

April 2025

Volume 3

BRIDGES 2.0

Asian American Studies Program Newsletter

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AAS Staff:
Lisa Ho, Timothy Yu & Jessica Montez

Letter from the Editors

Another year, another issue of *Bridges 2.0*. The 2024-2025 AY has been a busy one for Asian American Studies. Our program continues to thrive with a growing number of certificate students, co-sponsored events, and new faculty. We welcomed a new faculty member, Dr. Rachel Kuo, who is also jointly appointed in Gender and Women's Studies. The program had the pleasure of two directors this year: Peggy Choy and Tim Yu. Professor Choy served as a director during the Fall; her presence steadied us for a successful beginning of the academic year. Professor Yu took over in the Spring and has already picked up the pace to ensure a successful end to the academic year. We co-sponsored many exciting events with campus partners at the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Student Center, and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and welcomed talented writers and poets, such as Eddie Ahn and Mai Der Vang. Our recruit of new program ambassadors added so much energy to the program, and we've had successful study breaks and graduate student events. We are also grateful to have graduate program assistants this year: Xuan Nguyen and Elaine Almeida. They were essential to the everyday work needed to run the program; we appreciate them both very much. We are so grateful to all the faculty, staff, collaborators, and students that have contributed to the growth and success of the Asian American Studies Program. As such, we will return next Spring with another issue of *Bridges 2.0* chronicling more success and progress!

Editors: Lisa Ho, Jessica Montez, and Xuan Nguyen



Letter from the Director

Greetings,

It's been a tremendous honor to return this year as director of the Asian American Studies Program. When I last served in this position nearly a decade ago, I often characterized our program as small but scrappy: we had few resources, but we had dedicated faculty and staff, passionately committed students, and a supportive community. As I step back into the director's role, I'm awed by how our program has grown. In the past decade, we've doubled our faculty strength, welcomed new staff and affiliates, and witnessed astonishing growth in our certificate program, with a record 85 students enrolled in the certificate in Fall 2024. Our program, in short, isn't as small as it once was, but that same spirit of commitment and community continues to bring us all together. I'm indebted to the work of my predecessors as director, who have shepherded the program through this period of unprecedented growth. I want to recognize the work of Professor Peggy Choy, who served admirably as interim director during Fall 2024.



One of the most impressive changes is the growing scope and diversity of our curriculum. Some of the exciting courses we offered in 2024-25 included Critical Refugee Studies, The Pursuit of (Asian American) Happiness, Asian American Literary and Popular Culture, Southeast Asian Memory and Trauma, Hmong American Aesthetics and Culture, Eating Asian America, and Asian American Sports. We continue to expand our course offerings in support of the HMoob American Studies emphasis in our certificate program, from Hmong American Experiences in the U.S. to Hmong Refugee History.

It's been a great year for Asian American film on campus. In October, Madison's Asian American Media Spotlight featured the films *Smoking Tigers* and *Chaperone*, and this spring, we're co-sponsoring the Wisconsin Film Festival's presentation of the remake of *The Wedding Banquet*. We've also continued our popular study breaks, in conjunction with the APIDA Student Center, offering students treats, games, and career advice.

As we look back on the year, I want to acknowledge that these have been challenging times for the study of race and ethnicity. As I often remind my students, we have always had to fight for Asian American studies, and the critical perspectives offered by our field have never been more needed than they are now. I am tremendously proud of our program's history and of the decades of activism by students, staff, faculty, and community members that have gotten us to where we are today. Building on that history, our program will continue to provide a space to deeply and fearlessly explore the histories, cultures, struggles, and contributions of Asian Americans.

Timothy Yu
Director, Asian American Studies

New AASP Faculty



Dr. Rachel Kuo

(she/her/hers)

Assistant Professor

Gender & Women's Studies

Asian American Studies

University of WI-Madison

Dr. Rachel Kuo is trained in media and communication studies and her research focuses on the relationship between race, politics, and technology, with an emphasis on feminist and abolitionist social movements. Her first book, *Movement Media: In Pursuit of Solidarity* traces the relationship between media, the making of political formations, and collective politics.

