

# Asian Studies (MA)

Master



Universiteit  
Leiden

Discover the world at Leiden University

## Specialisations

- Chinese Studies (MA) (120EC)
- East Asian Studies (MA) (60EC)
- History, Arts and Culture of Asia (MA) (60EC)
- Japanese Studies (MA) (120EC)
- Korean Studies (MA) (120EC)
- Politics, Society and Economy of Asia (MA) (60EC)
- South Asian Studies (MA) (60EC)
- Southeast Asian Studies (MA) (60EC)

The Master's in Asian Studies at Leiden University is your opportunity to earn a specialised qualification from one of the leading centres for Asian studies in Europe.

## Why study Asian Studies at Leiden University?

The Asian Studies master's programme offers one-year specialisations in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the History, Arts and Culture of Asia, and the Politics, Society and Economy of Asia, as well as two-year specialisations in China, Japan, Korea. Expertise on Asia at Leiden University is internationally renowned and spans the whole of Asia. Small classes give you direct and regular contact with your lecturers, many of whom are at the leading edge of Asia-related research worldwide.

During your studies you have the opportunity to develop your fluency in a classical or modern language. You also have the option to take an intensive modern Indonesian language course.

[Learn more about the study programme](#)

## **What are your career prospects?**

As a graduate of the MA in Asian Studies, you are qualified to work within a variety of fields where there is a demand for expertise in Asia, including journalism and publishing, international trade and marketing, business, public relations, education and development aid, and in government, international organisations and NGOs.

[Find out more about the career prospects](#)

## **Is Asian Studies the programme for you?**

Do you feel invested in Asian culture, history, politics and/or arts? Expand your knowledge by choosing one of our specialisations in Asian Studies. Will it be Chinese Studies? Or maybe a broader focus such as the specialisation Southeast Asian Studies? Find the programme which suits your interests best within the eight different programmes Leiden University has to offer. Do you want to find out if you are eligible for this Master's Programme?

[Check the admission requirements](#)

# **Why Leiden University**

Leiden University offers ambitious students a world-class environment in which to reach their full potential.

## **Top-ranked university**

Leiden University's Faculty of Humanities consistently ranks among the top 30 humanities faculties worldwide by the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings. Here, you can access resources found nowhere else in the world, such as Leiden University's famous collections of Asian artefacts; learn from researchers whose expertise spans all corners of Asia; and choose from an expansive curriculum that includes specialised subjects not available elsewhere.

## **Close, individual tuition**

At Leiden, we take a student-centred approach to learning. Teaching takes the form of small-scale lectures, seminars and tutorials, where every student has the opportunity to participate in debates and share their ideas. A high level of focused attention from lecturers also keeps you engaged and on track to meet your goals. A flexible programme format means that whatever your interests or career goals, our faculty members can help you customise the programme to meet these requirements.

## **An excellent start to your career**

Our reputation as a centre of excellence means that your qualification is respected by organisations worldwide. Our graduates enjoy successful careers thanks to their broad and global mind-sets, specialised and in-depth knowledge, and strong critical-thinking skills. The success of our alumni speaks for itself: our graduates are equipped to solve the challenges facing society now and in the future.

## Diversity and inclusion

We are convinced that our education can only flourish if everyone within the programme feels supported, respected and empowered to do their best work. We find it important to offer a learning environment that allows for different perspectives and points of view that students bring with them, depending on their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, health, religion, age or socio-economic background. Every new generation sees the world from a new perspective – and our students are the newest generation. [We look forward to hearing more about your perspective.](#) Leiden University has been pursuing diversity policy since 2014, with the aim of creating a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment for all staff and students.

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## About the programme

Asian Studies at Leiden University is unparalleled in the Netherlands and combines the very best of Asia-related research in North-West Europe.

The programme offers eight specialisations:

- [Chinese Studies \(MA\) \(120EC\)](#)
- [East Asian Studies \(MA\) \(60EC\)](#)
- [History, Arts and Culture of Asia \(MA\) \(60EC\)](#)
- [Japanese Studies \(MA\) \(120EC\)](#)
- [Korean Studies \(MA\) \(120EC\)](#)
- [Politics, Society and Economy of Asia \(MA\) \(60EC\)](#)
- [South Asian Studies \(MA\) \(60EC\)](#)
- [Southeast Asian Studies \(MA\) \(60EC\)](#)

## Ethan Mark

Senior University Lecturer



“I try to encourage my students to think critically by pushing them to interrogate the categories through which we think and by which we describe the world: where they came from, what forces constructed them, and for what purposes.”

