

# 2019 February Newsletter



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
Weatherhead East Asian Institute



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Throughout 2019, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute will organize and cosponsor various events highlighting new directions in East and Southeast Asian studies.

In February, the Institute held the first event in the “Reporting Asia” series. Perhaps now more than ever, reasoned and nuanced reporting on Asia is urgently needed. The “Reporting Asia” series brings to Columbia University seasoned writers, editors, and journalists who have experience reporting on different parts of Asia and addressing the new and challenging environment which reporters and observers of Asia face today.

The first talk in the series focused on journalism and media in Vietnam. The talk featured presentations from Bill Hayton, associate fellow, Asia-Pacific Programme, Chatham House; and Nguyen Phuong Linh, Southeast Asia political analyst, former Financial Times and Reuters’ Vietnam correspondent. Both participants candidly addressed the importance of covering Vietnam, the significant obstacles in doing so, and prospects and trends for the future of media in Vietnam.

The Institute also cosponsored “Vietnam and China in the Longue Durée,” an international symposium examining the dynamic relationship between China and Vietnam from ancient to contemporary times. Four panels of eminent scholars from Australia, Vietnam, China, and Canada, as well as the United States, examined Sino-Vietnamese relations on topics that ranged from shared intellectual and educational systems over centuries of premodern history, to the hotly contested islands of the South China Sea in the present day.

Participants interrogated the cultural, political, economic, and/or social tissues connecting various stages of history to modern times, and also explored disconnections, disruptions, and discontinuities within that long history. The event attracted over 130 registrants, and marked the launch of the Vietnamese Studies program here at Columbia, helmed by Professors Lien-Hang Nguyen and John Phan.



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# Hugh Borton, second director of the East Asian Institute (1953-1958)



**Hugh Borton**  
1903-1995

**H**ugh Borton served as the second director of the East Asian Institute (renamed the Weatherhead East Asian Institute in 2003). Born in May 1903 in New Jersey, Dr. Borton is known as one of the leading architects of US policy towards postwar Japan. In 1927, he graduated from Haverford College and went on to become a teacher in Tokyo one year later with the American Friends Service Committee. This experience influenced him to pursue further studies on Japan. He specialized in the history of the region and made many key contributions to the field.

In 1937, Dr. Borton joined Columbia as Assistant Professor of Japanese Language and History. He helped form the first degree program in Japanese Studies at the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures (previously known as the Department of Chinese and Japanese). In 1942, Dr. Borton took leave from Columbia for six years to serve as a specialist on Japan with the US Department of State. During this time, he was involved in crafting important peace agreements between the US and Japan. He focused on constitutional reform and was committed to strengthening the relationship between the two countries. This work led him to receive positive recognition by the post-war Japanese government.

After returning to Columbia, Dr. Borton was appointed director of the East Asian Institute in 1953, a role he held until 1958. During this time, he published influential scholarship on Japan, including *Japan's Modern Century* (1956) and a book of essays entitled *Japan* (1951). He served as president of Haverford College for 10 years before returning to Columbia in 1967 as senior research associate at the East Asian Institute.



Dr. Borton greets Yoshihige Abe, president of Peers' College, Tokyo, and Fusae Ichikawa, president of the Japanese League of Women Voters, at New York International Airport.



Dr. Borton discusses the challenges of Japanese language study in a December 1941 article of the Herald Tribune.





From left to right: NYSEAN co-founders Ann Marie Murphy, Margaret Scott, Duncan McCargo, and John Gershman

## NYSEAN brings Southeast Asia's dynamism to Columbia and New York

Interviewed by Ariana King

“There’s a renewed attention on the region because of the rise of China and rising Sino-American tensions.”

Southeast Asia has long struggled to capture the level of attention that China, Japan, and Korea have held in American academia. Few US institutions designate significant resources to the study of Southeast Asia, and centers exclusively devoted to the region are rare.

But this dearth of knowledge on Southeast Asia—comprised of 10 rapidly growing countries and the focus of much foreign investment and geopolitical tussling—is a potential blind spot for any 21st century institution seeking to understand the realities of Asia.

Recognizing the importance of the region, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute (WEAI) has committed to supporting and expanding the study of Southeast Asia. In 2015, the New York Southeast Asia Network (NYSEAN) was established at WEAI with a generous grant from the Luce Foundation, and it has already become a busy hub for activity. As the home of NYSEAN at Columbia University, WEAI looks to highlight the inextricable social, political, and economic connections between East and Southeast Asia, throughout history and in today’s globalized world.

“Expertise on Southeast Asia peaked during the ‘60s and early ‘70s,” explained NYSEAN co-founder Duncan McCargo. When the US ended its military involvement in Vietnam, interest in the region waned, resulting in a deficiency or “vacuum” of expertise on Southeast Asia in American academia.

