

Asian American Studies Program

AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON

2016-17 NEWSLETTER



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

DR. ELLEN WU

Associate Professor, History/ Director, Asian American Studies Program

Dear Friends of IUB Asian American Studies,

The 2016-2017 academic year was the most eventful yet for our growing program! Thanks to the dedication and energy of our faculty, staff, and students and campus partners, I am proud to report that AAST offered a distinctive balance of research, teaching, and programming activities to the IU Bloomington community. It's a terrific indication of the rich insights and experiences that Asian American Studies uniquely brings to university life.

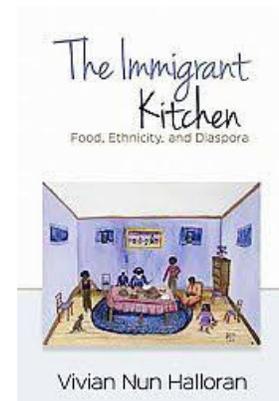
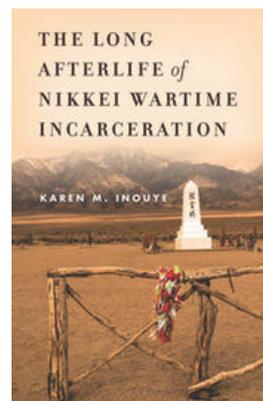
On the **research and creative activity front**, AAST affiliates continue to display a **remarkable breadth of rigor** in their respective disciplines. This past year saw the release of two important books by our faculty. Dr. **Karen M. Inouye's** *The Long Afterlife of Nikkei Wartime Incarceration* (Stanford University Press, 2016) delves into the myriad consequences of the World War II-era imprisonment of individuals of Japanese descent by the US and Canadian governments. Dr. Inouye has also been awarded a faculty fellowship from IU's College Arts and Humanities Institute (CAHI) and a New Frontiers Creativity and Scholarship Grant to support her new research project "Wartime Incarceration of Nikkei on Native and Indigenous Land."

Dr. Vivian Nun Halloran whets our appetites with her new book, *The Immigrant Kitchen: Food, Ethnicity, and Diaspora* (Ohio State University Press, 2016). The *Immigrant Kitchen* explores memoirs by immigrants and their descendants, revealing how their treatment of food deeply embeds concerns about immigrant identity in the United States. Congratulations are also due to Dr. Halloran for her promotion to full professor.

Dr. Dina Okamoto will be a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York in Fall 2017, where she will work on completing a book on diversity, trust, and civic engagement. Dr. Okamoto has also been selected for a Class of 1948 Herman B Wells Endowed Professorship, which recognizes scholars who are devoted to diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence.

Cutting-edge Asian American Studies-related research findings of our affiliates can be found in a wide range of venues, both academic and public-facing. For instance, **Dr. Jennifer Lee** and **Samuel Kye** (one of our AAST graduate student grant winners) jointly published the essay "Racialized Assimilation of Asian Americans" in

Annual Review of Sociology. **Dr. Joel Wong**—who specializes in Counseling and Counseling Psychology—has recent articles in *Death Studies* ("Circumstances preceding the suicide of Asian Pacific Islander Americans and White Americans") and *Psychology of Men* ("The intersection of race, ethnicity, and masculinities: Progress, problems, and prospects"). Look for Dr. **Ishan Ashutosh's** work in *Geographical Review* and the South Asian American Digital Archive, where he discusses "[America's Battle Over South Asia: Imagining the Region in the Second World War.](#)" Our newest affiliate, **Dr. Sam Museus**, was recognized by NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education with the 2017 Award For Outstanding Contribution to Research by the Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education's Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community.



Recent book releases by AAST faculty affiliates Dr. Karen Inouye and Dr. Vivian Nun Halloran

The AAST program had the great pleasure of awarding modest **grants to faculty and graduate students** to advance their research and creative activities in Asian American Studies. This year, our recipients are: Dr. Ishan Ashutosh, Dr. Karen Inouye, Dr. Jennifer Lee, Dr. Dina Okamoto, Dr. Joel Wong, Samuel Kye (PhD candidate, Sociology), Jordan Lynton (PhD candidate, Anthropology). If IUB Asian American Studies was an NBA team, we'd have one of the deepest line-ups of talent around!

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I want to give a special shout out to one of **AAST's MVPs—Visiting Lecturer Ms. Lisa Kwong**. In the classroom, she is effective instructor (A200 Asian American Literature; A101 Introduction to Asian American Studies; X490 Independent Reading/Research in Asian Studies), not to mention very popular with our students! Outside the classroom, Ms. Kwong—who holds an MFA in Creative Writing from IUB—is a prolific poet, with forthcoming pieces in *Anthology of Appalachian Writers*, *Charles Frazier Volume IX*, and *minnesota review*. This year, Ms. Kwong received a SAFTA residency scholarship from the Sundress Academy of the Arts in Knoxville, TN.

Graduate students comprise a vital part of AAST here at IUB. **Elizabeth Martinez** (PhD Candidate, Sociology) taught AAST A101 Introduction to Asian American Studies in fall 2016. **Lei Wang** (PhD candidate, Counseling Psychology) volunteered to coordinate our monthly member spotlights on the AAST website. **Samuel Kye** (PhD candidate, Sociology, project: “Post-1965 Picket Fences,”) and **Jordan Lynton** (PhD Candidate, Anthropology, panel “Deconstructing Hemispheric Orientalism”) are this year’s recipients of the AAST travel awards for graduate student in the College of Arts and Sciences.

This year, thanks to the initiative of our Graduate Assistant Jordan Lynton, AAST introduced the **Asian Diaspora Research Group (ADRG)**, a monthly writing workshop for students working on Asian American/Asian Diaspora Studies in all fields; History, Anthropology, Sociology, and American Studies were among those represented. We hope to continue the ADRG in future years, and AAST welcomes anyone seeking this type of scholarly community to participate.

In April, AAST rebooted our **annual symposium “Expanding Visions,”** showcasing the Asian American Studies research being conducted right here at IUB. We had the pleasure of hearing presentations from three graduate students **Stephanie Nguyen** (Higher Education Student Affairs), **Jacqueline Mac** (Higher Education Student Affairs), and **Giselle Cunanan** (American Studies)—plus one recent BA alum, **Grace Boya Shen** (History/American Studies). Dr. Sam Museums delivered a stimulating keynote, “**Advancing Scholar Activism** in Asian American Studies.”

