

2026

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

BRIDGES 2.0

April 2026

Volume 4

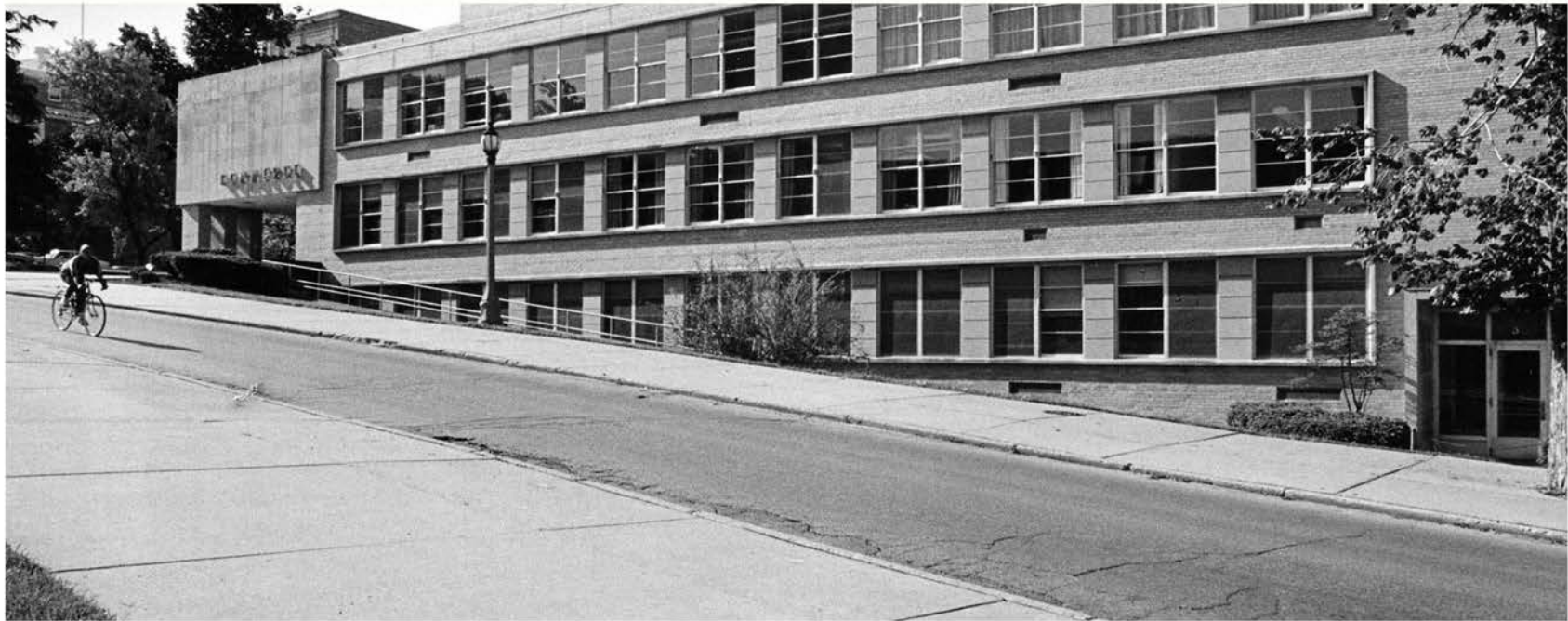


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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



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Thank you for joining us for our fourth issue of *Bridges 2.0*. We started this second coming of *Bridges* because we wanted to celebrate the founding of the Asian American Studies Program during our 35th Anniversary in 2023. While we did not anticipate this revival to continue beyond one issue, we realized how important it is to take a moment each year to spotlight the program through its events, students, and other accomplishments. This year was no exception: we hosted two luncheons for our graduate student affiliates, two study breaks, multiple collaborations with our friends at the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Student Center, and our sister program, Chicax/e & Latinx/e Studies. We were so happy to have these events for students to gather and experience community together. In a few months, we will be leaving Ingraham, our home for so many years, to create a new place in Levy Hall. We hope you all will join us in this new space and continue the home we've already built in Ingraham. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue and continue to support AASP!