She defines movement media as the broad array of media forms produced and circulated by and within social movements for organizing purposes, from public zines and newsletters to the behind-the-scenes work of meeting notes and agendas, coalition invitation letters, and more. Dr. Kuo is interested in processes of how people build alignment and consensus, including how they move through disagreement. A new direction of her research looks at cross-diasporic politics and intergenerational solidarity through the lens of transnational media and information networks. Much of Dr. Kuo's research is developed in collaboration with different community partners. She is currently working closely with the Alliance for Filipino Immigrant Rights and Empowerment (AFIRE) Chicago and Filipino Young Leaders Program (FYLPRO) on a project on how memory undergirds people's political analysis and media engagement. She approaches research from the lens of Asian American feminism to understand how we theorize and practice politics that can be mobilized at particular moments in time, under particular social-material conditions. She is also interested in bringing feminist abolition and Asian Americanist critique to critical understandings of technological innovation and governance. Some of the cultural production and organizing work Dr. Kuo also been doing in the last few years is trying to push back against the ways that technological reform becomes used to enable structures of state violence.

"I am always interested in and excited by how we can build and sustain various infrastructures and practices for fostering community with one another. I hope to bring that to the program by participating in and co-creating shared spaces for learning and discussion about contemporary issues and events that impact us, as well as potentially spaces for co-creation and imagination. I see the stakes of Asian American Studies past and present as necessarily engaging questions of power in relation, that is, to contextualize and apply understandings of differential and asymmetrical dimensions of power. I am excited to think about ways to support students in translating the different histories and perspectives they engage with through readings and in the classroom to other domains and translate what they've learned into whatever journey comes next for them."

AASP Ambassador



Divinaa Raju Velmurugan

Term: Graduating Senior

Hometown: Dallas, TX

Major: Biochemistry and Neurobiology

Favorite AAHPI Snack: Samosas

“As someone who has navigated both the academic and cultural aspects of campus life, I am eager to support initiatives that promote representation, inclusivity, and dialogue around Asian American identity. I would love the opportunity to engage with peers and help shape a more inclusive campus environment.”



Anna Yu-Gaul

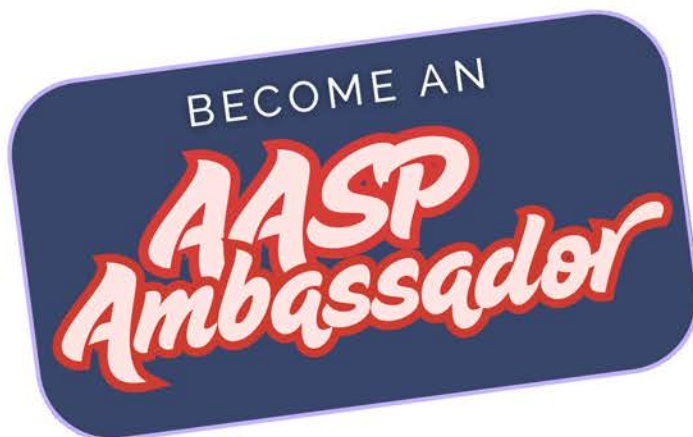
Term: Graduated Senior; working at UW Health Hospital

Hometown: Bloomington, MN

Major: Neurobiology

Favorite AAHPI Snacks: Murukku

“When I took my first Asian American studies course (AsianAm 240) in my freshman semester, I finally felt like I had a space where I could explore the full extent of my identity, and how my experiences as a mixed race Asian American compared/related to the experiences of other AAPI people in the US.”



If you love sharing your AAS enthusiasm and experiences, then please consider volunteering to become an Asian American Studies Program Ambassador! Ambassadors help plan social events, contribute to social media, and represent the program on Day of the Badger, UW-Madison student recruitment events and more.

