art market at the time. By studying the social function of her artistic production and literary exchanges, Xingning argues that Ma Xianglan carefully shaped her own persona and managed her relationships to achieve autonomy in her career and social life. At a more concrete level, her thesis addresses the following questions: How did commercial prosperity influence the construction and promotion of courtesans' public images? How did Ma Xianglan use artistic and literary production as a means of self-fashioning and self-promotion? Finally, how did courtesans claim their agency and legacy while interacting with literati? Through a close reading of relevant primary sources, including Ma Xianglan's paintings, poetry, personal correspondence, and writings by contemporary literati, Xingning demonstrates how courtesans used their talents and social skills to carve out space for themselves, negotiate the boundaries of different relationships and assert their autonomy in the intellectual and artistic circles of their time.





Corey

Corey is a junior majoring in Chemical Engineering and Chinese Language and Literature. Corey began pursuing their major in Chinese Language and Literature as a sophomore and received the Grace Wan award and the FLAS scholarship that year. Corey studied Chinese at National Taiwan University in Taipei, Taiwan during summer 2025. They hope to continue their study of both Chinese and Chemical Engineering after graduation, and eventually have a career that combines these disciplines.



Avery

Avery Adams is a senior majoring in EALC studies and focusing on Chinese Language and Literature. He first became interested in learning Chinese in his freshman year and later went on to major in it following his first study abroad to Taiwan. He took part in the first year of KU's summer program with National Sun Yat-Sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan to further learn Chinese, it was this study abroad that started to broaden his worldview and led him to become even more interested in EALC studies. The following summer of '25 he went back to Taiwan as a part of an internship program where he worked for an NGO focused on civic participation and supporting Taiwan. His employer even helped him start learning Taiwanese! After graduating he will return to Taiwan to attend a CLC for a year to prepare for graduate school. He hopes to one day work as an ambassador or translator to help strengthen the growing Taiwan/ United States relationship.

Aimee

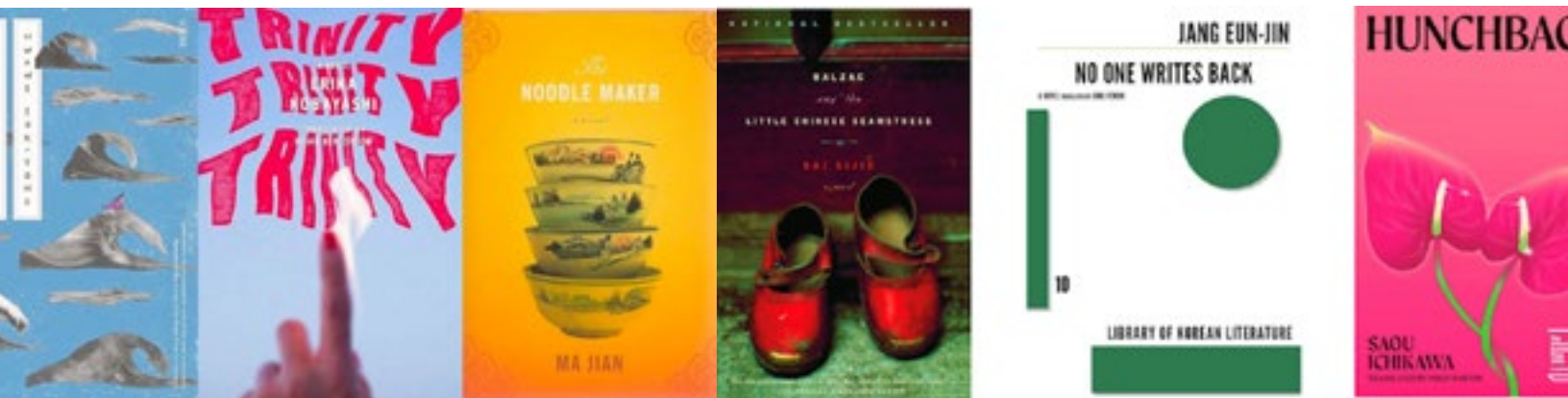
Aimee Cummings is a junior majoring in East Asian Languages and Cultures, Political Science, and Global and International Studies. This past summer she studied Mandarin Chinese at National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, for which she was a recipient of both the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship and the Gilman International Scholarship. She is interested in the cultural, historical, and societal factors that influence and underlie diplomatic relations and communication at the international level. She plans to continue her study of Mandarin Chinese and East Asia at KU with the ultimate goal of using her experiences for a career in foreign policy and international affairs.



Support EALC!

If you feel so inclined, please consider donating to our department! Our most important priorities are providing study-abroad scholarships for our undergraduates, research and conference funding for our graduate students, and covering expenses for activities on campus that benefit our students and the larger KU community. Click [here](https://ealc.ku.edu/giving-our-department) or go to ealc.ku.edu/giving-our-department. Thank you!

