

AAS 001: Introduction to Asian American Studies

Spring 2025

FULL SYLLABUS



Asian American writers and organizers associated with *Gidra*, a movement newspaper. Photo by Mike Murase (1971)

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Trung PQ Nguyen, Ph.D.

Email: trung.p.nguyen@sjsu.edu

Office Hours: DMH223, Wednesday 3-4
Starting Feb 5, Wed OH will be at
CAPISE (Student Union 1520)

Class Days/Time: S03, M/W 12:00-1:15PM

Classroom: HGH 122

Fulfills: [GE Area E](#); [AAS Minor](#)

Course Description

This course will critically examine Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans (APID/A) through U.S.-national and transnational frameworks. It will be principally concerned with the contests over the production of racial knowledge, power, and citizenship and belonging. We will explore a range of scholarly, literary, and visual texts in order to understand how the interdisciplinary field of Asian American Studies has shifted from an investment in domestic social justice concerns to consider how immigration and migration, citizenship, war, American empire, race and identity, globalization, and social movements for racial and economic justice have shaped APID/A lives historically and in the contemporary moment.

This course pays particular attention to the ways in which APID/As negotiate these structural forces in their everyday lives. It also develops an account of racialization beyond the black-white binary in the context of US war and empire in Asia and the Pacific Islands, settler colonialism, globalization, migration, and popular culture. We will complicate existing narratives of immigration and assimilation; complicate the assumed homogeneity of the category of “Asian American”; explore the historical and contemporary production of the “model minority” myth; situate APID/As within global and transnational frameworks; and track the continuing evolution of the interdisciplinary field of Asian American Studies.

This course is organized by a series of major themes in Asian American studies and APID/A life. The clusters are also meant to give you a framework through which to organize the material as you work through the readings, prepare for your exams, and complete all written assignments.

Content Note: This course contains materials of a sensitive nature, including sexual violence, state violence, abuse, death, and other content. Please contact instructor before the course starts if this will be a concern.

GE Learning Outcomes (GELO)

Upon successful completion of this GE course, students will be meet three out of the five learning outcomes listed below:

- GELO 1:** Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism.
- GELO 2:** Apply ethnic studies theory and knowledge to describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements that have and continue to facilitate the building of a more just and equitable society.
- GELO 3:** Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age.
- GELO 4:** Critically review how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation are relevant to current and structural issues such as communal, national, international, and transnational politics as, for example, in immigration, reparations, settler-colonialism, multiculturalism, language policies.
- GELO 5:** Describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements that have contributed to the building of a more just and equitable society.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Area F. Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- CLO 1:** Learn various methodologies, concepts, and theoretical contributions of Asian American Studies to comparative critical race analyses of power and structure, including white supremacy, liberation, sovereignty, and settler colonialism
- CLO 2:** Identify the intellectual contributions and shared experiences that link Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans together, as well as the internal diversity (class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age) that characterizes this diverse group
- CLO 3:** Describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements among Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans as well as other racial and ethnic coalitional groups to build a just and equitable society
- CLO 4:** Explain and assess how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced, enacted, and studied by Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans are relevant to current and structural issues such as in immigration, anti-immigrant sentiment, trans-misogyny, and settler-colonialism

Course Format

This class is an in-person course that meets twice a week. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, online may occur for some sessions and some office hours on an as-needed basis. If you are experiencing circumstances that will impact your performance in class, please contact me at trung.p.nguyen@sjsu.edu.

Course Website

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, additional readings, etc. can be found on the [Canvas Learning Management System](#) course login website. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [OneSJSU](#) to learn of any updates. Be sure to also review your Canvas notification settings, as I will be posting announcements via Canvas. Elect to have announcements forwarded immediately to your primary email address. Furthermore, you will be required to submit your assignments via Canvas. If you have any questions, come to office hours or consult the [eCampus](#) website.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

This course or portions of this course (i.e., lectures, discussions, student presentations) will be recorded for instructional or educational purposes. The recordings will only be shared with students enrolled in the class through Canvas. The recordings will be deleted at the end of the semester. If, however, you would prefer to remain anonymous during these recordings, then please speak with the instructor about possible accommodations (e.g., temporarily turning off identifying information from the Zoom session, including student name and picture, prior to recording). [University Policy S12-7](#) requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course.

Required Texts/Readings

All readings will be available on the course Canvas website.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

This course will rely on:

- Access to [Canvas](#)
- A working laptop, tablet, or other electronic device that allows you to access [Canvas](#) and course materials
- Reliable internet access
- An active SJSU email account
- A notebook and preferred writing/notetaking instruments

Course Requirements and Assignments

Cumulative: In-class [Participation](#) – (15%) Students will be evaluated on the basis of thoughtful participation in-class activities (which may or may not include reflections, small/large group discussions, in-class writing activities, and/or short presentations). Participation means coming to class prepared having completed readings and assignments before class, having a critical and respectful engagement with your classmates about the course material, asking/responding to questions, building on comments, taking a step back to let others share their thoughts, and/or contributing respectfully to the community and shared intellectual adventure of the classroom.