The AAST community enjoyed a **dynamic line-up of external speakers in 2016-2017**. Scholarly visitors included: Dr. Anna Lau (Psychology, UCLA), “Levers for Change: Strategies for Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Asian American Youth”; Dr. Arissa Oh (History, Boston College), “The Cold War Origins of International



Asian American Studies Visiting Lecturer Ms. Lisa Kwong (Prof. K with A101 graduating seniors Tara Fahimi and Allison Dong).

Adoption”; Dr. Cathy Schlund-Vials (English and Asian/Asian American Studies, UConn), “Prothetic Ecologies: (Re)MEMbering Disability, Curating Culpability, and ‘The Dirty War’ in Laos”; Dr. Pawan Dhingra, “Hyper-Education: Race, Morality, and the Meaning of Success.”

On February 20, **nationally-renown activist and author Deepa Iyer** spoke on “Rising Up: South Asian, Arab, Muslim, & Sikh Communities in post-9/11 America.” Her talk drew from the work she has done on the frontlines of anti-Islamophobia organizing since 9/11 and her recent book *WeToo Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Sikh Immigrants Shape Our Multiracial Future* (The New Press). In addition, she graciously agreed to facilitating a student workshop on “Asian American Resistance and Solidarity” at the Asian Culture Center and an informal discussion at CAHI. AAST was thrilled to have **seventeen campus and Bloomington community partners** for this event.



Panel of presenters at the Asian American Studies “Expanding Visions: Asian American Studies Research at Indiana University” Research Symposium. (Left to right: Grace Boya Shen, Stephanie Nguyen, Jacqueline Mac, Giselle Cunanan)

Ms. Iyer's visit was a fitting way to mark the annual **Day of Remembrance** commemorating the World War II Japanese American incarceration. It was also exceedingly timely, given the Trump administration's implementation of the "Muslim Travel Ban" in the weeks prior and the recent spike in anti-immigrant sentiment nationwide.



"Asian American Resistance and Solidarity" workshop with activist and author Deepa Iyer at the Asian Culture Center

Another highlight of the spring semester was our yearly **MOVEMENT: ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICA** film series at the incomparable IU Cinema, co-curated by the Asian Culture Center. Since 2012, MOVEMENT has been one of the highly-anticipated events in IUB's annual Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebration. Each spring MOVEMENT highlights an emerging voice in Asian Pacific American media. This year we were delighted to host **Mr. Andrew Ahn**, a queer Korean American filmmaker born and raised in Los Angeles. His debut feature film *Spa Night* premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. Dramatic Competition. Mr. Ahn and his team were honored with the prestigious 2017 Independent Spirit John Cassavetes Award from Film Independent for *Spa Night*. Notably—as he pointed out during his appearance—MOVEMENT/IU Cinema has the distinction of being the first and only venue to screen all of his films to date (the shorts *Andy* (2010) and *Dol (First Birthday)* (2011) in addition to *Spa Night*).

This year's documentary pick for MOVEMENT: ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN 2017 was **Painted Nails**, co-directed and co-produced by Dianne Griffin and Erica Jordan with special thanks to associate producer Nhung Pham. *Painted Nails* follows Van Hoang, a Vietnamese American nail salon owner in San Francisco whose health problems have resulted

from unregulated toxic chemicals in the products used for her clients' manicures and pedicures. She courageously takes on the fight for safe cosmetics, testifying on the national stage in Washington, D.C. and exposing the troubling costs of this "affordable" luxury.

Spring 2017 brought an unprecedented opportunity for the AAST: the chance to partner with the IU Arts and Humanities Council's on **China Remixed**, the inaugural Global Arts & Humanities Festival on the Bloomington campus. With over 40 events, *China Remixed* was the largest-ever China-themed festival in the Midwest, exploring the "most diverse and dynamic aspects of the contemporary Chinese diaspora." AAST worked with the Council to bring host **Dr. Gordon Chang** (History, Stanford University), who discussed "Entwined Destinies: America and China and a History of the Present and Going Forward into the Age of Trump"; and **Dr. Hua Hsu** (English, Vassar College, and contributing writer, *New Yorker*), who ruminated on "Who is Enjoying the Shadow of Whom": On Writing, Culture and Identity."



Audience discussion during the MOVEMENT: ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICA film series

In anticipation of cartoonist and graphic novelist (and MacArthur Fellow) **Mr. Gene Luen Yang's** visit to IUB, AAST faculty affiliate Dr. Vivian Halloran coordinated a series of public discussions about some of his key works: *American Born Chinese*, *Boxers and Saints*, *The Shadow*, and *The New Super-Man*.

China Remixed was a wonderful reminder that the reach of Asian American Studies goes far beyond the geographical borders of the United States—and in fact offers a fresh vantage point for thinking about the many ways in which our world is interconnected. AAST plans to partner with the IU Arts and Humanities Council for the **2018 Global Arts and Humanities Festival** which will focus on **India**. Stay tuned for exciting events highlight South Asian American experiences!

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Finally, AAST capped off a robust year with our Recognition Reception at the end of the semester. We acknowledge the accomplishments of our affiliates and students, including the winners of the 2016-2017 AAST Undergraduate Essay Competition: **Caroline Oates**, "Age, Gender, and Money" (First Place) and **Dorothy English**, "More Than a Box" (Second Place). Attendees enjoyed a lovely and inspiring line up of presenters: MFA candidate **Bix Gabriel** read an excerpt of her novel-in-progress; senior **Sidney Harris** recited a poem that she wrote for her AAST independent study course; seniors **Jenny Huang** and **Steven Johnson** played an original podcast profiling Liana Zhou, Director, Kinsey Institute Library and Special Collections; **Drs. Vivian Halloran** and **Karen Inouye** shared snippets from their books; and senior **Sara Zaheer**, IUSA student body president delivered a stirring reflection on Asian Americans and civic engagement.



