

The Department of Asian and Asian American Studies (AAAS) Interns present...

End of Semester NEWSLETTER

4th Edition

December 2025

incoming message

Happy finals! We hope all AAAS students are staying warm and healthy during this cold weather as we head into finals. The AAAS intern team is excited to share new information, highlight academic opportunities, and reflect on this past semester.

Cheers!

AAAS Intern Team

this edition's theme

this december, we celebrate the **winter solstice**. so for this newsletter, we will share recipes, winter courses, and more!

department socials



newsletter contents

recap events
course offerings



summer abroad

clubs
cultural lesson



recipes
music/media

faculty
interviews



Recap of Events

a reflection of this semester's
exciting department events!

CommUniversity Day September 27

We enjoyed connecting with the university community and everyone who came by to play our games!



Food Drive (Food Pantry Adopt a Week) October 6 - 10

Thank you to those who donated, and thank you Shulin and Daniel for transporting the goods!



Homecoming Door Decorating Contest Entry

October 20th



Many thanks to Lynne, Theresa and the AAAS student workers for their hard work and creativity!

Our Student Workers: 25-26

Eric Y, Barry Z, Daniel C, Danielle D, Emily C, Emily L, Jimmy J, Jonea T, Kevin H, Layton M, Marie A, Saraf W, Shulin Z



About the AAAS Department Student Workers

Like our office staff, essentially the backbone of our department...

Here's a few words on how they feel working for our department!

"I enjoy working with Lynne. She's the glue that holds this department together."
"It's great to work here. Everyone is friendly and very helpful."



Major/Minor Tabling Event October 27

We loved meeting every student who came by! Hope to see you in classes next semester!



Department Open House

November 5 12:30 - 1:50PM

Held at Humanities 1003, we got to hear a lot about the program from our undergraduate program director and our student speakers!



Course Offerings

take a look at some of the winter and spring courses we offer!

The full list of courses can be found [HERE](#)



Winter 2026 Courses

PATHWAY TO EAST-ASIAN MEDICINE

AAS 211.30

AAAS TOPICS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
Michael Kim

This course introduces the fundamental principles of East-Asian medicine, including its historical, cultural, and philosophical roots. Students will explore key concepts such as Yin-Yang, the Five Elements, and Qi, while gaining an understanding of basic diagnosis and treatment approaches. Additionally, students will gain insight into the educational pathways and professional qualifications required to pursue a career in East-Asian medicine.

WINTER SESSION 2026
ONLINE
WED 5:30-8:55 & ASYNCH

NEW COURSE!

3 CREDITS
SBC: SBS

AAS/RLS 260.30

Buddhism

SBCS: GLO, HUM

3 credits

Mary Diaz

online asynch

winter 2026

EASTERN RELIGIONS

AAS 102.30

winter 2026
MARY DIAZ

online asynch

SBCS: glo, hum

AAS 228.30

CHINA: History & Geography

Greg Ruf

online asynch

winter 2026

SBC: GLO
3 CREDITS

Course Offerings

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Spring 2026 Courses

AAS 110.01
Appreciating Indian Music
Aruna Sharma

TR 12:30-1:50
3 credits
SBC: ARTS

An introduction to elements of Indian classical music, such as raga, tala, gharanas (schools), and styles. Vocal and instrumental masterpieces are studied. Topics include the roles of stringed/percussion instruments, the intimate relationship between music and religion and music and ethnicity, and the influence of Indian classical music on contemporary art forms such as films and other forms of music. No prior musical training is required.

Basic elements of Indian classical music, such as regional traditions (Carnatic/Hindustani), classical styles such as Dhrupad, Khayal, and Thumri; rapport between performer and audience studied through vocal and instrumental performances. Students will learn to listen critically to multiple combinations of musical notes for pitch perception, which will help them in identifying major ragas and appreciating the nuances and innovations of great musical maestros.

