East Asia For All.
Want to study an Asian language?

Rebecca is!

Hajimemashite! I’m Rebecca, a 1st year Japanese Studies student from Essex. At school I took a range of GCSEs, before going on to do an International Baccalaureate Diploma at sixth form. For the language portion of the diploma, I chose to learn Japanese because I was a big anime and manga fan. Although most of my secondary school friends didn’t end up going to university, I decided that I wanted to take my love of Japan further. I chose SEAS after so many past students told me how much they had liked the department and enjoyed their year abroad.

With the BA Japanese Studies course, whilst you also learn about Japanese history and society, the main focus is on learning the Japanese language. This year I had eight hours of compulsory language lessons a week. I also studied outside of lessons as well, by having study groups with classmates and using the SEAS online study material. Despite what a lot of people think, Japanese is not that difficult to learn. Speaking is easy and the grammar is a lot more straightforward than English! The one thing I struggle with is Kanji, or Chinese characters. The only way to learn these is through using them repeatedly, so I’m sure they’ll become easier over time. Sometimes, I learn tongue twisters like this one: 庭には鶏がいます (Niwa ni wa niwatori ga imasu), which means “In the garden there is a chicken.” This year I also took an extra module in Chinese Mandarin, and I will be studying Korean in my second year. I love learning languages, and I want to be fluent in Korean and Spanish as well as Japanese in the future!

Want to spend a year abroad?

Dominic will!

Hi there, I’m Dominic and I’m from the Wirral. I was the first person in my family to go to university and I chose SEAS because its courses seemed really interesting and relevant. That positive feeling was reinforced when I visited on an Open Day and discovered a welcoming, engaging department.

I am currently studying the single honours Chinese Studies degree. It is four years long, with the first year spent in intensive Chinese language classes in order to prepare us for the second year of the course, which is spent in Nanjing, China. The teachers push you to the best of your ability, but if you’re struggling they are really approachable and happy to help. The course is designed for students with no prior experience and, whilst it can be challenging at times, those without prior knowledge become just as good as those with! There are also optional modules that you can choose, and this year I have taken courses in Japanese Politics and Italian (with the Modern Languages Teaching Centre) – both of which I never expected to study as part of a Chinese studies degree!

I am really excited to go on the year abroad next year! Not only will it be the best opportunity I might ever get to immerse myself in the Chinese language and culture, it will also be a fantastic opportunity to see a part of the world which is completely different to the UK. In the long term I think that having a year abroad in China as part of my degree will really set me apart from my peers when it comes to finding jobs. It’s an opportunity which I might not have got if I hadn’t chosen to study at SEAS.
Want to learn about a new culture?

Suzanne has!

An nyong ha se yo? Hello, how are you? My name is Suzanne and I’d like to tell you what it was like to study at SEAS from a mature student’s point of view. I spent many years raising a family and after they were grown I felt it was time for me to do something more with my life. As you can imagine, I had not been to school for a very long time but I took the plunge and went to an Open Day back in 2005.

The BA Korean Studies is a four-year course with one of those years spent in Korea for cultural immersion and intense language learning. This was my favourite part of the course but I also benefitted greatly from the translation course taught by one of the best Korean translators in the UK, Dr Judith Cherry. I also enjoyed learning Korean history and studying Hanja (Chinese characters) with Professor James Grayson. To be with teachers who are deeply interested in and committed to Korea always made learning a pleasure.

Since graduating I have achieved my dream as I now live and work in South Korea. I work as an English teacher and my in-depth knowledge of Korea really impresses my boss and colleagues and enables me to have a positive working and living experience in a culture unlike my own. And I have SEAS to thank for that! So, if you are mature and wondering about starting a new life like me by taking a course at SEAS, there’s a Jamiroquai song that came out around the time I started my degree that still often goes through my head: “Time won’t wait for you, so do all the things you wanted to” My advice to you is to just do it!

Want to become a Chinese TV star?

Richard did!

Hi! My name is Richard and I studied GCSEs and A-levels at a school in Cambridgeshire. I spent four very happy years at SEAS, graduating in 2010 with a BA in Chinese Studies. After I graduated I was offered one weird and wonderful job opportunity after another. While my classmates went to work testing computer games for the Asian market, or working for football clubs such as Sheffield United and Manchester City, I was offered the opportunity to go to China and become the Assistant Manager/Interpreter at a second tier Chinese football club! Unfortunately the opportunity fell through, but I was then offered the chance to cover the London Olympics for a Chinese news agency, which I obviously took without question. I covered the opening and closing ceremonies and did round-ups of sport in between, getting access to the Olympic Park and having a great time in the process.

It was shortly after the Olympics that I then started in a completely new direction. I received an email from a former lecturer at SEAS about auditions for a new TV show that was looking for Mandarin speakers. After auditioning I ended up getting a leading role in a brand new Chinese TV comedy drama. As I write this I am preparing to go and meet with the writers and director in Beijing, and am due to film thirty episodes of a show that will be broadcast all across China at the beginning of next year.

One thing is for sure, my working life since graduating from SEAS has never been dull, and once the show is broadcast next year, I truly have no idea where it could take me...exciting stuff!
Studying with us broadens your horizons, opens new doors and makes you stand out from the crowd. SEAS is the place for everyone to study East Asia!

The School of East Asian Studies (SEAS) is one of Europe’s leading centres for teaching and research on East Asia. We currently have over 400 students on our various programmes. With a history going back to 1963, SEAS is one of Europe’s leading centres of academic excellence for the study of contemporary East Asia, with research and teaching covering China, Japan and Korea. Its main focus is the business, politics, societies, cultures, economies and history of modern and contemporary East Asia.

Our excellence in teaching is widely acknowledged. Since 2007 the National Student Survey has regularly placed SEAS as one of the top Asian Studies departments in the UK. SEAS is also committed to your future. Strong economic growth in China, the global popularity of Japanese culture, and the possible future reunification of the Korean peninsula offer massive potential opportunities for our graduates who have knowledge of these countries, their languages and the resulting cultural agility.

We seek to play an active role in helping cultivate your ambitions. SEAS has a careers officer who offers guidance on employment whilst you are here and after you graduate, organises regular employers’ visits (many of whom target us for recruitment) and encourages students to undertake internships both in the UK and abroad. Following graduation, some of our students have gone on to work for employers including government, museums, NGOs and multinational companies, and have risen up their respective career ladders in professions as diverse as management consultancy, accountancy, marketing and translation. Others have chosen to study further, specialising in subjects as diverse as law, international development, interpreting and teaching, often subsidised by prestigious international scholarships.

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