Fridays: (3) Quotation-based Reading Responses – (10%) Students will submit 3 reading responses (2-3 pages double spaced) that cites direct quotations and analysis of quotations from and addressing that week's readings. Students can choose any three weeks to respond to throughout the semester. Responses must include: what they found illuminating about the reading and why, what connections they can make to themselves/society/our class/history/cultural production, and 1-2 quotations with analysis direct from the reading. Reading responses addressing a given week will only be accepted up until Friday of that week.

W2: Critical Autobiography – (10%) Students will be tasked to write a critical autobiography detailing how their life intersects with history. Details about this assignment will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.

W6 & W12: (2) Conceptual Analyses – (25%) Students will be tasked to analyze a key concept from the course. Possible questions will be discussed in class ahead of time. Details will be released the week before and posted on Canvas. 2-3 pages single or double spaced. Times New Roman. Upload assignments onto Canvas.

W6, W8, W10, W15: Group Project: Feast of Resistance – (15%) In groups of 3-4, students will organize a Feast of Resistance. This activity tasks students to bring food, ingredients, and dishes, and use them to tell histories of struggle and resistance in the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Project will culminate in a short presentation, write-up, and sharing of food at the Feast at the end of the semester.

W15 & Finals: Final Proposal, Project and Letter – (5%+20%) Final project will be similar to the conceptual analysis, but will be cumulative and synthesize key themes throughout the course. Students will also write a letter reflecting on what they learned. Details about this assignment will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. Proposal pre-approving the project will be due in Week 14 (100-200 words explaining what student's project will be).

Extra Credit

Extra credit may be offered on a periodic basis as relevant events occur throughout the semester. Each opportunity will be an extra 5 points to the participation grade. To receive extra credit, students must:

- Provide proof of attendance (a screenshot, a ticket, a photo of you at the event, a photo of the sign in sheet, etc.)
- Submit a 250+ word reflection that includes: a short summary of the event, your reflections, and relevance to any course topics and themes
- Upload the proof and reflection onto the relevant Canvas link within 14 days of the event, and no later than the Thanksgiving Holiday

Late Assignments

Assignments may be turned in up to three days (72 hours) late with a 5% grade deduction per day late (including weekends), no questions asked. This policy may be subject to change throughout the semester.

Student Assessment and Grading Scale

<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>
Cumulative	In-class Participation	15%
Cumulative	Reading Responses (3)	10%
W2, W, Feb 05	Critical Autobiography	10%
W6, W, Mar 05	Conceptual Analysis 1	12.5%
W6, W, Mar 05	Pick Groups for Feast	2.5%
W8, W, Mar 19	Feast Notes	2.5%
W10, W, Apr 02	Feast Outline	5%
W12, W, Apr 16	Conceptual Analysis 2	12.5%
W15, M, May 05	Feast Pres./Write-Ups	5%
W15, W, May 07	Project Proposal	5%
Finals, M/Tues, May 19/20	Final Analysis+Letter	20%
	Total:	100%

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A/A+</i>	<i>93 to 100%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>Below 59.9%</i>

Classroom Protocol

In this course, students are expected to attend class on-time, prepared, and engaged throughout the session. Preparedness means students have completed assigned readings before entering class. You may use tablets and laptops during class for course activities, notetaking, and/or accessing your readings.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. [This link](#) contains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.

Credit Hours

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

Students should be familiar with the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#). Plagiarism often occurs unintentionally, but is a serious offense in academic and professional environments. To plagiarize means to use the ideas or words of others as if they were your own or without crediting the source. Students are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is and how to address it.

A tutorial to explain how to identify and avoid plagiarism is available here: <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/plagiarism>

For examples of paraphrasing and quotation (easy ways to avoid plagiarism), please see the following: <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/overview.html>, <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/examples.html>

Instances of cheating or plagiarism will result in some combination of the following: grade deduction, zero credit, meeting with the instructor and department chair, reporting to the office of [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#), and possible failure of the course.

Enrolling in the course

It is your responsibility to confirm your continued [registration](#) in the course. If you decide not to continue in the course, it is your responsibility to formally withdraw from the course. Failure to withdraw can result in an “F” grade. Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops is available [here](#).

Academic Resources and Accommodations

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](#) to establish a record of need.

Student Technology Training Center

Taking online classes requires some basic equipment needs (wifi, computer) and learning to use common apps (like video conferencing, online discussion boards, learning management systems). Get the basics and help with this part of online learning using the [Learn Anywhere](#) eCampus website.

Peer Connections

[Peer Connections](#) (Room 600, Student Services Center) assists students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development.

SJSU Writing Center

[The SJSU Writing Center](#) (Room 126, Clark Hall) is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. For other writing resources, please refer to the [SJSU School of Information for Writing Resources for Students](#).

