Graduation 2015 – This year’s graduating class was one of the highest achieving years in recent memory.

Award for Outstanding Practice in Learning and Teaching

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Graduation

Graduation 2015 – One of our highest achieving cohorts in recent years. This year’s graduating class was one of the highest achieving years in recent memory.

The past academic year also saw some of the highest levels of student engagement within the School. We’ve been blessed by an inundation of students volunteering to help at open days and they have done an excellent job of helping us promote the Department. We’ve also seen the continued growth of our super-active student society EASSoc who have organised many events this year including a memorable staff-student game of The Chase. They have also recently set up an EASSoc Buddy system where students get to chat and partner up with a mentor from a higher year of their course. The aim of this is to ease any anxieties and answer any questions students might have about their SEAS course.

The high standard of this year’s graduates was shown in the fierce competition for the School’s two prizes.

The first of these is the Margaret Daniels Prize for which we are thankful to Dr Gordon Daniels, a former Senior Lecturer in Japanese History.

The prize is given to the student with the best performance on a Japanese Studies degree and this year saw a number of excellent results and some stiff competition but ultimately a highly deserving winner.

This year’s Margaret Daniels prize winner was Ellyn Barnes, who has been described as “enthusiastic”, “generous”, “determined”, “resilient” and her dissertation was said, by Prof Hugo Dobson to be “one of the best I’ve read in recent years and secured an appropriately stellar mark.”

The second of our prizes, the Robert Sloss prize, is named after the late Robert Sloss who spent his career as a scholar of Chinese Studies at Cambridge University and took an active interest in the development of Chinese at Sheffield. This year’s award was given to Jacob Fordham for the best performance amongst our first-class students in Chinese, East Asian or Korean Studies degree programmes.

Jacob has been a star throughout his time at Sheffield, performing at a consistently high standard on all modules. He is a student for whom one year abroad in China was simply not enough and he had to have two. After enjoying his year abroad so much, Jacob decided to take leave from his studies at Sheffield and stayed in China for an additional year. After graduation, Jacob plans to head back to China next year to begin an MA in Linguistics.

The School wishes all our graduates every success in their future careers.
The Global Leadership Initiative (GLI) is a really exciting development that is unique to the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Sheffield. It gives students from any department in the Faculty the opportunity to join a team of analysts led by academic members of staff and gain access to a high-profile global summit. Once at the summit and accredited as journalists, they work in the international media centre to produce real-time policy analysis in response to events as they unfold that is then published online in the international journal Global Policy. As a result, the students enhance their skills, improve their employability and become more internationalized. All this will be of even more interest to SEAS students with Japan set to host the G7 in May 2016 and China scheduled to host the G20 later that year in November.

As part of the initiative, a team of four high-performing students in the Faculty of Social Sciences were selected through a competitive process to accompany Hugo and Garrett to the G7 summit in Germany in June 2015. The team from Sheffield received media accreditation and worked in the international media centre near the venue where the world’s leaders met. As the summit discussion unfolded, the staff and students produced and published blogs and analysis of the developments in real time in the online journal, Global Policy.

While in Germany, Hugo also attended Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo’s post-summit press conference and was also interviewed by the BBC about the outcomes of the summit appearing on the News at One.

Find out more about the Global Leadership Initiative
www.sheffield.ac.uk/gloss/gli
New research clusters

Research in the School of East Asian Studies has recently undergone a restructure to help better reflect staff interests in East Asian culture, politics, business, international relations or economics.

Our clusters are a major part of our research culture. Whilst we do not have a ‘one size fits all’ model, cluster activity includes internal research collaborations, regular internal discussion, visits by international researchers and research groups, and involvement in virtual seminar series, alongside the more standard cross-department seminar series.

East Asian Business Environment

The East Asian Business Environment Cluster consists of researchers with disciplinary backgrounds in economics, business and law who conduct cutting-edge research on China, Japan and Korea. The cluster members’ varied research interests are unified by their joint aim to comprehensively assess the contemporary business environments of these three Asian countries. Current focal points of the cluster’s research activities are legal and economic development issues, corporate governance, foreign direct investment and free trade agreements, as well as human resource management and intercultural business practices.