East Asian Literature Book Club



The East Asian Literature Book Club of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, founded in Spring 2024, has continued strong throughout 2025. As before, our gatherings have taken place monthly in Wescoe Hall 2106 (EALC library room) on Wednesdays at 6 pm.

During the Spring 2025 semester, the club read three novels. In February, members discussed Hwang Sok-yong's *Princess Bari* (2013), a work that blends North Korean historical events with Korean mythology and present-day London. March's meeting focused on Kobayashi Erika's *Trinity, Trinity, Trinity* (2019), a speculative novel that grapples with the enduring impact of nuclear power. The spring series concluded in April with Ma Jian's *The Noodle Maker* (2004), a satirical exploration of the absurdities of life in post-Tiananmen China.

The Fall 2025 semester brought another diverse set of readings across languages and landscapes, East and West. The gatherings began in September with Han Kang's quiet and evocative novel *Greek Lessons* (2011), the second work our club has read by the 2024 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature. In October, the club read Qiu Miaojin's *Last Words from Montmartre* (2014), the first Taiwanese novel featured in our book club's history and an influential experimental text in queer literature.

The semester finished with Ishizawa Mai's *The Place of Shells* (2021), the Akutagawa Prize-winning novel about loss and memory in the aftermath of the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami - and everyone's favorite work of the Fall semester.

In Spring 2026, the Book Club will continue its focus on works from the early 2000s: Dai Sijie's *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* (2000) on February 25th; Jang Eun-Jin's *No One Writes Back* (2013) on March 25th; and Ichikawa Saou's *Hunchback* (2003) on April 29th. Please follow announcements about the club on our department's Events page and on Instagram @eastasianlitbookclub_ku or contact Linda Galvane (linda.galvane@ku.edu).



M.A. in East Asian Languages and Cultures

University of Kansas

About our program

The M.A. in East Asian Languages and Cultures is an interdisciplinary degree focused on East Asia, designed to prepare students for 21st-century global citizenship. The program provides students with rigorous language training and in-depth knowledge of a selected East Asian country (China, Japan, or Korea), a broad knowledge of pre-modern and modern East Asian cultures, as well as advanced research skills and methods (30 credit hours, with thesis and non-thesis options).

Why our program?

Since the 1950s, we have been the premier East Asian research unit in the Great Plains, collaborating with partners in Art History, History, Politics, Linguistics, Sociology, and other departments to disseminate knowledge about East Asian languages, cultures, and critical perspectives throughout the region.

60+ faculty in EALC and related fields in other departments. Extensive [East Asian Library](#) and renewed [Asian Art collection](#). Teaching Assistantships and Study Abroad opportunities in language and culture courses.

For more info: Visit [EALC MA Program](#)
Contact [Keith McMahon](#), EALC Director of Graduate Studies.

Admission Requirements:

1. B.A., B.S., or equivalent undergraduate degree.
2. Minimum 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale.
3. Two-years proficiency in an East Asian language preferred for admission.

How to apply:

1. Visit [How To Apply](#) and fill out the online graduate application fee.
2. Submit the following: (a) two-page statement of purpose, outlining your academic objectives, (b) CV/resume, (c) a writing sample, (d) three letters of recommendation, and (e) official transcripts for all post-secondary education.



Scan to visit us at
ealc.ku.edu/graduate

Meet our graduate faculty

Keith McMahon, Professor of Chinese Language and Culture, whose research explores gender and sexuality in China from antiquity to early modernity. His interests also include late imperial fiction, mythical cosmology, and historical narratives. Author of seven books, including *Saying All That Can Be Said*, winner of the Ming Studies Society book award. He is currently writing on cosmology, inner alchemy, and authority in a 16th-century Ming novel.

Faye Xiao, Professor of Chinese Language and Culture, studies gender, class, globalization, and Chinese culture in modern and contemporary times. She has published two monographs, including *Family Revolution: Marital Strife in Contemporary Chinese Literature and Visual Culture*, a co-edited volume, and is currently working on a third monograph, covering a range of topics including the contemporary youth economy, Chinese feminisms, and female leadership in modern Chinese literature and culture.

Yan Li, Associate Professor of Chinese Language and Culture, specializing in Chinese linguistics and second-language acquisition. Her research focuses on how adults learn Chinese, with emphasis on phonology, grammar, and evidence-based teaching strategies that enhance proficiency. She has published on Chinese function words and negation, including its interaction with scope in second-language learning. Her work also addresses curriculum design and technology-enhanced instruction, linking linguistic theory with practical pedagogy.

Crispin Williams, Associate Professor of Chinese Language and Culture, studies early Chinese language and culture with a particular focus on the analysis and interpretation of excavated early Chinese texts. He works primarily on the Wenxian 溫縣 covenant texts and is collaborating on the publication project for these materials. His own publications include articles on legal, religious, linguistic, and philosophical aspects of these texts.