Photo by Paulius Musteikis

Groundbreaking ceremony for Irving & Dorothy Levy Hall on May 2, 2025

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



My first full year as director of the Asian American Studies Program has certainly been an eventful one! At a time of tremendous challenges, I'm proud of the extraordinary work being done by our program's faculty, staff, and students, who show us every day the value and importance of Asian American studies.

Our certificate program is going strong, with about 50 students receiving the certificate in 2024-25 and nearly 90 students enrolled in the certificate program in 2025-26. Our classes this year have served over a thousand students, spanning such topics as Asian American history, graphic novels, feminism, food, sports, and Hmong American experiences. We continue to add innovative courses to our curriculum, such as Zach Fitzpatrick's new class on connections between Asian Americans and Asian Germans.

Our Asian American Studies faculty continue to blaze exciting new paths in scholarship. In October 2025, two new monographs by faculty appeared: Rachel Kuo's *Movement Media: In Pursuit of Solidarity* (Oxford University Press) and Kong Pheng Pha's *Queering the Hmong Diaspora: Racial Subjectivity and the Myth of Hyperheterosexuality* (University of Washington Press). Professor Kuo also published a co-edited collection, *We Are Each Other's Liberation: Black and Asian Feminist Solidarities* (Haymarket Books).

We've sponsored a diverse range of events this year, from scholarly panels to study breaks. Our grad luncheons built community among graduate students working in Asian American studies across the university, tackling topics like grad student teaching and mental health. We collaborated with the APIDA Student Center on our ever-popular study breaks, bringing students together for tasty treats, crafts, and community. And this spring, our program will be supporting the premiere of *Dreams of the Abandoned Daughter*, a dance-film by faculty member Peggy Choy that blends the social impacts of climate change with Korean myth.

I want to extend special appreciation to Jessica Montez and Lisa Ho, who keep our program running through their hard work on everything from managing finances to planning events to putting together this newsletter! We are also excited to welcome a new staff member this year: Hope Kelham, our communications and events specialist. You may already have seen her taking photos at our program events.

Finally, we've been kept especially busy this year with our final preparations for our move to the brand-new Irving & Dorothy Levy Hall, whose red-brick façade you may have seen going up at the corner of Lake and Johnson Streets. Believe it or not, the building will be done this spring and we'll be making the move in July. Our new location in Levy Hall will feature a welcoming home space, expanded offices, and the opportunity to forge even stronger connections with the other Ethnic and Indigenous Studies units, who will be our neighbors. I had a chance to tour the building in February, and it was thrilling to contemplate the new opportunities that await us in this gorgeous new space and to reflect on the many years of struggle and growth that have led us here. It's an honor to be leading the Asian American Studies Program into this exciting new era, and I can't wait to welcome you all to our new home in Levy Hall this fall.

Timothy Yu
AASP Program Director

PROGRAM AMBASSADORS

The Ambassador Program is a group of dedicated students—both concentrators and prospective concentrators—who love the Asian American Studies Program and the community it cultivates! Ambassadors share their excitement, help promote the Program, and inform us on how we can continue to improve. We are grateful to our amazing Ambassadors and all the enthusiasm they bring!

For more information on becoming an Asian American Studies Program Ambassador, send us an email: asianamerican@letsai.wisc.edu

2025-2026 ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM AMBASSADORS



ANNA JYI

(she/her/hers)

Class of 2027

- Major: Political Science and English
- Certificate: Asian American Studies
- Hometown: Green Bay, WI
- Favorite AAS class: Hmong American Aesthetics & Culture with Prof. Alexander Hopp
- Go to AAHPI snack: Shrimp Chips and Almond Flavored Pepero

"My hometown and community that I grew up in did not consist of many Asian Americans, and having the space to discuss important and delicate topics in a classroom setting is essential for the strength and diligence of our community. I believe in the importance of the representation and visibility that Asian American students will have, and am excited to be able to contribute to Asian American Studies Program!"

