

## MEDIA RESOURCES

### *Columbia University Launches New Website for Undergraduate Teaching About East Asia: [www.exeas.org](http://www.exeas.org)*

Heidi Johnson

Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University

The Expanding East Asian Studies (ExEAS) program at Columbia University was established in 2002 with funding from the Freeman Foundation Undergraduate Asian Studies Initiative. Under the direction of historian and member of the ASIANetwork Council of Advisors Carol Gluck, the program creates innovative courses and teaching materials that incorporate the study of East Asia in broad thematic, transnational, and interdisciplinary contexts.

Program activities are carried out by the ExEAS Teaching Collaborative, a diverse group of scholars composed of ExEAS Postdoctoral Fellows, faculty participants from two- and four-year undergraduate institutions in the Northeast, and members of the Columbia and Barnard faculty. Since Fall 2002, three cohorts of Teaching Collaborative participants have met on the Columbia campus for a series of weekend workshops that include discussions of curricular and pedagogical needs in East Asian studies, demonstrations of effective teaching techniques, and working sessions to develop new teaching units and other materials.

In Fall 2004, the ExEAS program launched its website, [www.exeas.org](http://www.exeas.org), to share materials for teaching about East Asia with educators everywhere. The website features a wide range of teaching materials and syllabi designed for use by instructors at all levels and in all subjects. Materials are designed for use by both Asia specialists and non-specialists as well as instructors teaching outside of their discipline or geographic area of expertise. De-nin Deanna Lee, Assistant Professor of Art History and Asian Studies at Bowdoin College and an ExEAS Teaching Collaborative participant, comments, "The ExEAS Collaborative has created teaching materials that are useful for non-Asianists and Asianists alike. The curriculum at Bowdoin increasingly embraces interdisciplinary approaches and adopts a more global stance, and in this context,

these materials — filmographies, literature focusing on issues of gender and sexuality, classroom suggestions for addressing Asian-American identity, texts for discussing East Asian experiences of modernity and so forth — will become ever more valuable."

Content on the ExEAS website is divided into three sections: teaching materials and resources, syllabi, and links. All materials are listed alphabetically as well as by category. Categories include Asian diasporas, contemporary society, East Asian economies, world history, world literature, and more.

Highlights of the teaching materials and resources section include teaching units written by ExEAS Teaching Collaborative participants on topics such as gender in pre-modern East Asian literature, nationalism in East Asia, Buddhism in Asian philosophy, and the political economy of postwar Japan. The units are designed to be incorporated into courses in all subjects in the humanities and social sciences, including general education and survey courses. Each unit includes all of the materials that instructors need to introduce the units into existing courses, including background information for instructors, lists of student readings annotated for easy selection and understanding, discussion questions or other classroom activities, and lists of further readings.

For example, the unit "Your Honor I am Innocent: Law and Society in Late Imperial China" features student readings and activities focused on the translation of a nineteenth-century homicide case. Written by historian Ming-te Pan of SUNY Oswego, the unit not only introduces Confucian principles, family structure, and social hierarchy in Chinese society, but also explores broader issues such as gender relations and capital punishment. Like all ExEAS units, it is designed to fit into a number of different courses, from East Asian history to women's studies and philosophy. "Units like 'Your Honor I am

Innocent' provide materials that can be easily integrated into large lecture courses and intimate seminars alike," says Ian Miller, Assistant Professor of History at Arizona State University and a former ExEAS Postdoctoral Fellow. "I plan to use the student activities from this unit to augment the lectures in my upcoming 'Introduction to Modern Asian History' course."

"The Short Story in East Asia and Beyond," "East Asia's Dynamic Economies," and "Exploring Culture in the Great Cities of Asia" are among the syllabi featured on the website. Syllabi include those courses developed by ExEAS Postdoctoral Fellows and piloted at Columbia as well as syllabi contributed by Teaching Collaborative participants and other faculty throughout the country.

"The courses developed through the ExEAS collaborative are a perfect fit for liberal arts colleges such as Connecticut. I can easily imagine colleagues in sociology or government departments, for example, making use of the syllabi we've developed when assigning materials for their introductory and comparative classes which otherwise might have overlooked Asia," says Alexis Dudden, Associate Professor of History at Connecticut College and a 2004-2005 ExEAS Teaching Collaborative participant.

The links section of the website offers a carefully selected listing of web-based resources for images, primary sources, teaching materials, writing guides, and much more. Lists of recommended films, novels, primary materials, and activities for classroom use will be added to the teaching materials and resources section of the site in Fall 2005.

The site will continue to evolve as new materials are made available. The success of [www.exeas.org](http://www.exeas.org) will be measured by experiences of site visitors. If you use any of the materials featured on the ExEAS website, please send comments and suggestions for improvement to [exeasmail@columbia.edu](mailto:exeasmail@columbia.edu).