Email us at:

asianamerican@letsci.wisc.edu

AASP Ambassador



Annabella Yang

Term: Incoming Junior

Hometown: Milwaukee, WI

Major: Consumer Behavior and Marketplace Studies

Favorite AAHPI Snack: Bunny Creamer Candy

"I had the great opportunity to be taught by many of the fabulous professors at UW-Madison and I think it's a great chance for all UW-Madison students to learn more through Asian American Studies."



Sheng Ying Vang

Term: Graduating Senior

Hometown: Wisconsin Rapids, WI

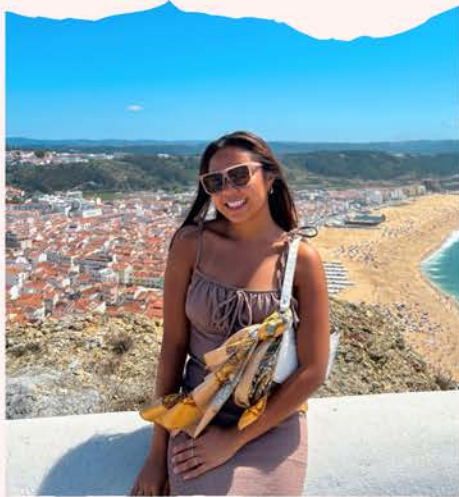
Major: Communication Arts & TV-Film and Digital Studies

Favorite AAHPI Snack: Shrimp chips

"The Asian American Studies Program has encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone! This program has inspired me to teach others and help others explore more and go beyond."



Why Asian American Studies?



Catherine Mauleon

Class of 2025

Major: Biology

"I declared a certificate in Asian American Studies because I wanted to learn more about my Filipino roots and the Asian American history since classes in high school more heavily focused on European colonization and immigration, lacking information on other minority groups. I want to apply the knowledge I learned within the Asian American courses to my future career and become a more culturally competent individual overall."



Marvin Yang

Class of 2025

Major: Human Development/ Family Studies & Environmental Studies

"I declared this certificate because I wanted to have an emphasis on Asian American families and how the surrounding environments impact their family structure and personal behaviors."



Annabella Yang

Class of 2026

Major: Consumer Behavior and Marketplace Studies

"I declared a certificate in Asian American Studies because as a first-generation Hmong daughter, I wanted to learn more about my culture and access resources that were not available to me. I have always heard stories from my family and coming to UW-Madison, I was excited to see the options of Asian American classes."

Why Asian American Studies?



Niti Patel

Class of 2026

Major: Biology and Global Health

“Growing up, I rarely saw meaningful representation of Asian American experiences, especially as Indian American myself. The certificate has deepened my understanding of the diversity within Asian American communities and the social, political, and historical factors that have shaped their experiences. It ties into my interest in global health especially when discussing issues like healthcare disparities, immigration, and barriers that affect access to care.”



Scy Yang

Class of 2025

Major: Rehabilitation Psychology

“I declared an Asian American certificate because I was already interested in the Asian Am courses when I got to UW. I already took classes that counted before I found out I could declare an official certificate with just two more courses. It was eye opening to be able to take a course entirely focused on Asian culture and experiences, I felt more connected with myself after.”



Chan Phung

Class of 2027

Major: Anthropology

“As an Anthropology major, I am drawn to the study of human cultures, histories, languages, and their relation to identity and community. My decision to pursue an certificate in Asian American Studies stems from a desire to explore these themes through the lens of my own Vietnamese American identity. By integrating anthropology with Asian American perspectives, I can deepen my understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity while also gaining insight into the historical and contemporary context that shapes these narratives.”

Why Asian American Studies?



