

The Department of Asian and Asian American Studies (AAAS) presents...

# End of Semester NEWSLETTER

2nd Edition

May 2025



## incoming message!

This newsletter hopes to serve the purpose of sharing news about the AAAS department to all students. Beyond academic information, the AAAS intern team serves to find activities and recreational outlets to connect students to the department, their cultures, and each other!

*Cheers!*

AAAS Intern Team

## this edition's theme

May is **AAPI Heritage Month**, so for this newsletter, we will be highlighting and empowering Asian and Asian American voices! We can start with an inspirational quote:

YOU KNOW WHAT, IT'S NOT ABOUT  
OTHER PEOPLE DOING FOR US. FIRST,  
WE HAVE TO DO FOR OURSELVES.

- MICHELLE YEOW



## aaas department socials!

[website](#) | [instagram](#) | [twitter](#)

## newsletter contents

**scholarships  
events**



**back at home**

**films/music**



**alumni/faculty  
interviews**

**commencement**



# Scholarships and Events

a look at some of our department's exciting events and awards!

## Cultural Fair/Open House

April 2<sup>nd</sup>

12-4 PM



held in the humanities lobby, we enjoyed a day of crafting origami, paper lanterns, bookmarks, and more!

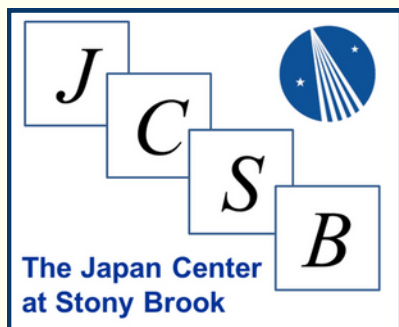
## Research Symposium

May 7<sup>th</sup>

12:30-2 PM



held in the library, we were amazed by the students who showcased their AAAS research topics!



## Japan Center Essay Competition

Sponsored by Canon U.S.A.

Congratulations to Naomi Kirkup for winning the College Division Best Essay Award with her essay "Amaterasu's Mirror of Ecstasy: A Brief Encounter with Japanese Shamanism and Shintoism".

Read more about the competition [here](#)!

# Shiming Hu/Eli Seifman Memorial Awards & Scholarships

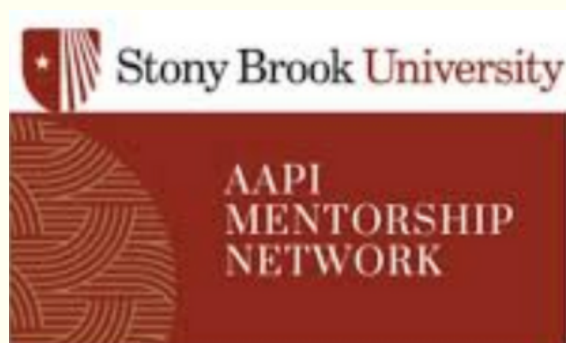


**Congratulations to the scholarship/award winners:**

**Freshman Scholarship Winner:** KJ Fung

**Leadership Award:** Steven Shi

**Chinese Studies Scholarship:** Yawen Zheng, Alaleh Zafar, and Priscillie Chu



## AAPI Mentorship Travel Award



This year's recipients are Aman Rahman and Radha Ganesans! Learn more about them and their scholarship [here!](#)

## Provost's Awards for Academic Excellence

The Provost's Awards for Academic Excellence are given to a select number of students. The awards are based on a student's achievements in research, teaching, clinical work, internships, fieldwork and service.

**Congratulations to the  
award winners  
Jenna Zaza and Naomi Kirkup!**

## AAAS/STEM Double Major Scholarship

The AAAS Department is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 AAAS/STEM Double Major

Scholarship:

Ayumi Nakagawa and  
Yawen Zheng

Read more about them and the scholarship [here!](#)



For all the moments we are coping with finals, what foods do we try to feel

# BACK AT HOME?



Go on a drive or take the LIRR and go on an adventure to indulge in Asian cuisines made with love right here in New York!

Bengali Sweets is a no-frills spot offering a wide range of vegetarian dishes from across India, including Bengali, Gujarati, and Punjabi cuisines. Their chaats are vibrant in texture, flavor, and color. Though both dahi puri and bhel puri share similar ingredients, they differ in balance. Dahi puri leans sweeter with more yogurt over a crispy shell stuffed with potatoes, while bhel puri is a savory mix of puffed rice, crushed crackers, and more chutneys with just a hint of yogurt. With a menu spanning from chhole bhature to sweets, you're sure to leave full without missing the meat.