“In a world in which we are so often confronted with the appearance of essential differences, I seek to stimulate an awareness of the interconnectedness of our identities and our histories, informed by an awareness of history itself not as a single narrative of objective facts, but as a field of ongoing contest between competing narratives and competing political agendas.”

## Programme structure

For a detailed programme, please check the Prospectus pages of each of the specialisations. Please note that the guide applies to the current academic year, which means that the curriculum for next year may slightly differ.

The specialisations [Chinese Studies](#), [Japanese Studies](#), and [Korean Studies](#) are two years in duration and offer the possibility of **an in-depth analysis of one country in East Asia**. They each require advanced proficiency in the relevant language.

All three programmes require the completion of a bachelor's degree in Chinese studies, Japanese studies or Korean studies, depending on the programme. Disciplinary specialisation is at the core of each, and involves the development of fluent classical or modern language skills. You will spend **a year at a university in the relevant country**, and write an MA thesis. Places in these specialisations are limited.

The specialisation [East Asian Studies](#) is a one-year programme that offers the possibility of in-depth analysis of **one country in East Asia**, either China, Japan, or Korea, in fields such as history, sociology, philosophy, economics, linguistics, politics and international relations.

Advanced knowledge of an East Asian language is required. The programme is similar to that of the related two-year specialisations, but with the advantage of allowing you to choose from a broader range of elective courses, including those on other Asian regions or countries outside the area of your specialisation, and also provides **options for internships** of two or three months.

The specialisations *History, Arts and Culture of Asia*, and *Politics, Society and Economy of Asia* are one-year specialisations that take a thematic approach to Asian Studies. Knowledge of a relevant language is not required, although you have **the option of learning one of the many Asian languages** taught at Leiden University.

[History, Arts and Culture of Asia](#) takes a humanities approach to pre-modern, modern or contemporary Asia. [Politics, Society and Economy of Asia](#) takes a social sciences approach to modern or contemporary Asia. You are free to choose a specific region or to cover all Asian regions.

The specialisations *South Asia* and *Southeast Asia* are one year in duration and **focus on a particular region**. Knowledge of a relevant language is not required, although some individual courses require knowledge of a classical or modern South or Southeast Asian language. Students have **the option of learning one of the many Asian languages** taught at Leiden University.

[South Asian Studies](#) focuses on pre-modern, modern or contemporary South Asia, in fields such as history, literature or religious studies. The focus of the programme is on India and Sri Lanka. [Southeast Asian Studies](#) focuses on one or more aspects of Southeast Asia, such as history, literature or religious studies.

## Extracurricular

Get the most out of your studies at Leiden University by taking part in our extracurricular activities.

### Asian Studies study associations

The Asian Studies department has four study associations related to the BA and MA programmes in Asian Studies: Siitaa (South and Southeast Asian Studies), SVS (Chinese Studies), LVSJK Tanuki (Japanese Studies), and S.V.K. Dokkaebi (Korean Studies). These associations organise educational and social activities such as parties and film nights, lectures, workshops and much more. Joining a study association is a great way to get to know fellow students and teachers outside of the academic setting.

### Leiden Leadership Programme

Are you interested in developing your leadership potential? The [Leiden Leadership Programme](#) (LLP) is an Honours Programme specifically developed for ambitious master's students at Leiden University and the Delft University of Technology who recognise the importance of leadership abilities. The LLP offers in-depth training sessions, assessments, seminars, and the creation of a Personal Leadership Roadmap – a five-year plan for reaching and developing your leadership potential.

## Career prospects

### Where do our graduates work?

As a graduate of the MA in Asian Studies, you are qualified to work within a variety of fields where there is a demand for expertise in Asia, including journalism and publishing, international trade and marketing, business, public relations, education and development aid, and in government, international organisations and NGOs.

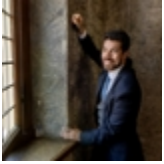
Examples of the diverse roles of our graduates include:

- Account manager at a translation agency
- Project manager at a trading and consultancy company in India
- Owner of a consultancy firm
- Consultant at a defence and security company
- Communications officer at an animation studio in Japan
- Relations management officer at an organisation promoting internationalisation in education

- Editor at an academic publishing house
- Content editor at a booking website

## Yu Kai Tan

Graduated in Politics, Society and Economy of Asia (MA Asian Studies)



"After my BA I leaped back into my studies with Asian Studies, I just wanted to learn more about Asia. The program didn't disappoint, far from it, Asian Studies turned out to be the natural next step for my academic interests and personal growth. During the program I not only learned about the ever-changing politics, societies and economics of Asia, I also learned more about their international relations, developed my own critical view and met many interesting people with backgrounds in various different disciplines. All that while living in one of the most beautiful and historic cities in the Netherlands, what more can you want? In my current job I am both a researcher and an analyst, and Asian Studies has given me the tools to not only succeed but thrive. The skills and lessons I learned during the study program continue to be of great value in both my personal life and my career."