- Major: Business & Human Resource Management
- Certificate: International Business and Asian American Studies
- Hometown: Madison, WI
- Favorite AAS class: Asian Americans & Media with Professor Lisa Ho
- Go to AAHPI snack: Sweet-Savory Seaweed
- Current Read: Flipped, Wendelin Van Draanen

"AsAm Love in Media didn't just analyze romance on the surface, but examined how race, gender, immigration, family expectations, and history shape the way love is expressed and understood. The course also introduced me to creators and stories that centered Asian Americans in ways that felt both validating and empowering. The topics were vastly different from my other studies, so having this outlet allowed me to reflect deeply about my relationships with the people I care about. The types of media were also unique, which shifted the way I think about love stories in film and TV."



BRITNEY TANG

(any pronouns)

Class of 2028

PROGRAM AMBASSADORS



MEKINNAH XIONG

(she/her/hers)

Class of 2026

- Major: Genetics & Genomics
- Certificate: Asian American Studies and Global Health
- Hometown: River Falls, WI
- Favorite AAS class: Hmong and Refugee Texts, and Hmong American Aesthetics & Culture with Prof. Alexander Hopp
- Go to AAHPI snack: Strawberry Pocky
- Current Read: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

"I became an Ambassador to help bridge the gap between the Asian American Studies Program and students. I declared the certificate with an emphasis on Hmong American Studies to learn more about my culture. Despite growing up Hmong and close to its culture and traditions, I have learned an immense amount in my Asian Am courses. I have also found some of my closest friends through my classes, which truly nurtured a sense of belonging and community."

- Major: Consumer Behavior & Marketplace Studies
- Certificate: Digital Studies and Asian American Studies with HMoob American Studies Emphasis
- Hometown: Milwaukee, WI
- Favorite AAS class: Hmong Refugee History
- Go to AAHPI snack: Panda Candy

Asian American Studies grabbed my interest during my freshman year, where I learned about the variety of Hmong classes available to me! Growing up, I learned about Hmong history through my grandparents, so seeing classes at UW-Madison inspired me to continue learning about Hmong history through others. The Asian American Studies certificate offers amazing classes with various topics and hands-on opportunities to learn, which I love!



ANNABELLA YANG

(she/her/hers)

Class of 2026

- Major: Social Welfare
- Certificate: Asian American Studies
- Hometown: Milwaukee, WI
- Favorite AAS class: Hmong Refugee History
- Go to AAHPI snack: Hello Panda Cookies

Over the past year, I've explored Asian American Studies more deeply while also learning about my own Hmong culture and traditions. Staying connected with this part of my identity is very important to me, and I look forward to being involved in event support, advocacy, and community engagement!



PAKOU YANG

(she/her/hers)

Class of 2027

WHY ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES?



KATHY BIAN

*Class of 2027
Political Science & Legal
Studies Major
Public Policy & Asian
American Studies
Certificate*

I declared the certificate because I wanted to learn more about myself and about my community. I grew up in the Midwest with a small community of Asian Americans, and we were always overlooked and ignored. I want to change that in the future, and I believe the certificate can help me home in on my identity in being the change maker I want to be.



JAYDA I LEE

*Class of 2027
Communication Science &
Rhetorical Studies Major
Asian American Studies
Certificate*

I was enthusiastic and declared the Asian American Studies Certificate because I am passionate and proud to be a Hmong American. I wanted to share my story, learn about Asian culture, history, and be part of a community where I feel I belong.



SELENA MOUA

*Class of 2026
Human Development &
Family Studies Major
Asian American Studies &
Disability Rights &
Services Certificate*

I decided to declare a certificate in Asian American Studies after taking so many courses that checks off the certificate. I really enjoy all the classes that are part of the program; it's amazing how many certificates the UW offers!

MEET OUR CONCENTRATORS

WHY ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES?



