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Asian Studies News: A Newsletter of the Asian Studies Program of Saint Joseph's University, Spring 2014

Saint Joseph's University

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25 Years After Tiananmen

A Commemoration

Twenty-five years ago, students and workers across China took to the streets to demonstrate against government corruption and restriction, and in favor of democracy and free expression. The center of these protests, Tiananmen Square in Beijing, was the focus of the world's attention for some two months in 1989. The peaceful protests involving millions of people across China lasted until June 4, 1989, when authorities began the brutal crackdown and suppression that led to the clearing of the square. Thousands of people were killed in Beijing and other cities.

On April 23 and 24 the SJU Asian Studies Program, with support from the History and International Relations program, the Dean's Office, and the National Committee on US-China Relations, brought artists and scholars together to consider the meaning and legacy of the Tiananmen Movement, a quarter-century later. Several hundred people from St Joseph's and the Philadelphia region attended all or parts of the two-day program, which was principally organized by Dr James Carter, a member of SJU's Asian Studies faculty.

Of the numerous programs commemorating Tiananmen Square's 25th anniversary, Saint Joseph's program was among the very best, and gave Asian Studies faculty and students a unique chance to meet with internationally renowned scholars and artists, including people who were directly involved in the protests.

The program began with a talk by Louisa Lim, NPR's Beijing correspondent, who spoke about her new book, *People's Republic of Amnesia*. Lim interviewed dozens of participants in

[Tiananmen](#), continued on page 2

Inside this issue

- 25 Years after Tiananmen (con't)** p. 2
- Chinese Language Competition goes Regional** p. 4
- Saint Joseph's hosts Asian Studies Undergraduate Conference** p. 5
- Asian Game Night returns** p. 6
- Essay Competition Winners Announced** p. 6
- Students receive Asian Studies scholarships** p. 6



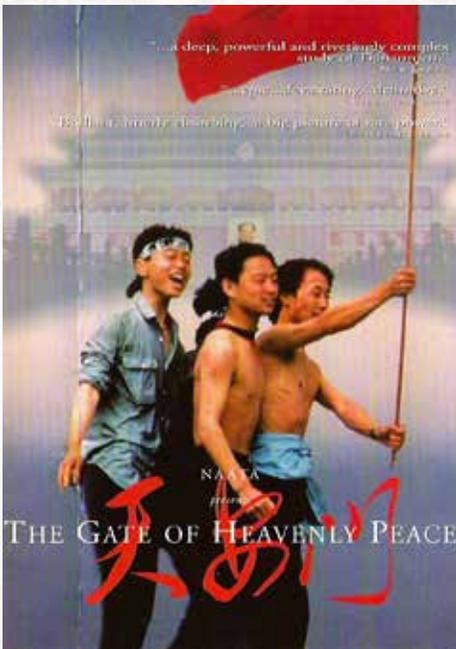
James Carter and James Nealis with NPR's Louisa Lim and Maura Cunningham (from right)

25 Years After Tiananmen

the protests, from student activists to soldiers charged with dispersing the students, and wrote about how their lives were changed by what happened that spring. Her book also detailed government brutality outside of Beijing, such as the murder of protesters in the city of Chengdu.

Following Lim's talk was a screening of the award-winning documentary *Gate of Heavenly Peace* by its co-director, Carma Hinton. Nearly 200 people, from St Joe's and beyond, came to see this film and hear a question and answer session with the Director as well as Prof Jeffrey Wasserstrom, of the University of California—Irvine, who consulted on the film, and Dr Guoguang Wu, who was a speechwriter and journalist in China in the 1980s and was featured in the film.

On Day 2 of the symposium, Father Gillespie welcomed the audience with recollections of his own role in a Tiananmen Square commemoration, 20 years ago—on the 5th anniversary—at Boston College. He was followed by



Carter flanked by Carma Hinton and Jeffrey Wasserstrom

author Rowena He, who took part in the protests in the southern city of Guangzhou, and has worked with Tiananmen survivors in the years since. She has published her experiences in a new book, *Tiananmen Exiles*.