**Bengali**  
Sweet Shop



 **HICKSVILLE, NY**

[WEBSITE](#)



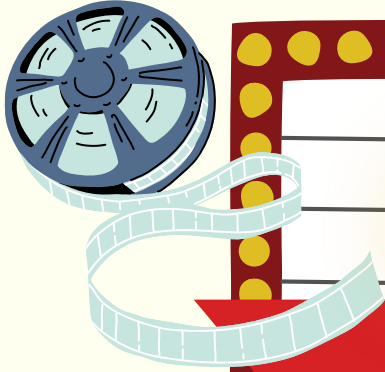
**TARIM UYGHUR CUISINE**

 **FLUSHING, NY**

On the lower level of the New World Mall, Tarim Uyghur Cuisine brings a distinct flavor to Flushing with its blend of Chinese cooking and Uzbeki spices. Known for its love of lamb, the restaurant serves smoky, charred skewers that are tender from the marbled fat. Their laghman noodles are bouncy and chewy, while the stir-fried dry beef noodles are oily, savory, and addictive. The samsa is a baked pastry filled with rich meat and sweet onions. As one of the only halal stalls in the mall, Tarim offers a unique taste among the many regional Chinese and East Asian cuisines nearby.







# AAPI FILMS

Nothing to stream?  
Here's some recommendations!



## Romantic Comedy



## Horror



## Social Drama



## Animation



## Sci-Fi/Fantasy



## Musical



## Familial Drama



## Drama



# Play next...

here are two people with absolutely wonderful vocal talent...could be a new playlist addition!



## RINA SAWAYAMA

JAPANESE-BRITISH

BORN IN NIIHATA JAPAN

INSPIRED BY HIKARU UTADA, MORNING MUSUME, ETC.

1.8 MILLION

MONTHLY LISTENERS

Pop

Rock

R&B

### We recommend...



**This Hell**  
Rina Sawayama



**Cherry**  
Rina Sawayama



### We recommend...



**Lover Boy**  
Phum Viphurit



**Softly Spoken**  
Phum Viphurit



## PHUM VIPHURIT

Thai

Born in Thailand

Sings in English

Inspired by House  
and Trance Music

86k

monthly listeners

Indie Folk

Neo-Soul



# Alumni Spotlight



**Nicole Miller**

*Hello!*

**My name is Nicole Miller, my pronouns are she/her. I graduated August 2024, but I walked at the AAS Commencement in the Spring. I was an Asian and Asian American major with a Japanese and Korean minor.**

**Q. Why did you choose to study in the AAAS department?**

Originally, I was a business management major since I thought I wanted to do business. However, I took one semester and realized it wasn't right for me. I talked to my older brother (Stony Brook Alumni) who took AAS classes said that the classes were very interesting, engaging and the professors were supportive.

**Q. What is your current profession? Why?**

Currently I am studying for the Bar Exam because I want to go into Law school. I wanted to be a lawyer because my dad is a lawyer but I am not sure what type of lawyer. I would like to work in diplomacy in New York and going into college helped me figure it out.

**Q. How has the AAAS department helped guide you to your current profession?**

The courses I took involved critical thinking and analysis which is helpful for law and helped me develop those skills further. It reminded me that there is a lot of reading to do but it is hard to get anywhere without teaching yourself and learning. These courses also taught me the

importance of doing research and to not take things at face value.

**Q. What was the most valuable thing the AAAS department taught you?**

One thing that resonated is don't be so stubborn and be able to unlearn things. After taking Dr. Sandra Kim's class, it taught me to take in other perspectives and not be afraid to unlearn certain things.

**Q. What advice would you give to an incoming AAAS major/minor?**

Advice I would give to an incoming AAAS major/minor is don't be scared of asking questions or reaching out for help. Everyone in the department is really kind, willing to help, and provide resources for future opportunities. Also don't be afraid to participate in class and try not be afraid to talk since you are here to learn.

**Q. Any advice for AAAS majors/minor graduating this semester?**

Don't feel hesitant to reach out, hold up connections and relationships with staff, professors, friends and any meaningful connections with the department.