SUSAN VANG

*Class of 2026
Psychology Major
Asian American Studies
HMoob American Studies
Emphasis Certificate*

I declared a certificate in Asian American Studies because of my desire to learn more about my HMoobness and the interconnections among my identity, culture, and other Asian American identities. To me, this certificate carries the significance of my ancestors' history, resilience, and power, reminding me that my education is a continuation of their dreams and legacies.



NICHOLAS LANG LY XIONG

*Class of 2027
Community & Environmental
Sociology Major
Asian American Studies
HMoob American Studies
Emphasis Certificate*

I declared an Asian American Studies certificate to reconnect with my HMoob identity, connect with other Asian American students, and understand my own identities and how it relates to today's politics. Through the HMoob Am Studies emphasis, I took classes that taught me more about the history of HMoob Americans and gave me the tools and knowledge on how to position myself as a Hmong American.

***What makes
our program
stand out?
What makes
our
concentrators
unique? Read
on to learn
more about
who makes up
our student
body.***

MEET OUR CONCENTRATORS

Mekinnah Xiong

Class of 2026



“One piece of advice that I would leave to my fellow Asian American Studies peers is to go out of your comfort zone. Learn new things, immerse yourself in different experiences and cultures. Never limit yourself to what you think you already know, and instead open your mind to the unknown.”

Why did you declare the Asian American Studies Certificate?

I decided to declare the Asian American Studies Certificate because it simultaneously allowed me to learn about something that I am passionate about while getting a certificate. I wanted to learn more about Asian American Studies because I am the daughter of Hmong refugees who immigrated from Laos during the Secret War, and therefore could directly relate to many events that happened to my family. I took Asian American 160: Process of Movement and Dislocation in the first semester of my freshman year. I got to further connect with my Hmong culture, which I truthfully thought I had already done. Taking multiple Asian American (Hmong emphasis) courses made me feel like I was in a room where I was finally seen.

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

I thought that I already knew all that I needed to know about the Hmong culture. I was very wrong and have gained so many more insights. Experiencing this has reminded me that there is always room to grow. I hope to use this certificate to continue to learn more about my Hmong culture and make a positive impact on those who look up to me.

AMY LING AWARDS

The Amy Ling Yellow Light Awards recognizes students for integrity, and creative endeavor and/or scholarship. The awards are in honor and legacy of our founding director Professor Amy Ling. To learn more about the Amy Ling Yellow Light Awards, and submission guidelines, please visit our website at:

<https://asianamerican.wisc.edu/amy-ling-yellow-light-awards-call-for-submissions/>

2026 Amy Ling Yellow Light Award Recipients



***Amy Ling Yellow Light Award for Integrity:
Anna Jyi***



***Amy Ling Yellow Light Award for Creative
Endeavor and/or Scholarship:
Moss Lin***



***Amy Ling Yellow Light Award for Creative
Endeavor and/or Scholarship:
Thao Pham***



***Amy Ling Yellow Light Award for Creative
Endeavor and/or Scholarship:
Shreya Singh***

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



AMELIA CATACUTAN

Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Academic advising and fostering belonging and mentorship between marginalized students

My focus on academic advising and fostering belonging directly challenges the model minority myth that often renders Asian American students' struggles invisible. Many Asian American communities—especially Southeast Asian, first-generation, low-income, and immigrant students—experience isolation, mental health stigma, and limited access to culturally responsive mentorship. By centering belonging and culturally responsive advising, my work addresses the hidden inequities within Asian American populations. As a Filipina advisor in a DEI scholarship program, I bring culturally grounded insight into how mentorship can affirm identity, counter marginalization, and strengthen community-connected success.



TONY DELAROSA

*Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Sociology, Education Policy,
Public Health, & Critical
Ethnic Studies*

Tony DelaRosa has three research aims. His dissertation project examines the policy advocacy of Hmong and other Asian Americans involved in the passage of Wisconsin Act 266. His second project, USAP Tayo, is a mixed-method study examining how well-being is influenced by Filipino politics. Lastly, he uses Du Boisian theory to examine Afro-Asian relationality through a lens of comparative racialization.

