



ASIAN CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

2023 Edition

Sigur Center
for Asian Studies

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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The 2022-2023 academic year was an excellent year for the Sigur Center for Asian Studies. In addition to sponsoring dozens of events and awarding thousands of dollars in fellowships, the center received several very significant grants and donations which will have a transformational impact on the center going forward.

In April the center received notification that the East Asia National Resource Center (NRC), which is co-managed with the GW Institute for Korean Studies, will be funded by the Department of Education (DOE) for another term. Students and alumni can be proud that GW is the only university in Washington DC that the DOE selected for as a National Resource Center in East Asia. This truly speaks to the unique strengths of both our faculty and our Asian Studies MA Program. The NRC will implement outreach programs to high schools and minority serving institutions. The Sigur Center will also now be able to strengthen its initiatives in Tibet and Uyghur Studies.

The center also received two significant anonymous donations. The first of these is a gift for nearly \$1 million to support Uyghur Studies at the Elliott School. Thanks to this generous gift, GW will be the first and only university in the Washington area to offer Uyghur language courses. This new endowment will also support scholarships for MA and Ph.D. students interested in Xinjiang. The second gift is from an alumna and will establish \$1 million endowment to support China studies in the Elliott School. The fund will create a special scholarship for students who want to study intensive Mandarin and fund the creation of new China Studies classes. These two gifts will consolidate the university's position as the leading place to study China in the DC area.

The center hosted some excellent and widely attended events over the course of the year as well. Our Taiwan programming continued to expand and improve. A roundtable that the center sponsored in March on semiconductor supply chains in Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan filled the Lindner Commons and provoked an excellent dialogue between the speakers and the audience. In the fall, the center hosted an event on the CCP 20th Party Congress that included some of GW's own leading China experts and several others from think tanks and other universities. This day-long event drew an audience of nearly 200 people and offered perhaps the most in-depth analyses of developments in the congress of any event in DC at the time. Finally, Professor Sonia Ryang of Rice University delivered the Gaston Sigur Memorial Lecture on "North Korea, Japan, and the Biopolitics of Repatriation." Ryang not only offered a persuasive analysis of the conditions of Koreans living in Japan but also shared some of her own experiences.

I am proud that during my two years as center director, I have been able to gradually return the center to hosting in person events and help it to move on from the pandemic. With new sources of funding and exciting new initiatives, the Sigur Center will undoubtedly remain on of the most exciting places for Asia related research in the country. It is therefore with mixed feelings that I will now take a sabbatical year and pass the leadership of the center on to a new director: Janet Steele. Janet is one of the leading experts on Southeast Asia and Indonesia and she promises to expand the center's activities into other areas. I am confident that the center will continue to thrive with its new leadership.

Gregg A. Brazinsky

Professor of History and International Affairs
Director of the Sigur Center for Asian Studies

Assignment China: An Oral History of American Journalists in the People's Republic

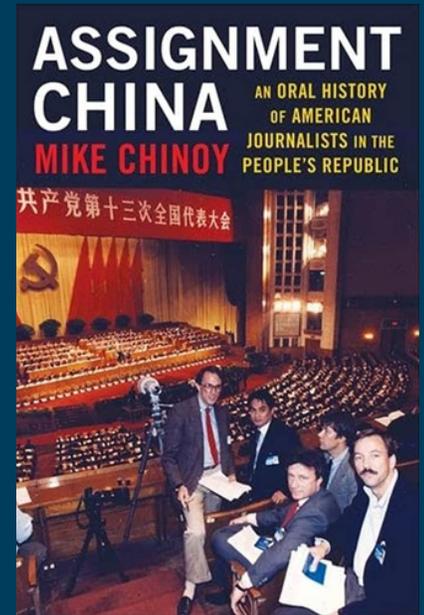
On March 28, 2023, the Sigur Center hosted a book talk with Mike Chinoy, a former foreign correspondent for CNN, on his latest publication. *Assignment China* tells the story of how American journalists have covered China—from the civil war of the 1940s through the COVID-19 pandemic—in their own words. Mike Chinoy assembles a remarkable collection of personal accounts from eminent journalists who share behind-the-scenes stories of reporting on historic moments. David Shambaugh moderated the discussion, which was followed by a Q&A with the audience.

