

BRIDGES 2.0

Asian American Studies Program Newsletter

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Lori Lopez, Lisa Ho and Jessica Montez

The Tradition of Bridges Continues

In 2023, the Asian American Studies Program celebrated its 35th Anniversary. In celebration, the program revived *Bridges*, a monthly newsletter that was created by our program's founding member, Amy Ling. We decided to continue this tradition with *Bridges 2.0*. Our program continues to thrive with a growing number of certificate students, new faculty, successful programming, and supportive campus partnerships. We've recently welcomed new faculty members: Professors Mai See Thao, Kong Pheng Pha, and Paul Tran. We co-hosted Study Breaks with the APIDA Student Center and Graduate Student Luncheons. We've received substantial support from our student assistants, and there has been increased enthusiasm and engagement in our 2023-2024 AAS Ambassadors program. Our continued growth demonstrates the commitment and hard work of our certificate students, faculty, and staff. Lastly, we want to thank our director, Dr. Lori Lopez, for all her hard work and dedication to the program.

Editors: Lisa Ho, Jessica Montez, and Emma Meicher

Director's Note



It's been another wonderful year in Asian American Studies! Four years into being director, I continue to marvel at how much our small but mighty program can accomplish. Some highlights from this year for me have included seeing the overflowing attendance at our October screening of *Modern Shaman* with filmmaker Gregory Yang, connecting over pizza with our wonderful team of Asian American Studies Ambassadors, and learning about Asian Australian social media practices in a research presentation from Tisha Dejmanee.

One of the most important things we can do as a program is hire new colleagues, and this year we were lucky to have been joined by new Assistant Professors Kong Pheng Pha and Mai See Thao. Kong and Mai See both bring years of experience as researchers and instructors but also program builders, advocates, and

community connectors. As national leaders within the field of HMoob American Studies, they will continue to strengthen our focus on the HMoob American communities that make our program distinctive. The addition of these two scholars could not have been accomplished without support from our amazing students, who have always fought for the growth of HMoob American Studies here at UW-Madison.

I would also like to call attention to our thriving community of Asian American Studies graduate students. Since our program doesn't offer a graduate degree, the important role of Asian American Studies graduate students might easily go overlooked. But every year you'll see graduate students from across campus instructing in our program as Lecturers and Teaching Assistants. And for the last two years, we've been increasing our support for that community through holding Graduate Student Luncheons each semester. This spring, we featured research presentations by Nabiha Mansoor and Seungmi Laura Cho. And at this year's Association for Asian American Studies, there will be presentations by eight UW-Madison graduate students! We are thrilled to support growth in our future professoriate and love finding ways to support these important members of our scholarly community from all across campus.

Finally, it has also been a big year for thinking about the future of our Asian American Studies Program. To build on last year's decision to start moving toward one day becoming a major, we created our first Curriculum Committee. This committee has been convening with the task of closely examining our course array and asking what we would want students to have learned in order to earn a B.A. in Asian American Studies. In these challenging and rewarding conversations, we've been able to reflect as a community on what we do right now, and where we would like to head in the future. There's nothing more rewarding than having the opportunity to think critically and dream bigger alongside you all.

Lori Kido Lopez
Director, Asian American Studies

New AASP Faculty

Our HMoob American Studies professors share their insights and hopes for the future!



Dr. Mai See Thao
Assistant Professor
Anthropology and
Asian American Studies

I did my undergrad at UW-Madison and completed the Asian American Studies Certificate back in 2010. During my undergraduate studies, I was able to partake in the newer courses on Hmong Studies in the Asian American Studies Program. These courses were the byproduct of student activism along with community and faculty partnership to address racism on this campus that impacted Hmong students. These courses and my undergraduate experiences cemented the importance of the academy's responsibility to be impactful to real world problems.