## Robert Beers

Graduated in East Asian Studies (MA Asian Studies)



"In my current position as management trainee at TU Delft, I benefit every day from having followed the MA East Asian Studies. I owe it to this programme that I have a unique outlook on the world, which makes a great difference when making decisions or doing business."

### **Intercultural sensitivity**

"It improved my analytic skills, critical thinking and problem solving abilities. Thanks to my one of a kind background, heightened intercultural sensitivity and communication skills, I am able to create opportunities that make life and career even more interesting!"

### **Plenty of flexibility and freedom**

"Whichever track you choose within the programme, there is plenty of flexibility and freedom to pursue your own academic interests. I really enjoyed the diversity of the curriculum. My field of

study being sociology, I wrote my thesis about the relationship between fans and anti-fans in Korean popular music fandom. I followed intensive courses that provided essential and comprehensive material which proved very useful for my perception of the world as well as my research. Another fantastic asset of this programme is the option to do an internship. This is a great way to prepare you for your career."

## **Christiaan Raaijmakers**

Graduated in Japanese Studies (MA Asian Studies)



"I work as an international sales manager for a French company that manufactures seats for theatres, cinemas, auditoriums, and conference halls worldwide. I travel around Northern Europe and Japan, where I meet with architects and owners of such venues and offer the company's top-quality products. The French company is part of a Japanese-owned company group. The head company of this group is Japanese and I attended an internship there in 2014. "

### **Becoming a link between Japan and Europe**

"A few months ago, they offered me to come and work for their French company. Now, I act as a link between the French company and Japanese company due to my knowledge of the Japanese language and culture that I gained during my Master Asian Studies. At the time, I chose the two-year Master Asian Studies – Japanese Studies to be able to study more about the country I grew to love. It also provided me with an exchange program to study the language and culture at one of Japan's top universities for one full year. With help from this Master programme, I have achieved my goal of becoming a link between Japan and Europe."

## **Career preparation**

Find out how this programme prepares you for your future career and check our career preparation activities.

At Leiden University, we give you the tools to become a powerful critical thinker with a strong and relevant knowledge base. Graduates of the master's in Asian Studies understand the key academic approaches taken within Asian Studies across multiple disciplines, and how to use these concepts to conduct quality research. They have a wealth of practical and professional skills. These qualities amount to a highly attractive package for future employers.

Do you consider to put your knowledge into practice during your studies? Determine whether an internship could be an option for you. Start orientating your possibilities by visiting an internship information session. This way you can receive information about the internship procedure and listen to tips of former interns. Notice that you will search for an internship yourself to find a place of your interest. Do you need some help

with this or the application process? Do not hesitate to [contact the Career Service](#). When you have found an internship, inform us. Then, the internship coordinator advises you how to proceed and provides your internship plan with feedback so it can be submitted for approval to the board of examiners.

Our staff can help you identify both the career that is right for you, and the necessary steps to get you there. Our team at [Humanities Career Service](#) provide all Leiden University humanities students with professional advice and guidance on everything from internships and career planning to job applications. Humanities Career Service also organises regular workshops on topics such as effective interview skills and creating a successful CV.

The Humanities Career Service offers you various (online) workshops, webinars and info sessions. [Check our overview of career activities](#).

The [Leiden University Career Zone](#) is an online career portal that helps you to prepare for the job market. Here you can find information, tools and tips to help you gain more personal insight, learn about the job market, develop your application skills, plan your academic and professional career, find job vacancies and discover what the [Career Service](#) can do for you.

Join the [Mentor Network](#) to contact alumni with experience on the labour market and ask them for advice. More than 1200 alumni are happy to help you!

## Jelle on finding an internship via Leiden University's Mentor Network

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## Admission and Application

We invite motivated students from around the world to apply for the Master of Arts in Asian Studies. Admission requirements may vary per specialisation, please visit the specialisation of your interest to find out more about the entry requirements.