Mike Chinoy

Mike Chinoy is a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the U.S.-China Institute at the University of Southern California. He spent 24 years as a foreign correspondent for CNN, serving as the network’s first Beijing bureau chief and senior Asia correspondent. Before joining CNN, Chinoy worked for CBS News and NBC News. He has won Emmy, Dupont, and Peabody awards for his journalism. *Assignment China* is his fifth book.

David Shambaugh

David Shambaugh is Gaston Sigur Professor of Asian Studies, Political Science, & International Affairs and the founding director of the China Policy Program in the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Before joining the GW faculty, Professor Shambaugh taught Chinese politics at the University of London’s School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS) and was editor of *The China Quarterly*.



Gaston Sigur Memorial Lecture: North Korea, Japan, and Biopolitics of Repatriation

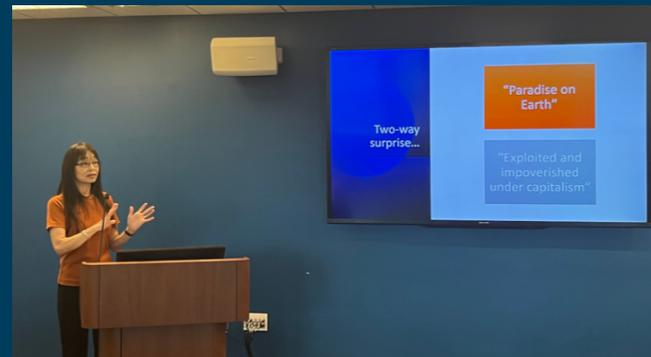
On May 4, 2023, the Sigur Center held its annual memorial lecture to honor the legacy of the Center's namesake - Gaston J. Sigur. The lecture discussed the repatriation of Koreans from Japan to North Korea. Between 1959 and 1984, a total of 93,340 persons were relocated from Japan to North Korea. Reflecting recent declassification of the International Committee for Red Cross papers, scholars have revisited this issue, yet questions remain regarding how this phenomenon should be understood. Sonia Ryang approached this topic from multiple angles and addressed the issues of power and forms of life.

In her talk, Dr. Ryang discussed how in reaction to discrimination and poverty, many Zainichi Koreans left Japan for the newly-created North Korea. The new arrivals were shocked at the poverty and devastation of their new home. They were confronted by the conundrum that they were in a paradise free of capitalism and exploitation, but was full of extreme poverty and starvation.

Sonia Ryang

Sonia Ryang was born in Japan to Korean parents and grew up speaking both Korean and Japanese. She is a social anthropologist by training, having obtained her PhD from Cambridge University in 1995. Recently, envisioning the concept of transnational Asia, she has begun to explore the best means by which the boundaries between Asia and Asian America can be undone, for, when viewed from multiple angles, such a distinction is rapidly becoming an artificial one. With the Academy of Korean Studies funding (AKS-2020-R24) Sonia Ryang is currently working on a research that reconsiders the repatriation of Koreans from Japan to North Korea (1959 through 1984).

Full Recording can be found on [YouTube](#)



The CCP 20th Party Congress and China's Road Ahead

On November 4th 2022, the Sigur Center hosted a half-day long conference about China's 20th Party Congress and its impact on China's future. The panelists discussed questions such as: What will Xi Jinping's third term mean for Chinese domestic politics? What are China's intentions for Taiwan? How will the party manage slowing economic growth along with mounting demographic and environmental problems? The conference held three panels centered on three thematic areas: domestic politics, international relations, and economic policy.

The domestic politics panelists discussed the role of Xi Jinping, China's environmental policy, and the growing role of technology. The panelists agreed that Xi Jinping is likely to continue to rule for a long time and that technological surveillance will be essential to his rule. The second panel, focused on international relations, analyzed the tense relationship between the United States and China and China and Taiwan. The third panel examined China's economic policy, its slowing growth, and its continued investment in Global South nations.

Panel 1: Domestic Politics

Bruce Dickson
Iza Ding
Jeff Ding

Panel 2: International Relations

David Shambaugh
Patricia M. Kim
Robert G. Sutter

Panel 3: Economic Policy

Maggie Xiaoyang Chen
David Dollar
Stephen B. Kaplan

Full Recording can be found on [YouTube](#)



Taiwan and Post-Crisis Economics: New Pathways for U.S.-Taiwan 21st Century Trade

Full Recording can be found on [YouTube](#)

On November 15, 2022, the Sigur Center hosted Ambassador Kurt Tong, Riley Walters and Vincent Wang for a Taiwan Roundtable event. The panelists discussed how the political economy drives the U.S.-Taiwan relationship and how Taiwan's economic position may be safeguarded in a more uncertain global economic environment.