I'm fortunate to be back here to continue that legacy by teaching more Hmong Studies courses and working on my research that examines Hmong health disparities as deeply connected and informed by post-refugee life and living, structural vulnerabilities, and displacement. As someone who loves to theorize about loss, ghosts, and haunting, my hope for the future of the program is a continued commitment to the past. That is, a past that remembers that Asian American Studies (of which Hmong Studies is a part of and informs the field) at UW-Madison germinated from grass roots and activist intentions, hopes, and dreams. I see myself as embodying those same affects, and I hope to contribute to that vision through my research, teaching, and my continual remembrance of this past.

New AASP Faculty

Dr. Kong Pheng Pha
Assistant Professor
Gender & Women's Studies
and Asian American Studies



My hopes for the Asian American Studies program are to build on our strengths in faculty research and our curriculum while dreaming of new ways to enhance student engagement and community partnerships. HMoob American Studies is also stronger than ever on our campus. Student interest and faculty research in this area has expanded in recent years. I hope to build on this area of strength by creating new courses, participate in research with undergraduate and graduate students, and organize on-campus talks with scholars, artists, and leaders around HMoob American Studies.

I also hope to highlight our strength in activism and social justice. Asian American Studies is a discipline with a long history of fighting for social change for all communities. Many of our own Asian American Studies certificate students are involved in a variety of social justice causes, volunteer activities, and community engagement initiatives. I strongly believe that putting our knowledge of theory, history, and society to work in clinical, organizational, or community settings should be embraced as a strength, asset, and value. I hope to contribute to that vision by creating conversations in my courses around these topics, engaging students in research on campus, and mentoring graduate students. The Asian American Studies Program has a long legacy of doing innovative work, and I am excited to see our program grow even more in the future.

AASP Ambassadors



Lili McGuffey

Term: Senior

Hometown: Madison, WI

Majors/Minors/Certifications: Data Science Major, Asian American Studies Certificate

Involvement: Datamatch UW, APIDA HM, Undergraduate Statistics Club

Preferred Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

"I found out about the Asian American Studies certificate by talking to people about their class experiences during APIDA events and that is what encouraged me to enroll in Asian American Studies."



Emma Meicher

Term: Junior

Hometown: Portage, WI

Majors/Minors/Certifications: Life Science, Communications and Communications Arts, Asian American Studies Certificate

Involvement: Badger Herald

Preferred Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

"The Asian American Studies Program has been the most impactful part of my college career, and I'm so grateful for all of the opportunities I've gained through the program."



Jessica Vong

Term: Senior

Hometown: Chicago, IL

Majors/Minors/Certifications: Animal Sciences, Global Health and Asian American Studies

Involvement: Pre-Vet Assoc., Vietnamese Student Assoc., Filipinx American Student Org.

Preferred Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

"I became an ambassador because I thoroughly enjoyed all the Asian American Studies courses that I took. I want to be able to promote and share everything that I have learned to everyone."

AASP Ambassadors



Thienthu (Jennifer) Vong

Term: Senior

Hometown: Chicago, IL

Majors/Minors/Certifications: Biochemistry, Asian American Studies

Involvement: Vietnamese Student Assoc., Filipinx American Student Org., SouthEast Asian Student Assoc.

Preferred Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

"I wanted to be able to promote this program to other people and get more people involved in the program so it could create a sense of community on campus."



Pakou Yang

Term: Freshman

Hometown: Milwaukee, WI

Majors/Minors/Certifications: Business and Psychology

Involvement: PEOPLE Scholar

Preferred Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

"I am passionate about learning new things, helping and uplifting others, and mindfulness. I use my passion to help me stay motivated and to achieve success."



