Leadership

Professor Sabine Frühstück (Director 2016–present), Department of East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies
Professor Michael Berry (Director 2012–2016), then Department of East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies

The current EAC Director was appointed in 2016 for a three-year term. The Director is charged with running the Center, consults with the newly established Advisory Board (2017–present), and engages in extramural grant applications that promise to benefit the entire East Asian Studies community at UCSB. Faculty Affiliates include faculty members in the departments of East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies, Communication, Dramatic Arts, Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology, Economics, English, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, Global Studies, History, History of Art and Architecture, Linguistics, Music, Political Science, Psychology, and Religious Studies (see the EAC website for individuals’ names and links).

Advisory Board

Professor Jia-Ching Chen, Global Studies
Professor Jin-Sook Lee, Education
Professor Yunte Huang, English
Professor Luke Roberts, History
Professor Katherine Saltzman-Li, EALCS

East Asian Studies in the 21st Century: An Overview

Over the last ten years or so, the number of undergraduate students majoring in the Humanities at U.S. universities has dramatically decreased. Within East Asian Studies, the number of undergraduate majors across the nation has been stable with a shift from Japanese language and cultural studies to Chinese language and cultural studies. According to data published by the Modern Language Association, Japanese
language and cultural studies numbers appear to be stagnating while Korean is one of the fastest growing foreign languages.

Trends among undergraduate majors in the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies at UCSB, however, defy these national trends: (1) The number of majors in EALCS has steadily increased and is currently at 119 and, thus, the same as Spanish (2018). (2) The shift to Chinese language and cultural studies majors at the expense of other East Asian languages and cultures has not happened. (3) Japanese and Japanese Studies remain the strongest of all three EALCS majors. In fact, even Chinese undergraduates have contributed to the increase in the number of Japanese Studies majors. And (4), Korean is offered again and is indeed popular.

Over the last decade, UCSB has made important East Asian Studies faculty hires across a number of divisions and departments, including in the History of Art and Architecture, English, History, Music, Film & Media Studies, Religious Studies, Theater and Dance, and EALCS as well as Psychology, Political Science, Education, the Bren School, and Global Studies. Moreover, faculty across the university recruit graduate students from East Asia, have ongoing research agendas that involve collaborations with scholars and institutions in East Asia, and receive funding from organizations in East Asia. In many ways, this is the Asian Century at and far beyond UCSB and the academy.

**Goals**

The East Asia Center (EAC) at the University of California, Santa Barbara promotes interdisciplinary research and cultural events on East Asia. It brings together UCSB faculty, students, and the wider local public with leading scholars and other creative individuals from other institutions in order to create a critical and nurturing community for the study of East Asia. EAC strives to collaborate with a range of departments, individuals and other units in the Humanities, Social Sciences and beyond that are invested in education and public understanding of East Asia. EAC invests in relationships between UCSB and the East Asian region as well as the academy and the public.

**Events**

2012–2013

EAC was able to develop its interdepartmental and multidisciplinary efforts by co-sponsoring events organized by the departments of East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies, History, Religious Studies, History of Art and Architecture, and Environmental Studies, and by the International Shinto Foundation Endowed Chair in Shinto Studies.

6 October, Co-Sponsorship of Professor Pheng Cheah (Department of Rhetoric U.C.


15 February, Co-Sponsorship of Professor Melanie Trede (Heidelberg University, Germany), “Money, Mother, Myth: An Ancient Empress as Popular Icon of Modernity.”

16 February, Co-Sponsorship of Dr. Erica Baffelli (Otago University, New Zealand), “The Latest and Newest Media and Religions in Japan.”

21 February, Co-Sponsorship of Professor Sato Hiroo (Tohoku University, Japan), “The Birth of the Ghosts: In Search for the Wellspring of Japanese Horror Culture.”

15-18 March, Co-Sponsorship of Nathaniel Smith’s travel to the Association of Asian Studies Conference in Toronto.

Grants to Lily Wong and Kuan-yen Lui (Comparative Literature), and Seokwon Choi (History of Art and Architecture) as a travel contribution to the Association for Asian Studies Conference in Toronto to present papers.

10 April, Co-Sponsorship of Professor Jing Tsu (Yale University), “The Informant Turn, Area Studies, and Literary Governance.”