News

Euro-Asia Management Studies Association Conference
Dr. Harald Conrad presented (together with his research partner Professor Dr. Hendrik Meyer-Oehle from the National University of Singapore) at the 32nd Annual Euro-Asia Management Studies Association Conference held at SOAS, University of London from 28–31 October 2015.

Global HR and the Japanese Company
Dr Harald Conrad organised a hugely successful international workshop - Global HR and the Japanese Company

Human Movement and Development in East Asia

HUM DEA is an inter-disciplinary research group with strong interest in migration, social change and development in East Asia, in particular, China, Japan and Korea. It provides a forum for researchers to share ideas and develop research projects on related topics.

News

Population Decline and Climate Change in the 21st Century
As part of the COP21 UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, Dr Peter Matanle, in partnership with Energy 2050, acted as convenor on a panel on ‘Population decline and climate change in the 21st century: Achieving a ‘depopulation dividend’ in the Asia-Pacific region’. The panel focused on identifying both barriers to and solutions for Japan and the Asia-Pacific region in tackling climate change and sustaining economic growth by turning the current trend of depopulation into an opportunity and maintain Japan’s leading position in Asia.

Dr. Zhong Zhang presented a paper on law and finance
Dr. Zhang presented a paper on law and finance at the International Symposium on Corporate Governance and Capital Markets in China.

Global HR and the Japanese Company
Dr Harald Conrad organised a hugely successful international workshop - Global HR and the Japanese Company

Dr Judith Cherry awarded research grant
Dr Cherry has been awarded a $20,000 research grant by the Academy of Korean Studies to look at the impact of the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

Dr. Zhong Zhang presented a paper on law and finance
Dr. Zhang presented a paper on law and finance at the International Symposium on Corporate Governance and Capital Markets in China.
Power, Cooperation and Competition in East Asia

Members of this research cluster share an interest in contemporary international relations as well as international history in East Asia since the late 19th century. We investigate the causes and processes of international cooperation and competition with reference to the structure of international system, agencies, norms, and cultures that have generated changes in the region. While researching the international relations of China, Japan, Korea, we examine how and why different orders rose and declined in the region, and investigate new emerging trends in East Asian international relations. We actively take into account wider issues in global and regional governance, which impact upon the roles played by China, Japan, and Korea. We draw on a variety of research methods, from history to social sciences, and aim at identifying enduring patterns and emerging trends that help us explore ways to promote greater cooperation and reconciliation in the region and world.

News

The Inaugural Nanjing Forum
Professor Katherine Morton presented two papers on ‘Safeguarding the Maritime Commons’ and ‘Towards a Peaceful Maritime Order in East Asia’ at the inaugural Nanjing Forum in China between 18-21 October 2015.

What to expect from the G20 in China
Hugo Dobson wrote in the Asia and the Pacific Policy Forum about what we might expect from the G20 summit due to be held in China next year.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership
Dr Watanabe had a TV interview with Singapore’s Channel NewsAsia in early October on the prospect of agreement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In the live TV program called ‘World Tonight’, he talked about some of the difficulties in the TPP negotiation such as the US-Australian disagreement on the patent period of biological drugs. He also predicted, however, that the TPP would be agreed eventually, which is what actually happened soon after this TV interview.

East Asian Text and Culture

This research cluster unites the School’s scholars who work on the societies and cultures of East Asia through their texts. We can be found searching archives, attending film premieres and shows, visiting historical, cultural and mnemonic sites, engaged in interviewing or translation, and exploring the content and the social uses of those texts. Our interests cover a broad chronological sweep from the sixth century to the twenty-first and are self-consciously polydisciplinary: we share a fascination with the use of oral, written, visual and material artefacts by the nations, peoples and individuals of East Asia to represent themselves and others.

News

Girlhood in East Asian Cinema Workshop
This one day workshop, organised by Dr Kate Taylor-Jones examined the representation of girlhood in various aspects of East Asian cinema and popular culture.

