East Asian Languages & East Asian Studies

East Asian Languages

The Bi-College programs in Chinese and Japanese offer full undergraduate curricula in Mandarin Chinese and modern Japanese. Both programs are part of the East Asian Studies Department. By studying in our program, students can achieve a high level of usable proficiency that will be further heightened by studying abroad, which we strongly encourage. When you are advising new students about the language requirement, please urge them to consider these languages. Although the workload in elementary Chinese and Japanese is rated by students as moderate to heavy, the languages themselves are not as “difficult” as they are often reputed to be, and they have the extra benefit of providing insights into “non-Western” societies and cultures.

The Chinese Program offers four years of instruction in Mandarin Chinese. First-Year Chinese (CNSE 001-002) has two master sections and three drill sections. This year the master sections are taught at Haverford and all drill sections meet at Bryn Mawr. So please encourage your advisees to consider taking Chinese now that they can do so comfortably at their home school. Students should register in one of the master sections and choose one of the drill sections (they do not need to register separately for the drill section and they cannot register just for a drill section). First-year Chinese is intensive and students receive a total of 3 credits for the year. Second-Year Chinese (CNSE 003-004) also offers two master sections (at Bryn Mawr) and two drill sections (at Haverford). If you have any questions, please contact Shizhe Huang, director of the Chinese Language Program (shuang@haverford.edu). All students who can speak Chinese are invited to our weekly Chinese Table at the Dining Center.

The Japanese Program offers four years of instruction in modern Japanese. All classes are held at Haverford. First-Year Japanese (JNSE 001-002) has two master sections and two drill sections. Students should register in one of the master sections and choose one of the drill sections (they do not need to register separately for the drill section and they cannot register just for a drill section). It is an intensive course and students receive a total of 3 credits for the year. Second-Year Japanese (JNSE 003-004) also offers two master sections and two drill sections. Students from the second-year and beyond take part in language partnerships with the local community of Japanese residents with whom they meet weekly. There is an active Japan Club run by students. If you have any questions, please contact Tetsuya Sato (tsato@haverford.edu), director of the Japanese Language Program.

First-Year language courses, CNSE 001-002 and JNSE 001-002, are both year-long courses, which means that both semesters must be completed in order to obtain credits.

Students considering a major in East Asian Studies should be aware that the minimum language requirement is college Third-Year level (or equivalent). Potential majors who have native or near-native fluency in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese or Korean are expected to begin the study of another East Asian language. East Asian Studies majors may, in rare cases, specialize in Korean language and culture, but such students are urged to consult with Paul Smith, the Haverford Co-chair of the department as soon as possible.

Placement Tests

Students who have studied Chinese or Japanese at the high school level or have acquired the language through other means (at home, residence abroad, etc.), should take the placement tests. Placement tests for first-time students at all levels are conducted during the orientation week before
the fall semester begins. (Please check the separate entries in this Handbook for the Chinese Program and Japanese Program for specific information pertaining to their placement tests.) Contact Prof. Huang or Prof. Sato with questions.

The Major East Asian Studies and Minors in Chinese, Japanese, or EAS

Students may complete a major in East Asian Studies, a minor in Chinese language or Japanese language, or a (non-language) minor in East Asian Studies.

The Bi-College Department of East Asian Studies links rigorous language training to the study of East Asian culture and society. In addition to our intensive programs in Chinese and Japanese languages, the departmental faculty offers courses in East Asian philosophy, linguistics, literature, religion, social and intellectual history. The East Asian Studies program also incorporates courses by affiliated Bi-College faculty on East Asian anthropology, cities, economics, philosophy, and sociology, as well as additional courses on East Asian culture and society by faculty at Swarthmore.

The intellectual orientation of the East Asian Studies Department is primarily historical and text-based; that is, we focus on East Asia’s rich cultural traditions as a way to understand its present, through the study of primary sources (in translation and in the vernacular) and scholarly books and articles. All students wishing to specialize in this humanistic approach to the study of China, Japan, and (with special approval) Korea are encouraged to consider the East Asian Studies major. But we also work closely with affiliated faculty in the Bi-Co and Tri-Co community who approach East Asia from the perspective of such social science disciplines as Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, and the Growth and Structure of Cities, as well as with faculty in History, Music, Religion, and Philosophy. EAS majors are encouraged to take advantage of these programs to supplement their EAS coursework. Please consult the course guide, online or in print, for details on this year’s offerings.

East Asian Major Requirements

1. Completion of at least the third-year level of (Mandarin) Chinese or Japanese (i.e. 101-102). Students who entered college with native fluency in one East Asian language (including Korean) must complete this requirement with another East Asian language.

2. EAST 200B (Methods and Approaches to East Asian Studies), which highlights the emergence of East Asia as a coherent cultural region and introduces students to basic bibliographic skills and research approaches.

3. Five additional courses in East Asian cultures, as follows: one 100-level Introduction (from among EAST 120, 129, 131, or 132); two 200-level courses; and two 300-level seminars.

4. A senior seminar (EAST 398, 399, culminating in the completion of a senior thesis early in the spring semester.)

East Asian Studies Minor Requirements – Three Tracks

The Department of East Asian Studies offers minors in both Chinese and Japanese. The requirement is six courses in either language. This minor is currently administered at Bryn Mawr. The department also offers a minor in East Asian Studies, requiring any six courses in EAS exclusive of languages but including cross-listed courses taught in other departments. Of the six courses taken in fulfillment of the EAS non-language minor, at least two must be at the 200 level and at least one must be at the 300 level.

Language Proficiency and Advancing in the Major or Minor

Placement tests for first-time students at all levels are conducted in the week before classes start in the fall semester. To qualify for third-year language courses students need to finish Second-year courses with a
score of 3.0 or above in all four areas of training: Listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the event that students do not meet the minimum grade at the conclusion of Second-year language study, they must consult with the director of the respective language program and work out a summer study plan that may include taking summer courses or studying on their own under supervision. They must take a placement test before starting Third-year language study in the fall. (Similarly, students who do not finish Third-year with a score of less than 3.0 in any of the four areas must also take a placement exam before entering Fourth-year.) For the minors in language, students must earn a 3.0 or above every semester.

Study Abroad

The East Asian Studies Department strongly recommends study abroad to maximize language proficiency and cultural familiarity. Formal approval is required by the study abroad advisor prior to the student's travel. Without this approval, credit for courses taken abroad will not be accepted by the East Asian Studies department. Also, since procedures for study abroad are different for Bryn Mawr and Haverford, students should contact the relevant deans at their own colleges. Students majoring in EAS are discouraged from studying abroad during the spring of their junior year, since the Methods and Approaches Seminar EAST200, meets then and it is best to take it as a junior. Minors and other students may go abroad fall or spring semester or for the whole year.

If studying abroad is not practical, students may consider attending certain intensive summer schools approved by the East Asian studies department. These plans must be worked out in concert with the program's study abroad advisor and the student's dean.

Typical course selection for first-year students

Students contemplating extended work in East Asian languages or culture should begin their Chinese or Japanese language study as soon as possible, preferably in their first year. (Please see the detailed information on the Placement Test for both languages.) Potential EAS majors should be reminded that they must take the Methods and Approaches Seminar (EAS 200), ideally in the spring semester of their junior year. Among non-language courses, we usually recommend that students begin with one of the 100-level courses in East Asian Studies offered at Haverford and Bryn Mawr as a gateway towards the major. In East Asian Studies, first-year students may take most 200 level courses as well, please contact the instructor teaching the class.

For more information, or answers to specific questions, please contact Prof. Paul Smith (psmith@haverford.edu), Co-chair of East Asian Studies.