Eva Zhong

Term: Junior

Hometown: Bellavue, WA

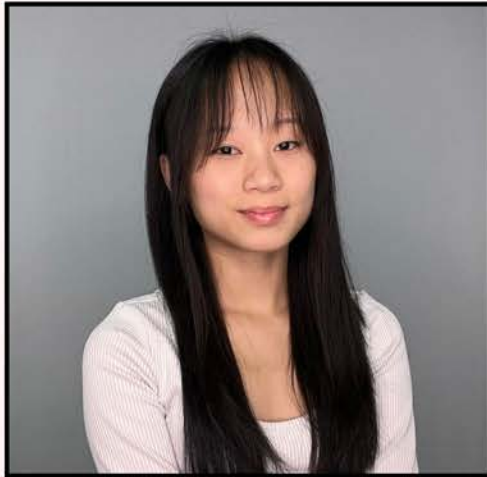
Majors/Minors/Certifications: Psychology, and Asian American Studies, and Gender and Women Studies Certificate

Involvement: Alpha Kappa Delta Phi

Preferred Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

"These courses have not only deepened my appreciation for the complexity of Asian/Asian American culture through an academic lens, but have also fueled my aspiration to pursue a career in this field."

Why Asian American Studies?



Areeya Her

Junior Year

Consumer Behavior & Marketplace Studies, Asian American Studies

I declared a certificate in Asian American Studies because I felt a strong desire to connect with my roots, culture, and to understand my parents better. Furthermore, I wanted to explore the intricate tapestry of Southeast Asian ethnic groups. My goal was to delve into the rich histories, cultures, and experiences of communities such as those from Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and others.



Lily Li (She/her)

Junior

Psychology, Social work & Asian American Studies

I declared a certificate in Asian American studies because I was already taking the classes that would fulfill the requirement. Finally, there were classes centered on the Asian American experiences that I myself have experienced--not as an American, not as an Asian, but as an Asian American.



Lili McGuffey

Senior

2023-2024 AASP Ambassador

Data Science & Asian American Studies

As an adopted Asian American, I want to learn more about Asian Americans' identity and explore how my experience as an adoptee is similar and different from the experiences of other Asian Americans. In my major I am not often able to explore topics such as ethnic studies and this certificate has allowed me to study those topics and enhance my college degree.

Why Asian American Studies?



Maia Scott

Senior

2022-2023 AASP Ambassador

Economics, Asian American Studies and Chinese Professional Language

Through the AAS certificate, I hope to better understand the social-political history of these communities, articulate and communicate the imperative of interethnic respect, and learn more from my own experiences within these narratives.



Lily Varilla (she/her)

Sophomore

Communication Science & Rhetorical Studies, Asian American Studies

I decided to declare an AAS certificate because I wanted to learn more about the multiplicity of Asian American experiences, and how my personal identity may relate to these larger themes. Engaging with many diverse perspectives has allowed me to expand my personal horizons and help me form my own view of the world.



Gao-je Vang

Senior

Comm. Science and Disorders & Asian Am Studies

I chose to get my certificate in Asian American studies because it complements my major in Comm. Science and Disorders (CS&D) and aligns with my personal and career goals. As a Hmong American woman, I never meet many Asian Americans in my professional field of interest. My major equips me with the knowledge to become a future speech pathologist, however, I thought it was crucial to understand the cultural nuances and experiences of the communities I aim to serve. My certificate in Asian American studies helps me gain deeper insight into the history, experiences and cultural factors that influence health and healthcare within the Asian community.

Why Asian American Studies?



Nicholas 'Nick' Xiong

Freshmen

Wildlife Ecology and Asian American Studies

I chose to enroll in this program to understand the experiences and challenges that Hmong Americans and other Asian American communities face today in the United States.



Annabella Yang

Sophomore

Psychology, Asian American Studies

I decided to declare a certificate in Asian American Studies with a Hmong emphasis to strengthen my knowledge on Hmong history while gaining knowledge on different ethnic studies all around. There are many classes offered under the Asian American certificate such as ASIAN AM 102 that has taught me new extraordinary things and deepened my knowledge.



A successful Spring Study Break in the books!

Amy Ling Yellow Light Awards

Integrity Award Winners



Cindy Dong

Junior

Global Health and Life Science Communication



Madison Xiao

Junior

Political Science

Asian American Studies, History, PEPP Certificates

Creative Endeavour Award Winners



Van Bawi Tial

Sophomore

Global Health and Life Sciences Communication



Ang Li

Senior

Computer Science

Celebrating Our Faculty



Paul Tran's book *All the Flowers Kneeling* received an Honorable Mention in Creative Writing: Poetry from the Association of Asian American Studies.