AAST undergraduate students mingle during the Asian American Studies Recognition Reception

Thank you to everyone who took part in the AAST program this year: our students, our staff, our faculty, and audience members at various events. We so appreciate, too, to all of our **campus and community programming supporters and partners for 2016-2017**: American Studies, Asian American Association; Asian Culture Center; Asian Pacific American Law Students Association; Bloomington Against Islamophobia; Bloomington Refugee Support Network; Btown Justice; Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society; College Arts and Humanities Institute; College of Arts and Sciences; Dhar India Studies; Emissaries for Graduate Student Diversity; History; IU Arts and Humanities Council; IU Cinema; IU Student Association Diversity Committee; Korean Studies; Muslim Students Association; Neal-Marshall Center; No Lost Generation; UndocuHoosier Alliance; US History Workshop.



M.F.A student, Bix Gabriel reads an excerpt of her novel-in-progress at the Asian American Studies Recognition Reception

In the spirit of **interdisciplinarity and community building**, AAST is also working more closely than ever with the **Latino Studies Program** and **Native American and Indigenous Studies**. At the end of the fall semester, we hosted our first joint open house with all three programs in our new shared suite on the fifth floor of Ballantine. And be sure to mark your calendars for **September 8, 2017**, when we will co-host the Themester symposium "**Politics, Promises, and Possibilities: Immigrant and Indigenous Intersections.**"

Last but of course far from least, I am extremely grateful to our **talented and tireless staff** for all the behind-the-scenes work of AAST: **Jordan Lynton**, our Graduate Assistant; **Stacy Weida** and **Nicole Wiegand**, our academic advisors; **Paula Cotner**, our administrator; and **Carol Glaze**, our fiscal officer. They are the backbone of our program!

Looking forward to another exciting year for AAST in 2017-2018!

Ellen Wu

Dr. Ellen Wu
Associate Professor, History
Director, Asian American Studies Program
Indiana University Bloomington

REMARKS FROM IUSA PRESIDENT

BY SARA ZAHEER

Read at the Asian American Studies Recognition Reception

In preparing for this event, I thought back to the course I took with Professor Wu titled "Busting the Melting Pot Myth." Looking through primary sources like aged cartoons and Supreme Court cases, we took a deep dive into the growth of the Asian American community in the United States. Historical perspectives give us insight on the factors that have shaped the Asian American political, social, economic, and cultural experience.

Studying these experiences forces us to think critically about how these events unfolded and where our place is in the current context. It sounds cliché, but by understanding the past we can avoid repeating harmful events today and in the years to come. Asian American Studies programs across the country came to fruition by the work of determined professors and scholars. They came into being in the 60s after decades of institutionalized discrimination against Asian Americans like racist immigration policies and unwarranted detention. To be able to study the experiences of Asian Americans is a privilege with many benefits.

For many Asian Americans, holding both identities can be a balancing act. We look differently from many people's image of the typical American. We might speak multiple languages and follow various faiths. We might cook foods that look, taste, and smell differently because they originated in our parents or grandparents or great grandparents' homeland. Our holidays are different and our traditions seem unique to our peers. Within the Asian American community, we are diverse.

We have roots from India to Indonesia to Japan and everywhere in between. But we, and our more recent ancestors, have and are continuing to plant new roots in American soil. Communities welcome new immigrants and help them adjust to life in the US without losing their culture. Over time, our customs have been adopted and celebrated. We, all Americans, can laugh at Modern Family and Stephen Colbert as well as Fresh off the Boat and Aziz Ansari.

“
**SLOWLY AND SURELY
WE'RE CHANGING WHAT
AN AMERICAN LOOKS LIKE**

We might be subjected to being "other"ed. But slowly and surely we're changing what an American looks like. And many of us strive to be cognizant of our historical



Sara Zaheer with Director, Dr. Ellen Wu at the Asian American Studies Recognition Reception

treatment by our neighbors and act as allies for other marginalized communities. While we are diverse, we are capable of organizing our communities to support one another. At the most basic levels this could mean international grocery stores or temples servicing specific communities. Academic and tutoring groups made of students of the same ethnicity. Professional organizations and social groups.

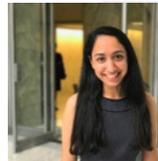
It's clear we benefit from our strong communities. As the world changes, we would do to find our

within it while making space for others to do the same and maximize opportunities to advance the ideas we believe in. For some that means high quality education and an economy open to innovation. For others it means reformed immigration policies or funding for the arts and humanities or scientific research. Asian Americans are and will become professors, researchers, artists, politicians, medical professionals and business leaders. We span every industry and position. We have limitless potential to achieve our own American dream and we can make that dream even more attainable by getting involved and staying engaged.

Civic engagement is essential but Asian Americans are underrepresented in the political sphere. In our communities we have diverse perspectives and the necessary skill sets to lead or train or gets to lead effectively. If you want to donate to a cause that's important to you, do so. Vote in every election, not just the presidential ones. Encourage your friends and families to register and show up at the polls. Break out of the captured group identity so that your voices are heard by policymakers. Become those policymakers yourself.

“
**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
IS ESSENTIAL**

If you were ready and simply waiting for someone's encouragement, here it is: run for something! Run for yourself, your family, your friends, for those without a voice, with the confidence that you're making an impact. Run for student government, for school board, for city-council. All politics is local and you are present and proximate to the issues in your communities. Represent yourself in tackling these issues in an informed manner because if you're not at the table you're on the menu. So guide the next chapter of the Asian American experience in your own unique way.



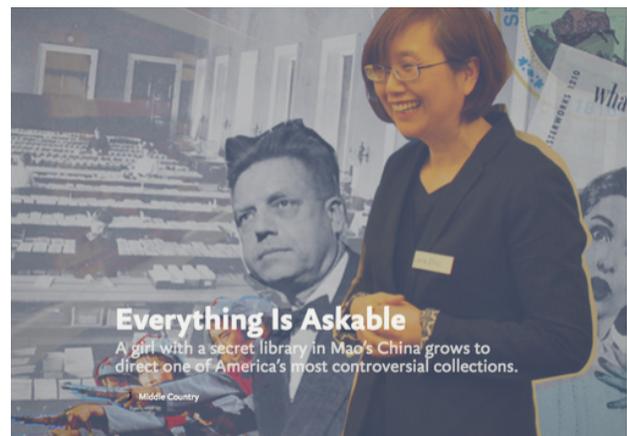
Sara Zaheer was the 2016-17 IUSA Student Body President. She is a recent graduate of IU with a B.A. in Political science and a certificate in business through the Liberal Arts and Management Program (LAMP).