This follows a recent publication of a collected edition titled International Cinema and the Girl: Local Issues, Transnational Contexts (Palgrave Macmillan Press 2015).

Ignite Academy

Amongst a list of over 20 academics from around the University, Dr Kate Taylor-Jones presented on Sex, Drugs and Synchronised Swimming: Girlhood in Cinema at this year’s Ignite Academy.
Poetry Gardens of Japan

Dr Thomas McAuley

A research project can emerge from the most unlikely and unexpected of beginnings. A few years ago, on a tourist visit to Japan’s ancient capital of Nara, I visited the ‘Kasuga Sacred and Man’yō Botanical Garden’. As ‘Man’yō’ is a reference to Man’yōshū (‘The Collection of a Myriad Leaves’), Japan’s oldest poetry anthology, a research area of mine, this visit made me want to look into Man’yō Botanical Gardens more and find out more about them, and I spent some time this summer doing just that.

For the Japanese today, Man’yōshū is one of their great cultural literary treasures, despite the fact that the script in which it was originally written is now illegible to all but a few experts, and the language of the poems is extremely remote. The question then arises of how people of the modern world can form a link with the world of Man’yōshū, given that we have little in common with them besides humanity. One of the ways this has been done in Japan is through the establishment of Man’yō Botanical Gardens, to showcase the plants which inspired the poets, as well as the poems they produced.

There are now 37 Man’yō botanical gardens all over Japan, although only about 25 of them are open to the public (the others are in private hands, or part of schools, or universities). You can find them attached to museums, at shrines or temples, in sections of public parks, or as stand-alone facilities. Some are formal Japanese gardens, some are set on mountains among hiking trails, but all give you an opportunity to see the plants which inspired so much literature, and read some of it for yourself, although generally only in Japanese. The gardens have mostly been set up in places with Man’yō links, either because a poet visited there, or poems mention them.

One of the issues which continue to both vex and delight scholars, however, is which plants the Man’yō poets were actually talking about when they wrote their poems. To give just one example, the omopigusa, a plant whose name literally translates as ‘thought grass’, has been variously identified as: the forest ghost flower (Aeginetia indica), the gentian (Gentiana scabra), the dayflower (Commelina communis), the valerian (Patrinia scabiosifolia), or as a catch-all term referring to a plant which grows in the shade of something! To make matters worse, omopigusa is only mentioned in a single poem:

Of Man’yōshū’s 4,500 poems, about 1,500 refer to plants in some way or other. A poem can simply be about how beautiful a flower is, or the flower can be used figuratively, to refer to a beautiful girl (or young man), or the flower blooming can be a metaphor for the swelling of the poet’s feelings. Of course, it’s not just flowers: the rustle of different sorts of grasses as the wind blows over them can evoke all sorts of feelings, as can leaves changing colour on various trees. All told, Man’yōshū has words for about 160 different plants, some of which are purely decorative, some of which grew wild around Japan, and some of which were cultivated, or gathered, and used for food, or craftwork.

One of the issues which continue to both vex and delight scholars, however, is which plants the Man’yō poets were actually talking about when they wrote their poems. To give just one example, the omopigusa, a plant whose name literally translates as ‘thought grass’, has been variously identified as: the forest ghost flower (Aeginetia indica), the gentian (Gentiana scabra), the dayflower (Commelina communis), the valerian (Patrinia scabiosifolia), or as a catch-all term referring to a plant which grows in the shade of something! To make matters worse, omopigusa is only mentioned in a single poem:

Clearly, the image of the omopigusa growing beneath a larger plant represents the poet’s secret feelings of love, but what it looked like is anyone’s guess!

miti no pe no
By the roadside.
wobana ga sita no
Underneath the miscanthus grows
omoipigusa
Thought grass:
ima sara ni nazo
Why is it, now, that yet again
mono ka omopamu
My feelings dwell on you so?

Dr Thomas McAuley
New academic staff join the school

Along with our new cohort of students who started this September we welcomed three new members of academic staff to our team. These new appointment will give us the opportunity to expand our expertise in East Asian politics, culture and media relations and allow us the opportunity to offer students a broader range of modules and topics to learn.

