

# ASIAN STUDIES U OF L NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021 - VOL. 4



**Asian Studies** is an interdisciplinary program at the University of Lethbridge which seeks to understand the human experience in Asia and the Asian diaspora. We create opportunities for students to learn about Asia through courses, presentations, exchange programs, and faculty and student research. Many thanks to our colleagues, students, admin assistant Bev Garnett, Arts & Science Deans, Prentice Institute, and International and President's Offices for your support.

## Message on Asian Heritage Month

During my undergrad at UBC, I took two third-year classes in Japanese history taught by Prof. Nam-lin Hur. I became fascinated in the subject. It inspired me to study the Japanese language which my mother had tried to teach us children when we were younger. At age 20 I gained a deeper appreciation for my cultural heritage, and a few years later I moved to Japan to further my studies in a Masters program.

This past year has seen a surge in anti-Asian racism across North America and around the world. People of Asian descent have been targeted with violence, physical and verbal. We must be vigilant against all forms of racism and discrimination in order to eliminate such forms of hate. At the Association for Asian Studies virtual conference held from March through to the end of April, we participated in discussions about racism targeted toward Asians, as well as racism and social exclusion within Asian societies. As a colleague stated, racism is inherently anti-democratic, and I join colleagues who wish to work towards creating a fairer, more democratic society.

This past term, my students and I had difficult, but very meaningful discussions about racism and how we can work to eliminate it. These were some of the insightful comments that my students shared:

- to educate ourselves in history and the world around us
- to call out racism when you witness it
- to support the victims, get help, or intervene if it is safe to do so for yourself and others
- to respectfully engage in dialogue with people, even if your views disagree
- to recognize one's own privilege relative to marginalized groups, and to learn how you might support people who are disadvantaged

May is Asian Heritage Month in Canada. This is an opportunity to recognize the diverse communities and cultures of Asian descent that live in and have made contributions to society here in Southern Alberta, Treaty 7 Territory, and across Canada. As a teacher, it is rewarding to hear students say that writing a research paper or taking a certain class led them to a better understanding of their own heritage, or the heritage of their friends or family members. I strive to do work in the classroom and in my research that is anti-racist, while supporting students in their journeys of learning and discovery, just as I have experienced since I was a young student. Thanks for reading, and please stay safe.

**Gideon Fujiwara, Asian Studies Coordinator, Assoc Prof of History**

For more info visit [Asian Studies | University of Lethbridge \(uleth.ca\)](https://www.asianstudies.uleth.ca) or contact [gideon.fujiwara@uleth.ca](mailto:gideon.fujiwara@uleth.ca)

## Fall 2021 Courses

### ASIA 1000 Introduction to Asia

(John Harding) M/W 12-1:15 pm, L1170A

ASIA 2020 Japan, Asia, & the World (G Fujiwara) M/W 6-7:40 pm (thru Oct); 5-6:40 pm (Nov-Dec); Online

### ASIA 3850 Health, Aging and Society in South Asia

(Kamrul Islam, Prentice Postdoctoral Fellow)

T/R 12-1:15 pm; B730

### ASIA/RELS 3850 Gender & Sexuality in Buddhism

(Erin Reid) T/R 10:30-11:45 am; Online

## Michael Chan Prize in Asian Studies

Michael Wing-Cheung Chan (1952-2001) was a Chinese Canadian scientist and humanitarian known for his brilliance in mathematics and his passion in promoting Canada-Asia understanding. The award was established by Dr. Bonnie Lee and family and friends of Michael Chan.

**Next submissions due Aug 20, 2021**

Learn more at [Michael Chan Prize in Asian Studies | University of Lethbridge \(uleth.ca\)](https://www.asianstudies.uleth.ca/michaelchanprize)