Amb. Kurt Tong Managing Partner and Member, Executive Committee at The Asia Group, former Consul General and Chief of Mission in Hong Kong and Macau

Riley Walters Deputy Director, Hudson Institute, Japan Chair and senior non-resident fellow, Global Taiwan Institute

Vincent Wang Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Political Science, Adelphi University



Semiconductor Supply Chains in the Indo-Pacific: The Role of Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan

Full Recording can be found on [YouTube](#)

On March 22, 2023, the Sigur Center presented a Roundtable on the resiliency of semi-conductor supply chains in the Indo-Pacific and their challenge for the U.S. and its partners in the region. The panelists discussed the position of Taiwan, South Korea and Japan in dealing with the ongoing supply chain stresses as well as the economic and security implications to watch for.



Lotta Danielsson Vice President, U.S.-Taiwan Business Council

Daniel Aum Associate, Institute for Korean-American Studies; Former Harold W. Rosenthal Fellow, U.S. House of Representatives

Jeffrey Bean Program Manager, Technology Policy Observer Research Foundation America

On September 29, 2022, the Sigur Center for Asian Studies presented a Roundtable on new security challenges for Taiwan's economic and military challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.



Rupert Hammond-Chambers, President of the U.S.-Taiwan Business Council

Fiona Cunningham, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania

Emily S. Weinstein, Research Fellow for the Center for Security and Emerging Technology at Georgetown University



MILITARY SECURITY

Cross Strait Relations, Defense & US-Taiwan Relations

Combined with intense cybersecurity challenges, supply chain pressures and US-China tech competition, Taiwan faces a unique set of economic and military security challenges that are increasingly recognized and shared by like-minded partners in the region as well as across the globe. The panelists therefore discussed key economic and military issues currently facing Taiwan, and the prospects for Cross-Strait and regional stability.

Eldridge Colby, Co-Founder and Principal of The Marathon Initiative

Robert Sutter, Professor of Practice of International Affairs at George Washington University

Jacob Stokes, Fellow for the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security



CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS AND U.S. STRATEGY AT A CROSSROAD?

Watch [this recording](#) and more on our [YouTube channel](#).

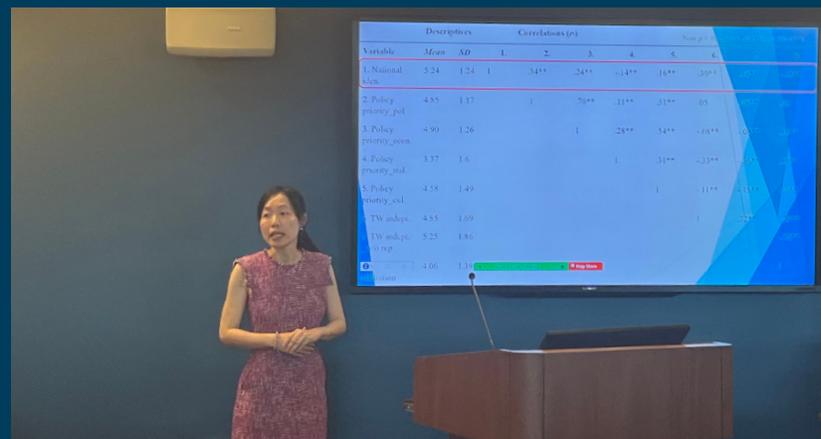
On May 12, 2023, the Sigur Center for Asian Studies presented a Roundtable on cross-strait relations and the next steps for the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific. Dr. Joel Wunthow of the National Defense University discussed possible military scenarios and strategies in the Taiwan Strait and predicted that any military action will come at a high cost for both Taiwan and mainland China. Prof. Rosalie Chen of the Dominican University of California presented her research on evolving identity in Taiwan. According to her, more people in Taiwan are beginning to identify as Taiwanese as opposed to Chinese, resulting in an increased distaste for reuniting with the mainland. Deputy Director of the Global Taiwan Institute John Dotson described how U.S.-China relations have soured and U.S.-Taiwan relations have shifted to a closer and more dynamic partnership.

Speakers

Joel Wunthow, Senior Research Fellow for the Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs at National Defense University

Rosalie Chen, Assistant Professor of Psychology at the Dominican University of California

John Dotson, Deputy Director at the Global Taiwan Institute



Thanks to a generous Anonymous donor to the Elliott School and the renewal of our East Asia National Resource Center, GW is offering for the first time in the Fall of 2023 a Uyghur Language course. The course, the only one of its kind in the D.C. area at a college or university, is available for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students interested in China, Central Asia, and/or human rights are encouraged to sign up!