Prof Katherine Morton
Chair in China’s International Relations
Prof Morton is a specialist on China’s International Relations with a particular focus on transnational security, global governance, environment and climate change, and international norms.

Her research contributes to key debates on China’s re-emergence as a dominant power in the Asia region, and globally, situated at the nexus between Chinese Studies and International Relations. A central aim to her research is to assess both the domestic and international motivations behind China’s changing role in the world and the implications for foreign policy and the study of International Relations.

A particular focus is upon Chinese responses to transnational security challenges such as environmental degradation, maritime security, food security, or internal conflicts that require new institutional mechanisms, forms of governance, and collective norms to regulate behaviour.

Dr Kate Taylor-Jones
Senior Lecturer in East Asian Studies
Dr Taylor-Jones research is highly interdisciplinary and draws on a variety of fields including film studies, history, gender and sexuality studies, media studies, visual culture and critical theory.

Her research interests can broadly be defined as: the cinema of Imperial Japan and its legacy across East Asia; popular culture and Imperialism in East Asia; representations of East Asian girlhood in film and media and the representation of prostitution and sex work in East Asian visual culture.

Along with conducting research, Dr Taylor-Jones will teach modules on East Asian Cinema and East Asian Popular Culture.

Dr Malgorzata (Gosia) Jakimów
Lecturer in Chinese Studies

Dr Jakimow expertise lie in Chinese politics and International Relations, and her research focuses particularly on Chinese citizenship, civil society, NGOs, migrant workers, labour movements, public policy, political economy and China-EU relations.

Prior to her post in the School, Dr Jakimow worked for several organisations in China, including grassroots labour NGOs and the United Nations Volunteers Agency. She has cooperated with Chinese and international NGOs and international organisations, such as UN and EU throughout her doctoral research.

Along with conducting research, Dr Jakimow will teach modules on Contemporary Chinese Politics, Chinese Culture and Society and Chinese Language.

Saying Goodbye

If any one thing is central to academic life, it is change: changes in understanding, changes in the world we study; growth, development, arrival and departure. Generally as academics, we work to promote change; but some changes are less welcome, and it is with considerable sadness that we say goodbye, in 2016, to Dr Angela Coutts, who is leaving the University for a new career. Angela completed her PhD on the work of Hayashi Fumiko 2001 and joined the School as a permanent member of staff in 2007. She continued to research on gender, nation and radicalism in modern Japanese literature, and her publications extended into the journals of her wider discipline – Signs, Contemporary Women’s Writing, and Culture, Theory and Critique – as well as the more familiar East Asian studies titles.

Her teaching in modern Japanese literature reflected both the content of her research interests, and the questioning, critical approach that she applied to her own work and expected of her students; and she also contributed to the Japanese language programme at all levels. She played a central role in supporting undergraduate students, as Director of Undergraduate Studies and Examinations Officer, and anyone who worked with her, or follows her in those roles, owes an enormous debt to her ability to navigate the frontiers where university systems meet student experience, in a rapidly changing academic environment. Her thoughtful advice and dedication to student support helped many undergraduates through difficult times, and her incisive approach to more narrowly bureaucratic processes simplified everyday life for all students while allowing all of us to focus on the important (and congenial) work of teaching, learning and research. We will miss her for her collegiality, her sense of humour, her practicality and her sharp intellectual curiosity, and wish her every success in her future career.
Thomas Crowe  
BA Chinese Studies  
Year abroad at Nanjing University, China

“My time in Nanjing was challenging and brought new experiences, new feelings and new knowledge. Having spent three months speaking Chinese with no one seeming to understand me, at Christmas time something clicked and suddenly I was communicating with people effortlessly, vocabulary no longer escaped me and I could understand accents like old style Nanjing.

Living in Nanjing developed my Chinese ability exponentially, but what I appreciate the most from my experience is the way I developed as an individual. The first three months where I understood almost nothing of what was going on have made me much less easily stressed and I have returned to the UK feeling much more self-reliant and resilient. I can’t wait to return and find a new place in such an incredible country.”