19 April, Co-Sponsorship of Professor Mark Teeuwen (Oslo University, Norway), “Premodern Secularism? A Samurai’s Views on Buddhism and the Way.”

26 April, Co-Sponsorship of Professor Der Reuy Yang, “The New Agency of Daoism in China Today.”

2013-2014

The EAC sponsored a series of events that brought a wide array of speakers to UCSB, including writers, filmmakers, musicians, politicians and scholars. Continuing the EAC’s longstanding mission of facilitating scholarly dialogue, some of the world’s leading scholars working on East Asia visited campus for a series of lectures and workshops. These events included Jennifer Robertson (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) on “Robot Caregivers and Robo-therapy in Japan: Treating the “Trauma” of Aging,” Peter Carroll (Northwestern University) and Jun Yoo (University of Hawai’i)

In addition, EAC sponsored several forums, such as a roundtable with UCSB East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies Visiting Scholars to introduce their research and discuss new academic trends in China, Taiwan, and Japan. This interdisciplinary forum featured Taiwan’s Literature specialist Hiroko Matsuzaki, (Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Taiwan Studies), Sociologist Lin Yi, (Xiamen University, Visiting Scholar, East Asia Center) and translation studies scholar Wu Yun, (Shanghai International Studies University, Visiting Scholar, EALCS). EAC also sponsored an informational session for the John Hopkins Nanjing Center.

Furthermore, by collaborating with a broad community of campus organs (including EALCS, Center for Taiwan Studies, Arts & Lectures, and the UCSB MultiCultural Center), EAC also helped bring more than half a dozen other artists, writers, filmmakers, actors, politicians and other creative figures to campus for a series of dialogues, lectures, and performances. Spearheaded by the Center for Taiwan Studies (and co-sponsored by EAC), UCSB Professor Emeritus Pai Hsien-yung, one of the most important stylists of modern Chinese fiction and a major voice in the Taiwan Modernist Literary Movement returned to campus to speak about his father, the influential Republican General Bai Chongxi. EAC also co-sponsored the “Master Artists from Japan: Living Traditions,” which featured a series of events on Noh theater, Kyoto cuisine, Shrine rebuilding, which enriched campus with a week of performances, demonstrations, and exhibits. “An Afternoon with film producer and critic Peggy Chiao: Taiwan Cinema and Beyond” featured a special campus visit by Peggy Chiao. A powerhouse figure in the Taiwan film industry, Chiao helped reshape New Taiwan Cinema in the 1980s and 1990s as a critic, programmer, festival organizer, and professor. She is also the producer of over 20 features, 5 documentaries and 3 television series. One of China’s best living writers Yan Lianke visited campus for a special dialogue on contemporary Chinese Literature at MCC where he spoke about his background, censorship, and gave an overview of his recent work. Finalist for the Man Booker Prize and Winner of the Kafka Prize, Yan is the author of such milestone novels as Lenin’s Kisses, Serve the People and Dream of Ding Village.
Before her sold-out concert at Campbell Hall, singer and songwriter Abigail Washburn participated in a roundtable “Chinese Bluegrass and Beyond: Abigail Washburn in Dialogue with Jeff Wasserstrom (UC, Irvine) and Michael Berry (Director, EAC).” They explored the intersections between politics, music, and activism in China. A critically acclaimed singer, composer and banjo player known for her collaborations with the Sparrow Quartet, the Wu Force, and her duet performances with Bela Fleck, she has performed extensively in China and collaborated with many leading Chinese musicians.

The EAC also sponsored a week-long residency with the father of Chinese queer cinema, Cui Zī’en. Known as a writer, director, actor, screenwriter, scholar, professor and activist, Cui has been one of the single most important voices in the Chinese queer rights movement for the past two decades. During his residency, Cui screened his documentary film “Queer China, Comrade China” at MCC and also took part in an extended dialogue on Chinese independent cinema with veteran screenwriter Ning Dai and UCSB students on Chinese independent cinema. Finally, EAC had the honor of hosting former Taiwan Vice-President Lu Hsiu-lien and her co-author Ashley Esarey for a dynamic dialogue about her new autobiography, My Fight for a New Taiwan: One Woman’s Journey from Prison to Power. In dialogue with Michael Berry, Lu and Esarey discussed her formative years, her instrumental role in Taiwan’s feminist movement, and her time as a political dissident including her experience as Vice-President, with her candidly talking about an assassination attempt on her life.