STUDENT PROJECTS

This year AAST students collaborated with Asian American Studies faculty and staff to create several amazing creative projects. Here are a few!

MIDDLE COUNTRY PODCAST JENNY HUANG AND STEVEN JOHNSON

This semester Jenny Huang and Steven Johnson created the podcast *Middle Country*, exploring the experiences of Chinese Americans in Indiana. The title of their podcast, *Middle Country*, has a double meaning, referring both to Indiana's geographic location as part of the Mid-West as well as the name of China in Mandarin, *zhongguo* (中国), which translated means middle country. Their first podcast, "Everything is Askable" follows Liana Hong Zhou, Director of the Kinsey Institute's Library and Special Collections as she discusses the ways she challenges social mores in her work and in her life. Stories span from her secret library in China, acquiring material for the Kinsey, and having "the talk" with her son.



Listen to Middle Country at
<https://middlecountry.atavist.com>

TO THE ASIAN FOLKS I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO SEE UNTIL JUST NOW
POEM BY SIDNEY HARRIS

When we speak of what America
has done to us. How She has broken
our backs and hearts. And, confined
our tongues and imaginations.

I want you know that We will mirror the beauty and light
of one another in the darkest of times. We will speak
poems into existence on stages and write life
onto bounded notebook pages that one day
just might become a lifeboat for those with cracked
reflections. I want you know that I in this Black body
with these Black thoughts and an even Blacker reality
recognize your truth.

I want you to know that I have not always known
how to accept your being in a way that doesn't negate mine.
To not feel like your false ascendance to whiteness wasn't a spiky boot
on my head pushing me farther into the purgatory of "otherness".

I did not realize the pain of your reality
and how that ascendance to whiteness ain't
all it's cracked up to be. How it requires your soul
and whatever else is left after that.
I am sorry.

America can do that
turn you into a patriot.
She demands loyalty
that looks, feels, walks, talks,
and smells a lot like bullying and self-betrayal,
and we do this to one another
because as the poet George Yamazawa says,
"we all want to feel like America sometimes".
Well in this America
We have yet to find reconciliation.
We remain the unsightly
brown and yellow stains
on the white fabric of this nation.
Stains that I pray as James Baldwin once wrote
will "force our brothers to see themselves as they are
[and] make America
what America must become."

So in this effort I come
to say that I see you
and I ask that you see me.
Let Us write images of ourselves,
that feel authentic.
Authentic for now,
Even when We have no more words
for our exclusion. We will kick, scream, and slam
our way out of distorted representations and forced silence.



Sidney performing at the
Recognition Reception

I see the magic and the humanity.
They do not.

So what now.
Now We write our own selves
into living, in this world,
in this place, in this moment in time.
Our God the One of the Universe
only deems it right.

For the blind have never been able to see,
so why hate them for their deficiency now?
Why mourn them
now?
We must learn to escape the trappings of their smog.

Their understanding does not breathe
life into our souls.

Write.

Speak.

And emerge
unshackled from them
from their ways.

Authenticity is your key.

And truth is your Freedom.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Asian American Studies Student Jenna Fattah reflects on AAST event, Rising Up with Deepa Iyer

Introduction by: Dr. Ellen Wu, Director of Asian American Studies

In February, the Asian American Studies Program—along with seventeen campus and community co-sponsors—welcomed South Asian American activist, writer, and lawyer Deepa Iyer to IUB for the event **RISING UP: RISING UP: SOUTH ASIAN, ARAB, MUSLIM, and SIKH COMMUNITIES in POST-9/11 AMERICA**. Ms. Iyer is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Social Inclusion where she provides analysis, commentary and scholarship on equity and solidarity in America’s changing racial landscape. Before her current position she served as the Executive Director of **South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)**. While at SAALT for nearly a decade, Ms. Iyer shaped the formation of the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO), a network of local South Asian groups, and served as Chair of the **National Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)**.

Deepa Iyer spoke about her years of work on the frontlines of social justice. She has written about these experiences in *We Too Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim and Sikh Immigrants Shape Our Multiracial Future* (New Press, 2015), elected by the American Librarians Association’s Booklist magazine to be one of the top 10 multicultural non-fiction books of the year.



Deepa Iyer meets with IUB graduate students

For Asian American Studies, **RISING UP** was our way of honoring the annual Day of Remembrance commemorating the WWII-era incarceration of Japanese Americans. This year, the Day of Remembrance had special urgency. February 19, 2017 marked the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066—President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s authorization of the Secretary of War to “prescribe military areas... from which any or all persons may be excluded.” While the EO did not explicitly mention Japanese Americans, this



Deepa Iyer, Author of *We Too Sing America*

population was undoubtedly its target. Federal authorities selectively applied the mandate to Japanese Americans on the west coast. They justified their decision on the unsubstantiated grounds that all persons of Japanese ancestry were potential fifth columnists by virtue of blood alone. As a result, some 120,000 innocent individuals found themselves detained in government-built concentration camps without due process.

Since the 2016 Presidential election season, arguments excusing Japanese American internment—a debate long thought to be settled—have gained traction as Islamophobia and anti-immigrant xenophobia and racism have ratcheted up. In the most chilling echo of all, President Trump himself issued an Executive Order—singling out specific racial/religious group—the “Muslim ban”—in the name of national security. Given the context of the political moment, Deepa Iyer’s visit and **RISING UP** could not have been more timely.

Here, second year student Jenna Fattah shares her reflections on the event. She draws comparisons to the course AMERICA’S PACIFIC (AAST A300), a class that examines the history and legacies of the United States’ expansion into the Pacific, including the example of Hawai’i.

DEEPA IYER AND THE NEED TO BUILD

By Jenna Fattah

I greatly enjoyed Deepa Iyer’s book talk on February 20th about her book *We Too Sing America* and the subsequent panel discussion.