SPRING 2026

AAS 211.01
AAS TOPICS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

Structure of Indian Language: Hindi
SREEPARNA SARKAR

SPRING 2026 TUES/THU 5:00-6:20
SBC: SB

DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

spring 2026

Sthaneshwar Timalisina

AAS 212.01
meditation & contemplation

3 credits
sbc: hum

MW 11-12:20

DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

AAS 370/570.01
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

AGNES HE

MON/WED 9:30-10:50 AM

SBC: SBS+
3 CREDITS

SPRING 2026

SPRING 2026

AAS 401.01/501.01
SEMINAR IN ASIAN & ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES
SBC: SPK, WRD
3 CREDITS

ATSUKO OYAMA
TUESDAYS 12:30-3:20

This is one course in which you can focus on a Topic of YOUR Choice!
• Explore Research Methods
• Develop Presentation Skills
• Refine Persuasive Writing Skills

This is the only course required for all AAS Majors -- don't wait until your last semester to take it!
• Open to U3 and U4
• Fulfill SPK and WRD Gen Ed (SBC) Requirements
• Opportunity to Participate in the annual AAAS & URECA Student Symposiums

Seats available for Minors (AAM, AAS, ATH, CNS, JNH, KOR, RLS, SOA), with instructor approval (contact atsuko.oyama@stonybrook.edu)

AAS 391.02
(HUMANITIES TOPICS IN AAAS)
INDIAN MUSIC IN BOLLYWOOD FILMS
aruna sharma

TUE/THUR 2:00-3:20
3 CREDITS
SBCS: HFA+

SPRING 2026



Summer in Shanghai

STUDY ABROAD



Location: Shanghai International Studies University



Application Deadline: March 1st

6-9 undergraduate credits required

- CHI 111 Elementary Chinese I (4 credits) Part LANG
- CHI 112 Elementary Chinese II (4 credits) LANG
- CHI 120 Elementary Chinese for Heritage Speakers (4 credits) GLO/LANG
- CHI 211 Intermediate Chinese I (3 credits) GLO, LANG
- CHI 212 Intermediate Chinese II (3 credits) GLO, LANG, HUM
- CHI 311 Advanced Chinese I (3 credits) HFA+, LANG
- CHI 312 Advanced Chinese II (3 credits) HFA+, LANG, SPK
- CHI 410 Business Chinese (3 credits) SBS+, SPK
- CHI 447 Directed Readings in Chinese (1-3 credits) EXP +
- CHI 475/6 Undergraduate Teaching Practicum I/II (1-3 credits)
- AAS 220 China Language and Culture (3 credits) GLO/SBS
- AAS 487 Supervised Research in Asian and Asian American Studies (1-3 credits) EXP+
- AAS 488 Internship (2-6 credits) EXP +

Apply Here!

Scholarships

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Hotel-style accommodation

PROGRAM AND TUITION FEES

Application Fee.....\$60

Administrative Fee.....\$200

Undergraduate Tuition (subject to change)

NY residents per credit.....\$295

Non-residents per credit.....\$1,031

Program Fee.....\$2,600

(Includes room, two meals per day, group excursions, books, and international health insurance)



Asian Game Recommendations

Want to pass some time during the winter? Here's some games to play over the break!



A narrative adventure game following Mark Borja and his experiences with teenage life and a strange occurrences in a post-disaster Filipino city.

Adventure

Indie

Visual Novel



A narrative cooking game following an immigrant Indian Family that moved to Canada trying to reconnect with their culture.

Puzzle

Interactive Fiction



A martial arts game following a revenge story of a martial artists seeking to avenge their family.

Fighting

Action

Indie



An action-adventure game where you play as the Shinto sun goddess, Amaterasu, in the form of a white wolf to save Japan from evil.

Puzzle

Adventure

Platform

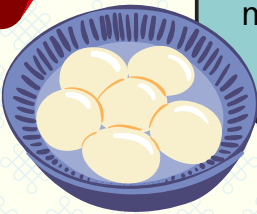
Winter Solstice

A Journey of Light

The winter solstice, the year's shortest day and longest night, is more than just an astronomical event. Across Asia, cultures have built unique and vibrant festivals around this day, each celebrating the return of the sun in their own way. Let's explore four of these incredible traditions!

Savory Tangyuan:

Fillings include minced pork, mushrooms, and vegetables.



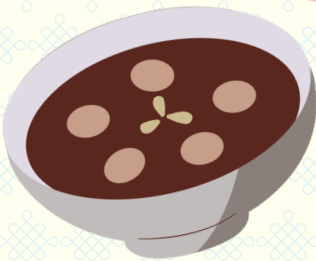
Sweet Tangyuan:

Fillings include black sesame, sweet red bean paste, peanut, and even fruit jams.



Warding Off Evil with a Simple Meal:

The traditions are focused on protection and health for the coming year.



The Spirit of Family Reunion:
Families gather for a large, festive meal, celebrating harmony and warmth.

Patjuk:

A red bean porridge made from adzuki beans and includes rice cake balls.