2014-2015

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the EAC sponsored a series of events that brought a number of scholars and cultural figures to campus. In Fall, EAC invited a group of four filmmakers from China for a mini-film festival highlighting the work of Wu Wenguang’s Memory Project. This multi-day event included screenings of documentary films by Wu Wenguang, Zhang Mengqi, Li Xinmin, and Zou Xueping, panel discussions, post-screening Q & A sessions, and even a performance art piece. The Memory Project uses oral history, documentary film, dance and performance art to document the Great Famine in China of 1958-1962 and open up new avenues for understanding modern Chinese history. During Winter, EAC hosted British documentary film director Matthew Thorne, who screened his documentary film Lessons in Dissent, about student protests in Hong Kong and engaged in an extended dialogue about the film and the 2014 Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong. Professor Hu Ying from UC Irvine delivered a lecture on “Burying Nie Zheng’s Bones: The Making of Martyrs in 1911 China.” During Spring, award-winning filmmaker and Nanjing University Professor Yishu Yang presented her film One Summer and also gave a special lecture on “The Cultural Revolution in Film.”

In addition to these core events, EAC also co-sponsored numerous other events, including the lectures by Haicheng Wang (University of Washington) on “Writing and the Ancient State,” Alfreda Murck (Independent Scholar) on “Sanctification of Mangoes: Symbol Creation in the Cult of Mao Zedong,” Anne Allison (Duke
University) on “Greeting the Dead: Managing Solitary Existence in Japan,” Amy Stanley (Northwestern University) on “Maidservants’ Tales: Domestic and Comparative Histories of Women in Early Modern Japan,” and Katarzyna Cwierka (Leiden University) on “The Afterlife of Tokyo’s Landfills.”

EAC also co-sponsored the interdisciplinary conference “War and Remembrance: Cultural Imprints of Japan’s Samurai Age” and the international and interdisciplinary conference “Child’s Play: Multi- Sensory Histories of Children and Childhood in Japan and Beyond.” In addition to lecture and conference sponsorship, EAC also hosted an information session for undergraduates interested in the Hopkins-Nanjing Center and awarded Graduate Student Travel Grants in the amount of $300 each to a total of eight UCSB graduate students engaged in research on East Asia. Through scholarly lectures, dialogues with artists and filmmakers, and graduate student funding, the EAC has continued to bring to life the cultural richness of East Asia for the larger UCSB community.

2015-2016

The EAC collaborated with Arts & Lectures, the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, the Carsey- Wolfe Center, and the Multicultural Center to organize or co-sponsor a wide array of forums, lectures, conferences, public dialogues, and film screenings. Some of the highlights included co-sponsoring EALCS’s inaugural graduate student conference, “Networks & Negotiations: A Graduate Student Conference on Premodern Japan.” Co-organized by doctoral students Emily B. Simpson and Travis Seifman, the conference brought graduate students together with veteran scholars, such as keynote speaker Professor Kären Wigen (Stanford), for two days of vibrant discussions. World-renowned dancer/choreographer and founder of the Cloud Gate Theater, Lin Hwai-min participated in a rare public dialogue at the MCC Theater before the Santa Barbara premiere of “Rice” at the Granada Theater. Lin talked about his influences, the history of Cloud Gate Theater, and the creative process.

In May, EAC hosted a rare 35mm screening of “Beautiful Duckling,” a classic film from the golden era of Taiwan cinema. The event featured the film’s original screenwriter Chang Yung-hsiang, a legendary figure in Taiwan film history who has written screenplays for over 100 films. Winner of the awards for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Cinematography at the 1965 Golden Horse Awards, Beautiful Duckling is one of the true classics of Taiwanese cinema. The screening was preceded with “50 Years of Taiwan Cinema: A Panel Discussion,” Featuring Dominic Cheung (USC), Austin Hsu (Taipei Film Archive), Edwin Chen (Taipei Film Archive), and Michael Berry (UCSB).

