

# Asia at WSU

## The WSU Asia Program and Study Abroad

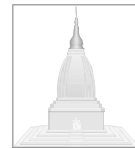
As many of you know, the Asia Program has had considerable success in encouraging our students to incorporate a study-abroad experience into their academic careers at WSU. Indeed, the faculty of the Asia Program has worked diligently the past six years to establish and expand endowed scholarships to provide material support to outstanding study abroad candidates. The Study Abroad in Asia Scholarship and the India Research Scholarship are two such programs that many of you have helped establish and support with your generosity.

During a recent development trip to Seattle, I had a wonderful opportunity to visit with two Asia Program alumni, Jeffrey Gibbs and Eric Hall. Both have been extraordinarily supportive of the Study Abroad in Asia Scholarship fund. During our conversations I learned that their study abroad experiences profoundly influenced their personnel and professional lives. In addition to broadening their global perspectives, their experiences in Asia (Jeffrey in Taiwan, Eric in Japan) continue to inform their work as each of their careers focuses on Asia.

As many of the student and faculty stories in this edition of the newsletter reflect, I suspect that Jeffrey's and Eric's experiences are replicated time and again among our students who take advantage of study abroad opportunities. Increasingly the lives of our students will be shaped by expanding cultural and economic ties with Asia. The mission of the Asia Program is to provide a rigorous Asian Studies curriculum and to promote learning opportunities related to Asia to all WSU students. Study abroad enhances these experiences in immeasurable ways.

I hope the reflections in this newsletter validate our continued emphasis in helping Asian Studies students to study abroad. And the critical support that many of you have extended to our study abroad scholarships will continue to be key in this effort. Thanks you so much for your help!

- David Pietz, Director



### UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT . . .

## Asia Program Develops Pilot Asian Studies Capstone Course

This fall the Asia Program is offering an undergraduate capstone course designed to better assess the interdisciplinary learning goals of our Asian Studies degrees. Development of the course was an outcome of the Asia Program Assessment Project that began three years ago in an effort to explore how we might better take advantage of the multiple disciplinary perspectives that our Asian Studies curriculum includes. Funded by a \$5,000 Samuel and Patricia Smith



Teaching and Learning Grant, Profs. Lydia Gerber and David Pietz developed the course as a cross-disciplinary learning experience that seeks to introduce the research and teaching methodologies of the various disciplines that our faculty represent. Taught by Prof. Ger-

ber, the class meets once a week to hear presentations by Asia Program faculty about their respective research perspectives. Presenters have included Profs. Roger Chan (History), William Brecher (Foreign Languages and Cultures), Michael Myers (Philosophy) and William Halligan (School of Economic Sciences).

For their final project students will be asked to present a research paper, either a paper researched and written during the semester, or a revised research paper from a previous course, that attempts to incorporate the perspectives of several different disciplines. Ultimately, our goal is use these research projects to assess whether our students are mastering Asia Program learning goals that focus on interdisciplinary understanding of Asian history, society, and culture. We will review the results of the pilot program in the spring semester.

# WSU ASIA PROGRAM'S 2008-2009 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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**1st Annual Murrow College - Asia Program International Journalist Speaker Series Lecture:** Rajiv Chandrasekaran (National Editor of the *Washington Post*), "Building Peace in the War on Terror: The Elusive Quest for Stability in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan" (February 29, 2008)

**2nd Annual Murrow College - Asia Program International Journalist Speaker Series Lecture:** Donald Kirk (*Christian Science Monitor*), "Reporting Korea" (February 25, 2009)

**China Town Hall Forum** (webcast: Norman Ornstein, "The China Issue in the 2008 Presidential and Congressional Campaigns," April 17, 2008; public lecture: William Overholt, "Asia, America, and Transformation of Geopolitics") (co-sponsored: *National Committee on US-China Relations*)

**Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum's Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Poster Exhibition** (co-sponsored with ICU-WSU Peace and Security Research Partnership, College of Liberal Arts, Foley Institute, International Programs, Department of History, Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures; November 10-24, 2008)

**Animation Film Series** ("Barefoot Gen" (1983) and "Barefoot Gen 2" (1986) created by Keiji Nakazawa; November 12, 13, 17, 19, 2008)

Samuel H. and Patricia W. Smith Teaching and Learning Endowment Grant: "**Strengthening Interdisciplinary Perspectives: Developing an Asian Studies Capstone Experience**" (awarded: January 2009)

**Asia 301: "Pakistan!"** (one-credit annual course; 90+ students; with assistance from the Foley Institute, General Education, and International Programs, February 2008 )

**Asia 301: "Korea, Korea"** (one-credit annual course; 100+ students; with assistance from the Foley Institute, General Education, and International Programs, February 2009)

**K-12 Teacher Training Workshop: "China in the News"** (WSU-Spokane; in collaboration with the UW East Asian Resource Center, April 2008)

**2nd Columbia Valley Undergraduate Asian Studies Research Symposium** (April 18-19, 2008)

**3rd Columbia Valley Undergraduate Asian Studies Research Symposium** (April 17-18, 2009)

**Film Screening with Sarah Singh**, award-winning Director of "The Sky Below" (contemporary exploration of the 1947 Partition of the Indian Subcontinent; April 13, 2009)

**Asian Studies Interdisciplinary Capstone Experience** (pilot capstone course, Fall 2009)

**"Building Japan Studies at WSU: Japan's Search for Peace and Security"** (grant application: Japan Foundation Institutional Project Support Program for Japanese Studies program, April 2009)

**Undergraduate Certificate in Gulf and Middle Eastern Studies** (under development with Distance Degree Programs and the American University of Kuwait, 2009-)

## Study Abroad in Jordan: In My Own Words - Alyssa Wilson

During my study abroad experience in Jordan, I studied Arabic and took classes on religion and history at the University of Jordan. My favorite memory in Jordan was camping in Wadi Rum.



