

# York Centre for Asian Research 2013 Award Recipients

Graduate training is one of the four key elements in the York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR) mandate. Over the past eight years, YCAR has provided 37 awards to graduate students at York University to support their language training and research fieldwork in Asia and the Diaspora.

The **2013 YCAR Awards** support Khmer, Hindi, Thai and Urdu language studies, and fieldwork in Thailand, India and Israel.

In 2013, YCAR also announced its **YCAR Professional Development Fund** and 11 recipients were funded in 2012.2013 year. For more information, visit:

[www.yorku.ca/yicar/Awards/YCAR\\_Awards.html](http://www.yorku.ca/yicar/Awards/YCAR_Awards.html).

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**Alyssa Brierley** is the recipient of the 2013 Vivienne Poy Asian Research Award. She is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science at York University. She completed her Juris Doctor at Osgoode Hall Law School with a specialization in International, Transnational and Comparative Law and was called to the Bar of Ontario in 2010 after articling in the litigation department of a national, full-service law firm. She also has a master's degree in Political Science from York and a BA in Economics and



Political Science from the University of Waterloo . She is a 2012 Graduate Fellow with the Nathanson Centre on Transnational Human Rights, Crime and Security and is an active Board and Committee Member of various national and community-based organizations, including Family Services of Toronto, Community Living Toronto and the Red Cross.

The award funds will assist Alyssa in her dissertation fieldwork in India this summer. Her dissertation, titled: "Public Interest Litigation as a Development Strategy: An Examination of the Campaigns for the Right to Food, Health and Housing in India" will explore how and to what effect litigation has been used to further development policy objectives by expanding access to primary and emergency health care, housing and food. She will be interviewing lawyers and litigants involved in relevant court cases, actors from various non-governmental and legal aid organizations, social workers, researchers and academics. Specifically, her research explores how jurisprudence has been translated into tangible policy and legislative changes in the areas of access to food, health and housing.

The **Vivienne Poy Asian Research Award** is named for the Honourable Dr. Vivienne Poy and assists a graduate student in fulfilling the fieldwork requirement for the Graduate Diploma in Asian Studies. YCAR is very grateful for Dr. Poy's continued support for this award, which she recently endowed to further enhance YCAR's support for student research in the future.

A video of Alyssa speaking about her award can be found here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fx6HyIUya5A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fx6HyIUya5A).

Alyssa is also the recipient of a **YCAR Language Award**. Alyssa began Hindi language classes in September 2012 and will be continuing her language training while she is in India doing her fieldwork.

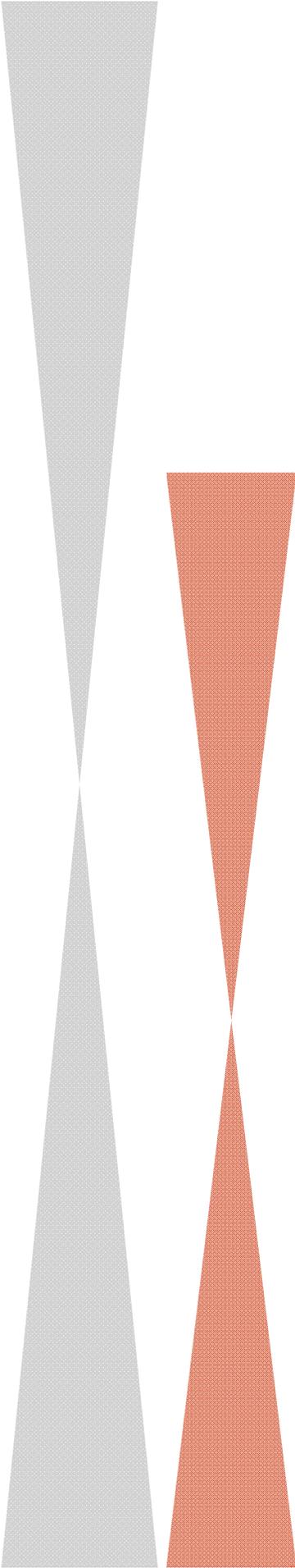


**Alison Brydges**, a master's candidate in Human Geography, is recipient of the Albert C. W. Chan Foundation Fellowship. She is focusing on the power dynamics between coffee producers and companies in order to identify the extent of farmers' involvement in decision-making processes. Through her engagement with local farmers, Alison is investigating how their influence over negotiations may impact their ability to fully capture the potential benefits of fair trade.