Anna Jyi

Class of 2026

Major: Political Science, English

"At first I enrolled in a couple Asian American Studies courses for fun and out of my own personal interest, but I quickly became more passionate about the course content that I was learning in my classes, more specifically in Hmong studies classes. I declared a Certificate in Asian American Studies because the ability and opportunity for students to be represented in the classroom and beyond is an important value to me."



Lilly Varilla

Class of 2025

Major: Communication Sciences & Rhetorical Studies

"I declared an AAS certificate to better understand and explore elements of my identity that are important to me including community, culture, connection, and coalition. By being able to reflect on the multifaceted Asian American community and beyond, the certificate has enabled me to think more critically, act with greater empathy, and identify with a greater sense of pride as an Asian American."



Michelle Yang

Class of 2025

Major: Marketing, Finance, & RMI

"I was inspired by an Asian American class I took my freshman year. I love exploring the depths of my own background and through this certificate I was able to explore systematic oppression through learning history, the beauty of community, and my own understanding of what it means to be an Asian American."

Featured Graduating Senior

Anna Yu Gaul



Why did you declare the Asian American Studies certificate?

The Asian American identity is incredibly diverse, in our cultural practices, immigration paths and general lived experiences in the States. This provides a unique forum for discussing the intersections of race, class, colonialism and citizenship—all essential components for understanding how our systems and structures operate. I wanted to pursue this field to supplement my pre-med courses; people and patient care make up the core of medicine, and I believe that Asian Am courses equipped me with the language and history to better serve an increasingly diverse community.

How has your certificate contributed to your time at UW-Madison?

Asian Am courses provided the space for me to engage with topics I hadn't had the opportunity to discuss in high school. My first course, AsianAm240 with Dr. Ho, changed my experience at UW. Finding language to describe the systems and patterns I saw while growing up in a multicultural household was empowering and helped me better understand my own family and identity, as well as the world around me.

How do you hope to use your certificate in the future?

I hope to use the knowledge I gained from my Asian Am certificate to provide person-centered and culturally competent care in my future career. By using frameworks like racial triangulation, I am better equipped to understand how our systems disadvantage BIPOC communities, and how to identify methods for countering these biases that present in healthcare-specific settings.

What would be the one piece of advice you would leave to your fellow Asian American Studies peers?

Take advantage of the opportunity to immerse yourself in each course! APIDA identities are not monolithic; they are diverse and nuanced, so make sure you are not solely focusing on the perspective of just one community. Push yourself to dive further into the intersections of multi-faceted identities, and recognize when, where and why certain stories are not fully or authentically portrayed. Also, use these courses to build connections with your peers, and be that support system for each other!

Graduate Student Spotlight



GRADUATE RESEARCH IN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



Gloria Pham

Ph.D. Student, English & Literary Studies

My research interests focus on contemporary Asian American literature, Critical Refugee & Diaspora Studies, and Transnational Feminism. In particular, I am interested in how diasporic Vietnamese writers and artists theorize refugeeism through frameworks that advance decolonial solidarity, critique protectionist and humanitarian rhetoric, and foreground refugees as agents of knowledge and cultural production.



Tracy C. Guan

Ph.D. Candidate, Counseling Psychology

To address the dearth of literature on Asian American graduate women, my programmatic agenda explores their gendered racialized experiences in graduate-level health service psychology training (clinical, counseling, school psychology). My dissertation took a subgroup focus to examine critical incidents and gendered racism for East Asian American women in doctoral-level health psychology training using a 15-week diary method across an academic semester. I am deeply committed to creating liberatory training environments across multiple contexts of psychology training (e.g., teaching, advising, supervision) for Asian American graduate women.

Graduate Student Spotlight



GRADUATE RESEARCH IN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



Nabiha Mansoor

Ph.D. Candidate, English & Literary Studies

My dissertation, “The Terror Underneath: Visualizing Muslims Post-9/11,” develops a theory of Muslim racialization and outlines the place of “Muslim,” a religious affiliation, in and for Asian American Studies. “The Terror Underneath” engages art and literature by a wide range of identities impacted by Muslim racialization from Divya Victor and the Nation of Islam to Hala Alyan and Hasan Minhaj. My archive consists of poetry, literature, film, visual art, photography, and stand-up comedy. Through close readings across my archive, I explore how Muslim American artists characterize, and contest, Muslim racialization as an oppressive gaze which relentlessly searches for evidence of hidden terrorist intent.