The EAC also hosted the event “In the Writer’s Studio: A Conversation with Wang Anyi,” which featured an in-depth dialogue with one of China’s greatest living writers, Wang Anyi. Wang Anyi began her career as a writer in 1978. Her books in English include Lapse of Time, Love in a Small Town, Love on a Barren Mountain, Brocade Valley, and the novel Baotown, which was a finalist for the Los Angeles
Times Book of the Year award. She has been awarded every top literary award in China, such as the Maodun Prize and the Dream of the Red Chamber Award. She was also a finalist for the Man-Booker Prize. "Between the Lines: A Workshop on Chinese-English Literary Translation" featured international translation studies scholars such as Zhang Jie (Zhongshan University), Yang Xiaohua (Xi'an International Studies University), Wang Xiaoyuan (Shanghai University), and Zheng Ye (Shanghai International Studies University), along with UCSB translators and scholars Bozhou Men, Yunte Huang, K.C. Tu, and Michael Berry. The events combined a series of dialogues on literary translation with more focused presentations.

2016-2017

In 2016/17, the EAC organized or co-sponsored a total of thirteen talks and conferences, most of which were engaging trans-nationality and trans-disciplinarity, two current major currents in the Humanities and Social Sciences, including Asian Studies.

12 November, Co-sponsorship of Professor Timon Screech, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

“**The Shogun’ Silver Telescope: God, Art & Money in the First English Voyages to Japan, 1611-23.**”

Abstract: The English East India Company was founded in 1600 as a spice-importing organization. In 1611, it sent a ship to Japan, which arrived in 1613. This talk will investigate the purpose of that voyage, since at that time Japan produced no spices. Portuguese missionaries and Dutch traders were active in Japan, and the English sought ways to present themselves to the Japanese in order to foster a competitive advantage. These issues will be analyzed via the object presented to Tokugawa Ieyasu (the founding shogun of the Edo period [1600-1867]) in the name of King James I: a silver telescope.

Sponsored by the departments of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, History, History of Art and Architecture, Economics, and Global Studies as well as the East Asia Center, and the IHC’s Reinventing Japan Research Focus Group.

7 June, Professor David Ambaras, Department of History, North Carolina State University

“**Embodying the Borderland: Nakamura Sueko as Runaway Woman and Pirate Queen.**”

David R. Ambaras is a scholar of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Japanese history. His first book, *Bad Youth: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Japan* (University of California, 2005), examined the development of the modern Japanese state through the policing of urban youth. His second book project, from which this talk is drawn, examines the transgressive mobilities of prostitutes, peddlers, and other marginalized individuals who circulated between China and Japan under the Japanese Empire. Ambaras is currently Associate
Professor of History at North Carolina State University and a founding member of the Triangle Center for Japanese Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill.

11 January, Co-sponsorship of Professor Rui Kohiyama, Tokyo Women’s Christian University “American Women Missionaries, Christian Homes and Romantic Love in Meiji Japan.”
American women missionaries are well known for their educational and reformatory intervention in various mission fields in Asia. Although their initiatives in criticizing child marriage and widowhood in India and foot-binding in China are famous, those in Japan are vague: all we have been told is that they introduced “modern education for women” in Japan. This presentation will clarify the relationship between “modern education for women” and the missionary aim of creating Christian homes, and point out the unexpected outcome of the missionary education: nurturing “romantic love” in mission schools.

13 February, Co-sponsorship of Professor Michael Como, Columbia University “Angry Spirits and Urban Soundscapes in Ancient Japan.”
From the late seventh to the late eighth centuries, Japanese rulers built no fewer than six capitals, with the largest housing as many as 70,000 to 100,000 residents. In this paper, I will suggest that the buildings, roads and tools of these capitals functioned not simply as inert matter, but also as active forces that reshaped the ritual means by which urban residents mediated their relationship with their physical environment and with the superhuman world. Because urbanization disrupted longstanding geographic connections between shrines, tombs and the urban residents that had left them behind, it helped produce a number of new ritual strategies related to divination and the propitiation of angry spirits. Although the visual dimensions of the new urban landscape have been discussed by scholars of Japanese literature and art history, in this talk my chief concern will be with the aural dimensions associated with the construction of the Nara and Heian capitals. How did the new urban soundscapes affect the ritual strategies and interpretative frameworks of rulers ensconced in their Nara and Heian palaces? How, and where, did the court and its officials listen for clues concerning both the mundane and superhuman worlds? As I explore these questions, I shall argue that a series of aural anomalies recorded in the court histories helps illustrate remarkable shifts in the ritual means by which the court engaged this newly-built environment and its manifold structures that went bump in the night.