Linda Galvane, Assistant Professor of Japanese Language and Culture, specializes in modern and contemporary Japanese literature and culture in conversation with Japan's premodern legacy. Other interests: body politics, material culture, Japanese film and performance, and comparative literature, including Western portrayals of Japan and (post) Soviet- Japanese literary connections. Currently, she is working on a book manuscript on excremental rhetoric in modern Japanese literature and culture.

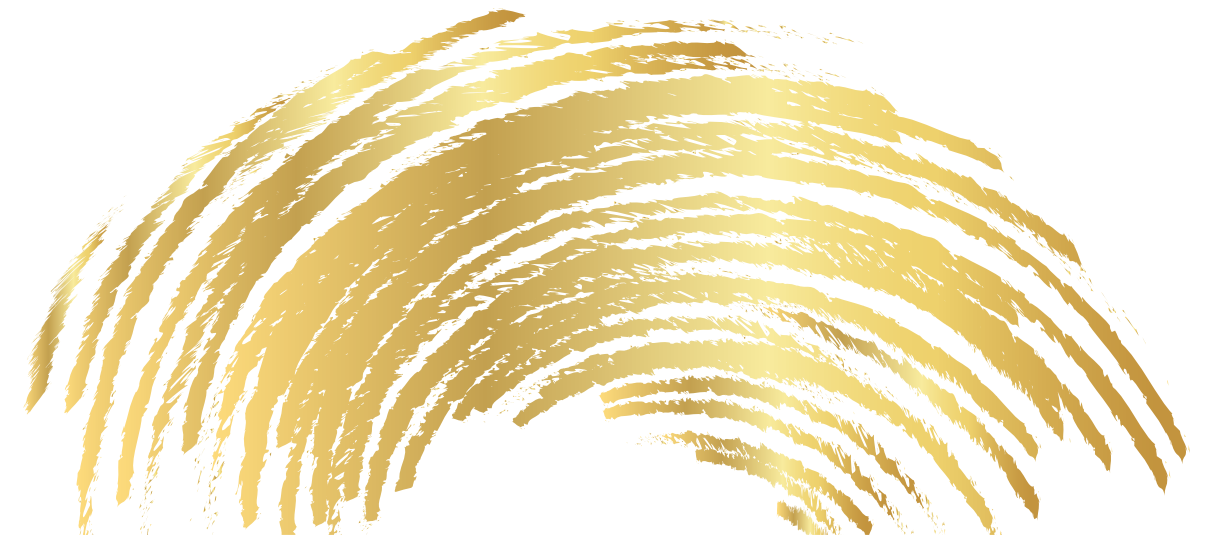
Thomas McDonald, Assistant Professor of Japanese Language and Culture, studies modern and contemporary Japanese literature in interdisciplinary and comparative contexts, especially questions of language, translation, geopolitics, and philosophy in dialogue with cultural phenomena from East Asia, Central Europe, and Latin America. He has published articles on literary aesthetics and translation practice, translations from Japanese and Slovene, and original poetry, and he is currently developing a book project on Japanese-Korean writer and dancer Lee Yangji.

Yuka Naito, Associate Teaching Professor of Japanese, specializes in Japanese pedagogy and linguistics, with particular expertise in second language acquisition, pronunciation and prosody, sentence processing, and Japanese mimetics. Her teaching incorporates authentic experiences such as Japanese cuisine to cultivate students' cultural literacy and global awareness in the language classroom. She is also interested in how the brain processes music and language.

Kyoim Yun, Associate Professor of Korean Language and Culture, examines modern Korea through the lenses of anthropology, folklore, and history. Her research investigates cultural practices and social change, with particular focus on shamanism, Buddhism, and well-being. An interdisciplinary scholar, she has published widely in Korean studies, folklore, anthropology, ritual studies, and human geography. She is the author of *The Shaman's Wages* and is currently developing her second book project, tentatively titled *Wellness Tourism in South Korea: Retreats in Buddhist Mountain Monasteries*.

Eun Ah Cho, Assistant Professor of Korean language and culture, specializes in modern and contemporary Korean studies. Her research examines how literature, films, and media shape societal perceptions and discourses surrounding marginalized groups in South Korea. She has published articles and book chapters on the narratives and images of North Korean refugees through economic, cultural, and gender lenses. She has begun a new project that explores how aging Asian women's bodies are represented across different cultural texts and social discourses.

Ji-Yeon Lee, Assistant Teaching Professor and the Korean Language Coordinator, specializes in teaching Korean as a foreign language, with expertise in curriculum development, teacher training, and proficiency assessment. She has published articles on pronunciation instruction, the experiences of Korean women in U.S. higher education, and best practices for accessibility in Korean language classrooms. She is also a certified ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) tester and Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) rater in Korean.



Happy Holidays!

节日快乐/節日快樂!

良いお年をお迎え下さい!

즐거운 성탄절 보내시고, 새해 복 많이 받으세요!

Gung sang la Tashi delek!

دەم ئېلىشىڭىز كۆڭۈللۈك بولسۇن!

