

AAS 001: Introduction to Asian American Studies

Section 15 - Monday, Wednesday 3-4:15pm

Fall 2025

San José State University

Program in Asian American Studies

Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences

“KNOW HISTORY, KNOW SELF. NO HISTORY, NO SELF.” - JOSÉ RIZAL

The quote above was said by José Rizal, a Filipino leader who inspired the Philippine Revolution against Spanish colonization. The quote captures the spirit of ethnic studies and the hope for what students will get out of this class.

COURSE AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Instructor: Lan Nguyen (she/hers)

Email: Lan.h.Nguyen01@sjsu.edu **DO NOT use the Canvas messaging system! You will not receive a reply.**

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-2:30pm in DMH 238B. No appointment necessary. Please email me if you would like to meet outside of these hours and we can arrange something.

Class Days/Time/Location: Sec 15: Mondays 3:00-4:15pm in DMH 208

Fulfills: AAS minor requirement, GE Area F: Ethnic Studies

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 the instructor before the course starts if this will be a concern.

GE LEARNING OUTCOMES (GELO)

Upon successful completion of this GE course, students will 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 antiracism.
- 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 is an in-person course that meets once per week. Please check Canvas on a weekly basis for updates. For further questions, please contact the instructor at: Lan.h.Nguyen01@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

[University Policy S12-7](#) requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course: "Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material..... Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent." **In short, students are NOT ALLOWED to record lectures without the instructor's permission. No exceptions.**

Required Texts/Readings/Materials

All readings and other required course materials will be available on the course Canvas website.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material:

- Daily access to Canvas.
- Installation of [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#) on Canvas
- An active SJSU email account. Your Canvas profile should include your email address.
- A working laptop, tablet, or other electronic device that allows you access to Canvas and other course materials.
- Reliable internet access.
- A notebook and preferred writing & notetaking instruments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- **In-Class Participation 25%**
 - Students will be evaluated on the basis of thoughtful participation during in-class activities. Thoughtful participation requires that students have done and understand the assigned readings or viewed the assigned media prior to the class meetings. Assessments for the in-class participation grading category includes written reflections, small/large group discussions, pop-quizzes on the readings, and in-class activities. Students are expected to respectfully engage with classmates about the course material, ask/respond to questions, and contribute respectfully to the community and shared learning experience of the classroom. At the end of the semester, I will automatically excuse the participation points allotted for one class absence. If students are absent more than once a semester, there is a possibility to make up participation points for TWO additional absences. In order to make up the participation points for the class meeting (up to 2 per semester), email the instructor no later than 24 hours after missing the class session.
- **Reading Responses 15%**
 - Students will submit 3 reading/media responses (2-3 pages double spaced) that explains the author/creator's arguments and includes students' own original insights. The responses should cite direct quotations and analysis of quotations from and addressing that week's readings. During the first class meeting, students will sign up for the 3 weeks in which they will complete the reading responses. 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 from the reading/media with analysis. Reading responses will be due each week on Monday at 2:59pm, before the class meeting.

- **Weekly Reflection Journals: 15%**
 - A 250-500 word reflection is due at 2:59pm before class each Wednesday. The reflection prompts will be posted on Canvas each Monday, related to the readings for the week as well as the class lecture and activities from Monday's class.
- **Midterm exam: 20%**
 - A series of multiple choice and short answer questions that will be completed in class on Monday, October 6th.
- **Final Project Proposal: 2.5%**
 - Students will submit a graphic organizer brainstorming their plans for the final project. Instructions will be posted on Canvas. **Due on Monday, October 13th by 11:59pm.**
- **Final Project Progress Report: 2.5%**
 - Students will need to meet with the professor the week of Nov 3-7 and submit a progress report containing an outline of the film and notes for at least 1 completed interview. **Due on Friday, Nov 7th by 11:59pm.**
- **Final Project - Documentary: 20%**
 - In lieu of a final exam, students will choose to work alone or in a group of 2-3 to create a 5-10 minute documentary on a topic of their choice. **The documentary will be due on Canvas Friday, December 12th at 11:59 pm.**
- **Extra Credit**
 - Extra credit may be offered on a periodic basis as relevant events occur throughout the semester. Extra credit opportunities will be announced on Canvas, via email, and in class. Students must follow the directions on Canvas and submit the required materials within 7 days of the event to receive points.
- **Late Assignments**
 - *Late assignments will be accepted with the mark down of one full letter grade (-10%).*

The final course letter grade is based on the following (strict) scale below. Final grades will not be rounded.

