



MARSEA

MASTER OF ARTS IN REGIONAL
STUDIES—EAST ASIA



MASTER OF ARTS IN REGIONAL STUDIES—EAST ASIA (MARSEA)

The MARSEA program at Columbia University is intended for those wishing to study modern or contemporary East Asia at the master's level, with an interdisciplinary emphasis on the social sciences. Housed in the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, MARSEA trains students to analyze critically the politics, international relations, modern history, cultures, and societies of the region, with special attention to a country or area of focus. The program is designed to meet the needs of students preparing for entry into doctoral programs or planning to pursue professional degrees (such as the J.D. or M.B.A.), those who seek to begin careers in the private or public sector, as well as mid-career professionals who want to gain deep regional expertise.

“Being a part of the MARSEA program was an amazing experience simply because I was at a nexus for academic information and conversations: I had access to a never-ending flow of talks, panels, and lectures. MARSEA also allowed me to take classes from different departments and schools across campus. I was able to plan my own development and further my research interests. It was an intensive nine months, but it made me realize how much I enjoyed being in such a stimulating environment.”

—Jiajia Zhou, MARSEA '18,
Assistant Correspondent at the
Mainichi Newspapers



Fellowships and Financial Aid

The Weatherhead East Asian Institute offers a limited number of merit-based fellowships each year to incoming MARSEA students. In addition, U.S. citizens or permanent residents can apply for the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS), graduate loans, and the Federal Work-Study Program.



ASIA RESOURCES AND CENTERS AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Weatherhead East Asian Institute

Home of the MARSEA program, the Institute is an interdisciplinary center for modern and contemporary East Asia research, studies, and publication at Columbia, dealing with China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Mongolia (Inner Asia), Tibet, and, increasingly, the countries of Southeast Asia. The Institute brings together more than 50 faculty and research scholars from across the University.

Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures (EALAC)

C. V. Starr East Asian Library

Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture

APEC Study Center

Center for Chinese Legal Studies

Center on Japanese Economy and Business

Center for Japanese Legal Studies

Center for Korean Research

Center for Korean Legal Studies

Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies

Tang Center for Early China

“Over two decades of teaching and working with MARSEA students, I have seen that the interdisciplinary nature of the program prepares them well for a wide variety of career paths. Knowledge of the rapidly changing region of East Asia continues to be crucial for our world today.”

—Xiaobo Lü, Director, MARSEA Program;
Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Political Science, Barnard College

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for the China, Japan, Korea, or Tibet Specialization

- Language proficiency equivalent to the third-year level of Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, or the second-year level of modern Tibetan. The language requirement may be met through coursework or by passing a language placement examination at Columbia.
- Two courses in the modern history of the country or area of focus. Comparable work may be substituted, if approved by the program's faculty adviser.
- Five regional courses selected from at least two different fields: at least one of the five courses will focus on an Asia Pacific country or subregion other than the student's area of specialization. The regional courses will be drawn from a wide range of offerings in anthropology, business, economics, history, international affairs, literature and film, law, political science, religion, and sociology.
- One elective course not necessarily dealing with East Asia.
- Minimum of 30 credits/points in total (approximately ten courses)
- A master's thesis

- The program may be completed in two full-time semesters, depending on the student's level of proficiency in the relevant Asian language. However, students may also choose to extend their time in the program to three or four semesters.

Thesis

The master's thesis, a substantial piece of independent research conducted under the supervision of a thesis adviser from the Columbia University faculty, deals with a modern or contemporary topic in the social sciences, with a focus on East Asia in general and the student's chosen country or area of interest in particular.

Residence Units

Students are required to complete two residence units at Columbia University. One full residence unit is equivalent to full-time registration for one semester.

Credits/Points at Columbia

A one-semester course is typically worth three to four credits/points and meets for three hours per week over approximately 15 weeks. A MARSEA student typically takes a minimum of four courses or 16 credits/points per semester.

“I really draw so much inspiration from my cohort. Other than the fact that we’ve grown to become really close friends, I...have a huge amount of admiration and respect for my colleagues and the kind of work that they’re doing.”

—Kelvin Ng, MARSEA '19, Ph.D. student in the Department of History at Yale University

LIFE IN NEW YORK CITY

Nestled within one of the world's greatest and most diverse cities, the MARSEA program offers unparalleled access to international expertise. Resources available to the academic community include Columbia University's renowned C. V. Starr East Asian Library and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute's extensive ties to the business, diplomatic, legal, and media communities in New York City, the nation, and abroad. The depth as well as breadth of East Asian Studies at Columbia has been recognized by a wide variety of funding sources, including the U.S. Department of Education, which, since 1960, has designated Columbia an East Asian National Resource Center.

MARSEA students are encouraged to explore the wealth of opportunities that lie just beyond the campus, in New York City. In addition to showcasing some of the world's greatest treasures of art and culture in numerous museums, theatres, concert halls, and other art spaces, New York abounds in special resources for students of Asia. For a sampling, see below.

Asia Society

Asian American Arts Centre

Asian Cultural Council

China Institute in America

**Jacques Marchais Museum
of Tibetan Art**

Japan Society



Korea Society

Korean Cultural Center New York

Museum of Chinese in America

Rubin Museum of Art

Tibet House



APPLYING TO THE PROGRAM

Please apply to the MARSEA program through the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). Applications are accepted for fall admission only.

In addition to the application form, three letters of evaluation, transcripts, standardized test scores, and a writing sample are required to be considered for admission.

Questions regarding the admissions process should be directed to the GSAS Office of Admissions.

B.A./M.A. Option

The MARSEA program accepts applications for the B.A./M.A. option, which is available only to current Columbia undergraduates. Students interested in the B.A./M.A. option should contact us to determine an appropriate selection of graduate courses during their remaining undergraduate semesters.

For the most up-to-date information on MARSEA admissions and degree requirements, please visit the program website at <https://marsea.weai.columbia.edu/>

MARSEA Application Checklist

- Application for Admission
- Statement of Academic Purpose
- GRE Scores
- TOEFL Scores
(for non-native English speakers)
- CV/Resume
- Transcripts
- 3 Letters of Evaluation
- Writing Sample
- Application Fee

Contact Us

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