A midday roundtable featured all the participants: joining Hinton, Wasserstrom, He, Wu, and Carter, were Maura Cunningham (a SJU Asian Studies alumna, now a PhD candidate at UC-Irvine) and Guobin Yang (Penn).

In the afternoon, SJU Communications professor J. Michael Lyons led a panel on digital dissent in China since 1989, featuring Cunningham, Yang, and Wu. Among the topics were the extent to which the Chinese government can control the internet, and also the role of social media in social protest, with panelists suggesting that while media like twitter (or its Chinese equivalent, weibo) contribute to free expression and grassroots organization,

they can also encourage government monitoring and provide a “safety valve” that allows dissent to be vented before it reaches the level of public protest.

The last session of the program was designed to help secondary school



Father Gillespie



Maura Cunningham with Guoguang Wu and Guobin Yang.

teachers teach the events of 1989 in their classrooms. Jeff Wasserstrom commented on primary sources, including newspaper editorials, song lyrics, and protest manifestoes from 1989, helping to put them in context so that they could fit into high school classrooms. Rowena He also shared her experience teaching a seminar on Tiananmen at Harvard, and finally Carma Hinton showed the audience some raw film footage to help explain the process by

which it was edited and selected to eventually become a finished film.

The Tiananmen at 25 symposium brought a great deal of national and international attention to Saint Joseph's University, and is just the latest example of how the Nealis gift has helped transform the study of China, and Asia, giving students rare opportunities to engage with important issues.



Further Reading

Craig Calhoun, *Neither Gods Nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China* (University of California Press, 1995).

James Carter and Cynthia Paces, *1989: End of the Twentieth Century* (Norton, 2009).

Rowena He, *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China* (Palgrave, 2014)

Louisa Lim, *The People's Republic of Amnesia* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Binyan Liu, *Tell the World: What Happened in China and Why* (Pantheon, 1989).

Shen Tong, *Almost a Revolution* (Houghton Mifflin, 1990).

Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Elizabeth Perry, *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*. Second Edition (Westview, 1994).

Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford University Press, 1991).

Guoguang Wu and Helen Landsdowne, *Zhao Ziyang and China's Political Future* (Routledge, 2012).

Guobin Yang, *The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online* (Columbia University Press, 2011).



Chinese Language Competition Goes Regional

For the past several years Dr. Juan Julie Yu has organized a Chinese Language Competition for her students. Students perform skits, tell stories, enact dialogues, all in Chinese, all before a panel of judges. It is a lot of fun and also encourages students in their study of Chinese. This year there was something new. Dr. Yu envisioned expanding the competition beyond Saint Joseph's, and with the help of one of her students, Anthony Parascondola, a junior International Business and Finance major minoring in Chinese, reached out to other area universities. The result was the first "Dragon Cup Competition" which took place on March 29 in the Mandeville Teletorium, with students from the University of Pennsylvania and Rutgers University joining Saint Joseph's students. In helping organize the event, Mr. Parascondola sought out the help of a number of Chinese students at Saint Joseph's, who assisted with such tasks as budgeting, sponsorship, public relations, catering, and recruiting judges. However, to make the experience more challenging for himself, Mr. Parascondola insisted on working with the Chinese students in Chinese, which

proved to be a valuable experience in its own right: "Sitting down and working in a cross-cultural setting is the epitome of what I intend to do when I graduate and secure a career where I can utilize my language skills. In the end, there is no doubt that I gained an invaluable experience."

Paul Klingsberg of the Department of Mathematics at Saint Joseph's, and a fluent speaker of Mandarin, has served as a judge for the Chinese language competitions since their inception. He noted that this year, in addition to the competition itself, there were also audience-participation games. "My favorite was a charades-like game. Two people—one a native speaker and the other a student—would come to the front of the room. The student (and the audience) would be shown a basic Chinese word which the native speaker could not see. The object was for the student, using only Chinese, to get the native speaker to utter the word."