ACCESS SJSU Social Sciences Success Center

[The Academic Counseling Center for Excellence in the Social Sciences \(ACCESS\)](#) (Clark Hall 240) provides advising for undergraduate students majoring or want to major in any in the Department of Social Sciences. Students can find academic tutoring and advising in critical areas such as writing and statistics in a quiet, comfortable study environment. Students can talk with a professional advisor about requirements for their major, general education courses, changing majors and much more.

Students can get advice on developing study strategies, improve time management, and general information on how to navigate the SJSU experience. For any student needs, problems or situations, this Center can provide a start for a solution. It is also a nice quiet place to study.

Course Schedule *(readings subject to change)*

UNIT I: FRAMEWORKS OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Week 01: What is Asian American Studies?

Introductions and Syllabus

Academic

- Choy, Catherine Ceniza. "The Multiple Origins of Asian American Histories."

Week 02: kNOw History/kNOw Self; A History of Restriction

Academic

- Paik, A. Naomi. "Bans."

News

- Bandlamundi, Adithi. "[San Jose Had 5 Chinatowns. What Happened to Them?](#)" *KQED Bay Curious*.

Assignment Due

- Wed, Feb 05: Critical Autobiography

Week 03: Racist Violence and the Ethnic Enclave

Academic

- Bonacich, Edna and Lucie Cheng. "A Theoretical Orientation to International Labor Migration." Selections: p. 1-3; 31-34; 160-167.

Site Visit – San Jose Japantown

- Wed, Feb 12: Meet at Issei Memorial Building in San Jose Japantown (565 N 5th St, San Jose, CA, 95112)

Week 04: Anti-War and Third World Solidarities

Editorial

- Wallace, Nina. "[In the Belly of the Monster: Asian American Opposition to the Vietnam War](#)." *Densho*.

Academic

- Choy, Catherine Ceniza. "1968: What's in the 'Name Asian American?'"

Film

- *On Strike: Ethnic Studies 1969-1999* (1999). Dir. Irum Shiekh.

Week 05: Colonizing the Pacific

Academic

- Teaiwa, TK. "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans."
- Kay-Trask, Haunani. "Lovely Hula Lands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture."

Week 06: Process Week

Assignment Due

- Wed, Mar 05: Conceptual Analysis 1

Assignment Due

- Wed, Mar 05: Read **Feast of Resistance** Assignment and pick your groups (3-4 people)

UNIT II: WAR, MEMORY, REPRESENTATION

Week 07: Eviction and Resistance

Academic

- Habal, Estella "Manilatown, Manongs, and the Student Radicals"

Film

- *Fall of the I-Hotel* (1983). Dir. Curtis Choy

Week 08: Refugees and War Memories

Academic

- Espiritu, Yen Le. "We-Win-Even-When-We-Lose" Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the 'Fall of Saigon.'"
- Cho, Grace M. "Kimchi Blues"

Assignment Due

- Wed, Mar 19: Feast Meeting Notes due

Week 09: Fast Cars, Dangerous Bodies

Academic

- Frank, Dana. "Demons in the Parking Lot: Auto Workers, Buy American Campaigns, and the 'Japanese Threat' in the 1980s."
- Kwon, Soo Ah. "'Autoexoticizing': Asian American Youth and the Import Car Scene."

Week 10: Spring Break

Assignment Due

- Wed, Apr 02: Feast Outline due

UNIT III: LABOR STRUGGLES AND JUSTICE NOW!

Week 11: Consuming Race: Food and Film

Academic

- Padoongpatt, Mark. "Thailand's '77th Province': Culinary Tourism in Thai Town."
- Alsultany, Evelyn. "Arabs and Muslims in the Media after 9/11."

Week 12: Process Week

Assignment Due

- Wed, Apr. 16: Conceptual Analysis 2

Week 13: Model/Minority/Mutiny and Black-Asian Relations

Academic:

- o Wu, Ellen. "The Invention of the Model Minority Myth."

Editorial:

- Fujino, Diane. "Black-Asian Solidarity Requires Us to Think and Act Relationally."
- Jung, Soya. "The racial Justice Movement Needs a Model Minority Mutiny."

Week 14: Deportation and Incarceration

Academic

- Sonoda, Healani. A Nation Incarcerated.

Editorial

- Davis, Angela. Masked Racism: Reflections on the Prison-Industrial Complex.
- Nourn, Ny. "[From Surviving Systemic Violence to Liberating People from Prisons and ICE Detention.](#)" *Asian Prisoner Support Committee.*

Policy

- Asian Prisoner Support Committee. "On Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated AAPIs"

UNIT IV: FEAST OF RESISTANCE

Week 15: Feast of Resistance and Wrap Up

Assignment Due

- Mon, May 05 – Feast of Resistance Presentations; Feast Write-Ups
- Wed, May 07 – Final Project proposals due

Week 16: Process Week

Use the time to work on the final exam

Finals Week

Assignment Due

- Mon, May 19 – Final Project
- Tues, May 20 – Final Letter