## MEET THE FACULTY!

# Professor Eriko Sato

Associate Professor | AAAS Department Chair

research areas: hybridity, translanguaging, translation studies, intercultural communication, language learning/teaching, online teaching, and Japanese linguistics and pedagogy



### Q. Would you like to introduce your background?

I was born and raised in Kawasaki City near Tokyo. My husband is a physicist from Shanghai. He was a PhD student in Japan when we got married. We moved to Stony Brook because of his job. Then, I completed a PhD in Linguistics and started to teach Japanese at Stony Brook University!

### Q. How do you feel about becoming the AAAS department chair?

I was very nervous about becoming an AAAS chair at first! But I now enjoy it because it is a privilege. I've been able to have more one-on-one conversations with my colleagues and learn about their aspirations and needs—things I might not have known otherwise. It's rewarding to be able to support them.

### Q. What are your thoughts on translating/teaching?

I teach AAS385 – Translation Studies of Asian Languages. I make it a collaborative effort between students from all the different minors under AAAS. Some students who are very fluent in a given language serve as informants in the classroom and answer their peers' questions. This helps them discover different cultural perspectives. Although there is no perfect translation and it is hard to bring the beauty of one language into another, I encourage students to take an explorative approach to investigate the historical and social background of authors and translators to see different perspectives and become well-rounded in their thoughts.



### Q. How would you describe your teaching style?

When teaching translation studies, I try to transcend boundaries – there are so many connections between languages, cultures, and societies. I don't want to prescribe how to translate, but encourage my students to observe differences and similarities, critically analyze cultural influences, and arrive at creative solutions.

When teaching Japanese, I make it all about the students. Students asked me a lot of questions during class. They wanted to know how to say things in different contexts. “What if I want to say this phrase to my girlfriend? What if I want to say this phrase to my business client?” Based on students’ questions, I wrote a comprehensive textbook series called “Contemporary Japanese.” Textbooks, however, get outdated in a few years because languages, especially vocabulary, change very quickly, so I have made them into PDFs to be shared with our students in our program. I still edit the PDFs after each semester with other teachers.

### Q. As the new chair of AAAS, what are your hopes and expectations?

Honestly, I wasn't quite sure how to start leading the department as the AAAS chair at first. All I knew was that I wanted this department to be very student-centered. I made six points on what my policy is:

- **Listen to the students.** I conducted a survey of our majors and minors to learn what they wanted. Most students who responded said they wanted to interact with international students and students in other programs or language classes. They wanted to break the walls and get to know other students. I want them to connect not only with each other and the staff, but also to discover connections—between languages, between cultures, and between values and beliefs.
- **Listen to faculty.** I asked the faculty what they want from and for the department, both during departmental meetings and through emails and surveys. Most people responded with interdisciplinary/well-rounded research. Again, they want to break walls between disciplines and programs. In many ways, students and faculty are more alike than different.
- **Lean on faculty strength.** We have faculty members with different strengths. The varied strengths of our faculty members contribute to the overall strength of the department.
- **Promote leadership.** My goal was to promote leadership opportunities for all faculty. They shouldn't be limited to serving the department but should be empowered to lead it.

- **Support faculty aspirations.** I hear, “I want to apply for this grant, make this program, or organize this event.” I wholeheartedly want to support each of our faculty members’ aspirations.
- **Ensure that our department remains strongly student oriented.** I want to keep it so that our department remains strongly student-centered. We warmly welcome students. Students should know our department is there for them – that we would support their research and activities. Theresa and Lynne are like our windows, and direct students to many of our program directors and faculty members. We help students engage in professionally oriented internships to prepare themselves to get interesting jobs in the future.



**In appreciation of Professor Dongmei Zeng, Senior Lecturer/Provost Outstanding Lecturer of the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, here are some words from her fellow faculty members:**

“We all wanted to congratulate you, thank you, and express how much you’ve meant to us, as a director, a teacher, a research collaborator, a teammate in organizing events and programs, a precious friend, and, for me, a wonderful classmate in Linguistics. I love your genuine and sincere character, as well as your kind and frank communication style. I could trust you, always. I’ve seen so many students who admire you.”