Rituals for Good Luck & Health:

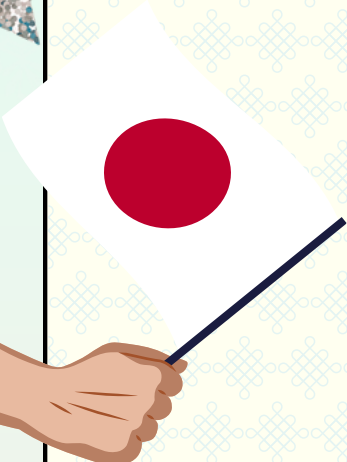
Taking a hot yuzu citrus bath to prevent colds and bring good luck.

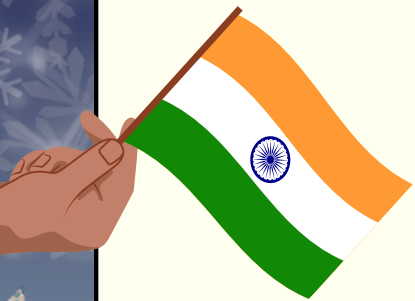


Udon

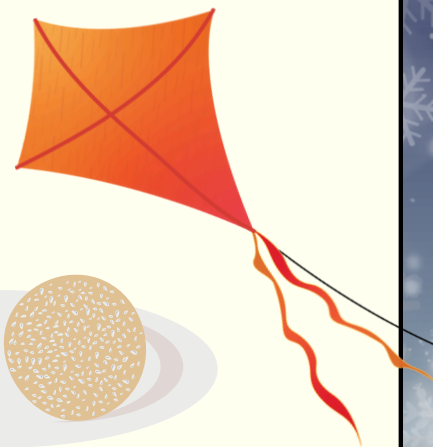


Kabocha



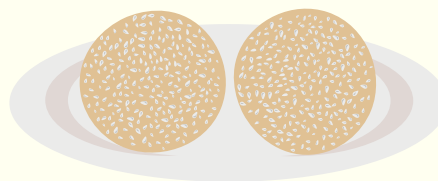


A Harvest Festival of the Sun:
Flying kites to symbolize joy and
connection to the divine.



Makar Sankranti:

Sweets made from til (sesame) and gur
(jaggery) for warmth and sweetness



Recipes for Winter

Some recipes we'd recommend students try out during winter break!

Black Sesame Tangyuan (Glutinous Rice Balls)

Ingredients

Filling: 1 package (approx. 200-250g) pre-made
sesame paste/filling
Dough: 200g glutinous rice flour (also called sweet
rice flour), approximately 160ml warm water

Yields approx. 20 pieces

[Recipe Link](#)



Shortbread Jam Sandwich Cookies

Ingredients

- 3 sticks unsalted butter at room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup seedless raspberry jam (or any seedless jam that you like! Sometimes I use apricot jam)
- Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

Yields approx.
30-36 cookies

[Recipe Link](#)





AAAS Music

winter beats



let's introduce the new season with



some new artist recommendations!

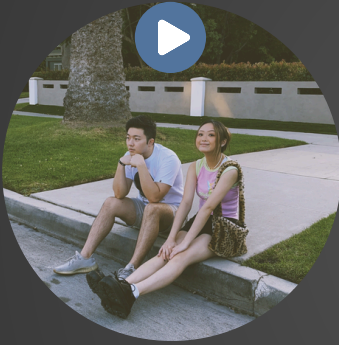
Artists

Albums

Songs

Community playlists

Videos



sundial

a duo formed by Jisu Kim and Dorothy Chan
they have been dating since 2015
they met in their freshman year of college and
formed sundial in 2016

indie-pop • electronic jazz



grass is greener

sundial • 244K plays • 3:20

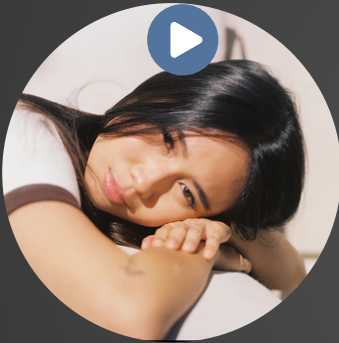
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NIKI

an Indonesian singer-songwriter
she won a competition to be the opening act
for Taylor Swift's show in Jakarta
took inspiration from Taylor Swift and Phoebe
Bridgers

alternative r&b • pop



High School in Jakarta

NIKI • 2.3M plays • 4:35

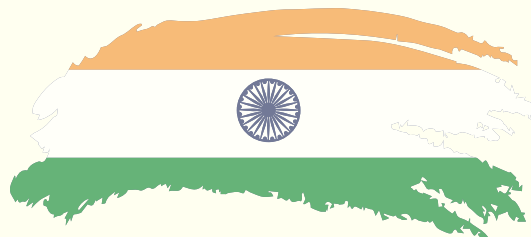




MEET THE NEW PROFESSOR!