94.00–100.00 = A	80.00–83.99 = B-	67.00–69.99 = D+
90.00–93.99 = A-	77.00–79.99 = C+	64.00–66.99 = D
87.00–89.99 = B+	74.00–76.99 = C	60.00–63.99 = D
84.00–86.99 = B	70.00–73.99 = C-	0.00–59.99 = F

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. *If students exhibit unprofessionalism with their technology use, points will be subtracted from the students' participation grade.*

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*)

Week 0

Wednesday, Aug 20: First Day of Class; syllabus intro

UNIT 1: Racialization of Asian Americans

Week 1- What is Asian American Studies?

Monday, Aug 25

- Course Intro; no readings due this week

Wednesday Aug 27

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 2 - Localizing Asian American Studies

Monday, Sep 1

- **Labor Day; No class meeting**

Wednesday, Sep 3 (Walking tour of San Jose; meet in class)

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 3 - Histories of Inclusion and Exclusion in America

Monday, Sep 8

Due before class:

- Academic: Dhingra, Pawan & Robyn M. Rodriguez. "Arrival and History" in Asian America: Sociological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Wednesday, Sep 10

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 4 - Racial Formation of Asian Americans

Monday, Sep 15

Due before class:

- Academic: Omi, Michael & Howard Winant. "The Theory of Racial Formation" in *Racial Formation in the United States*. (excerpt)
- Editorial: Bhangal, Naseeb & Oiyen Poon. "Are Asian Americans White? Or People of Color?"

Wednesday, Sep 17

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 5 - Unpacking Model Minority & Asian-Black Relations

Monday, Sep 22:

Due before class:

- Academic: Kim, Claire Jean. "Introduction" in *Asian Americans in an Anti-Black World*.

Wednesday Sep 24:

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 6 - The Racialization of Terror

Monday, Sep 29

Due before class:

- Editorial: "Of Spies and G-Men: How the U.S. Government Turned Japanese Americans into Enemies of the State"
- News: "Post-9/11 surveillance has left a generation of Muslim Americans in a shadow of distrust and fear"

Wednesday, Oct 1

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 7 - Midterm week

Monday, Oct 6

- **Midterm exam**

Wednesday, Oct 8

- No readings or journals due before class

UNIT 2: Systemic Anti-Asian Violence

Week 8 - Settler colonialism

Monday, Oct 13

No in-person meeting. Please watch videos posted on Canvas to inform the weekly reflection journal due before class on Wednesday

Wednesday, Oct. 15

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Documentary project proposal due Friday, Oct 17 at 11:59pm

Week 9 - Gentrification

Monday, Oct 20

Due before class:

- Editorial: Huynh, Frances. "The Gentrification of Los Angeles Chinatown: How Do We Talk About It?"

Wednesday Oct 22

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 10 - War & Militarism

Monday, Oct 27

Due before class:

- Academic: Okiihiro, Gary. "Imperialism and Migration"

Wednesday, Oct 29

- Due before class: Weekly Reflection Journal

Week 11 - Monday, Nov 3: Documentary Workshop Week

No in-person class meeting or readings due this week. In lieu of a class meeting, students will be required to meet with the professor to discuss the final project. Documentary Progress Report due on Friday, Nov 7th by 11:59pm.

Unit 3: Movements of Resistance

Week 12 - From Refugees to Deportees

Monday, Nov 10

Due before class:

- Comic: Bui, Thi "Refugee to Detainee: How the U.S. is Deporting Those Seeking a Safe Haven"
- Editorial: Nourn, Ny "From Surviving Systemic Violence to Liberating People from Prisons and ICE Detention"

Wednesday, Nov 12

- Due before class: weekly reflection journal

Week 13 - Labor Exploitation & Resistance

Monday, Nov 17

Due before class:

- Definition: ["What is a union"](#)
- Academic: Kim, Marlene "Organizing Asian Americans into Labor Unions"

Wednesday, Nov 19:

- Due before class: weekly reflection journal

Week 14 - Reclaiming Narratives

Monday, Nov 24:

Due before class:

- Video of a talk and performance: Ibarra, Ruby "The Art of Storytelling"
- Editorial: Sugihara, M. & Ju, J "Media Matters: Why Asian American Representation in Media is a Social Justice Issue"

Wednesday, Nov 26:

- **No Class, nothing due**

Week 15 - Contemporary Movements and Solidarity

Monday, Dec 1

Due before class:

- Editorial: Taylor, A. & Hunt-Hendrix, L "What is Solidarity and How Does it Work?"
- Editorial: Suong, Sarath "We've Been Here Before": Bearing Witness to Palestine's Genocide as a Cambodian Genocide Survivor"

- Editorial: “Black and Asian Solidarity in American History: The Power of Unity Exemplified by 5 Major Events”

Wednesday, Dec 3

- Due before class: weekly reflection journal

Week 16 - Monday, Dec 8: Last Day of Class

No readings due this week

Friday, Dec 12th, 3:15-5:15pm: Optional Extra Credit Class Meeting: documentary film screenings

Final Project (documentary) due Friday, Dec 12th at 11:59pm