“After the helicopters flew off from Saigon in April 1975, interest in Southeast Asia declined fairly exponentially,” said McCargo, who is a visiting professor of political science at Columbia University and professor of political science at the University of Leeds in the UK. But “a lot has happened since the ‘70s,” he noted.

According to NYSEAN cofounder Ann Marie Murphy, professor at the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University and senior research scholar at WEAI, there have been waves of interest in Southeast Asia. In the mid-1990s, Wall Street closely followed the so-called “rising tigers” of the region, but this attention tapered off after the Asian financial crisis of 1997. After 9/11 and a string of terrorist attacks in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, the countries were more closely scrutinized in the US from a security angle, she said.

Today, study of the region is multifaceted, spanning the growth of countries like Vietnam to governmental transitions. “There’s a renewed attention on the region because of the rise of China and rising Sino-American tensions,” Professor Murphy added.

Professors McCargo and Murphy are half of NYSEAN’s four-founder team, which includes John Gershman, professor at New York University’s Wagner School of Public Service, and Margaret Scott, adjunct associate professor at Wagner and a journalist. Since its founding four years ago, NYSEAN has operated as a “virtual center,” mobilizing a largely digital network of students, expatriates, and scholars of Southeast Asia to expand knowledge of the region through scholarship and public events from its base at WEAI.

NYSEAN, though administratively and financially based at Columbia University, is a collaborative venture with New York University and Seton Hall University, and operates as a partnership with a diverse cast of nine other organizations, including the Asian American Writers’ Workshop and American Jewish World Service. In its short existence, it has grown to more than 100 members and sponsors upwards of 60 events annually on everything from Thailand’s electoral politics to Cambodian performance art.



Various NYSEAN events 2018-2019; clockwise: Profs. Meredith Weiss (SUNY Albany) and Jeremy Menchik (Boston University) discuss election politics in Malaysia and Indonesia at NYU Wagner; Profs. John Roosa (left, University of British Columbia and Margaret Scott (right) at a conference, "Mass Violence in Southeast Asia" at Yale University; Daniel Russel (former assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and senior fellow at the Asia Society) at a NYSEAN conference, "The Trump administration and Southeast Asia;" official NYSEAN logo; Prof. Geoffrey Robinson (UCLA) speaks at Yale's conference on mass violence



"Obviously the kind of people who come to our events are people who have already realized that Southeast Asia is incredibly significant," Professor McCargo said. The countries of Southeast Asia "epitomize so many of the challenges that countries in today's world are facing," he explained. "They're struggling with political polarization, with problems around electoral politics. They're torn between authoritarian and populist and Democratic tendencies. These are parts of the world with just amazingly intensive levels of social media participation."

Social sciences, particularly policy and politics, have been the focus of many of NYSEAN's events, where strong public interest and the network cofounders' personal backgrounds converge. But NYSEAN covers a wide range of interests, funding events proposed by its diverse partners from across disciplines. One well-attended political event on the Philippines under President Rodrigo Duterte, cosponsored by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, incorporated a book launch and dance performance.

Challenges still remain in attracting support for Southeast Asian studies within the US, especially within the geopolitical power centers of New York and Washington.

"The New York Southeast Asia Network is trying to foster deep understanding of the region and networks between Americans and Southeast Asians so that you have a much better base of knowledge and you don't get knee-jerk policy responses," Professor Murphy said.

"There is still some continuing work to do," Professor McCargo said of the need to bring in resources for the study of the region. But "I think that's been a view for a long time at Weatherhead—that you can't really separate East and Southeast Asia," he said. "The distinction between East and Southeast Asia is sort of a Cold War construction."

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Housed at WEAI at Columbia, NYSEAN has much to offer. but also much to gain. The resources of an institute like WEAI—with 70 years of history and a vibrant community of its own—make it an incubating ground for fresh ideas and an ideal place to replenish lost academic interaction with Southeast Asia.

"The Weatherhead has such great strengths in China, Japan, and Korea," Professor Murphy said, suggesting that this context is a crucial advantage. "If you don't understand the countries of the region and the way in which they view their own interests, separate from Sino-American competition, you're going to miss a lot."

"What's exciting about Columbia is there's so much interaction going on at all levels between people from the region, people who have some heritage from the region, people who have no connection with the region but may have connections with other parts of Asia and are seeing comparisons and parallels and similarities," Professor McCargo said. "There's so much energy on so many fronts that the capacity to do things is really really there."



Jiajia Zhou is a 2018 graduate of the Master of Arts in Regional Studies - East Asia (MARSEA) program. This month, a paper she co-authored with Jennifer So, titled “Supporting Variability in Women’s Lifestyles: A Study of Single-motherhood Transition in South Korea and Japan,” was published in the *Journal of Asian Public Policy*. She began the project during a course on global social policy at the School of Social Work with Professor Qin Gao, who helped her publish the paper.