The message of the night was that through understanding history we can see the signs and learn how to not repeat the issues of the past, especially racial oppression and discrimination.

The first tie in to my “America’s Pacific” course was that the event was held a day after the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, which authorized the internment of Japanese Americans. Today, similar Executive Orders could be coming any day now. Iyer discussed previous ones such as NSEERS [the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, instituted in 2002 as part of the “War on Terror”].

Her book recounts tales of discrimination that were exacerbated by 9/11, but had underlying roots. This is eerily reminiscent of the Japanese immigrants in Hawai’i and on the mainland before and during World War II. Just five days after the 9/11 attacks, Deepa and many activists urged Americans not to commit the same mistakes at the Japanese American Memorial in DC, but their warning was not heeded. What is different from both WWII and 9/11 is that now we are seeing more mainstream and accepted racism.

According to Iyer, there are two types of discrimination: one-on-one and state-sanctioned. I can see more parallels with state sanctioned discrimination and the experience of minorities in Hawai’i. Alongside Executive Order 9066 on the mainland and selective interment in Hawai’i, Japanese language schools were shut down, many Japanese men lost their jobs, and over 10,000 prominent community leaders were surveilled.

This parallels what is happening now to Muslims and other people of color. 1920 Congressional Hearings discussed instituting a Japanese ban similar to that of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which is very similar to an Executive Order that attempted to go through just this January banning entry from certain Muslim countries. Shutting down Japanese language schools also reinforced the fear that English would not be Hawai’i’s first language, just as the missionaries drove the native Hawaiian language and cultural practices such as hula underground. This could also match the one-on-one discrimination as places of worship were attacked after 9/11, and cultural worships were driven underground.

Iyer illustrated the codependency of these two types of discrimination through the story of a Kurdish family in Nashville. The American government saw them as useful when they were reporting on the Iraqi government, but as soon as they came to the States through Guam, then Phoenix, and finally Nashville, the American people saw them as invaders - a danger to the community. This

is almost exactly like earlier Chinese and Japanese immigrants to Hawai’i: The plantation owners needed laborers, but as soon as these immigrants became a majority and strikes began, they were perceived as a threat by the haoles [whites].

Iyer then emphasized a call to action, which reminded me greatly of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement: *It has happened, how can we change it/fix it?*

Her book introduced an acronym that I will refer to and apply for probably the rest of my life: BUILD. We need to build bridges. We need to understand the cyclical nature of discrimination because only then can we make a change. Understanding means we have to be informed and inform others; “stay woke” as Iyer and many modern organizations put it. Help in the ways you can do best—but help.

**“
WE ARE A
COUNTRY BUILT
ON INCLUSION.”**

Perhaps the most important and the most powerful during the panel: Disrupt the status quo. Resistance is not futile. Haunani-Kay Trask’s *From A Native Daughter* [arguing for Hawaiian sovereignty] was highly disputed in class, but it started a dialogue (so many new voices in class!) and disrupted the status quo! I hope we can learn from Hawai’i and solve racial oppression and discrimination not only in the US but throughout the world. We are a country built on inclusion.

On a personal note, I cannot thank Asian American Studies enough for this opportunity. Deepa and I had such a good conversation as she was signing my book (“Immigrants—we get the job done!”) for my mom. She was really interested in my parents’ stories. Deepa said I’d really like the chapter on light-skinned Arabs who are considered “honorary whites” and yet feel attached to their heritage. I am first-generation American but grew up surrounded by Arab culture and feel that Arab culture should be preserved. As a light-skinned Arab, I have had the privilege of never experiencing discrimination, and I will use every ounce of that privilege to BUILD a better America.



Jenna Fattah is a junior majoring in Honors History with minors in psychology and classics. This summer she interned with the Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

A CONVERSATION WITH AWARD WINNING FILMMAKER ANDREW-AHN

BY NORA ZHENG

Republished with permission from IU Cinema Blogs: <http://blogs.iu.edu/aplaceforfilm/2017/03/22/a-conversation-with-award-winning-filmmaker-andrew-ahn/>

I was presented the opportunity to interview Korean-American filmmaker Andrew Ahn. His works include short films Dol (First Birthday), Andy, and the feature film SPA NIGHT. Andrew Ahn's films explore Korean-American and queer identities, while challenging American film culture to expand and diversify. We are honored to select Andrew Ahn as this year's featured artist for the Emerging Asian/Pacific American Voices spotlight.

NZ: We (IU Cinema) are super excited to show your film SPA NIGHT, as part of our film series Movement: Asian/Pacific America. The purpose of the series is to show the Asian American/Pacific Islander perspective through films. For you, what does it mean to be Asian American? And could you elaborate on the Asian American perspective that is shown in SPA NIGHT?

AA: The only truthful way for me to answer this is by saying that the Asian American community is extremely diverse and holds so many different cultures, experiences, identities, and challenges. With SPA NIGHT, I attempted to share a perspective that explores the second generation Korean-American experience. What is it like to have immigrant parents? How does this shape our identities?

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I FEEL LESS LIKE A VANGUARD, AND MORE LIKE A RUNNER IN A RELAY RACE. THE BATON HAS BEEN PASSED AND I'M GOING TO DO MY BEST WITH IT UNTIL THE NEXT GENERATION OF FILMMAKERS.



Director Andrew Ahn at the IU Cinema for a screening of his film, SPA NIGHT during the Asian American Studies MOVEMENT: Asian/Pacific America Film Series

NZ: As director of SPA NIGHT, you were awarded the Independent Spirit John Cassavetes Award. The award is named after John Cassavetes, a pioneer in American independent film. You, like John Cassavetes, are a pioneer in American independent film. What motivated you to be a pioneer with your filmmaking? Where did you find the courage to be a pioneer?

AA: I'm very flattered by this question! I don't know if I would consider myself a pioneer, because I have met and researched filmmakers who have worked hard to give me the opportunity to make a work like SPA NIGHT. I am part of a history and a community that has not received its fair share of publicity. In this way, I feel less like a vanguard, and more like a runner in a relay race. The baton has been passed and I'm going to do my best with it until the next generation of filmmakers. This does take a certain amount of courage, but it's nice to know that I'm not alone in this. I'm motivated by the legacy.

