

Taiwan and Sinology Seminar Series

October 11-November 25, 2013

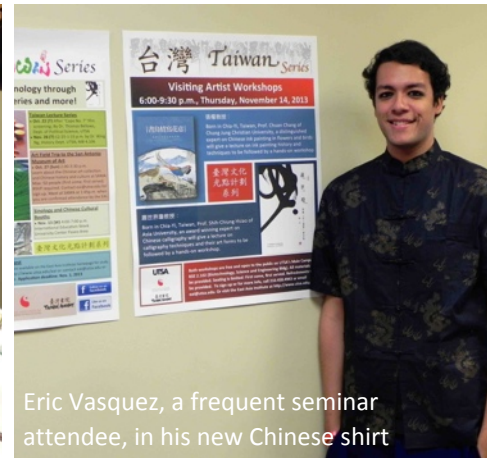
臺灣與漢學講座



Sulin Su next to the tea set leads a Chinese tea ceremony session



Calligraphy session



Eric Vasquez, a frequent seminar attendee, in his new Chinese shirt

Learning about Taiwan and Sinology through roundtable discussions

UTSA's East Asia Institute (EAI) hosted weekly seminars of Taiwanese Culture and Sinology for the last eight weeks as part of the Taiwan Series with a generous grant from the Taiwan Academy. Discussion topics included history, geography, pop culture, tea ceremony, calligraphy, food, economy, and religions led and facilitated by Sulin Su, Lecture of Chinese at UTSA and Program Coordinator of the EAI. On the average, each seminar was attended by 8-10 participants weekly.

In this language and culture roundtable, Su used multimedia presentations and offered

participants opportunities to practice their Chinese language skills. The attendees learned about Taiwan from a wide array of angles through discussions.

The 1st seminar covered Taiwan's history with a discussion of Taiwan and Chinese history and culture. Afterwards, participants compared similarities and differences between their cultures. Further, Su presented the similarities of the historical background between that of Texas and Taiwan. With this information, attendees managed to feel connected.

The 2nd seminar covered the geography of Taiwan. Su used visual

aids to show participants the geography of China and Taiwan. Different Chinese dialects were also introduced and practiced.

The Pop culture of Taiwan was the main focus of the 3rd



Part of the Taiwan Series

Sponsored by the Taiwan Academy & UTSA' East Asia Institute

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"The East Asia Institute hopes to build a bridge between the U.S. and Taiwan through the Taiwan Series events, a diverse approach to understanding Chinese Studies."

Mimi Yu, Associate Director, East Asia Institute



Learning about Taiwan and Sinology through seminars

seminar. Su discussed the two pronunciation systems, 注音 (phonetic) verses 拼音 (Pinyin).

Participants also compared some words in classic Chinese, simplified Chinese, and Japanese. In addition, participants also learned how to introduce themselves in Mandarin Chinese. Taiwanese culture under the democratic political system was also introduced.

Tea Ceremony was introduced at the 4th seminar. Su explained the essence of the Chinese tea ceremony, which is about humanity, love, care, and equality. Traditional Chinese music was played in the background throughout the demonstration while she introduced the tea tools, tea set, and the process of making a cup of tea, step by step. The whole group also meditated when the tea was steeping.

The 5th seminar was on Calligraphy. To help aid discussion, Su wrote traditional, simplified, and Japanese characters on the whiteboard. Different styles of Chinese calligraphy were presented and the attendees were asked to compare the shapes. The participants analyzed special characters into three parts and then combined them

to examine the culture of patience, tolerance, and endurance. The attendees were also given the chance to practice writing Chinese characters using a brush pen and ink.

Food was the main topic for the 6th seminar. Su demonstrated how to cook tangyuan, rice balls made of rice flour and water. Tangyuan is a homophone of tuanyuan, a metaphor for family union. Chinese families eat tangyuan at family gatherings such as at New Year's celebration. Jiaozi (dumplings) was also served that typically consists of ground meat and/or with vegetable filling wrapped in a thinly rolled piece of dough. Jiaozi often resemble as yuanbao, silver or gold ingot. Those who eat jiaozi are said to bring good fortune. After practicing writing these dishes' names in Chinese, participants savored the food.

To start up the 7th seminar, Su showed a video named "Economy of Taiwan" as Taiwan has one of the biggest economies in the world. Taiwan is known for computer manufacturing, especially in wafer production used in computer motherboards. In addition, Taiwan is known for developing flat panel displays. Major industries such as electronics industry and yacht

industry, marine economy, were also covered. Su explained that Taiwan also has economic issues like other developed countries. Taiwan outsources labor intensive industries to countries like China and Vietnam, where they provide cheap labor. Immigrant issues were also part of the discussion.

Chinese philosophies and religions practiced in Taiwan were covered at the 8th and final seminar. Attendees shared their own philosophy on life and Confucianism, Legalism, Taoism, and Mohism were introduced. Due to Taiwan's multicultural historical background and freedom for religions is allowed, the religion beliefs in Taiwan are diverse. The majority of people in Taiwan practice a blend of Buddhism, Taoism, and Chinese folk religion.

"The seminars have been fun and informative," said Sheldon Washington, a student taking Asia related classes at UTSA. "I learned a lot!" Yao Chen from China has also been a regular at the seminar. "The seminars have given me the opportunities to exchange ideas with students from UTSA, which is valuable to my understanding of the U.S. culture."