Klingsberg was particularly impressed by this year's winner of first prize in the "intermediate" category: "The winner of this year's contest, a student from Penn, was mind-bogglingly good. Her



Ariel Koren performs Chinese rap

Chinese was better than mine; I wonder if her Chinese isn't better than my English! The *pièce de résistance* of her performance was a 'Chinese rap.' I had difficulty following her—not surprising, since I also have trouble following raps in English."



Anthony Parascondola



Judges Jerry Chen, Feng Shen, and Jing Lin

Saint Joseph's Hosts Undergraduate Conference

Emily Reineberg wins top prize

This Spring Saint Joseph's University hosted the annual Undergraduate Conference of the Greater Philadelphia Asian Studies Consortium. The event, which was held in the Haub Executive Center on March 22, brought together undergraduate students from regional universities to present their research on a wide range of topics to an audience of both students and faculty. In addition to reading their papers on the day of the conference students have the option of submitting their papers in advance to a panel of judges who select a limited number of papers to be recognized with monetary awards.

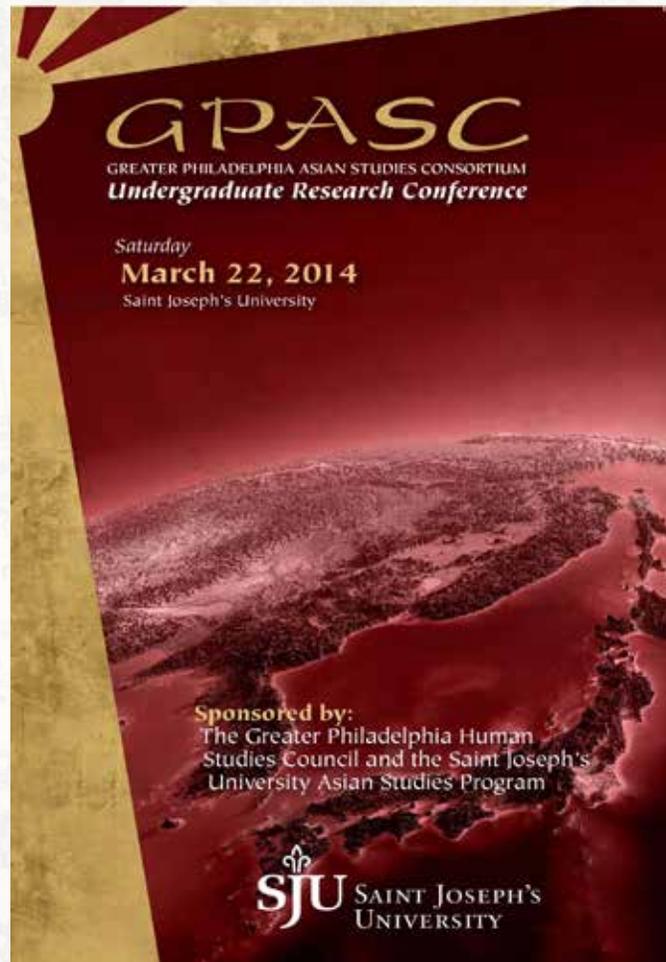


Emily Reineberg

For most of the students the conference is their first opportunity to present their work to a circle wider than their own teachers and classmates. Emily Reineberg, Saint Joseph's class of '14, who won the top prize for her paper on the 2005 anti-Japan protests in China, reflected on her experience: "I enjoyed every part of the Undergraduate Conference, but I was most surprised by the level of scholarship displayed by every single undergraduate participant. The participants' topics of study were broad and fascinating, their research was very

