



(from Pulido, Laura, *Black, Brown, Yellow, Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. 2006)  
Asian American contingent at a march against deportations in East Los Angeles, Summer 1976. Asian American solidarity with Chicanas/os. Photographer: Mary Uyematsu Kao

# SJSU Spring 2025

## AAS 175: Asian American Communities

### Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Trung PQ Nguyen, Ph.D.

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Office Hours:

DMH 223, 3PM – 4PM Wednesdays and by appointment

*Starting Feb 5, Wednesday Office Hours will be at CAPISE (Student Union 1520)*

### Course Time and Location

Mon/Wed, 1:30PM – 2:45PM, HGH 122

### Course Description

This class will examine the conditions and contradictions of Asian American community-making and belonging through space, while engaging in practices of community ourselves. Who “counts” as Asian American? How has this idea shifted by capitalism, war, justice struggles, and state violence? How are the boundaries of Asian American actively reproduced, challenged, and negotiated through space?

## Content Warning

This course will engage with difficult topics such as structural violence, racism, and war. Given the course's emphasis on a structural analysis, students will also learn about communities and systems beyond their own (and beyond Asian American studies). Students are expected to engage with these topics, materials, and with each other in a mature and scholarly way, and consider how each idea relates back to them. Furthermore, students are expected to keep up with the reading and writing load of this course; students will be evaluated on all readings. A bare minimum pass for the class will require that students read all the readings before class, and write the reading responses. If a student feels unprepared to succeed in this class this semester, they should reconsider enrolling in this class and wait for a different semester or a different instructor.

## Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

S1: describe how identities are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality. Examples include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, age, generation, regional origin, national identity, language, intersectionalities

S2: analyze historical, economic, political, or social processes that shape diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. and reflect on one's own identities and positions within these structures

S3: evaluate social actions which have or have not led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S.

S4: engage in constructive interactions about social issues in the U.S. within the framework of equality and inequalities

## Course Policies

**Modality:** 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](mailto:trung.p.nguyen@sjsu.edu).

**Course Website and Grade Posting:** 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. 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 some of your assignments via Canvas. Assignments posted on Canvas will have grades posted on Canvas, but not all assignments will be posted there. The most accurate grade will be in my personal grade book, which will not be on Canvas. If you have any questions, come to office hours or consult the eCampus website.

**Late Policy:** Late assignments accepted up to 3 days after due date, with a 5% penalty per day. Assignments after 3 days are given 0's.

**Required Texts/Readings:** All readings will be available on the course Canvas website.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material: Come prepared with the below.

- Access to Canvas
- A working laptop, tablet, or other electronic device that allows you to access Canvas and course materials (see: <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services-for-more>)
- Reliable internet access
- An active SJSU email account
- A notebook and preferred writing/notetaking instruments

Grading:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>97 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>93% to 96%.</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>

### Assignments

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Community Autobiography	10%
Weekly Reading Engagement	10%
Participation	10%
Name Quiz	5%
Midterm 1	15%
Midterm 2	15%
Final Research Project	30%

### Assignment Descriptions

#### 10% Community Autobiography – Due Week 4

Students will write an autobiography about their community and their relationship to it.  
Due: Wed, Feb 19 (Week 4)

#### 10% Weekly Reading Responses – Due Sundays before midnight starting Week 3 (starting Feb 9)

Students will be assessed on weekly reading responses throughout the semester. Reading engagements will be due on Sundays before midnight, 1-2 pages double spaced, online. Responses should address at least one of those assigned readings for the week ahead. Responses should focus on: 1) what was illuminating about the text; 2) what connections students see to themselves, to class, their communities, and to society beyond them; and 3) relevant direct quotations from

readings. Students are allowed to miss up to 2 reading responses and can still have full credit for this assignment.

10% **Participation – Due each class meeting**

Students will be assessed on in-class participation. This can include: in-class activities and quizzes, active verbal or non-verbal (note-taking, nodding, writing down questions, engagement) contributions to class activities and discussions, and coming to class prepared. Class discussions will always begin with asking: 1) what is the argument/main theme?; 2) what are the community conditions and needs?; 3) what were the responses and tensions?

5% **Name Quiz – Due Week 8**

Students will be quizzed on the names of every student

Due: Wed, March 19 (Week 8)

15% **Midterm 1 – Due Week 6**

Students will be assessed on two midterms throughout the semester. Midterms will be writing-based, non-cumulative, and assessed on demonstration of comprehension, synthesis, and critical analysis of the course materials. Midterm 1 will test concepts covered in Weeks 1-5 (see course schedule for key concept list)

15% **Midterm 2 – Due Week 12**

Same as above. Midterm 2 will test covered in Weeks 7-11.

30% **Group Research Project – Due Weeks 7, 10, 14/15, and Finals**

Students will work on a group research project throughout the semester which will take place throughout the semester. Components will be due periodically: a plan, interview notes, presentation, and a final write up.

## Reading Schedule

W1, 01/27-29

### **Asian/American/Community**

*What links Asian Americans?*

Key terms: Asian American, community, imperialism, education, liberation, migrant labour

Mon:

Introductions and Syllabus

Wed:

(1999) Omatsu, Glenn “Defying a Thousand Pointing Fingers and Serving the Children: Re-envisioning the Mission of Asian American Studies in Our Communities”

(2020) Man, Simeon. “Anti-Asian violence and US imperialism.”