NZ: Your first film Dol (First Birthday), was made for your family. What were your expectations for the film? Were you afraid of the reception of the film?

AA: I had such a specific and personal reason to make Dol (First Birthday). I wanted to come out to my parents. I used the film as a vehicle to help me with that process. My only expectation for the film was that. I didn't think it would screen at Sundance. I didn't necessarily think it was going to launch my career. I didn't know how many people would see it. Anything beyond showing it to my parents was a bonus.



Andrew Ahn responding to Q&A after the IU Cinema screening of SPA NIGHT

NZ: There is a nakedness themed across both films of Dol and SPA NIGHT. Dol ends with a shower scene. SPA NIGHT takes place in a Korean bathhouse. Is there a metaphorical significance to the nakedness? Is the connection between the two films intentional?

AA: The connection wasn't intentional, but I do think there's a subconscious connection. There's a vulnerability to nakedness. What emotional walls fall when your characters are physically vulnerable? It puts the characters in more danger, in more excitement. Also, very important to my work, is this idea of my Korean body. There's something about how my biology connects me to my culture. I feel very Korean inside a Korean spa because I'm naked and very aware that my body looks like the other Korean bodies in that space.



Student and amateur filmmaker, Nora Zeng studies International Studies and Chinese with Indiana University's Chinese Flagship Program. Nora enjoys spending her time learning about the different cultures and languages of our world.



NZ: Storytelling. For you, why is showing Asian American perspective important? Why is the existence of Asian American film important? More specifically, why is the existence of LGBTQ Asian American film important?

AA: I believe that American cinema culture should reflect the diversity of our country. Representation in film (and art in general) validates our experiences as stories worth telling. Through art and documentation, we can move toward equality. Asian American film and LGBTQ Asian American film are growing; I feel like there are more and more films each year that fit within these spaces. It's my hope that soon we'll have rich, full cinema cultures that show the diversity within our communities, the wide ranging narratives of our existence.



Director Andrew Ahn at the IU Cinema with Asian American Studies Director, Dr. Ellen Wu

EMBODYING HISTORY

How Fred Korematsu's story reveals history's evocative and empathetic power

BY DR. KAREN INOUE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN AMERICAN STUDIES

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<http://stanfordpress.typepad.com/blog/2017/04/embodying-history.html>

In 1942 Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, directing over 100,000 people of Japanese descent to leave their homes and relocate to prison camps bounded by barbed wire and guard towers. Most of those affected were American citizens, including Fred Korematsu who became one of a handful of Japanese Americans to challenge the presidential order, not once, but twice. Facing a conviction for evading internment, he first brought his case before the Supreme Court in 1944, which, in a landmark ruling, affirmed the validity of the executive order. That decision rested on the reasoning that protection against espionage outweighed Korematsu's individual rights as a citizen and it stood until 1983 when a district court in northern California struck it down.

The case, *Korematsu v. United States*, turned its namesake into a civil rights hero whose memory was honored earlier this year with a Google Doodle commemorating Korematsu's birthday, January 30th—a date that in California is now remembered officially as Fred Korematsu Day. Remarkably, despite this legacy, Karen Korematsu-Haigh first learned the history of her father, Fred Korematsu, not at home but in high school. [As she told NPR:](#)

It was a social studies class when my friend Maya got up in front of all of us to give a book report, an oral book report, about the Japanese-American internment. Her book was called "Concentration Camps USA" [by Roger Daniels]. And when she was talking about the Japanese-American internment, it was a subject I had not heard of before. No one spoke about it in my family. And then she went on to say that someone had resisted the exclusion order and resulted in a famous Supreme Court case, *Korematsu v. the United States*. Well, I sat there and said that's my name. And the only thing I knew is that Korematsu is a very unusual Japanese name.

When Korematsu-Haigh quizzed her father, her questions had as much to do with the intervening years of silence as with the legal challenge. His response was simple: "My father said, you know, we're always very busy with our lives being Americans. I mean, that's what my father believed,



The Google doodle from January 30th, 2017 commemorated the 98th birthday of Fred Korematsu.

was he wanted to get on and be an American and do all the activities that are privileged to us." And yet, she recalled, "I could see ... the pain in his eyes." As a result, despite this extraordinary revelation, the contact between past and present remained fragmentary. Recognizing the depth of her father's suffering, Korematsu-Haigh stopped asking questions, and in the wake of their conversation a renewed silence fell over the household: "The irony to this story is that my brother, Ken, who is four years younger than I am, found out the same way in high school."

Korematsu-Haigh's experience was not uncommon. As Harry Kitano has written in *Japanese Americans* and Yasuko Takezawa demonstrated in *Breaking the Silence*, mid-century Issei (immigrants) and Nisei (the children of immigrants) could be reticent about their wartime history, partly owing to traditional Japanese values and partly because of the shame associated with imprisonment, even when it was so flagrantly baseless. What is uncommon about Korematsu-Haigh's story is that, notwithstanding his initial reticence to share his story with his children, her father has become a model for political action for subsequent generations, in large part because his personal history exemplifies a complicated and dynamic response to a cultural

history of bigotry—a history with more than one dimension that can enable empathetic forms of agency. Such empathetic agency is a deeply personal mode of political engagement that derives from the long emotional afterlife of injustice—in this case, wartime incarceration. It derives from the often-shared experience of injustice, if not the same injustice, but it can manifest in all manner of ways. It can be spurred at any moment, in some cases arising years, even decades after the initial injury. In every case, though, what animates it is a sense of identification among its participants.

“
**KOREMATSU’S SUFFERING
BECAME AN EMBLEM FOR
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ENABLED AN EMOTION THEY
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DRIVE CHANGE.**

For instance, Warren Furutani, a California state assemblyman who worked on bringing Fred Korematsu Day to fruition, was inspired in his youth by Stokeley Carmichael’s rallying cry to black communities in the 60s calling for self-definition and cultural reclamation. Though celebrating a specific individual, Fred Korematsu Day nonetheless also served a larger purpose: to “emphasize the constitutional rights afforded to all Americans regardless of race or ancestry” and “to uphold the civil liberties of all citizens ... especially in times of real or perceived crisis.” Thus read the bill establishing Fred Korematsu Day, the authors of which (including Furutani) decided to link an important abstract political concept to the suffering of a specific individual, Fred Korematsu, embodying in his experience the ever-ongoing struggle between injustice and resistance.