Megan Eustace  
BA Chinese Studies  
Year abroad at Nanjing University, China

“The course has definitely lived up to my expectations so far. To say the first year was a challenge may be a slight understatement, (since I had no previous knowledge of Chinese), but now I’m in my second month on the year abroad in China and it’s safe to say every challenge was completely worth it! This country is pretty amazing and the city that Sheffield chooses for the year abroad, Nanjing, is a brilliant spot. Already after 2 months I can feel a huge improvement in my Chinese.”
The best thing about doing an East Asian Studies degree is the variation and flexibility of the course. While many other subjects have one singular focus, East Asian Studies offers a broad selection of subject matter related to the region. So it keeps me interested and also allows me to develop a lot more skills!

"My year abroad in Korea helped me to improve my language skills but it also gave me the chance to develop more independence, and discipline when it comes to my studies. Korea is a very beautiful country with lots to see both in and outside of Seoul and I spent most weekends travelling with friends."

Deborah Muleba
BA Korean Studies
Year abroad at Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, South Korea

"Studying in Japan for a year helped me gain further language skills, widen my knowledge of Japanese culture and develop my communication skills and ability to smoothly work alongside people from many different backgrounds and cultures.

At first living in Sapporo was challenging, but as I got to know the city I also grew to love it. I participated in local festivals and events, made Japanese and other foreign friends and overall enjoyed my time there. I had a part time job which gave me a chance to experience life in Japan outside of studying. There were also many chances to travel to different part of Japan and take part in so many events and go to festivals such as the snow festival."

Laura Rutherford
BA Linguistics and Japanese Studies
Year abroad at Hokkaido University, Japan

"The best thing about doing an East Asian Studies degree is the variation and flexibility of the course. While many other subjects have one singular focus, East Asian Studies offers a broad selection of subject matter related to the region. So it keeps me interested and also allows me to develop a lot more skills!"
Alumni Spotlight

Wen-Pei Lin
Graduated with an MSc East Asian Business in 2015
Currently working for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in Taiwan

I graduated with a BSc Business Administration and spent three years at a private commercial bank as a teller in Taipei, Taiwan. I came to realize that there were three things I was looking for in my career: working in an international organization and with great people from different countries; opportunities to work on challenging problems; and able to work for business but also help people. I felt I would benefit from having a higher degree but also from having the opportunity to experience a new culture, and develop my language skills. Therefore, in 2013, I applied the MSc in East Asian Business degree at University of Sheffield, focusing my studies on the economic & political relations and labour issues in East Asian countries.

The MSc gave me good insight into many elements of business from a global perspective, and from this, I developed a strong interest in how business operates globally and especially how they tackle people-related challenge. In addition, critical thinking and problem solving are two core skills that I was lacking and which I’ve learnt the most in the UK. These abilities impact efficiently on my work and my whole life.

Today, I am carrying out dual roles as a British Consular and Prosperity Officer at the British Office Taipei (British consulate), which is responsible for Foreign & Commonwealth Office. I provide practical and efficient assistance to British nationals in Taiwan and provide help to British nationals if there is a major crisis or incident in Taiwan which may affect them.

In the other role, I provide support with administration, translate and reports on the economy for UK business and Government, as well as lobbying on behalf of UK companies and a range of stakeholders for improvements to the business environment and to increase business relationships between the UK and Taiwan.

Since joining the FCO I have worked across various departments, particularly Crisis Management and UK Trade & Investment (UKTI). Combining the academic knowledge, which I’ve learnt in the University with the latest economics figures, I am proud that can be part of the team to help UK-based companies succeed in Asian economic environment.
Laura Simonite  
*Graduated with a BA(Hons) Japanese Studies in 2012*  
*Currently working as International Sales Support Coordinator for Taylor & Francis Group*

I work as international sales support for Taylor & Francis, one of the biggest academic publishers in the world. I’m one of the key points of contact between customers and agents in Japan, Korea, the Middle East and Africa and the company. I make sure they have all the information they need to sell our books, and supply them with data and reports, as well as news and promotional information. I also work closely with the international sales director to spot any gaps in the market and provide him with the information he needs to maximise sales.