**- Eriko Sato, AAAS Department Chair**

As a former department chair, I can say without hesitation that under your leadership, the China Studies program became a model of what an area studies program can be—well-organized, efficient, transparent, and above all, student-centered. You held regular meetings with clear agendas and thoughtfully prepared minutes. You worked tirelessly to improve the curriculum, to develop new courses, and to revise existing ones. You championed the ACE program. You recruited and mentored adjunct faculty, kept a close eye on textbook quality and relevance—even wrote your own. You managed student advising, coordinated the annual China Studies scholarship awards, and carried out course planning with precision and care.

I’ve always admired your clarity and straightforwardness—your no-nonsense style that is at once firm and respectful, practical yet deeply kind. You have a way of knowing exactly what needs to be done and just doing it, and I’ve been deeply grateful for that clarity and competence.

**- Agnes He, Professor of Applied Linguistics**

**Finally, a piece of advice from Professor Zeng to her students:**

“Find out what truly interests you and you are good at. Pursue your goals with passion and do not pass any opportunities to advance yourself.”



# **AAAS Department Graduates**

## **AAAS 2025 Commencement**

### **Class Speakers:**

Nuoyi Chen

Camron Xomvimane

Naomi Kirkup

### **Fall 2024**

Benjamin An, KOR Minor

Dylan Chen, AAS Minor

Kylie Ferrentino, KOR Minor

Yasuko Fujita, CAASMA

Guga Khidasheli, JNH Minor

Conor Labelle, AAS Minor

Vincent Li, JNH Minor

Daniel Morel, KOR Minor

Jina Ren, CNS Minor

Sijae Sung, AAS Major

Claire Tangellamudi, KOR Minor

Zhihao Wang, JNH Minor

Jackie Xiao, CNS Minor

Selina Zhu, AAS Major, CNS Minor



# Spring 2025

Jason Bahn, AAS Major

Alana Bennett, JNH Minor, KOR Minor

Isabella Birbiglia, JNH Minor

Nicholas Castellano, JNH Minor

Nuoyi Chen, CAASMA

Celina Chen, AAS Minor, CNS Minor

Katy Chiu, JNH Minor

Felix Chong, AAS Major, JNH Minor

Priscillie Chu, CNS Minor

Anna Ding, CNS Minor

Victoria Duong, KOR Minor

Hong Minorg Gu, JNH Minor

Alan Guerrero, JNH Minor

Sarah Hafke, AAS Minor

Anahje Hector, JPN Minor

Isabella Ho, CNS Minor

Tianxiao Hu, JNH Minor

Gianna Jaworski, KOR Minor

Fei Ji, CNS Minor

Abudurexiti Kaiwushaer, CAASMA

Vaughn Kelly, JNH Minor

Naomi Kirkup, AAS Major, CNS Minor,

RLS Minor, & SOA Minor

Debby Lee, AAS Major, Teacher

Preparation in Korean Language, &  
KOR Minor

Andrew Lee, CNS Minor

Meghan Lee, KOR Minor

Alan Li, JNH Minor

Shirley Lin, CNS Minor

Quinton Ling, JNH Minor

Alexandra Ma, KOR Minor

Dillon Mackay, JNH Minor

Harry Miller, KOR Minor

Ayumi Nakagawa, AAS Major, JNH  
Minor

Sarah Ng, AAS Major, JNH Minor

Gabriel Painton, JNH Minor

Isha Patel, SOA Minor

Mauli Patel, SOA Minor

Devin Pons, JNH Minor

Kaya Rexford, AAS Major

Yuchen Sun, JNH Minor

Alex Tan, KOR Minor

Ahror Temirov, KOR Minor

Juno Thompson, AAS Major, JNH Minor

Mia Vogel, KOR Minor

Camron Xomvimane, AAS Major, JNH  
Minor

Qian Yu, AAS Major, KOR Minor

Jenna Zaza, KOR Minor

Paul Zheng, CNS Minor

Paris Zhu, AAS Major, Teacher

Preparation in Chinese Language &  
CNS Minor

Yue Zhu, JNH Minor

James Frith, RLS Minor



## **Summer 2025**

Tony Cheung, JNH Minor  
Nijun Fang Zhou, CNS Minor  
Stacey Jiang, CNS Minor  
Harleen Kaur, SOA Minor  
Anastasia Kim, KOR Minor  
Yumeng Liang, AAS Major  
Alexandra Locke, JNH Minor  
Brianna Lum, JNH Minor  
Ashley Triolo, KOR Minor

**Congratulations to all of the Asian &  
Asian American Studies Department  
Graduates!**