In this way Korematsu’s suffering became an emblem for empathetic agency. And suffering it very much was: Korematsu found himself ostracized in the Tanforan prison camp, because his fellow inmates were sure the legal challenge to Executive Order 9066 would invite retribution; and in the years after the war, Korematsu’s conviction for defying the Order deprived him of numerous employment opportunities. The pain Korematsu-Haigh saw in her father’s eyes thus became inseparable from his ultimate decision to challenge

his initial conviction some four decades later. And there lies the moment in which Korematsu’s empathetic agency gains special force: having broken the pattern of institutionalized injustice and silence, and having broken his own pattern of silence, he became an example of how the loss and suffering felt by so many Nikkei might be redirected into political action. He enabled an emotion they and others shared to drive change.

What Fred Korematsu’s story shows is how the complexities of one individual’s personal experience can lead to wider transformation. As Korematsu changed history, his cultural and political status changed as well. For fellow Nikkei, both former camp inmates and younger generations, his narrative spurred changes. By demonstrating the tenacity of institutionalized racism and the power of coordinated resistance, that narrative helped people begin to transform themselves. More than an emblem, then, Korematsu also became a catalyst twice over, initially by winning his protracted legal battle, and then by talking about what was required for victory in the first place: voice, action—and, above else, alliances.



Dr. Inouye presents at the Asian American Studies Reception

The necessity of allies in any quest for social and political change brings empathy to the fore of activism, enabling seemingly disparate groups of people to find common cause. Korematsu understood the importance of this empathetic agency. In a 2001 interview with Eric Fournier (as quoted in Lorraine K. Bannai’s *Enduring Conviction*) he noted that

There are Arab Americans today who are going through what Japanese Americans experienced years ago, and we can’t let that happen again. I met someone years ago who had never heard of the roundup of Japanese Americans. It’s been sixty years since this [arrest] happened, and it’s happening again, and that’s why I continue to talk about what happened to me.

Speaking in support of, and in solidarity with, new targets of bigotry, Korematsu identified with the Arab Americans of which he spoke. In so doing he spoke out not only against a specific instance of racial profiling, but also against the root causes of such profiling. Every injustice has an afterlife, though not every afterlife gives rise to recognizable agency. Korematsu provides us with an important example of what's possible when it does. Rather than closing the door on the past or allowing others to use it to their own ends, he revived

history. Bringing the past into the present, he provided points of emotional contact for others who might, once again, find common cause in that history.



Dr. Karen Inouye's is an Assistant Professor in American Studies. Her book, *The Long Afterlife of Nikkei Wartime Incarceration* was published in October 2016 by Stanford University Press.

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

2016-17 STUDENT AND FACULY ACHIEVEMENTS

Our student and faculty affiliates have accomplished some amazing things this year. Here are a few highlights of their success.



Giselle Cunanan: PhD Student, American Studies

AAST Member Spotlight Student, Giselle Cunanan presented her research at the Asian American Studies conference as the National Association for Ethnic Studies conference with co-author Marimas Hosan Mostiller (University of Hawaii Manoa). The later presentation was entitled "The Limits and Possibilities of Radical Organizing between Asian American and Native and Indigenous Communities." Giselle was also the recipient of several awards including a College of Arts of Science Travel Grant and the Won Joon Young Scholarship Award. She conducted a workshop titled "Locating Asian American Identity, Family, Community and Culture" with Apexa Mamtora for the 3rd annual Indiana Asian American Conference and was the keynote speaker for the IU's Filipino American Association culture night .



Lisa Kwong: MFA, Visiting Lecturer for the Asian American Studies Program

Lisa was the instructor of 2 AAST courses, in addition to supervising three independent study courses. Students skyped with renowned authors such as Jean Kwok, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Bich Minh Nguyen, and Paisley Rekdal. Lisa is the recipient of a SAFTA Residency Scholarship for an Appalachian Writer, awarded by Sundress Academy of the Arts in Knoxville, TN. Her poems are forthcoming in Anthology of Appalachian Writers, Charles Frazier Volume IX and the minnesota review: a journal of creative and critical writing. Kwong also wrote the essay "An AppalAsian on Belonging and Community" for the IU Asian Culture Center in honor of AAPI Heritage Month. She also presented and read her poems at the AWP (Association of Writers and Writing Programs) and ASA (Appalachian Studies Association) Conferences in February and March 2017.



Dr. Dina Okamoto: Professor in Sociology, Director of the Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society

Dr. Okamoto Dina Okamoto will be a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York in the Fall, where she will work on completing a book on diversity, trust, and civic engagement. She was also selected as a recipient of the Class of 1948 Herman B Wells Endowed Professorship, which recognizes scholars who are devoted to diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence. She is being recognized with this award for her research and teaching, which advances the understanding of race and ethnicity among IU students and faculty, and beyond. Dr. Okamoto has also co-published two articles in the *Journal of Adolescent Research*.

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Our student and faculty affiliates have accomplished some amazing things this year. Here are a few highlights of their success.



Mai Thai: Ph.D. Student, Sociology,
Former AAST Graduate Assistant, Mai Thai was awarded a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Award for her dissertation research under the direction of Dr. Dina Okamoto (PI). Her project is entitled, "Junior Police Students, Model Citizenship, and Social Control in School."



Lei Wang: M.Ed; Doctoral Student, Counseling Psychology
Lei coordinated and curated the Asian American Studies Monthly spotlights. She is the recipient of several awards including research awards from the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology and the IU Graduate Student and Professional Student Government, travel awards from the Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society, the American Psychological Association Society for Psychology of Women, and the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. In addition to these awards Lei presented at 6 peer-reviewed conference panels, four roundtables, and contributed to a WFHB Bloomington Community Radio special on how Asian mental health stigma creates barrier to treatment. Check out the Member Spotlight series: <http://www.indiana.edu/~aasp/memberspotlight.php>



Dr. Joel Wong, Associate Professor in Counseling and Counseling Psychology
Dr. Wong published two papers related to Asian American Studies, In 2017, he published the following papers related to Asian Americans: "Circumstances preceding the suicide of Asian Pacific Islander Americans and White Americans" in *Death Studies*, and "The intersection of race, ethnicity, and masculinities: Progress, problems, and prospects." *Psychology of Men and Masculinities*. In January 2017, he was also appointed the program director of the Counseling Psychology program at Indiana University.