The job specifically required someone with experience working in an international context, so having lived in Japan and studied the region definitely helped. I’m also required to compile reports and synthesise information from lots of different sources, which are both skills I developed on the degree programme.

Although I don’t use Japanese in my day to day work, having knowledge of the language and culture has definitely helped me to build relationships with customers more easily. Being able to read Japanese has also been really useful in keeping abreast of current affairs in Japan, which have a direct impact on the sales activities we undertake there.

Angela Davies  
*Angela Davies was one of the first people to ever graduate from the Centre for Japanese Studies (now known as the School of East Asian Studies). Since graduating with a degree in Japanese and Economic History in 1970 Angela has enjoyed a varied and successful career.*  

She began her career as a translator and interpreter and in 1984, worked for the team that designed and built the winning Japanese Garden for the International Garden Festival. This began a long association with Japanese garden designers and conservationists. She went on to work as an International Liaison Officer at the International Garden and Greenery Exhibition in Osaka and has since then acted on behalf of several Japanese government bodies as coordinator of relations with Kew Gardens and the Royal Horticultural Society. For her work on one project at Kew she was awarded the Satoh Prize by the Parks and Open Space Association of Japan.

Along with being one of our first graduates, Angela was also one of the first British people to go to Japan on the newly-established Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. She spent a year as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Kagawa Prefecture.

In recent years, Angela has been predominantly based in the UK work in translation and interpretation as well as teaching at a number of UK institutions.

In her career she has received the Japanese Ambassador’s Commendation for instituting a regular series of Japan Days when she was Chair of JSNW. And in 2013 she was awarded the Commendation of the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs for her contribution to Anglo-Japanese relations.
New Masters Course

MA Politics and Media in East Asia

East Asia is the most dynamic region in the world, where both cooperation and competition continue in political, economic, and cultural arenas among countries in the region. The interaction between politics and media has strongly influenced the region-wide situation as well as domestic politics and socio-cultural trends in China, Japan, and South and North Korea.

This degree offers advanced, focused, and timely training on the most exciting aspects of international politics and media in East Asia, drawing on interdisciplinary strength in the School of East Asia Studies at University of Sheffield. The School of East Asian studies has committed experts in both East Asian politics, and media. Our expert knowledge in these areas is strengthened by the rich and diverse expertise of the rest of our staff whose research interests lie in related topics such as business, politics, society, culture, and languages of East Asia.

Your future

This degree will offer excellent training for students aiming at careers in government offices, such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Cultural and Information, Ministry of Defence, and Home Office, etc. It will offer career pathways towards media industries, journalism, and consulting industries. It will also serve as a platform for students who wish to pursue further advanced studies in the related areas of studies in the doctoral level.

East Asian Studies Degrees

The School of East Asian Studies offers a wide range of single and dual honours degrees, as well as postgraduate taught and research degrees. For further information, contact seas@sheffield.ac.uk, or visit: www.sheffield.ac.uk/seas.

BA degrees

Unless otherwise stated, BA Degrees involve four years of study.

Single honours

Chinese Studies

Japanese Studies

Korean Studies

East Asian Studies (three years)

Dual honours

Chinese Studies and / History, Management, Music

Chinese Studies with / French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish

Japanese Studies and / History, Linguistics, Management

Japanese Studies with / German, Russian, Spanish

French/Germanic/Hispanic/Russian Studies with Japanese

Korean Studies and /Management, Music

Korean Studies with Japanese

East Asian Studies and Music (three years)

Postgraduate taught degrees

MA Contemporary China

MA Contemporary Japan

MSc East Asian Business

MA Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL)

MA Politics and Media in East Asia

Postgraduate research degrees

PhD supervision is available in a wide range of subject areas on China, Japan, Korea and intra-regional studies. In addition, scholarships may be available through the University of Sheffield.