About the Instructor

Mustafa Aksu is from Awat County in the Uyghur region (called Xinjiang or East Turkestan). He holds a M.A. in Linguistics and Central Asian Studies from Indiana University Bloomington, an M.B.A. from Yeditepe University in Turkey, and a B.A. in Language and Literature from Tianjin Foreign Studies University in China. He is fluent in Uyghur, English, Turkish, and Mandarin Chinese, with elementary knowledge of Mongolian, Dari, and Spanish.

Mustafa has lived in the U.S. since 2016, and is an active member of the Uyghur community here in D.C. He is an outspoken advocate for the rights of his people and previously worked as a Program Manager for the Uyghur Human Rights Project.



Mustafa is excited to be teaching a Beginner-level Uyghur language class this fall. Throughout his time in DC, he has had students from a variety of universities in the DMV area inquire about learning Uyghur. Thanks to an anonymous donor and the renewal of our East Asia National Resource Center, GW is now able to offer this course. Mustafa is very grateful for all the people that are helping make this class possible, as it makes him feel that Uyghur culture and language are valued. He looks forward to being able to share his language, and plans on incorporating Uyghur customs and traditions into the class, such as dances and food. He also plans to ask members of the D.C. Uyghur community to help his students practice the language. As a teacher, Mustafa looks forward to being able to provide personalized guidance and support to help each student reach their full potential.

What should students expect to get out of this class?

Students can expect to improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in Uyghur while also gaining a deeper understanding of Uyghur history, customs, and traditions. The class will be designed to challenge and engage students, offering a variety of learning activities and opportunities to practice their language skills.

Additionally, students will gain insights into the connections between Uyghur and other Turkic languages, as well as the influences from Arabic, Persian, and Russian on Uyghur vocabulary. The class will be designed to challenge and engage students, offering a variety of learning activities and opportunities to practice their language skills.

Why are you excited about teaching the class this Fall?

I am passionate about sharing the Uyghur language and culture with others and helping students develop their language skills. Uyghur language is a gateway to the Turkic world, Central Asia, offering a unique perspective region with a rich history and vibrant local cultures. Teaching this class in the Fall allows me to continue supporting students in their linguistic and cultural journey, and I look forward to fostering an engaging and supportive learning environment.

Is there anything else you think students interested in Uyghur should know?

Uyghur shares a literary legacy with other Central Asian Turkic languages and has a long history of being recorded in written form, employing a modified form of Perso-Arabic script. Latin and Cyrillic alphabets are also used in specific contexts. By studying Uyghur, students not only gain valuable language skills but also contribute to preserving and promoting this important language and cultural heritage.

Knowledge of Uyghur can open up a variety of employment opportunities in human rights organizations, non-profits, government, military, and international companies. Many students learning Uyghur use the language to better understand the region's significance in China's relations with Central Asia, as well as its rich cultural and historical heritage. Moreover, by studying Uyghur, students contribute to preserving and promoting this important language and cultural heritage.



The East Asia National Resource Center (NRC) at The George Washington University (GW) is supported by the Title VI provision of the 1965 Higher Education Act and is jointly managed by the Sigur Center for Asian Studies and the GW Institute for Korean Studies. The primary goal of the NRC is to provide learning resources and educational programming about East Asian Studies to K-12 learning communities, Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and the general public to ultimately empower students, educators, and future leaders to better engage contemporary global issues. The NRC does so through a variety of public events, professional development and training workshops, and specially designed digital, audio, and visual content.

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the NRC continued to advance its public outreach mission through the following activities:

- 1 K-12 Outreach**
 - Hosted two teacher-training workshops
 - Coordinated seven GW faculty virtual lectures with middle and high schools
 - Co-sponsored the national Junior Japan Bowl for 380 students across eight states
 - Piloted a new Taiwan Strait Conflict simulation for three MCPS middle schools
- 2 Engagement with Minority-Serving Institutions**
 - NRC co-directors and staff visited Spelman College and Morehouse College to give guest lectures, conduct classroom visits, and attend meetings with faculty and staff
 - NRC staff and faculty visited Albany State University (ASU) to establish a new partnership
 - NRC supported ASU's first Annual Albany Movement Conference
- 3 Seminars and Research**
 - Designed and implemented a one-month virtual Pre-Departure Orientation on Taiwan affairs for 16 Fulbright-Hays scholars going to Taiwan
 - Hosted a six-week seminar on contemporary Tibetan society, politics, and humanities
 - Supported three non-resident scholars under the NRC's East Asia Voices Initiative fellowship

Title VI Grant Renewed for 2023-2026!