- [Chinese Studies](#)
- [East Asian Studies](#)
- [History, Arts and Culture of Asia](#)
- [Japanese Studies](#)
- [Korean Studies](#)
- [Politics, Society and Economy of Asia](#)
- [South Asian Studies](#)
- [Southeast Asian Studies](#)

# Student life

Your time at Leiden is about more than just studying. Some of your best experiences will stem from being a part of our lively and diverse student community, as well as from life in the beautiful city of Leiden.

## International Student Associations

Leiden has several student organisations that specifically cater for international students. These associations organise regular social events and activities that help create the strong sense of community that exists within our international student body. The main two organisations are:

### Erasmus Student Network Leiden (ESN)

[ESN Leiden](#) is an international student organisation which hosts a range of activities and programmes. They also have a buddy programme which provides new students with the right support to assimilate into Leiden and the university.

### AEGEE Leiden

[AEGEE](#) is a leading European student association with sister organisations in over 40 countries across Europe. AEGEE organises many activities in Leiden, from dinners and pool nights to boat trips and guest lectures.

For an overview of all of our student associations, please visit our [Student associations page](#).

## Humanities Master's Buddy Programme

The Humanities Master's Buddy Programme has been set up by the Faculty of Humanities to help all students who are new to the university to integrate quickly and easily into university life. You will be matched to a buddy who can help you out with your academic and practical questions. Additionally you will be able to attend fun monthly activities and make friends from all over the world.

For more information about the Buddy Programme, please visit the [Humanities Buddy Programme page](#).

## Welcome and orientation programme

In August and February each year, Leiden University hosts the English-language [Orientation Week Leiden \(OWL\)](#), which welcomes both international and Dutch students. The OWL is an excellent way to get to know Leiden University, the city, and other students.

## Life in Leiden

Picturesque and the perfect size, Leiden is the ideal place to spend your university days. The Faculty of Humanities is located within the heart of the city, where dozens of cafes, shops and bars line its historic laneways and leafy canals. Small enough to run into familiar faces, but big enough to keep offering surprises – you will treasure your time at Leiden. And for adventures further afield, the major cities of The Hague and Amsterdam are a short train ride away, along with Schiphol Airport, which is just half an hour away by train.

Our study and student associations organise a huge variety of social, cultural, and study events to keep you busy all year round. You can also join the University Sports Centre, which offers scheduled group sports and fitness classes, among other activities.

The study associations related to Asian Studies:

[A.S.I.A. \(Asian Studies International Association\)](#) for all students of Asian Studies. Contact via [asialeiden@gmail.com](mailto:asialeiden@gmail.com).

## Information activities

Get to know us through our online and in-person events for prospective students!



Two speakers at the open day

Are you thinking about joining this Master's programme, and want to determine if it will be the right fit for you? Below, you can browse the events that we have coming up, and sign up to experience Leiden University and the programme for yourself. Alternatively, take a look at the Master Talks videos to find out more about the programme or check out our virtual campus tours!

## Upcoming events

### Master's Open Days

The next [Master's Open Day](#) will take place on 16 February 2024. You can also still watch the recordings of all the presentations from the last Online Open Days. The videos can be found on the [Master Talks page](#).

## Master Talks: Programme videos

On the [Master Talks: programme videos platform](#) you can find videos for each master's programme. This includes a video which gives a short introduction to the programme. You can also find the recording of the Master's Online Open Days of 5-6 October and watch the programme presentation on the platform.

## Get to know the campus

Check out our virtual campus tours, filmed in 360 degrees – by dragging the video, you can look around at the surroundings yourself. Below is the video recorded at the Humanities faculty, where most of your lectures will take place; you can also view other 360 campus tours of the various university faculties [here](#).

## 360 Campus tour: the Humanities faculty

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## Contact

If you have a question, there are various ways to get in touch with us.

This website and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) are the quickest ways to find an answer to many of your questions.

## Questions about the Programme

**Coordinator of studies**

Sabine van Veelen & Vera Vinck

Email: [stucoMAAS@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:stucoMAAS@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

## Questions about the application procedure, tuition fees and scholarships

**Student Affairs Front Office**

Phone: +31 (0)71 527 80 11

Email: [Contact form](#)

Or visit their [website](#)

**Visiting address**

Leiden: Plexus Student Centre

Kaiserstraat 25, ground floor

2311 GN Leiden

Monday to Friday between 11.00 and 16.00, Tuesday between 11.00 and 17.30.