Professor Sreeparna Sarkar

Areas of interest: Speech Production and Perception, Phonology of South Asian Languages, Second and Foreign Language Acquisition.



Would you like to share your background?

I have a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Delaware, specializing in phonetics and phonology. My research focuses on the production and perception of sounds in various languages, including English, Hindi, Bengali, Quechua, Burmese, and Sinhala. As a native speaker of Hindi and Bengali, I combine my linguistic expertise with TESOL certification to apply evidence-based teaching methodologies. At Stony Brook University, I integrated these methods to teach Hindi by applying best practices in second language teaching while focusing on the underlying structure of the language.

What drew you to study in this field?

I majored in English and had to take a required linguistics course, where I discovered Phonetics and instantly fell in love with it because of how closely it is tied to physics, one of my areas of interest from my high school STEM courses. That led me to a master's in the UK and a PhD at the University of Delaware. Along the way, I saw the social side of phonetics through language teaching. I began researching phonological questions in understudied, less-commonly taught languages, especially Hindi and Bengali, then pairing those insights with TESOL methods. I also recognized the business dimension of language education that helps people expand opportunities

What is most challenging, and most rewarding, in your studies?

The main challenge is precisely segmenting subtle differences among sounds in the acoustic signal, because each signal can carry crucial meaning; capturing it accurately is essential. The rewards are always the findings, and in knowing they contribute to research on linguistically understudied, less commonly taught languages like Hindi, and enriching limited literature available in this field.



What are some findings from your work that excite you?

I study the four-way stop contrast in several South Asian languages. My dissertation tested how prosodic prominence shapes listeners' perception of this contrast in Bengali. The work assesses whether all four stop categories are reliably distinguished by native speakers; any confusion could indicate mergers and ongoing sound change. I find that prominence boosts perceptual accuracy, especially stress, which has a strong effect, extending a well-known production finding to perception. This result answers a long-standing question for me and directly informs my classroom teaching.

Can you introduce some of the lectures you teach at SBU?

This semester, I am teaching HIN 111, which is Elementary Hindi. Next semester, I will teach HIN 112, which is part 2 in the elementary Hindi series. I will also teach two AAS courses, one on language and society in South Asia, and one Structure of an Indian language: Hindi. In the Language and Society course, I will talk about different socio-linguistic phenomena in South Asia, such as multilingualism, code-switching/code-mixing, and the role of English in South Asia. For the second course, I will talk about the linguistic structure of an Indian language, which is Hindi, for this semester, which will include an overview of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Hindi.

How do you teach Hindi as a foreign language to beginners?

My courses are task-based, where students learn by completing activities. The biggest challenge is mastering the Hindi script, which takes up much of the first half of the semester. Afterward, we transition to group, paired, and individual tasks. For example, after learning yes/no questions in Hindi, students conduct a small survey, asking classmates what their majors are, how they are feeling, and what their nationality is. Then we discuss results and patterns. So that makes the experience more real and not just plain made-up conversations, which may not seem useful to them sometimes.

What advice do you have for students interested in studying South Asian languages or linguistics?

South Asian languages are very unique in the sense that they exhibit certain properties that are extremely rare in other languages, and studying them linguistically is a very eye-opening experience. When it comes to learning South Asian languages, I would say it would open up a huge area of communication and access to a massive and diverse population, their sensibility and ideologies, which in itself is a huge plus. You can not only have more new knowledge about the culture and society of a place but also participate in new festivals, meet new people, network more widely for work opportunities, travel to new places, and eat a greater variety of food, which would be more than just butter chicken and naan. While it is also true that South Asia does have a huge English presence, knowing the languages of the region can help create stronger connections. So I would say, dive into the world of South Asian languages and discover a whole new world.



WITH APPRECIATION OF 45 YEARS OF TEACHING

Professor S.N. Sridhar

Would you like to share your background?