The NRC received a notice in April 2023 that the U.S. Department of Education selected our competitive 2022 NRC proposal to receive a three-year \$640,000 grant to carry out new activities from August 2023 through August 2026! The new grant, made possible by extra funds becoming available at the Department of Education, will restore GW's status as a National Resource Center for East Asian Studies and support GW's high-impact outreach to K-12 learning communities, MSIs, and the general public. The new grant will enable the NRC to carry out the following new activities each year starting from August 2023:

K-12 Outreach

- Recruit a curriculum developer
- Host teacher workshops
- Support the Junior Japan Bowl
- Develop MUN simulations
- Establish a new K-12 advisory council for East Asian Studies
- Put together an annual DC field trip for high school students

MSI Outreach

- Run the annual Professional Development Program with Spelman College
- Conduct annual visits to partner MSI schools in Georgia, including Spelman, Morehouse, and Albany State University
- Support a new East Asia course at Spelman College

GW & the Public

- Support a new Uyghur language course each year
- Host two roundtables on "Diversity in Asian Studies" and four single-speaker events on Asian affairs
- Create a new seminar for policymakers that centers studies of Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong



<p>Janet Steele Professor of Media and Public Affairs and International Affairs</p>	<p>Celeste Arrington Korea Foundation Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs</p>	<p>Shoko Hamano Professor Emeritus of Japanese and International Affairs</p>	<p>Mika Natif Associate Professor of Art History</p>
<p>U.S. Embassy Jakarta Grant</p>	<p>Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers - LMU, Munich, Germany</p>	<p>Japan-U.S. Friendship Committee Grant</p>	<p>Appointed Dean's Research Chair, 2022-2024</p>



<p>Donald C. Clarke David Weaver Professor of Law and Research Professor of Law</p>	<p>Alexa Alice Joubin Professor of English, East Asian Languages and Literatures, Theatre & Dance</p>
<p>Member, National Committee on U.S.-China Relations</p>	<p>Oscar and Shoshana Prize Trachtenberg Prize for Scholarship (Research) bell hooks Legacy Award Martin Luther King Jr. Award</p>



David Shambaugh

Gaston Sigur Professor of Asian Studies, Political Science, & International Affairs

**Distinguished Fellow, The Wilson Center
Distinguished Visiting Fellow, The Hoover Institution**



2022-2023 TERP ACTIVITIES

The Taiwan Education and Research Program (TERP) was established in 2004 to promote and support both academic and policy-related study and research on the history, international relations, and the contemporary political, economic and social development of Taiwan. TERP's mission is to build DC's first comprehensive Taiwan Studies academic program to prepare students, researchers, and policymakers to better engage in Taiwan-related issues globally. Its mission is especially relevant as US-Taiwan educational and cultural exchange continues to progress, and the security challenges between the US, China, and Taiwan persist. In support of its long-term goals, TERP conducted the following activities in 2022-2023:

- Hosted two Taiwan Humanities Lectures:
 - Taiwan Humanities Lecture on 10/27/2022 on the topic of "Ghost Town: Exploring the Liaison Between Fiction and Autobiography" with actor-turned-author Keven Chen
 - Taiwan Humanities Lecture on 04/07/2023 on the topic of "Sounding Settler Politics: The Institutionalization of Hakka Music in Postwar Taiwan" with Dr. Hsin-wen Hsu
- Co-sponsored four public events on Taiwan studies
- Supported the graduate-undergraduate cross-listed seminar on "Women in Asia," taught by professorial lecturer Dr. Kuniko Ashizawa
- Selected three students as this year's Taiwan Studies Research Fellows
- Hosted the second iteration of the Strait Talk GW Symposium
 - 14 young professionals, scholars, and policymakers were guided by three professional facilitators for a three-day weekend of interactive conflict resolution training that tied together professional development, cross-Strait relations, and peace studies

