

Richard J. Samuels Dissertation Award in Japanese Studies

Now Accepting Nominations

The United States-Japan Foundation invites departments to nominate outstanding dissertations for the 2026 Samuels Award – honoring excellence in social science research on contemporary Japan. The award recognizes dissertations that use Japanese sources and social science methods to offer fresh insights into Japan's contemporary politics, economy, or social relations.

The Award

\$2,500 Honorarium

Plus an invitation to present at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, March 2027.

Eligible Fields

Anthropology, economics, history, political science, psychology, sociology, and related fields, including demography, finance, and global/regional studies.

U.S. citizenship is not required.



“I am proud to be associated with the USJF’s effort to honor excellent research in Japanese Studies. It is my hope that this initiative will draw attention to important work by promising young scholars and deepen the public’s understanding of contemporary Japan.”

– Richard J. Samuels, MIT

2025 Inaugural Awardee

Qiaoyan Li Rosenberg (PhD, UCLA Sociology) received the inaugural award for her original research on labor migration programs in Japan. Dr. Rosenberg is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard’s Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies.



Submission Guidelines

- Dissertations accepted between **January 1, 2025** and **June 13, 2026** are eligible.
- Nominations must be submitted by a department head or academic dean – self-nominations are not accepted.
- Each department may nominate up to **two dissertations**.
- Submit a PDF of the dissertation plus a cover letter detailing its contributions.
- Winner announced by September 1, 2026.

Learn more about the award here