My name is S. N. Sridhar. People call me "Sridhar," which is my last name but also part of my first name. I was born in Shimoga, India. I earned my B.A. (Hons.) in English Literature, Linguistics, and Language from Bangalore University in 1969. I completed my M.A. in English Literature and Linguistics in 1971, graduating first in my class at the university. Then I worked for two years at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages in Hyderabad: one year as a research associate and one year as faculty. In 1973, I came to the United States to pursue my PhD in Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. I completed my PhD in 1979 and came to Stony Brook in 1980. I've been here for about 45 years. The university has been very good to me. I received tenure within four years, and became a full professor in 1990 and then a distinguished professor in 2011.

How did you become involved in creating the India Studies program?

In 1995, several Indian students approached us, saying that although many Indian students were on campus, there were no courses on India. They asked us to create such courses. We helped them organize, and they submitted a petition with 700 signatures requesting an India Studies program.

I started teaching "Introduction to Indian Civilization," and my wife, Professor Kamal Sridhar, taught Hindi. We reached out to the local Indian community and said, "Your own children want courses on Indian culture; help us support this program." The community donated funds so we could hire part-time faculty. Eventually, we offered courses in Sanskrit, Indian epics, mythology, classical dance, classical music, languages, literature, and more. From just two courses, the program grew to 30 courses a year. We received a suite of offices from the university and built a library of around 15,000 books on India. We also created an endowment, now around \$5 million, to ensure financial stability. Only 5% of an endowment can be used yearly, so this provides steady long-term support.

What opportunities does the Mattoo Center offer to students?

- A study-abroad program
- Internships on research projects
- Four scholarships require students to take at least one India-related course
- Opportunities to work with visiting professors
- Public events, including guest lectures, film screenings, and cultural celebrations
- Teaching assistant
- A welcoming study space, which served as a haven for students during difficult times

What goals do you have for the center's future?

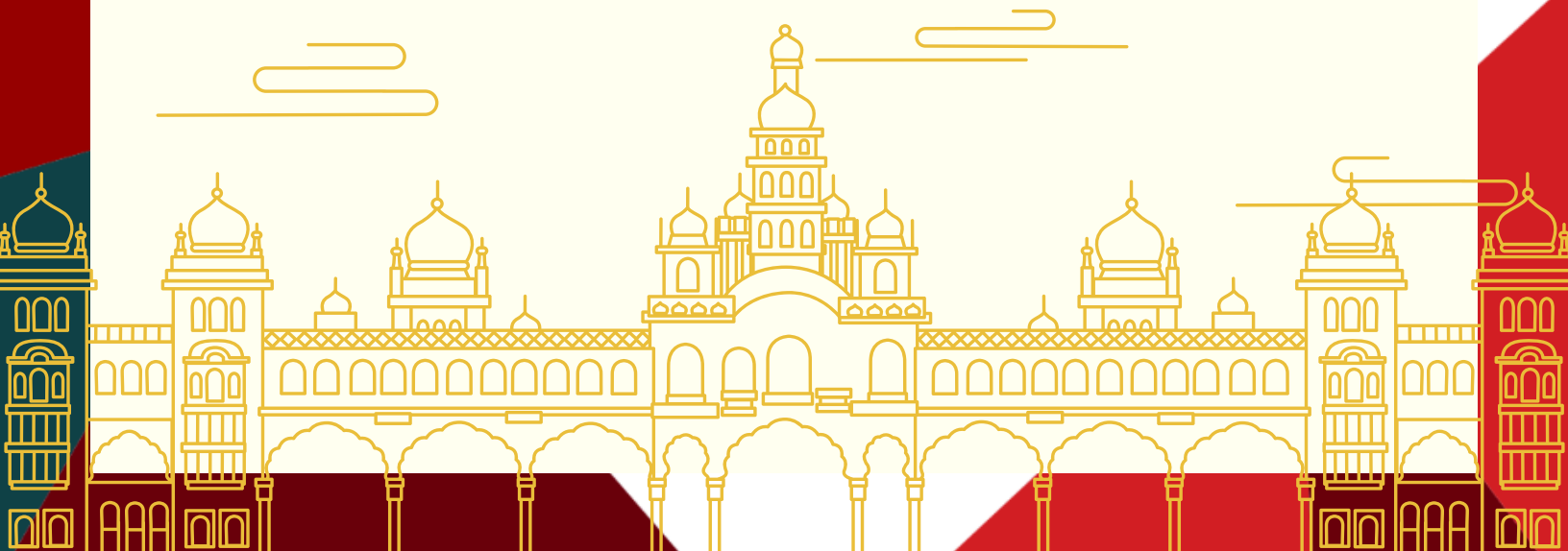
We have created an endowed chair and hope to establish four more. Endowed chairs bring world-class scholars with strong research funding. We also want to create postdoctoral positions, fellowships, and expand our activities so that the center becomes a full Institute of India Studies, similar to other major interdisciplinary institutes on campus.