TAIWAN STUDIES RESEARCH FELLOWS

Each academic year, TERP selects a small cohort of graduate and undergraduate students from a competitive University-wide application pool to be Taiwan Studies Research Fellows. Fellows work with a faculty mentor to produce an original research contribution on any aspect of Taiwan Studies. Fellows then present on their respective research topics in an interactive roundtable with GW faculty, staff, and students, as well as friends and family. The 2022-2023 Taiwan Studies Research Fellows are:

Haruka Satake



- **Research Project:** "Comfort Women and Women's Rights in Taiwan"
- **Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Kuniko Ashizawa

Anais Szu Yin Fang



- **Research Project:** "Education Reform and National Identity: The Evolving State of Peace in the Taiwan Strait"
- **Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Robert Sutter

Elissa DeTellis



- **Research Project:** "Understanding the Relationship Between Taiwanese Beverages and National Identity"
- **Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Savreen Hundal

Hye Jun Seo is a second-year M.A. student at the Elliott School of International Affairs' Asian Studies program and journalist at Radio Free Asia (RFA). Born in South Korea, Hye Jun moved to Queens, New York when she was 10 years old. She earned her B.A. in Korean Studies from Binghamton University in 2017 and subsequently worked as a news producer in New York City.



Hye Jun moved to Washington DC in 2018 to work for KBS (Korean Broadcasting System). One of her formative experiences in that position was covering the 2019 Hanoi Summit between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. While she was interested in and enjoyed debating her colleagues on the outcome of the summit, Hye Jun also realized that she was fairly uneducated on the topic. Her desire to better understand the diplomatic relationship between the United State and South Korea, and how the US-ROK alliance plays out in negotiations with North Korea is what pushed her to pursue her masters in Asian Studies.

Hye Jun is currently a journalist at Radio Free Asia focusing on the Korean Peninsula, particularly concentrating on North Korea's nuclear threat and human rights issues. RFA's coverage is focused on Asian countries that don't have freedom of media, including sending radio messages directly to North Korea. For Hye Jun, everyday is different and she is able to cover a variety of topics. One part she especially enjoys is being able to speak with experts and North Korean defectors.

Working at RFA while pursuing her Asian Studies M.A. means that Hye Jun is often able to use what she is learning in school at work, and vice versa. She likes how she is able to attend events at GW as both a student and a reporter, such as when Former South Korean Prime Minister Nakyon Lee spoke in February 2023. Hye Jun admits that it can be challenging at times balancing being a part time student and full time reporter, especially when she has to do a ton of readings for grad school and then separate readings for work.

She encourages anyone considering applying to Elliott's Asian Studies program to do so as long as they are truly interested in learning more about the region and believe earning a masters will advance their career. Hye Jun finds that studying at Elliott allows her to broaden her focus and learn different perspectives, and looking ahead to the future she hopes to continue to contribute to policy-making.



Jennifer Ahn is a second-year M.A. student in the Elliott School of International Affairs' Asian Studies program. Raised in Atlanta, Jennifer graduated from Boston University in 2020 with a B.A. in International Relations and a minor in Korean Language and Literature. She is currently the Research Associate for Korea Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). Her research focuses broadly on the U.S.-South Korea alliance, South Korean politics, and Northeast Asian security. Jennifer is pursuing a master's degree to build her expertise on Korea and expand her understanding of the broader Northeast Asian region. She was drawn to GW's Asian Studies program specifically for its professors specializing in all aspects of Asian studies and for the option to pursue a functional track in international security policy. The GW Institute for Korean Studies (GWIKS) also captured Jennifer's interest because of its focus on cultivating a community of Korea watchers, both next-generation and those established in their careers. Those qualities of Elliott's program align with Jennifer's dedication and professional career goal of strengthening the U.S.-South Korea alliance.

You are currently a Korea Studies Research Associate at CFR. Can you explain what that entails?

I assume research, administrative, and programmatic responsibilities in support of the CFR Korea Studies program. My primary duty is to research, analyze, and write about issues and current events related to North and South Korea. Day-to-day, I utilize my Korean language skills quite regularly, especially when tracking and monitoring Korean media for daily news and political developments, so I enjoy blending together my language proficiency with my research and analytical abilities. One of the reasons I applied to this position was due to my deep respect and appreciation of CFR as an organization dedicated to non-partisan and objective analysis of foreign policy, and I am always grateful for the opportunity to contribute my perspective, insight, and research on a wide range of topics and issues in Korean politics.

Throughout your educational and professional journey, what has been the biggest challenge you've faced?