I got to go 4x4ing through the desert, see cave paintings, watch the sun set, and take a 3-hour camel ride through the Wadi.

My mom encouraged all of her children to study abroad so when I discovered my interest for the Middle East in Dr. Robert Staab's Middle Eastern History class, it seemed like a good choice to study overseas. I chose Jordan specifically because I found a program there that fit in exactly with what I wanted.

I wanted to immerse myself in the culture as much as possible. I found a place that I completely connected with despite being so different from everything I have ever known. I was able to go as far out of my comfort zone as I have ever gone and found it an exciting and liberating experience. It gave me a very different perspective on an area of the world that has been so commonly misunderstood. It has also given me valuable intercultural experience that I can use for many different career paths.

My interest in the Middle East has only grown by this experience. Whatever I do when I graduate will be highly influenced by this interest, whether I pursue graduate school Middle Eastern Studies, work for the government, or go on to the Peace Corp. Studying abroad was one of the best experiences of my life. I highly recommend anyone and everyone to take the next step and study somewhere outside our own borders. It is an experience you will not regret.

### Faculty Profile: Christopher Lupke, Chinese Language and Literature

**Chris began studying Chinese on a fluke. He states, "I wanted to study abroad but wasn't thrilled about doing the same old study abroad in Europe thing. I went to Hong Kong and enjoyed learning Chinese. I then moved to Taiwan and got hooked once I could converse with people in Chinese."**

**Chris believes that China is the most important country politically and economically besides the United States. "It is the largest, and its influence is felt from Korea to Pakistan, and everywhere in between. The economy is roaring. It has a cultural history so vast that the word "nation" falls short of describing its magnitude. Yet Americans are largely completely ignorant of China. It is vital to our national security that more students learn Chinese. I also want students to know that learning Chinese is not mystical — it can be done, and has been done by many of our students."**

**Chris has a couple of favorite courses, but the most important is first-year Chinese because it is the threshold through which all students serious about China must pass. "It may seem to some as too basic, but the way we have structured the Chinese language program, no course is unimportant. I like to stress good pronunciation, correct tones and a solid foundation in Chinese characters."**

**On study abroad: "Study abroad in an immersion program is essential for the mastery of an Asian language. Students should spend at least six months in an environment where they only learn the language and speak it exclusively with teachers, roommates, friends, and those they encounter on the streets. If students can't swing this, then any trip abroad is still worthwhile, because it gives Americans the opportunity to see how vastly different things are outside our national bubble."**



## WSU ASIA PROGRAM ALUM

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### Crystal Thomas (08) in Japan

I am currently working for the Joyo City Board of Education as a second year Assistant English Teacher (AET) on the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program. Being an AET entails rotating between 12 different schools (10 elementary schools and 2 middle schools) assisting in the English education of their students. With 12 schools to visit, work can be busy as I am switching schools every week (in the case of elementary schools) or two weeks (in the case of middle schools), but I enjoy teaching the kids a little about America while assisting their English language studies. I spend the majority of my time in Japan in a city called Joyo which is located about 30 minutes by train from Kyoto. Since Japan has many federal holidays, I have also been able to travel to other parts of Honshu (the main island of Japan) like Kobe, Osaka, Tokyo, Nagoya, Hakone and Yokohama.

My favorite memory has to be my first “sign session” in an elementary school. I was very surprised when a large group of students all the sudden asked for my autograph handing me their notebooks and a writing utensil after I had just finished presenting my self-introduction. As I didn’t have enough time to sign all the presented materials, I told them I would sign their books during lunch recess. I ended up spending the whole recess signing notebooks. I guess news spreads around the school pretty fast when it comes to getting signatures from the new AETs. After that, I learned to always have a pen or writing utensil with me when I go to elementary schools. Since then, I have signed student’s favorite books, pencil boards and the recently introduced English textbooks.

Being on the JET Program has been the start along a new career path for me. Throughout college, I had planned to be either a veterinarian or work with animals. Upon realizing that I enjoyed Asian studies and had a talent for Japanese, I decided I wanted to work towards becoming a Japanese teacher in the US. In order to obtain this new-found goal, I decided that I should first work on my Japanese skills. What better way than living in Japan for a year! That one year has now turned into two and I am thinking on staying in Japan for a total of three years getting experience teaching while brushing up on my Japanese skills and experiencing as much of Japanese culture as possible.

My experiences on the JET Program have taught me a lot about myself. I have found that even though I am twenty-four year old, I am able to live and get around in a foreign country like it was my own. Everyday is exciting and a chance for me to learn something new! Professionally, I am slowly learning the skills it takes to control a classroom and keep the children involved in my lessons by watching the Japanese English language teachers present new language skills. I have also increased my public speaking skills thanks to always making speeches in the front of a classroom.



As I mentioned before, this experience is the first step to a career in teaching. When I return back to the ‘States, I plan on going to graduate school and getting my masters in either Education or Japanese. After that, I will either stay and get my PHD or look for a Japanese teaching job.

*The India Research Scholarship and the Study Abroad in Asia Scholarship are made possible by the generous support of alumni and friends of the Asia Program.  
Thank you!*