While the Asian American Studies Program does not offer a graduate studies certificate, we support graduate students across the University with special interest or focus on Asian American Studies.

& GRADUATE RESEARCH



XUAN NGUYEN

Sociology

Political Sociology, Migration & Migrant Communities, Asian Americans in the Midwest, Geopolitical Trauma, Collective Political Behavior

Xuan's research focus on the (geo)political dimensions of ethnic enclave's sociopolitical dynamics. In particular, Xuan's current project focuses on the Southeast Asian diaspora and explores the role geopolitical legacies play in sustaining migrant enclaves in the Midwest. Her current project focuses on the Vietnamese diaspora and how enclave space facilitate Vietnamese Americans' political consciousness. Xuan's research aims to highlight the racial, ethnic, and political diversity of Asian America in the American heartland at a time of polarization and democratic decline.



GLORIA PHAM

**English & Literary Studies
Asian American Studies,
Critical Refugee Studies,
Transnational Feminism**

My dissertation "Refugee Temporalities: Southeast Asian American Literature and the Politics of Time" explores how nation-states dictate the temporality of refugee experience through law, policy, and media. The project further interrogates how refugee writers and artists reject this linear, progressive timeline to citizenship in favor of more liberatory possibilities. In response to a global refugee regime structured by what Liisa Malki calls "the national order of things," this dissertation asks: what alternate temporal orders might refugees imagine for themselves? From memoirs of life inside the refugee camp to speculative fiction exploring alternate histories, this project pushes back against the concept of "refugee exceptionalism," which casts displacement as a temporary condition, to reveal the ways in which the legacy of unsettledness lives on.

FACULTY HAPPENINGS

Dr. Alberta M. Gloria, an AASP Faculty Affiliate in Counseling Psychology, has co-authored “What’s out there? A scoping review addressing the availability of South Asian American psychological literature within the past decade” for the *Asian American Journal of Psychology*. It will be available online.

ASIAN AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Peggy Choy’s *Dreams of the Abandoned Daughter* premiered in Madison at the Chazen Museum in April. Professor Choy had a busy sabbatical in 2025: “I studied Butoh dance in New York. I also traveled to Merida in the Yucatàn, Mexico to meet descendents of Korean laborers who worked on Henequen plantations from 1909-1913. My grand uncle, Whang Sa-Yong, traveled from San Francisco to Merida in 1913, to the assist the workers obtaining their pensions, and helped to found the Korean National Association in Merida. The descendents we met still remembered Whang Sa-Yong.”



FACULTY HAPPENINGS

Dr. Rachel Kuo and Dr. Kong Pheng Pha celebrated the launch of their respective books: *Movement Media* and *Queering the Hmong Diaspora* at the Mystery To Me Bookstore in Madison this February.



Congratulations to our Asian American Studies Faculty on recent publications and productions!

SUMMER COURSES

Looking for courses to fulfill your Asian American Studies certificate requirements? We offer two summer online and asynchronous courses 5/18/26-7/12/26 taught by Professor Lisa Ho.

AAS 101: INTRO TO ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Introduction to the historical, sociological, anthropological, political, and cultural study of Americans of Asian ancestry.



AAS 251: CONTEMPORARY ASIAN IDENTITIES

This class focuses on recently arrived Asian immigrant groups and historically excluded groups to highlight their exclusion from mainstream Asian America. Covers how Asian American-based identity politics has reduced the experiences of these groups to categorical understandings of race, citizenship, nationality, class, immigration, and others. Uses intersectional lens to analyze their experiences with the goal of expanding what it means to be “Asian American.” Lastly, examines how Asian American-based identity politics has influenced conversations around higher education, politics, and race relations.



Check out our fall courses with some new course offerings in addition to our core courses.