When I first started graduate school, one of the challenges I faced was related to how to manage a full-time job and part-time school. It can be particularly difficult during instances when I am juggling multiple projects at work during midterms or finals season. I am very fortunate in the sense that I am surrounded by supportive colleagues at CFR who are understanding of my school workload and the professors and mentors at school who will check in on me to make sure I am not overwhelmed. After close to two years, I have learned how to best manage my time and organize my day-to-day schedule so that I am able to give both work and school the proper attention and commitment that they deserve. In the end, I believe there are many advantages of working while attending grad school, so the benefits definitely outweigh the challenges.

What were your biggest takeaways from your past State Department and CFR internships?

My biggest takeaway, which even applies to the current position I am in, is the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities that come your way, and to genuinely enjoy and appreciate the ones that you are able to take on. Internships are a great place to explore different projects and skills so that you can think about and decide on the career trajectory and direction that most suit you. While I knew early in my academic career that I was interested in studying U.S.-Korea relations, each of my internships allowed me to explore a particular issue area within the relationship, from economics and trade to diplomacy and summitry, which then I was able to start narrowing down the specific areas I wanted to continue working on.

Are there any special memories from any of your experiences you would like to share?

I recently had the opportunity to publish on and speak at a panel analyzing South Korea's nuclear weapons debate. I plan to continue looking into this topic for my MA thesis this year, so it was a valuable experience being able to dig deeply into the nuclear debate, examine it from various angles, and talk about the potential implications.

Any advice for applicants to this program?

My biggest piece of advice would be for applicants to elaborate on your genuine interest in both deepening your expertise and expanding your knowledge/understanding within Asian Studies. I believe indicating your willingness to learn is particularly important for studying a region such as Asia because many of the countries are historically, politically, and economically intertwined, so it is difficult to study any one country in isolation. What I really enjoy about my time here at the Elliott School is that I am constantly learning something new every week in my classes and from my classmates about both Korea and the region more broadly.



Soeun Lee received her Master of Arts in Asian Studies from the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University in 2021. Her study focused on Korea and the international political economy of the Indo-Pacific region. While at GW, she worked at the GW Institute for Korean Studies (GWIKS) as a recipient of the GWIKS Research Assistant Fellowship and was part of the Organization of Asian Studies, a graduate student organization where she served as a Director of Korean Affairs and Director of Public Affairs. She is currently an External Relations Officer at the ASEAN-Korea Centre, an intergovernmental organization based in Seoul, Korea. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with bachelor's degrees in Economics and International Studies.

What drew you after undergrad to GW's Asian Studies Program?

The University of Wisconsin Madison's International Studies program is more focused on humanities and literature. I wanted to continue to graduate school with a greater focus on policy. At the time, I pursued my career at think tanks and research institutes. I interned at the D.C. Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islanders. I was surprised at how full D.C. was of government agencies, international organizations, think tanks, and politics-related people. When I applied for graduate school, I tried to find places where I could experience more practical things. I looked at the faculty and programs and found that GW's Asian Studies program, while having an academic element, is very policy-oriented and provides a practical view of international relations.

What is your favorite memory from your time at GW?

I loved all the courses that I took. I remember going to happy hour with my cohort after classes and having dinner with Professor Mochizuki at the end of the semester. One of my favorite memories at GW is the GWIKS North Korea Program. I participated in 2019, which was the first year they did it. I met speakers from all disciplines and perspectives talking about North Korea. When we usually talk about North Korea, we talk about politics, nuclear weapons, or economic sanctions. The North Korea Program covered things like literature and film in North Korea, the daily lives of North Korea people, human rights issues, and things of that nature in addition to politics. It was really interesting to meet all these experts from all disciplines and perspectives. I also got to meet North Korea defectors who I believe were visiting the U.S. for advocacy activities. It was really interesting to talk to them because it was my first time being exposed to North Korea defectors because I lived in South Korea and hadn't met any in-person.

Could you tell me more about your current position and what led you there?

I am currently a Program Officer at the ASEAN-Korea Center based in Seoul. I work in the Development Planning and General Affairs Unit, where we oversee the organization's external relations, review and draft the end of work programs, manage human resources and budgets, and monitor and evaluate programs. I am now in charge of external relations, so I arrange regular meetings between the executive board and council, ad hoc meetings with the ASEAN member embassies in Korea, and meetings with the Korea MOFA. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 in 2020, I returned to Korea and took online courses. Since there was a time difference, I began to work during the daytime and take classes at night. During the last semester of my studies, I took International Politics of East Asia with Professor David Shambaugh. Professor Shambaugh had recently written a book about Southeast Asian countries and how the U.S. and China are competing for influence in the region, so he integrated Southeast Asian countries into the course's curriculum and taught about ASEAN. By knowing about ASEAN, I found an internship opportunity at the ASEAN-Korea Center during my last semester at GW. I was very lucky that a job opening was available while I was an intern, so I transitioned from intern to officer.