## STUDENT PROFILE

**Jiajia Zhou**  
Former MARSEA student and  
assistant correspondent at  
The Mainichi Newspapers

Left to right: former MARSEA students Yong Wei Tan, Adena Peckler, Hailey Savage, former WEAI Student Affairs Officer Jamie Tan, Jiajia Zhou, Ziwei Wang and Yutong Liu during an outing to the Brooklyn Botanical Garden in 2018







Currently I am working as an assistant correspondent at The Mainichi Newspapers where, as my title suggests, I assist correspondents in gathering information for news stories. This includes sourcing for potential interviewees (and occasionally conducting interviews), attending press briefings, fact-checking information with relevant legislations, and finding and organizing statistics.

I chose Columbia and the Master of Arts in Regional Studies - East Asia (MARSEA) program because I was looking for a program that could offer a bridge towards pursuing a PhD. With a background in regional studies and economics, I was drawn to the MARSEA program's unique slant towards the social sciences. I am also deeply grateful for the Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship, without which I would not have been able to complete my Master's at Columbia.

Being a part of the MARSEA program was an amazing experience simply because I was at a nexus for academic information and conversations: I had access to a never-ending flow of talks, panels and lectures. MARSEA also allowed me to take classes from different departments and schools across campus. I was able to plan my own development and further my research interests. It was an intensive nine months with MARSEA but it made me realize how much I enjoyed being in such a stimulating environment.

Photos p.5; bottom, p.6: MARSEA students visit the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, by Hailey Savage  
Top, p.6: A copy of the Mainichi Shinbun from May, 2016, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/73852584@N00/26697567024>



## ON THIS MONTH IN 1960:

### INSTITUTE SPECIALIZES IN FAR EAST AFFAIRS

#### ***Institute Specializes In Far East Affairs***

##### **East Asian Institute Trains Students For Careers Connected With Orient**

By Andrew Krulwich

Far Eastern affairs have gained increasing prominence in world news; but knowledge of the area has not kept pace. The East Asian Institute—one of the five regional institutes of the Columbia University School of International Affairs—was created after the Second World War to fill this need for a better understanding of the economics, politics, and social structure of Far Eastern nations. In addition, the institute trains students for careers in journalism, government service, business, and education connected with the Orient.

Graduate students entering the institute study a two-year sequence of courses designed to provide a broad foundation on which to build a career in a specialized field. The program leads to the Certificate of the Institute. Simultaneously, the student works towards an advanced degree in a department of the University most closely related to his specialty.

Approximately one-third of the thirty-five students in the institute enter careers in government service, journalism, or business. The remaining students either continue towards their Ph.D. or enter college teaching.

The two-year sequence requires 48 points of course work from the student and a working knowledge of either Chinese or Japanese and either French or German. The European language requirement is at least partially dictated by the numerous French and German periodicals on the Far East.

Students must also take a basic course dealing with the economics, geography, history, and sociology of modern China and Japan. This course—one of the few in the institute open to undergraduates—is taught by seven faculty members drawn from other divisions of the University. With this course as a basis for further study, the candidate is able to pursue intensive courses in his field of specialization and courses in other graduate divisions of the University.

Since the institute was founded ten years ago, fifty students have received the degree of Master of International Affairs. One of the degree requirements is an essay intensively studying some aspect of the student's specialty. The shelves in the office of Prof. C. Martin Wilbur, director of the institute, are lined with many of these published essays, usually about one hundred pages long. Candidates for the Certificate of the Institute must also submit essays, though these are usually shorter.

The heavy pre-requisites for most courses limit the enrollment in the institute to serious students of East Asian affairs. While all students in the University's graduate schools are permitted to take courses in any University division, the pre-requisites discourage non-candidates in the institute.

Classes in the institute, with the exception of two research seminars, are conducted as lecture rather than discussion classes. Candidates for the certificate are required to take one of these two seminars. For students specializing in history, international relations, public law, economics, or sociology, the institute offers a combined research seminar dealing with modern China, Japan, and Korea. Students concentrating on the relations between these countries and the Soviet Union may take a seminar in this subject.

The institute also sponsors a series of six lectures by scholars working on a project concerning the Far East or by visiting dignitaries. This series has included talks on Japanese local government, on the emergence of a Japanese middle class, and on early Chinese history. Lectures by Swedish and Japanese scholars have also been scheduled in addition to one on changes in early Chinese historiography resulting from recent archaeological exploration.

February 8, 1960

Excerpts from the *Columbia Daily Spectator* archive follow:

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Full article available at:

<http://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu/>

*An archived copy of the Columbia Daily Spectator,  
dated February 8, 1960, featuring a profile of the East Asian Institute  
(now the Weatherhead East Asian Institute)*