FALL COURSES

AAS 101 INTRO TO ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Ho | TR | 11:00-12:15PM

AAS 121 ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT

Choy | MW | 8:50-10:40AM

**AAS 152 ASIAN AM LIT & POPULAR CULTURE:
RACE, FANTASY, FUTURES**

Bow | MW | 12:05-12:55PM

AAS 160 ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORY: MOVEMENT & DISLOCATION

Cheng | TR | 11:00-12:15PM



AAS 170 HMONG AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN THE US

Pha | MW | 2:30-3:45PM

AAS 240 ASIAN AM PANETHNICITY & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Miyasaki | MW | 4:00-5:15PM



AAS 250 EATING ASIAN AMERICA

Jew | TR | 2:30-3:45PM

**AAS 319 AFRO ASIAN IMPROV:
FROM HIP HOP TO MARTIAL ARTS FUSION**

Choy | MW | 1:30-3:10PM



AAS 420 ASIAN AMERICANS & MEDIA

Ho | TR | 9:30-10:45AM

AAS 462 ASIAN AMERICANS & SCI-FI

Yu | TR | 11:00-12:15PM

AAS 462 ASIAN AMERICAN CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

Tran | T | 1:20-3:15PM

AAS 540 SOUTHEAST ASIAN MEMORY & TRAUMA

Thao | M | 1:20-3:15PM

#ATLANTASYLLABUS REVISITED



Photo by Megan Varner/Getty Images

On March 16, 2021, eight people were killed at an Atlanta area spa business—six of whom were Asian women. As we reflect on this horrific tragedy, we also wanted to consider why the Asian American Studies Program felt compelled to develop a syllabus that discusses the complex history of anti-Asian hatred and the persistent realities of misogyny in this country.

Lori Kido Lopez

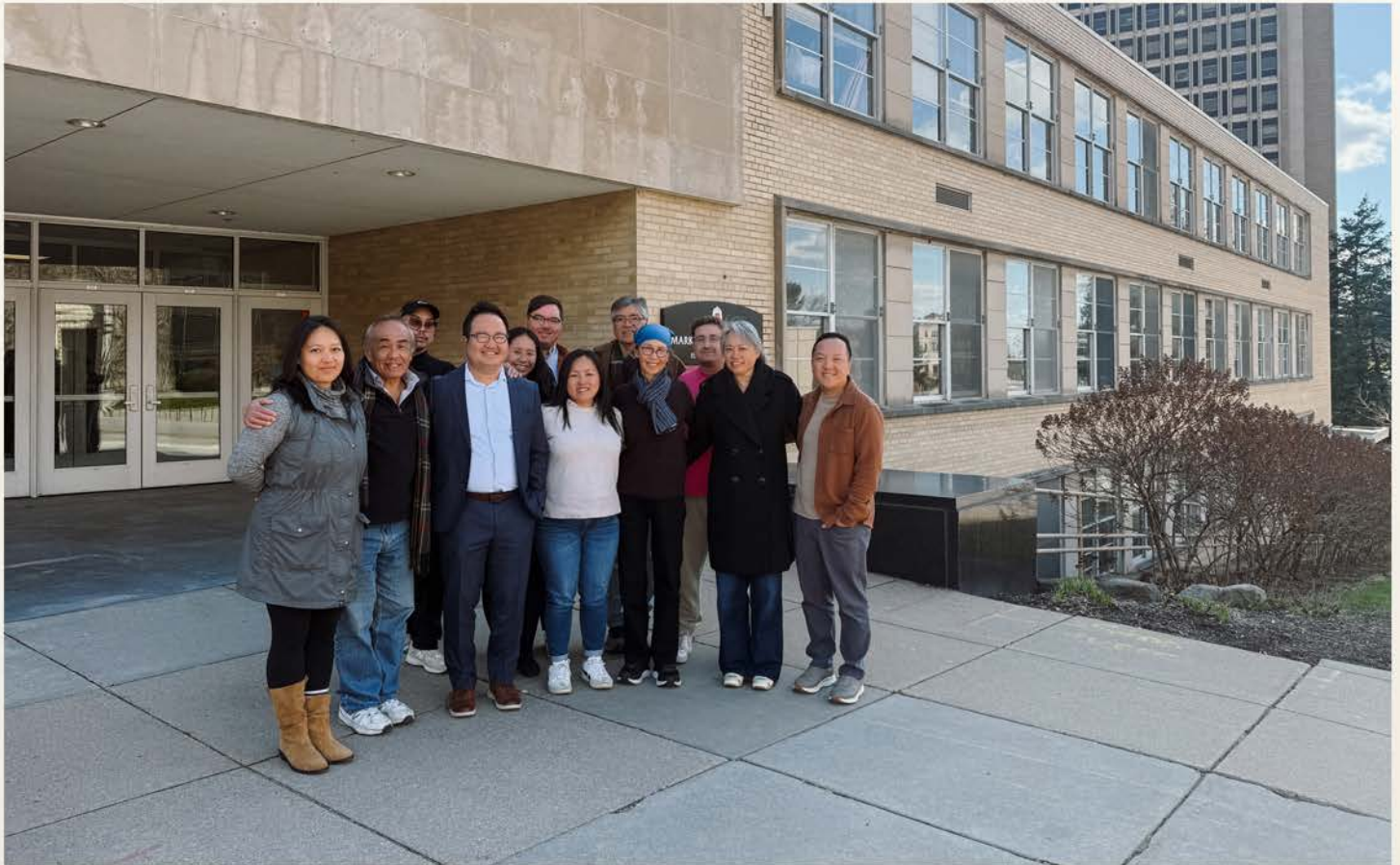
Five years ago, in the immediate aftermath of the Atlanta spa shootings, my colleagues and I felt a sense of urgency to respond to the moment with something useful. We created the #AtlantaSyllabus because we didn't agree with the dominant narratives being offered, and knew that the scholarly tools of Asian American Studies could help to give a more accurate and nuanced framework for understanding what was happening. We felt it was our responsibility as Asian American Studies educators to share these tools as widely as possible, helping to communicate what we know about the long history of anti-Asian violence--and the equally important history of Asian American resistance and resilience. Five years later, we are proud to see the thousands of times the syllabus has been downloaded and the impact it has had. But we know there is still more work to be done. There have been new incidents of violence, and new crises to respond to. We hope that our students and colleagues from Asian American Studies can continue to share their knowledge, research findings, and personal experiences as a way of strengthening our community.