What advice would you give students interested in India Studies?

Today's world is globalized. No student should study only their own country. To be educated, you must understand multiple civilizations—China, the Arab world, Iran, India, and more. India is now the world's third-largest economy and is deeply interconnected with global industries. Companies like Citibank, Amazon, Google, Tesla, and many others value employees who understand India. Learning about India makes students more competitive and globally literate.

What are your personal future plans?

I will continue community work with the Indian American community, with whom we've built strong partnerships for 40 years. I want to complete several research projects, compile my 100 published papers into books, and finish the ongoing translation project. Personally, I want to travel, meet new people, mentor young students, and even teach courses for free because I enjoy engaging with the young people.





In appreciation of Professor Sridhar, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor and Professor of Linguistics and India Studies at the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, here are some words from his fellow faculty members and his students:

“Dear Prof. Sridhar, wish you a relaxing and enjoyable retirement! I know you will continue working on your several projects, but hope you enjoy some fun time outside of work too!”

- Sreeparna Sarkar, Lecturer

“I took AAS 201 last year with Dr. Sridhar and you could tell that he cared about his class and was passionate about educating. He had opened my eyes to another part of the world that I didn't know much about.”

- Amber McLeod, Student

“What an honor to be a part of our department with you in it, Sridhar! Your incisive scholarship, collegial care, and community leadership are models for junior faculty like me. Wishing you a wonderful retirement!”

- Sandra Kim, AAM Program Director

“Thank you for your kind words and for the high praise you gave me as a student, and for sparking my interest in Indian cultures. I hope to remain in contact, and I wish you a peaceful retirement.”

- Matías Ignacio Saland, Student

“Thank you for all your help in creating the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies. I still recall meeting you for the first time, in your old office in SBS, way back in the 1990s. During that conversation you impressed upon me that the person you admired most in world history was Jawaharlal Nehru. Your efforts at program development through the years are a testament to those values, and have shaped our department in fundamental ways, creating an enduring legacy. Wishing you well as you start the next chapter of your life.”

- Gregory Ruf, AAAS Associate Professor/Assessment Coordinator

“Congratulations on your well-earned retirement!”

- Hongkyung Kim, Director of the Center of Korean Studies and Professor

“Congratulations! Thank you for your dedication and the inspiration you've given us!”

- Jung Min Kang, Lecturer

“Professor Sridhar, your class about the Indian subcontinent taught me a lot about history, and let me understand my roots. You have had a profound impact on me and a lot of other students as well. I wish you a wonderful time ahead!”

- Aaryaman, Student

“Dear Dr. Sridhar! Congratulations on retiring!”

- AAAS Student

Congratulations on your retirement, Sridhar! We are so grateful to you for all of your support and your endless kindness and boundless generosity.

-Theresa Spadola, ATC

“Since joining AAAS in 2021, we only talked a few times, but every conversation made it clear why you’re such a beloved presence in our department. I still remember visiting the Center with the job candidate and thinking, “So this is the Sridhar energy everyone keeps talking about,” the warmth, the calm, and that quiet confidence that fills the whole space.

I’m also really grateful that you served on the committee during my campus visit for the assistant professor position. I learned a lot from our conversations, and your presence made the whole experience feel so much more welcoming.

And even though I didn’t have the chance to get to know Meena well, I now work in her old office. Every time I look around, I’m reminded that I’m sitting in a space shaped by the two of you, and it motivates me to do justice to that legacy (or at least try not to ruin anything :)).

Thank you for everything you’ve given to our department and to generations of students and colleagues. Wishing you a very joyful, relaxing, and absolutely well-deserved retirement.”

- Yi Wang, Assistant Professor

Congratulations on your retirement, Sridhar! Thank you for your extraordinary leadership, scholarship, mentorship, and kindness, which were all essential in founding and shaping our department. We will preserve your legacy and carry the department forward with the commitment and passion you inspired in us. I also wish to acknowledge Meena for her unwavering support. Please keep in touch!

-Eriko Sato, Department Chair