Alison completed a BA Honors Specialization in Anthropology from Western University prior to entering the graduate programme at York. Her research interests include political ecology, alternative food networks, agrarian change and rural poverty.

The **Albert C.W. Chan Foundation Fellowship** was established by the to encourage and assist York University graduate students to conduct field research in East and/or Southeast Asia. With the support of the fellowship, Alison Brydges is currently in Thailand conducting research on fair trade practices in the north of the country.

Alison was also the recipient of a **YCAR Language Award**. While in Chiang Rai, Alison is taking Thai language classes, which will aid her master's research and will facilitate future work in the region.



**Kasim Tirmizey**, a doctoral student in environmental studies, will be using his language award to develop his Urdu language skills, allowing him to take full advantage of archival materials in this language that are relevant to his research. Kasim is interested in agrarian political economy, social theory, and state theory. His PhD research on the neoliberalization of agriculture in Pakistan examines the ways in which imperialism, colonialism, class struggle, and ecology constitute the post-colonial state.



As a recipient of the YCAR Language Award, **Laura Schoenberger** will study Khmer with a tutor in Phnom Penh as she prepares for in-depth field research. This award builds upon previous YCAR funding that enabled her to study intermediate university-level Khmer at the Southeast Asian Summer Studies Institute (SEASSI) at University Wisconsin-Madison in 2012. Laura is a PhD candidate in the Department of Geography. Her dissertation research examines recent changes to land control in Cambodia and the counter-movements that have emerged to assert local rights to land. She has an MA in Geography from McGill University and a BA in International Development Studies. Before starting her PhD, Laura worked as a Research Advisor in Cambodia, for the United Nations in Lao PDR, for environmental non-governmental organizations in Vietnam and Cambodia, and for Canada's International Development Research Centre in Ottawa and Singapore.



**Guillaume Dandurand**'s areas of research are: political economy, political ecology, capitalisms, theories of development, actor-network theory, the concepts of governmentality and habitus, as well as the food imaginaries and materialities. His doctoral project seeks to ethnographically examine the ways in which "the economy" is connected to practices and meanings of food security in New Delhi. Guillaume's

main site of research is the Targeted Public Distribution System, a 50-year-old programme of food distribution managed by the central government in India. His fieldwork in New Delhi will primarily be conducted in Hindi and the YCAR Language Award will allow him to attend the South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison this summer.

**Alyssa Brierley** and **Alison Brydges** also received YCAR Language Award funding.

The **YCAR Language Award**, first awarded in 2007, supports graduate students in fulfilling the language requirement for the Graduate Diploma in Asian Studies (GDAS) while at the same time facilitating the awardees' masters or doctoral-level research. Aside from Alyssa and Alison, three other students received language training funding in 2013.

YCAR is also pleased to announce that for the first time, an undergraduate student has been awarded the David Wurfel Award.

**Allison Magpayo** recently completed her undergraduate studies in the Individualized Studies Honours BA programme and the certificate in Refugee and Migration Studies. The David Wurfel Award supported her honours thesis fieldwork, completed in December 2012, on the politics of nationalism, belonging, and citizenship among Filipino migrant domestic workers in Israel. Based on observation and formal interviews with Filipino migrants in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Allison's work discusses the ways in which Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) narrate their own migration stories and negotiate belonging within Israeli society. Her research pays special attention to the experiences of Filipino children born and raised in Israel. By sharing the self-styled histories of Filipinos in Israel, Allison hopes to move beyond descriptions of OFWs as mere victims of globalization to promote a more varied understanding that validates the agency and resistance of Filipinos as transnational migrants working within the structural limits of migration regimes. She also hopes that her research will contribute to the wider debate on the meaning of citizenship and shed light on the complex experiences of transnational families. Allison plans to join the graduate programme in Geography at York in September 2013.



The **David Wurfel Award** was established in 2006 by Dr. David Wurfel, who passed away in 2012. He wanted to contribute to the emergence of a new generation of Filipino leadership that is grounded in the country's history, culture and public affairs. Dr. Wurfel was a Philippine specialist who received his PhD from Cornell University's Southeast Asia Program. For more on Dr. Wurfel's lifetime contributions to Philippine Studies, and his support of the field at York, visit <http://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2013/02/07/passings-david-wurfel-best-known-for-definitive-works-on-philippine-politics/>.

For more information about YCAR Awards and its professional development fund for graduate students, please visit:

[www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/YCAR\\_Awards.html](http://www.yorku.ca/ycar/Awards/YCAR_Awards.html).

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