Brand D. Nakashima

Ph.D. Candidate, History

I am writing my dissertation on the afterlife of the displacement and internment of Japanese Peruvians by the United States (1942–1947) by examining the transnational impact of state-based violence and community-based healing from the internees' release to the present. Drawing on oral histories and archival sources, my research explores how grassroots activism and community-building have served as tools of resistance to erasure across national borders. . My upcoming research trip to Peru will examine how internment shaped the resettlement of those who were able to return to Peru and how they connected with friends and family in the U.S.

Graduate Student Spotlight

GRADUATE RESEARCH IN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



Shreya Singh

M.S., Ph.D. Student, Counseling Psychology

I am currently pursuing two research projects that aim to understand the wellness experiences of South Asian women in higher education. One of my research projects explores wellness through a cultural framework and explores the role of mind-body wellness in addressing wellness while exploring higher education. My second academic project explores the conversations South Asian students have regarding mental health with their community, including family, friends, and peers. My dissertation continues to build on these projects as I aim to explore the conceptualization of wellness among Indian women residing in India.



Jyotsa (Joy) Dhar

M.A., LPC, Ph.D. Student, Counseling Psychology

In partnership with Mann Mukti chapter at UW-Madison, a student-led organization which facilitates conversations about South Asian mental health, belonging, and identity, I work with other researchers under the direction of Dr. Alberta Gloria to examine how South Asian students broach conversations around mental health across various domains (community, family, university settings, etc). This research will provide UW-Mann Mukti with data for improved programming while offering "bottom-up" insights to mental health providers serving South Asian students and student-led organizations at UW-Madison and beyond.

Graduate Student Spotlight



GRADUATE RESEARCH IN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



Cherise Fung

Ph.D. Student, English & Literary Studies

My research rethinks the representation of Asian women in the global care chain in relation to human rights discourses. A rights-based approach—itself a legacy of colonialism—assumes the ability of the oppressed to understand the conditions of their oppression and convey that knowledge through language. This ableist assumption disavows the value of silence and absence unless it can be interpreted as a form of speech and an act of resistance. I argue that literary works offer us a different analytical method to acknowledge the value of silence without always demanding that our research subjects perform resistance that can be recognized existing political frameworks.



2025 Spring Graduate Student Luncheon facilitated by Professor Rachel Kuo



Professors Rachel Kuo and Lisa Ho



Professor Victor Jew



Amy Ling Yellow Light Awards

Integrity Award Winners



Tony DelaRosa

PhD Student

Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis



Jasmine Cheng

Junior

Human Development and Family Studies
Certificate in Asian American Studies-HMoob Emphasis

Creative Endeavour Award Winners



Katie Krause

Senior

Computer Science

Certificate in Asian American Studies

Certificate in Art



Thérèse Moua Jasperson

Third year doctoral student

Second Language Acquisition

AASP Staff Highlight

We are incredibly grateful to our student staff for their dedication in keeping the program running seamlessly and making it shine. This year, we welcomed two graduate students to our team to support administrative projects, with a special focus on marketing our events, managing social media, and enhancing website communications.

Xuan Nguyen joined as a Project Assistant for the Asian American Studies Program, playing a vital role in supporting program events, social media, communications, and more. She has been instrumental in assisting the AAS Administration staff, particularly in developing programming for both undergraduate and graduate students. Her efforts in outreach and communications have significantly boosted the program's visibility within the Asian American Studies community.

Xuan Nguyen is a graduate student in the Sociology Department with research interests in Mass Conflict & Community Trauma; Systemic Violence & Disparity; Diaspora & Transnational Studies; Political Sociology & Collective Behavior.