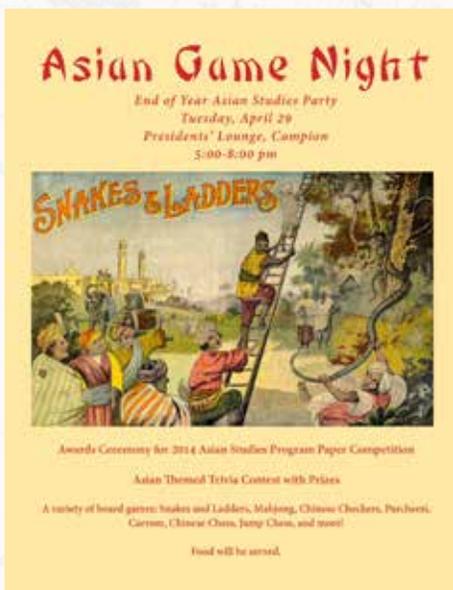
well-done, and it was obvious that we all enjoyed talking about our research topics and about our interest in Asia in general. It was so nice to be surrounded by people with similar interests, and to get to meet so many professors and scholars who shared those interests." Also receiving awards were Saint Joseph's students Mercedes Yanora '14 for her paper on "Temple and Mosque Desecration in India: Ammunition for Political Opportunists," Salvatore Corasaniti '14 for his paper "Ethnic Division and Civil Inclusion in the 'Union': Effects of Myanmar's Transition on the Karen, Kachin, and Rohingya Minority Ethnicities," and Villanova student Caitlin Flessate for her

paper "Emerging into Daylight: Changing Concepts of Korean Womanhood from the 1880s to 1930s." In all the seventeen student papers were presented, divided into separate panels on China, Japan, India, a panel combining papers on Korea, Taiwan the Philippines and Myanmar, and a panel devoted to Buddhist studies. There was also a Round Table discussion of Study Abroad, moderated by Dr. Charles Desnoyers of LaSalle University. A highlight of the program was the keynote address was given by Dr. Deven Patel of the University of Pennsylvania, entitled "Is Asia the most exciting place on earth to study?" Dr. Patel's answer: yes, definitely!



Asian Game Night Returns

The second annual Asian Game Night was held in the Presidents' Lounge on April 29. Now in its second year this event has proved a popular way for students to relax a bit before the onslaught of final exams. Not that an academic component was entirely absent. In addition to a variety of popular board games and a buffet Chinese dinner the evening included an Asia-themed trivia contest hosted by Dr. Amber Abbas of the Department of History. Questions were submitted by Asian Studies faculty, based on courses they taught during the 2013-2014 academic year. One that stumped everyone: Who was the first President of the United States to visit China? (see below for the answer) The winners of this year's contest were Mercedes Yanora and Jayson Madara, who received Starbucks gift cards. Asian Game Night, being the last Asian Studies event of the academic year, is also the occasion for recognizing the winners of this year's Asian Studies Essay Competition (see story this page). (Answer to trivia question: Ulysses S. Grant, in 1879, after leaving office. Richard Nixon was the first *sitting* President to visit China.)



Essay Competition Winners Announced

The Asian Studies Program held its the second annual Asian Studies Student Essay Competition this year. The competition was open to all Saint Joseph's undergraduate students in the Day and PLS programs, and submissions were welcomed from all fields of the social sciences and the humanities with relevance to Asia. The organizers this year, as last, were Dr. Kazuya Fukuoka, Associate Professor of Political Science and Dr. Divya Balasubramaniam, Assistant Professor of Economics, and the papers were judged by the Asian Studies faculty as a whole. Students submitted papers across a wide range of topics, often the result of senior

seminar research projects in the areas of their majors. The annual competition has become an occasion to both encourage and showcase student research on Asia. This year the winner of a first prize of \$250 was awarded to Emily Reineberg for her paper entitled "Harbinger of a New Era in Chinese Nationalism?: A Study on China's 2005 Anti-Japan Protests." A second prize of \$150 was given to Rachel Sellers for her paper on "Handprints of Horror, Heedlessness, and Hope: Four Factors Explain Vietnam's Mystifying Increase in Child Abuse."



Essay award winners Emily Reineberg (front left) and Rachel Sellers with faculty

Two Students receive Asian Studies Scholarships for Study in China

The Asian Studies Program awarded two scholarships this year to support study in Asia. Erin Caffrey '14 and Aria Chambers '16 both received \$1000 scholarships to support their participation the Saint Joseph's

University's Summer China Program. The scholarship program is open to all Saint Joseph's students who participate in university-approved programs of study in Asia.



Asian Studies Program

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