Leslie Bow has been named a Fellow of the Center for 21st Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for 2024-2025.



Featured Graduating Senior

Madeleine Allen



Why did you declare a certificate in Asian American Studies?

I declared a certificate in Asian American Studies because I really enjoyed the AASP class I took my first semester of undergrad and wanted to take more, but I wasn't sure if I could fit them into my course plan while prioritizing my required major classes. When I found out that there was an AASP certificate and you only needed to take four classes to get it, I was like "sign me up!" I also really enjoyed the environment in the classroom and the flexibility my professors allowed for us to explore topics not only about Asian Americans, but within the broader APIDA community as well. As someone who is Pacific Islander and wanted to learn more about my heritage in college, the AASP certificate offered me the opportunity to do so.

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

My AASP certificate has been an important part of my time here at UW-Madison. Not only have my AASP classes been some of my favorite courses the past four years, they were often bright spots in my day when my schedule was loaded with sometimes less enjoyable classes. My AASP certificate has also allowed me to meet lots of new friends -especially other APIDA people - and encouraged me to get more involved in the APIDA community on campus, such as starting the Pacific Islander Student Association and being a member of the APIDA Heritage Month Planning Committee.

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

I am planning to go into the psychology and mental health fields for my career, so getting the AAS certificate will aid me in providing culturally competent care, particularly to my Asian American and APIDA clients.

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

Go and talk to your professors! Introduce yourself at the beginning of the semester, ask questions in class, and go to their office hours. Not only are they experts in their field and can help clarify class content, but they genuinely want to support you and help you succeed, both in their class and beyond. My Asian American Studies professor in my first semester of college has been an incredible mentor to me throughout my academic career here and has always been supportive of me in my pursuits - even when unrelated to the AASP program--including (most recently) applying to graduate school. Sending a huge "thank you" to Dr.Ho!

Summer 2024 Courses

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM SUMMER 2024 COURSES

Asian Am 240: Contemporary Asian Am
History

5/20-7/14 online Professor Lisa Ho

Asian Am 240: Critical Refugee Studies

5/20-7/14 online Professor Lisa Ho



Fall 2024 Courses

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

AAS 101: Introduction to Asian American Studies

Lisa Ho TR 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM
Victor Jew MW 2:30 PM to 3:45 PM

AAS 121: Asian American Movement
Peggy Choy MW 8:50 AM to 10:40 AM

AAS 152: Asian American Literary and Popular Culture: Race, Fantasy, Futures
TBA MW 12:00 PM to 12:50 PM

AAS160: Asian American History: Movement and Dislocation
Cindy Cheng MW 2:30 PM to 3:45 PM

AAS170: Hmong American Experiences in the United States
Alex Hopp TR 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM

AAS 220: Ethnic Movements in the United States
TBA MW 9:55 AM to 10:45 AM

AAS 240: Hmong and Refugee Texts
TBA TR 2:30 PM to 3:45 PM

AAS 240: Asian American Activism: Contemporary Concerns
Jan Miyasaki MW 4:00 PM to 5:15 PM

AAS 240: Critical Refugee Studies
Alex Hopp TR 1:00 PM to 2:15 PM

AAS 250: Eating Asian America
Victor Jew TR 5:30 PM to 6:45 PM

AAS 420: Asian Americans and Media
Lisa Ho TR 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM

AAS 462: Asian American Happiness
Paul Tran T 1:20 PM to 3:15 PM

AAS 540: Southeast Asian Memory & Trauma
Mai See Thao MW 2:30 PM to 3:45 PM





**Thank
You!**



Contact Us!



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Top: Timothy Yu, Lori Lopez, and Victor Jew
Bottom: Kong Pheng Pha, Mai See Thao, and Peggy Choy