

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



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Gilbert Friedell Rozman



Gil Rozman, the Musgrave Professor of Sociology, is retiring after fifty years of association with Princeton. Gil first studied at Princeton as a junior in 1963-64. He went on to graduate from Carleton College and returned to Princeton, where he was awarded a Ph.D. in sociology in 1971.

Gil is arguably unique in his combination of interdisciplinary and regional interests. He has produced scholarship and taught in sociology, regional studies, and international relations. Simultaneously, he has written about China, Russia, Japan, and Korea. His own description is as a “Northeastasianist,” and he has played a major role in making that part of the world the subject of scholarly and policy attention.

Three formative experiences helped shape Gil’s career. As a teenager, he won a contest sponsored by the *Minneapolis Star*. This competition to see who could demonstrate the most extensive knowledge of global and national affairs gave Gil a chance to visit Washington, D.C., where he met his two senators (Eugene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey), Lyndon Baines Johnson, and John F. Kennedy. After that there was no going back! The next step occurred when he attended Princeton’s Critical Languages Program his junior year, when he was able to study Russian and Chinese and began his life-long devotion to language learning as the foundation for research into how others see the world. Finally, while in graduate school, Gil studied Japanese and found three mentors whose work pointed the way to his future efforts. Fritz Mote encouraged scholarship on China while Marius Jansen did the same for Japan. An undergraduate course with Marion Levy had originally stimulated his interest in comparing the two societies.

In the first decade of his career, Gil focused on the pre-modern urbanization of China, Japan, and Russia and on their subsequent modernization. He developed a framework for comparing levels of development prior to the nineteenth century, and he stressed the importance

of the pre-modern legacy for modernization. The volume on Chinese modernization was translated twice in the mid-1980s and attracted particular attention among students in China. In the 1980s, Gil's interests shifted towards more contemporary times and particularly to the study of how each of these societies perceived the other, especially in light of the changes begun in China following Mao Zedong's death. This included volumes on Soviet perceptions of China and Chinese perceptions of the Soviet Union, as well as Japanese perceptions of the Soviet transition and decline.

In the 1990s, Gil responded to the end of the Cold War by immersing himself in new debates about establishing regionalism in Asia. He looked at multiple levels, from cross-border ties to bilateral relations to struggles between different strategies to reorder the region with or without the involvement of the United States. Eventually, this led him to expand to Korean studies and to explore new frameworks of analysis. The most important of these is national identity studies, which he has sought to systematize and establish as the approach most useful for understanding the region. His books since 2000 include: a five-volume series on strategic thought toward Asia; a three-volume series on national identities; three books emphasizing Korea's centrality; and recent studies of Chinese foreign policy and how it is made, as well as U.S. leadership, history, and bilateral relations. Among these are books that he edited with the object of maximizing cohesion among the best-informed specialists. Coming full circle, while his junior paper made a stab at understanding Chinese thinking behind the Sino-Soviet debate in the shadow of anti-Americanism, his latest book applies the concept of a national identity gap to the Sino-Russian "embrace" in the shadow of demonization of the United States and its Asian allies.

In addition to his tremendous scholarly production, Gil has been a dedicated teacher and mentor, and an exceptional University citizen. He has taken greatest satisfaction from advising senior theses, ranging across five departments, and most recently he has worked closely with students in courses titled "Strategic Asia" and "National Identities and Great Powers," guiding them in using sources in foreign languages. Within the University, Gil led the initial efforts to globalize Princeton

through his leadership of the Council on Regional Studies and as the chair of the Faculty Committee on International Experience in Undergraduate Education. The University's more recent successes with internationalization owe much to Gil's efforts. In the sociology department, Gil was director of graduate studies for more than fifteen years and also served as acting chair.

Gil's scholarship and leadership have been recognized with various awards, including grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Science Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, National Council for Soviet and East European Research, United States Institute of Peace, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Korea Foundation, and the United States-Japan Foundation. He has been a frequent visitor and lecturer at several major universities in Asia.

Gil is now retiring to Washington, D.C., and is increasingly involved in public and policy debates regarding national security and relations in Northeast Asia. The four countries that preoccupy him are drawing new scrutiny that is bound to keep him busy even when he misses the wonderful stimulation of the exceptional students he had the privilege to teach and advise at Princeton.