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JAPAN SEMINAR LAUNCHES THE FACULTY CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT ON ASIA FOR THE 21ST CENTURY INITIATIVE

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A key issue for American colleges and universities today is preparing students for life in the 21st century. One response has been a concerted effort to internationalize the curriculum. A significant contribution towards this goal began this summer with the ASIANetwork's Japan Seminar. Funded by the Ford Foundation and administered by ASIANetwork, the three-week seminar was designed to provide a means for non-Asian specialists to expand or create new courses on Japan. The following report may be especially helpful for those considering applying for one of the remaining seminars on China, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.

On a warm and slightly humid summer evening at Earlham College, Richmond, IN, ten college professors from around the country gathered to begin an intensive three-week seminar on Japan. Representing a variety of disciplines in the liberal arts, the participants were bound by two factors: none were Japan specialists, and all had agreed to expand or create courses that focus on Japan.

Directed by Steve Nussbaum, Anthropology, Japan Study, Earlham College, the seminar met six days a week, July 1-19, 1996. Formal sessions, commencing at 9 a.m., included lectures on topics from art to politics, with time allotted for questions and group discussions. Evenings were spent working on assigned readings, researching background materials, searching for course material, or viewing a series of Japanese films. The net effect was to reinforce the truism, "the more you know, the more you realize you don't know!"

Given our desire to continue to increase our understanding of Japan, we have included a few lines on each participant indicating that person's

area of interest. Anyone wishing to offer helpful hints or questions can contact us at our distribution email address: AsianJ-L@Earlham.edu.

Barbara Bowman (English, Illinois Wesleyan) is developing a Japanese film course. She is especially interested in how space is configured in Japanese films, particularly in the conveyance of tension between being inside (*uchi*) and being outside (*soto*) with the use of, for example, camera angles or panels. In the long term, she will be developing a team-taught Asian humanities course.

Annie G. Dandavati (Political Science, Hope) has been developing a course on the politics of China and Japan. The seminar gave her the chance to expand her personal knowledge of Japan. Particularly helpful were the opportunities to learn about resources: books, world wide web sites, films, and videos.

All the participants agree with Annie that we will continue our study of Japan throughout the years; this summer launched us.

Lawry Finsen (Philosophy, Redlands)

worked on a first-year seminar, focusing on Japanese values at the boundaries of life and death. He was interested to learn what issues other seminar participants and presenters consider significant, and appreciated the opportunity to preview a wide variety of resources.

"I came to the seminar with a vague conception of how I and my students might approach Japan, and left Earlham with a more clearly defined set of ideas, issues, and texts to consider." Finsen is looking forward to using some of the strategies and resources highlighted by the seminar to enhance the Asian Studies program at the University of Redlands, especially in language instruction and library resources.

Bill Guinee (Sociology and Anthropology, Westminster, Missouri) was pleased to obtain information on institutional development of Asian programs as well as to learn of resources for course development. Participants exchanged information on strategies, resources, obstacles, and successes in the establishment of language classes, and minors, and concentrations in Asian Studies.

In the field of curriculum, Bill is interested in two areas: the development of an introductory course on Japanese culture, and learning about practiced religion, particularly about spirits, the use of mediums, and the content of folk legends.

Sandra A. Harris (Human Development, Eckerd) praised the opportunity to exchange ideas. Specifically, she firmed up a course structure and gathered a list of specific resources. She is developing an introductory course using family case studies as windows for a multi-disciplinary exploration of Japanese culture.

Harris is also exploring comparative components for a first-year Global Heritage course that will compare Greek and Noh drama as well as the creation stories of Genesis and traditional Japanese myths from the Kojiki and Nihongi.

For **Dick Olufs (Political Science, Pacific Lutheran)**, the seminar will feed directly into a course entitled, "Politics of the Pacific Rim." He envisions developing a two-course sequence, "Politics in Japan" and "Political Economy of Eastern Asia."

Luke Reinsma (English, Seattle Pacific) reworked and then rethought his course in Japanese literature. "I thought I knew what I was doing until I joined the seminar," he said. "Only then did I discover how many pieces of the puzzle, how much context, I was missing. Only then did I discover how much I had been 'us/theming' Japan."

The seminar's film series suggested ways in which Japanese cinema-filmed adaptations of Tanizaki's *Makioka Sisters*, for instance, might complement the literature course. Since Seattle Pacific is deliberately Christian in its emphases, Reinsma intends to spend time next summer in Japan with Shusaku Endo, a Christian who has been especially intent upon bridging the gap between East and West in novels such as *Silence* and *Deep River*.

Linda Seward (Communication, John Carroll) plans to expand her "Intercultural Communication" course to include interdisciplinary aspects of Japanese culture.

Seward is reformulating her course to include more active (and hopefully, more permanent) learning. Instead of asking students to read the conclusions of communication researchers, Seward will expose students to various components of Japanese culture to see if they might be able to predict the conclusions of the researchers. She hopes that the understandings gained from this process will help students when they encounter the communication styles of people from cultures that have not been studied as extensively as have the Japanese.

Denny Storer (Political Science, Hastings) is developing a new course, "The Culture of Modern Japan," to be offered in January 1998. He will also expand his existing courses, "World Politics" and "Political Economics."

Fred White (English, Goucher) will enhance the content of a course, "Japan in Film," which he currently teaches with an Asian historian. He has gathered invaluable information, contacts, and an introduction to sources which he will find useful in developing a survey course on Japanese literature in translation. White is also interested in developing a Japanese Studies or Asian Studies minor.

All Japan Seminar participants were excited to learn of grants and programs to implement the teaching of Asian languages and the expansion of library holdings. While some faculty represented schools with Asian Studies programs, others have determined to develop such programs at their institutions.

All in all, we left Earlham with our brains brimming with information and thoughts as we begin a new chapter in our lives. We look forward with great anticipation to our trip to Japan in the summer of 1997.

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