Do you have any advice for current or prospective GW Asian students?

Enjoy all the opportunities that D.C. and GW provide, attend events on campus, at think tanks, and international organizations; they really help you to broaden your perspectives. I remember Sigur Center and GWIKS had a lot of events with government officials, former diplomats, scholars, and researchers. Try to experience as much as possible because you don't know what opportunities that experience will bring you, so try to engage in many activities and overcome challenges. Try to engage in as many activities and experiences as possible. Be sure to enjoy the city. I loved going to happy hours with friends, professors, and others. So enjoy D.C.!



CHINA POLICY PROGRAM (CPP)

The China Policy Program was created to build upon the Elliott School's longstanding expertise and involvement in U.S.-China relations and contemporary Chinese affairs. It primarily serves as an outreach program to the policy community in Washington, officials, and China specialists around the world, the media, and the public.

David Shambaugh
shambaug@gwu.edu



RISING POWERS INITIATIVE (RPI)

The Rising Powers Initiative is a multi-year, cross-national research effort that examines the role of domestic identities and foreign policy debates of aspiring powers in Asia. The RPI brings together an internationally recognized team of scholars from both the United States and across the globe to analyze and compare the foreign policy thinking in today's rising powers.

Deepa Ollapally
deepao@gwu.edu



PARTNERSHIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES IN ASIA (PISA)

Since 1984, PISA has worked with partner organizations in Asia to enhance capacity at the national and regional levels to address emerging concerns in the Asia Pacific region. PISA works with its global network of experts to develop issue-specific programs in areas of mutual interest between the United States and Asia, specializing in transnational issues such as climate change, human security, and international governance.

Linda Yarr
lyarr@gwu.edu



TAIWAN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PROGRAM (TERP)

The Taiwan Education and Research Program was established in 2004 to promote and support academic and policy-related study and research on the history, international relations, and the contemporary political, economic, and social development of Taiwan. It has been the primary goal of the Taiwan Education and Research Program to create and support the Taiwan Resource Center at GW's Gelman Library.

Liana Chen
liachen@gwu.edu



TIBET GOVERNANCE PROJECT

Tibet Governance Project advances scholarship, research, and new perspectives around key issues related to governance and public policy in contemporary Tibet. Research initiatives and program activities in the program produce fresh insights, analyses, and approaches towards understanding the social, economic, and institutional challenges faced by Tibetans in the region.

Tashi Rabgey
trabgey@gwu.edu



MEMORY AND RECONCILIATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

The Memory and Reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific program promotes the study of the ongoing "memory wars" as well as reconciliation efforts in the region. MRIAP's cataloging of official statements, scholarly works, and news articles on the subject will make it easier for people to become more aware of conflict resolution and confidence-building efforts in the region.

Daqing Yang
yanghist@gwu.edu



Mike Mochizuki
mochizuk@gwu.edu





**IN FALL 2022 -
SUMMER 2023,**

**THE GEORGE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY ACHIEVED:**

Total GW Study Abroad Programs in the Indo-Pacific: 35

Total Countries in GW-Indo Pacific Exchanges: 12

**Countries where Sigur Summer Grant Awardees Studied:
India, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong (Special
Administrative Region of China)**



111

GW Students
went to IPR*:
Bachelor's



7

Elliott School
Partnerships in IPR



33

Inbound Exchanges
from IPR: Bachelor's



567

IPR International
Students to GW:
Bachelor's



194

IPR International
Students to the
Elliott School



1,425

IPR International
Students to GW:
Graduate

*IPR = Indo-Pacific Region

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CONTACT US

1957 E St. NW, Suite 503

Washington, DC 20052

sigur.elliott.gwu.edu

(202) 994-5886 | gsigur@gwu.edu

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Edited and Assembled by
Adam Bubanich, Program Coordinator

Designed by
Shivam Kotak, Communications Assistant

Contributions by
Faiza Ahmed, Events Assistant
Akber Latif, Events Assistant
Analisa Paoli, Events Assistant
Anneliese Reynolds, Project Assistant