AAST AWARDS

2016-17 ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES AWARDS

STUDENT AWARDS

Samuel Kye, PhD Student, Sociology: AAST Graduate Student Travel Award

Jordan Lynton, PhD Student, Anthropology: AAST Graduate Student Travel Award

Caroline Oates, AAST Undergraduate Paper Award Winner for her paper "Age, Gender, and Money,"

Dorothy English, Second-place winner of the AAST Undergraduate Paper Award for her paper "More Than A Box"

FACULTY AWARDS

Dr. Dina Okamoto, Sociology: Faculty Research Award for the project "Boundary Claims and Comparisons: Substantiating Asian American Panethnicity."

Dr. Joel Wong, Counseling Psychology: Faculty Travel Award to present the paper "Racial Discrimination on the Change of Suicide Risk among Ethnic Minorities in the U.S."

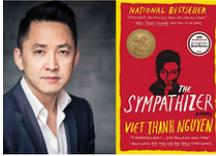
SAVE THE DATE

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE FALL EVENTS!

DIVERSITY
DIFFERENCE
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September 8, 2017: Themester symposium "Politics, Promises, and Possibilities: Immigrant and Indigenous Intersections." Co-sponsored with the Native and Indigenous Studies and Latino Studies Programs.



October 26, 2017: Themester Lecture with **Dr. Viet Thanh Nguyen** author of *The Refugees*, *Nothing Ever Dies*, and *The Sympathizer*. To prepare for his visit there will be a reading group organized by Dr. Vivian Nun Halloran.



November 3, 2017: **David Takeuchi**, Professor, Associate Dean for Research, and the inaugural Dorothy Book Scholar at Boston College School of Social Work will be presenting a talk as part of the **Social Psychology, Health, and the Life Course (SHeL) workshop**. Asian American Studies is co-sponsoring.



The **Asian Diaspora Research Group (ADRG)** will resume this Fall. ADRG is an interdisciplinary working group for graduate students working on Asian American/Asian Diaspora research. If you are interested in participating please contact aasp@indiana.edu

LOVE THE WORK YOU SEE HERE?

Consider supporting the Asian American Studies Program with a financial gift this year!
Any amount is appreciated.

Your donations will support **building Indiana University Bloomington's Asian American Studies community**; providing **research funding** for students and faculty; bringing **guest speakers** to campus; developing **innovative programming**; and furthering **community outreach**.



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INTERESTED IN AN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES MINOR?

A minor in Asian American Studies enriches your understanding of diversity and provides you with an area of specialized knowledge as you prepare for a career in **diverse career paths**, including: Law, Public Policy, Urban Planning, International Relations, Human Geography, Education (Teaching, Counseling, Policy), Arts, Arts Administration, Journalism, Medicine, Nursing, Social Work, Psychology, Business, Marketing, Public Relations. The Asian American Studies minor is also versatile as our 100 and 200 level courses **fulfill either an Arts & Humanities or a Social & Historical Studies requirement**.



All you need is 15 credit hours!

Introduction to Asian American Studies (AAST-A 101)

OR

Sociology of Asian America (SOC-S 101)

+

12 credit hours of Asian American or Asian Diaspora classes

*6 credit hours of which must be Asian American focused, and 9 credits must be 300-level or above..

Below are a listing of regularly offered Asian American Studies Courses.

AAST-A 101 Introduction to Asian American Studies (3 cr.) CASE S&H, CASE DUS

Examines the histories, experiences, and cultures that shape the Asian American community. Through articles, books, and film, this course explores the commonalities and the diversity of experiences among Asians in the United States, with particular focus on such issues as immigration, education, community, and identity.

AAST-A 200 Asian American Literature (3 cr.) CASE A&H, CASE DUS

Survey of Asian American literary production featuring works from a variety of genres--lyric poetry, short fiction, drama, non-fiction, life writing and novels. Works selected from American writers of Asian descent including those of Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Taiwanese, or Vietnamese heritage.

AAST-A 201 Asian Diaspora Experience (3 cr.) CASE A&H, CASE GCC

Explores the Asian Diaspora in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Examines Asian diasporic experience through diverse cultural forms: literature, art, music, dance, theatre, news, film, and other popular media. Addresses such salient issues as identity in transition, ecology and human ecology, globalization, and more.

AAST-A 210 Issues in Asian America (3 cr.)

Exploration of various social and historical issues facing Asian Americans in the United States, such as Asian American history, mental health, and social problems. Examination of various local and global forces that have shaped the lives of Asian Americans, as well as the ways in which Asian Americans have impacted regional, national, and international dynamics. May be repeated with a different topic for a maximum of 6 credit hours.

AAST-A 300 Topics in Asian American Studies (3 cr.) CASE DUS

Advanced study of a single focused topic in Asian American studies, with attention to disciplinary and interdisciplinary interpretations, frameworks of theory and practice, and skills in research, analysis, and writing. Topics vary. May be repeated with a different topic for a maximum of 6 credit hours.

AAST-A 320 Advanced Topics in Asian American Literature (3 cr.) CASE A&H, CASE DUS

In-depth study of a single author or topic as manifested in literary works produced by and about Asian Americans. Topics vary from semester to semester. May be repeated with a different topic for a maximum of 6 credit hours.

AAST-A 499 Capstone Seminar in Asian American Studies (3 cr.)

P: Consent of the program. A faculty-supervised course of independent research utilizing a specific disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach and culminating in a paper or report. The project may incorporate a practical or service-learning component and the use of diverse media. The report must include a written, analytical component.

AAST-X 490 Independent Readings and Research in Asian American Studies (3 cr.)

P: Consent of instructor and program director. Independent readings or research project in Asian American studies. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credit hours.



ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

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