17 February, Collaboration with Professor David Novak, Director of the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Music at UCSB TransAsian Experimental Music Symposium with Adel Jing Wang, James Fei, and Kato Hideki.

1 March, Panel featuring Yumiko Glover, MFA, Department of Art, UCSB Love, Peace, Dreams, and Bombs Symposium.
6 April, Professor Eleana Kim, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Irvine
“Pursuing Peace and Life in the Korean Demilitarized Zone.”
With the discovery of rare and endangered species in areas around the Korean Demilitarized Zone, and inspired by the paradoxical flourishing of nonhuman nature in the context of unending war, a wide network of scientists, bureaucrats, journalists, natural scientists, citizen ecologists, and others have become captured by a utopian vision in which nature, peace, and life constitute a tightly-wound bundle of naturalized associations. Especially since the late 1990s, in the context of increasingly dire planetary futures presented by global climate change and mass extinction, as well as with the deteriorating prospects of national reunification or reconciliation between the two Koreas, the DMZ’s nature has offered the conceptual ground for mainstream and marginal imaginaries of peace in South Korea and beyond. While it would be easy to dismiss these hopeful discourses as naive and romanticizing, this paper seeks to take them seriously as empirically-grounded logics in which the existence of biodiversity of the DMZ offers potentially alternatives to the present political impasse. How is the DMZ’s nature temporally operationalized as transhistorical and universal, connecting a pre-division, yet national, space to a “context yet to come” of a post-division Korea? What imaginative possibilities does it offer beyond state-centric and nationalist frameworks for unification?

3 May, Professor Seth Jacobowitz, Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, Yale University
Transoceanic passage brought nearly 200,000 immigrants from Japan to Brazil from 1908 until the onset of World War II in 1941. This mass migration was welcomed, and frequently subsidized, by federal and state governments in Brazil to supply much-needed labor for the coffee boom in the interior of São Paulo. For the Japanese government, meanwhile, it was seen as a means of reducing its “surplus population” (kajō jinkō) while increasing the Japanese people’s presence overseas. The conventional portrayal of the Japanese immigrant experience in Brazil is one in which families left behind poverty in their homeland for a “new paradise” (shin tenchi) of coffee plantations and abundant tropical farmland. Yet in contrast to earlier waves of the Japanese diaspora to Hawaii and the West Coast, there were well-defined policies to keep immigrants to Brazil linguistically, culturally, and nationally within the fold (or folk) of the Empire. Even at the height of Japanese imperialism when more proximate destinations existed in East Asia, Brazil continued to draw on average tens of thousands of immigrants per year. My presentation analyzes two stories by Sugi Takeo, a frequent prewar contributor to the Burajiru Jihō, that represent the settlers forced to wrestle with the meaning of being Japanese in the remote interior of Brazil. In “Café-en o uru” (Selling the coffee plantation, 1933) a Japanese family is forced to sell their land due to the predations of soldiers from the Constitutionalist Revolution of 1932 (also known as the Brazilian Civil War). Sugi’s “Tera Roshiya” (Terra rossa, 1937), meanwhile, derives its title from the red clay soil that made São Paulo State the heart of the
global coffee trade. Echoing the previous work, it is ironically the moonshine sellers who see steady profits from every race and type of immigrant laborer, while the Japanese newcomers who naively dream of riches by bringing coffee to the market reap only a bitter brew of poverty for their efforts.

31 May, Professor Takashi Fujitani, Department of History, University of Toronto “Two Unforgivens: Clint Eastwood, Lee Sang-II, and Traveling Westerns.”
In this presentation, Prof. Fujitani reads Clint Eastwood’s critically acclaimed Unforgiven (1992) against Lee Sang-il’s “remake” (Yurusarezaru mono, 2013) of the original. While the few Anglophone critics who have reviewed Lee’s version have generally treated it as a competent but fairly unremarkable copy of the original, Fujitani argues that the film, set in Hokkaidō, is in many ways a far more radical and challenging exploration of key themes taken up by Eastwood. These include violence, law, the outlaw, sovereign power, the right to kill, and historical accountability. At the same time, Lee takes up several issues that Eastwood simply leaves as background to his story -- in particular race, indigeneity, and settler colonialism. While the Western has been a staple genre in Eastwood’s long career leading up to Unforgiven, it is the first and, so far, only Western made by the much younger Lee. Lee’s first film, Chong (1998, 2001), is in part based upon his own life growing up as an ethnic Korean in Japan. His more well-known films include Hula Girl (2006), The Villain (Akunin, 2010, and Rage (Ikari, 2016).