Elaine Almeida (she/her) has also been a tremendous asset to our website, contributing creative content, providing valuable feedback on design ideas, and assisting with graduate resources. We truly appreciate the hard work and dedication of our student staff in strengthening our program's impact!



Elaine Almeida is a doctoral candidate in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication interested in how folks of color reimagine masculinity in digital and offline spaces. In particular, she emphasizes connections within Asian American and Latinx racialization and genderings as a central site of critical liberatory inquiry. She stays with the trouble through engaging ethnic studies, posthumanist ethics of care, along with visual culture and sound studies to help weave a nuanced image of how masculine ecological becomings are facilitated and manifested.

Celebrating Our Faculty

Professor Lori Kido Lopez was appointed the Associate Dean for the Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Science in the Summer of 2024.



Professor Peggy Choy premiered her new film, "Dreams of the Abandoned Daughter: A Dance Film About the Climate Crisis" on the "The Motion Tour" this March. Professor Choy will travel to Europe with two dancers, Ze Motion and Shizu Higa, to show the film and conduct Afro Asian dance workshops.

Celebrating Our Faculty



Professor Kong Pheng Pha was awarded the “Early Career Award” by the Association of Asian American Studies (AAAS).

Professor Leslie Bow was awarded the Sally Mead Hands-Bascom Professorship in English and the College of Letters and Science. Professor Bow was invited to give talks at Duke, University of Chicago, and University of Kansas. Professor Bow also gave interviews with major news outlets like Associated Press and BBC News World Service about her work on Hello Kitty.



