

Asian Studies Highlights

Fall 2025



**ASIAN
STUDIES**

Dear Asian Studies Community:

It has been a wonderful first semester serving as the Director of Asian Studies!

Our new [coordinating committee](#) voted for the program name change to “Asian and Asian American Studies.” The proposal, approved by the Dean of CAHSS, is under review at the Provost's Office.

Ten more [faculty members](#) have joined us as new affiliate faculty.

Along with the [Global Asias Initiative](#), we organized numerous well-attended events with Asian and Asian American themes.

Please stay tuned for many more [exciting happenings](#) in Spring 26!

Happy Holidays!

Dr. Fan Yang
Director of Asian Studies
Professor of Media and Communication Studies



Dr. Fan Yang pictured with Robert Daly, former diplomat and actor, at the [US-China People's Dialogue](#), Nov 2025



Dr. Tamara Bhalla (AMST) reading with her daughters at the [Asian American Children's Literature Exhibition](#), organized by Dr. Sharon Tran (ENGL), Dec 2025

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Pictures from "[American 'Qi': Chinese Medicine in Music City, USA](#),"
by Dr. Ruth Rogaski (Vanderbilt Univ.), eminent mentor of Dr. Jinghong Zhang (History)

Program Events



The [UMBC News story](#) about our *Kpop Demon Hunters* event went viral!

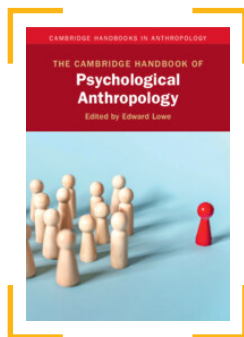


The "[Caring Robots in an Aging World](#)" Talk (co-sponsored with SAPH) showcased robot animals from Japan that have traveled to Germany and Denmark.

Publications

Dr. Bambi Chapin

contributed a chapter, "[Children in Social Change](#)," to *The Cambridge Handbook of Psychological Anthropology*. She and her co-author draw on their ethnographic research in Sri Lanka, China, and the U.S. to demonstrate how children are simultaneously shaped by and agents of social change.



**PUBLIC
HUMANITIES**

Dr. Trang X Ta

published an open access essay, "[Romance as a Method, Enjoyment as Empiricism](#)" in the journal *Public Humanities*. For her, "watching Asian drama is serious, scholarly work. And also a very enjoyable research method."

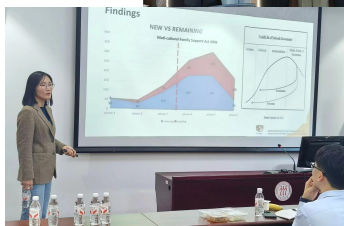
Media Appearances, Invited Talks, and More



Dr. Fan Yang
was quoted in
[*China Daily*](#)
when she was
invited to the
US-China
People's
Dialogue.



**Dr. Jungwon Yeo
(EDHS)** shared
her research on
Crisis Resilience,
Community
Capacity, and
Migrant
Integration
Network at six
Universities in
four cities and
four provinces in
China.



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Dr. Meredith Oyen
(History, Former Director)
was featured in [*The Conversation Weekly Podcast*](#) on
China's Military Parade in Sept.
She also dressed up as
"Rumi leaving Dr. Han's" for our
Kpop Demon Hunters event, with
her daughters, also in costumes!

Photo credit:
Dr. Kyung-Eun Yoon (MLLI), who
invited the Korea Foundation to
join us (with lots of snacks!)



Dr. Constantine Vaporis
(History, Founding Director)
created ten 30-minute long lessons for an
Audible course titled "The Real Life of a Japanese
Samurai," to be recorded in February for a
mid-2026 release on Audible.

Alyssa Thomas
(Asian Studies '25)

received a Fulbright
grant to teach
English in Taiwan.
Congratulations!



Dr. Constantine Vaporis
accompanied a
tour group for
Smithsonian
Journeys tour
"Eternal Japan"
as a Japan
expert, giving a
series of formal
lectures and
informal talks.



Upcoming

February–March Events

Lunar New Year Celebration
Wednesday, February 18, 4–5:15pm

Book talk by Nianshen Song
Monday, February 23, 1–2:30pm

Made in Ethiopia (a documentary on China-Africa)
Q&A with director Xinyan Yu
Thursday, March 5, 4:30–7:30pm

You can view the [calendar](#) for details of upcoming Asian Studies/Global Asias Initiative Events.

Study Abroad



Dr. Takashi Yamashita (SAPH) will lead a study abroad program in June on "[Global Health and Aging in Japan](#)"