1 June, Co-sponsorship of Professor Lisa Yoneyama, Department of Asian American Studies, University of Toronto “Remnants of American Justice: Race and Sexuality of Japan’s Revisionism.”
The U.S.-led post-conflict transitional justice in the Asia-Pacific War’s aftermath has not only rendered certain violences illegible and unredressable. It also left many colonial legacies intact. In Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes I argued that, much more than products of the East Asian state policies capitalizing on the anti-Japanese sentiments or the ethnonational politics of recognition in North America, the transnational efforts especially intensifying since the 1990s to bring justice to the victims of Japanese imperial violence must be seen as a trace of failed justice—in particular, the failure of decolonization—under the Cold War. This presentation considers the Japanese conservative revisionism in the transpacific “Comfort Women” redress culture. Once critiqued conjunctively across the seemingly discrepant categories and geographies, Japan’s revisionism and the post-1990s redress culture of which it is a part can reveal the disavowed history of violence and entanglement, while pointing to the limits of pursuing justice within the bounds of Cold War formations and their structuring legacies.

25-26 February, Co-sponsorship of Professor Fabio Rambelli’s conference Invisible Empire: Spirits and Animism in Contemporary Japan.
http://www.eastasian.ucsb.edu/shugendo/
A striking aspect of contemporary Japanese culture is the pervasive nature of discussions and representations of “spirits” (tama or tamashii), generally rooted in
vaguely articulated discourses on "animism" (animizumu) that often exist separately from explicit religious forms. In other words, this pervasive presence of animistic and spirit-related themes in Japanese contemporary mass culture (also and especially outside of strictly religious discourses) is often taken for granted as an obvious feature of Japanese culture and spirituality, but very little is articulated about the nature of spirits and the characteristics of animism that gives them shape. This conference will attempt to map the field of Japanese animism by addressing various instances in which it is evoked---in popular religion, mass culture (films, literature), visual arts and architecture, and even science and technology. The papers will both provide analyses of specific cases of "animistic attitudes" in which the presence of "spirits" and spiritual forces is alleged and attempts to tracing cultural genealogies of those attitudes and producing conceptual maps of current animistic ideas about spirits.

19-20 June, Co-sponsorship of Professor Fabio Rambelli’s conference "Repositioning Shugendō: New Research Directions on Japanese Mountain Religions."

9-10 June, Co-sponsorship of Professor Kate McDonald’s conference “Deep-Mapping the Spaces of Japanese History.”

The Spaces of Japanese History conference brings together scholars of the spatial history of early modern to postwar Japan. Using the concept of “deep-mapping,” the conference asks participants to introduce and discuss a brief primary source that they consider particularly significant for understanding the multi-scalar structures, networks, and flows, and the differentiated engagements of mobile and immobile bodies with those structures, that have marked the evolution of “modern Japan.” We hope through these presentations to begin the project of creating a shared theoretical and historical vocabulary for understanding how the key spatial categories of modern Japan and its empire have been constructed and sustained, while at the same time encouraging an approach to the study of space as one of conversation and encounter, through which we can map multilayered and embodied historical experiences without reifying any one spatial narrative or perspective.

Visiting Fellow 2016–2017

This past year, the EAC hosted Visiting Fellow Silke Werth, PhD. Dr. Werth is mainly interested in the analysis of the dynamic changes of modern and contemporary Japanese culture and society in a global context, especially around the themes of emerging adulthood, migration, the social construction of place, space, gender and race, civil society and social sustainability. Engaged in interdisciplinary, transnational multi-method research, Dr. Werth is currently examining how a range of Japanese individuals address social, political and economic frictions in an effort to redirect their own life courses while also achieving social sustainability across national borders. Dr. Werth earned her PhD in East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies, the University of California at Santa Barbara (2016). In her dissertation on
“Japan’s Generation Z on the Move: Moratorium, Maturity and Home-making” she analyzes how migration and cultural exchange impact notions of self, society, and decision making of emerging adults in search of a place to call home.

Prepared by Sabine Frühstück, Director (June 2017)