2025 Course Offerings

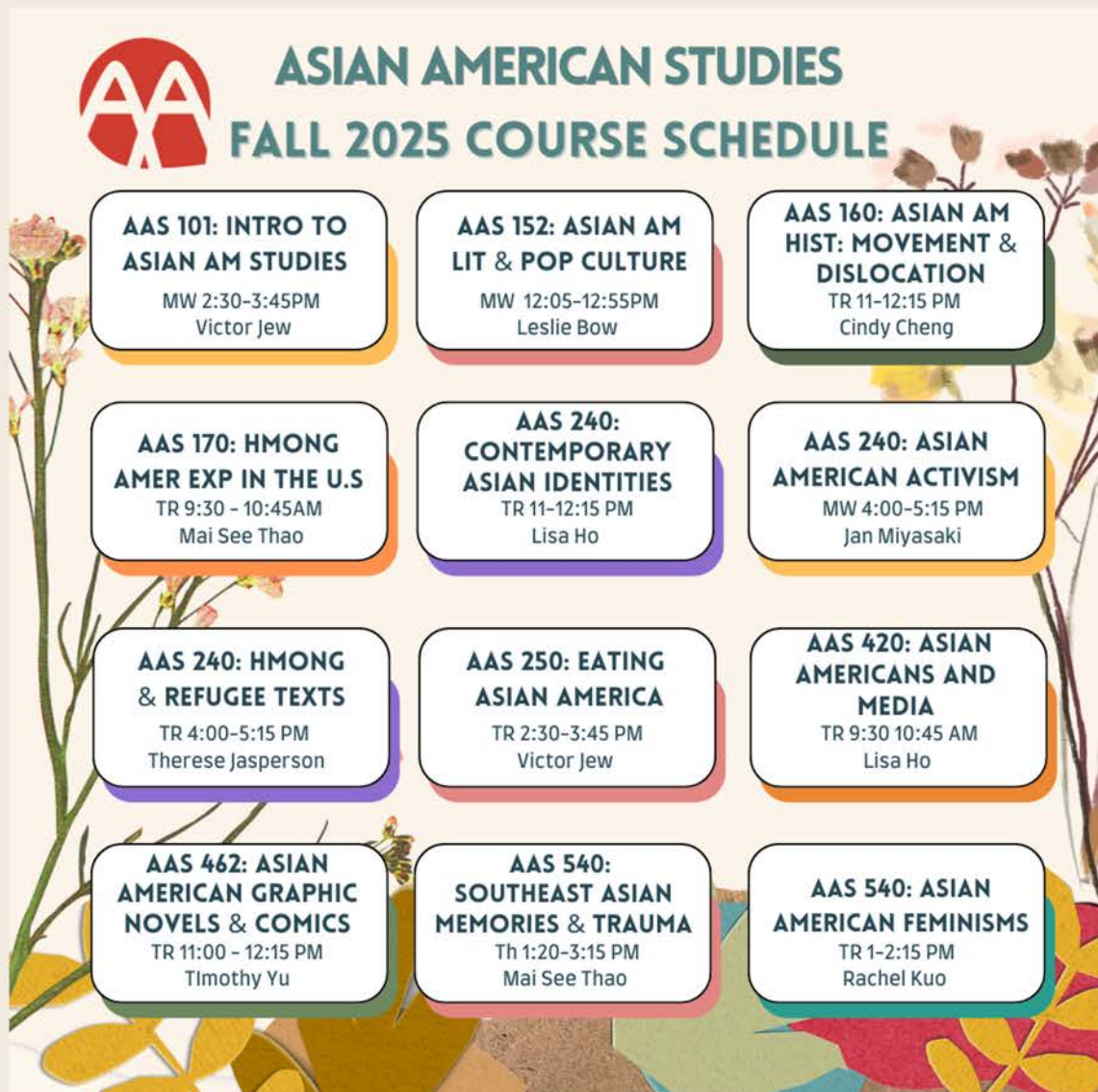
SUMMER 2025

Summer courses are offered online and asynchronous
May 19th through July 13th.

AAS 240: Contemporary Asian American History

AAS 240: Critical Refugee Studies

FALL 2025



The graphic features a grid of 12 course offerings, each in a rounded rectangular box with a colored border. The background is decorated with floral and leaf patterns. At the top left is the AA logo (two overlapping red circles). The title 'ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES FALL 2025 COURSE SCHEDULE' is centered at the top in a teal font.

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES FALL 2025 COURSE SCHEDULE		
AAS 101: INTRO TO ASIAN AM STUDIES MW 2:30-3:45PM Victor Jew	AAS 152: ASIAN AM LIT & POP CULTURE MW 12:05-12:55PM Leslie Bow	AAS 160: ASIAN AM HIST: MOVEMENT & DISLOCATION TR 11-12:15 PM Cindy Cheng
AAS 170: HMONG AMER EXP IN THE U.S TR 9:30 - 10:45AM Mai See Thao	AAS 240: CONTEMPORARY ASIAN IDENTITIES TR 11-12:15 PM Lisa Ho	AAS 240: ASIAN AMERICAN ACTIVISM MW 4:00-5:15 PM Jan Miyasaki
AAS 240: HMONG & REFUGEE TEXTS TR 4:00-5:15 PM Therese Jaspersen	AAS 250: EATING ASIAN AMERICA TR 2:30-3:45 PM Victor Jew	AAS 420: ASIAN AMERICANS AND MEDIA TR 9:30 10:45 AM Lisa Ho
AAS 462: ASIAN AMERICAN GRAPHIC NOVELS & COMICS TR 11:00 - 12:15 PM Timothy Yu	AAS 540: SOUTHEAST ASIAN MEMORIES & TRAUMA Th 1:20-3:15 PM Mai See Thao	AAS 540: ASIAN AMERICAN FEMINISMS TR 1-2:15 PM Rachel Kuo

THANK
☺ YOU





CONTACT US!



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Center for Southeast Asian Studies Friday Forum with Mai Der Vang

Left to Right: Timonhy Yu, Mai See Thao, Kong Pheng Pha, Mai Der Vang,
Chong Moua