Erika Kanesaka

In March 2021, during my last semester as a Ph.D. Student at UW–Madison, I received a job offer to teach Asian American Literature and Culture at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. This good news came to me only a few weeks before the tragedy of the Atlanta spa shootings. When Professors Lori Kido Lopez and Lisa Ho invited graduate students to join them in assembling an open-access syllabus with Asian American studies resources for understanding the incident, I jumped at the opportunity to help. I not only wanted to feel useful in some small way, but I wanted to myself feel better prepared to dispel the idea that the attack was “not racially motivated,” as many people claimed. My education in Asian American Studies at UW-Madison taught me to see how histories of imperialism, militarism, exclusion, exploitation, and gender violence collide in such moments, and I am thankful that the #AtlantaSyllabus has made some of this scholarship accessible to all. Five years later, I am grateful that the syllabus still stands as a reminder to keep reflecting on that time and all the ways the struggle remains unfinished.

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

Goodbye Ingraham Hall!



While we are sad to leave Ingraham and all the memories we've made here, we are happy to continue our work in our new space at Levy Hall.

2025-2026 WRAP UP



2025-2026 WRAP UP



Thank you!

2026

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Make a gift to the Amy Ling Legacy Fund

Your donation will aid the Program in its teaching, research, and community outreach. The Fund supports community-building functions, lectures, undergraduate scholarships, symposia, and other scholarly activities that enhance our understanding of the Asian diaspora. Gifts of any size are most welcome and gratefully received. All contributions to the Program are processed through the UW Foundation.

To donate by mail, please make a check payable to "UW Foundation/Amy Ling Legacy Fund" and send it to:

**University of Wisconsin Foundation
US Bank Lockbox
PO Box 78808
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807**

Use the QR code to make an online contribution.



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