W2, 02/03-05

### **Serve the People**

*What’s the link between Asian American activism, community, and solidarity?*

Key Terms: Serve the People, solidarity, people of color

Mon:

(2016) Ishizuka, Karen. "To Serve the People." *Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties*

(2006) Pulido, Laura. "The Politics of Solidarity: Interethnic Relations in the Third World Left" (excerpt: p.153-162). *Black, Brown, Yellow, Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*.

(2022) SJSU Disoriented Asian American Activist Timeline

Wed:

Guest Speakers from Nikkei Resisters San Jose and Sustainable Japantown on "Serving the People: SJSU Students and SJ Japantown"

W3, 02/10-12

### **Spatial Reorganizations I: Imagination and Meaning**

*What do places and spaces mean to Asian American communities?*

Key Terms: imagination, memory, diaspora, ethnoburb, ethnic enclave, place, space

#### **Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2021) Mani, Bakirathi. "Diasporic Longings." *Asian American Literature in Transition, 1965-1996*.

(2024) Hom, Lauren. "Why Chinatown Still Matters." *The Power of Chinatown: Searching for Spatial Justice in Los Angeles*.

Wed:

(2021) Zauner, Michelle. "Crying in H-Mart." *Crying in H-Mart: A Memoir*.

Activity: Community Stories

*Optional:* (2013) Mabalon, Dawn. "Coming Home to Little Manila." *Little Manila is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipina/o American Community in Stockton*.

W4, 02/17-19

### **Spatial Reorganizations II: Suburban Dispersals and Fear**

*How do racist histories of migrant restriction and fear shape the dispersal of Asian American communities into the suburbs?*

Key Terms: suburb, fear, property, Alien, homes

#### **Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2013) Cheng, Wendy. "Not 'For Caucasians Only': Race, Property, Homeownership." *The Changes Next Door to the Díases: Remapping Race in Suburban California*.

(2009) Vergara, Benito. "Little Manila." *Pinoy Capital: The Filipino Nation in Daly City*.  
OR (2010) Espiritu, Yen Le. "Homes, Borders, and Possibilities." *Asian American Studies Now: A Critical Reader*

Wed:

(2016) Maira, Sunaina. "The 9/11 Generation in Silicon Valley." *The 9/11 Generation: Youth, Rights, And Solidarity in the War on Terror*.

**Due: Community Autobiography**

W5, 02/24-26

**Incarcerated Communities**

*How do incarcerated people build and imagine community within and beyond incarceration? How can we better build community with incarcerated people?*

Key Terms: incarceration, prisons, abolition, freedom

**Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2022) Zheng, Eddy. "Prison-to-Leadership Pipeline: Asian American Prisoner Activism." *Contemporary Asian American Activism: Building Movements for Liberation*.

Wed:

(2024) *Arriving: Freedom Writings by Asian and Pacific Islanders Behind and Beyond Bars (selections)*

Activity: Letter-writing to incarcerated people

W6, 03/03-05

No Meetings. Work on Midterm 1

W7, 03/10-12

**Communities after War and Empire**

*How do adoptees make visible the histories of war shaping Asian American communities?*

Key Terms: adoption, adoptee, empire, militarized humanitarianism, war

**Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2014) Pate, SooJin. "Militarized Humanitarianism: Rethinking the Emergence of Korean Adoption." *From Orphan to Adoptee: U.S. Empire and Genealogies of Korean Adoption*.

(2013) Schlund-Vials, Cathy. "Lost in their 'Fathers' Land': War, Migration, and Vietnamese Amerasians." *War Baby / Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American Art*.

Wed:

Kim, Eleana. "Adoptee Cultural Citizenship." *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging*.

Optional:

(2019) Kim, Eleana and Kim Park Nelson. "Natural Born Aliens: Transnational Adoptees and U.S. Citizenship"

**Due: Group Project Plan and Timeline**

W8, 03/17-19

**Communities of Postmemory**

*How do memories of violence shape communities after the fact?*

Key Terms: postmemory, 9/11, haunting, terror

**Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2018) Devgan, Shruti. "A Haunted Generation Remembers"

Activity: What haunts you?

Wed:

(2009) Maira, Sunaina. "Missing: Fear, Complicity, and Solidarity." *Missing: Youth, Citizenship, and Empire After 9/11*.

**Due: In-class Name Quiz**

W9, 03/24-26

**Community against Settler/Colonial/Climate Genocide**

*What is the urgency of community-making in the context of historical and ongoing state-sponsored genocide?*

Key Terms: genocide, settler colonialism, sovereignty, land, climate

**Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2021) Qutami, Loubna. "Transnational Histories of Palestinian Youth Organizing in the United States"

Wed:

(2014) Lasky, Jacqueline. "Waiāhole-Waikāne." *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty*.

(2024) Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Noelani, Kenneth Gofigan Kuper, Joakim "Joko" Peter. "Together We Are Stronger: Micronesian and Hawaiian Solidarity."

W10, 03/31-04/02

**Spring Break**

**Due: Group Project Interview Notes**

W11, 04/07-09

**Communities without Documents**

*What do undocumented communities face and how do they build movements?*

Key Terms: undocumented, ICE, policing

**Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2018) Buenavista, Tracy Lachica. "Model (undocumented) minorities and 'illegal' immigrants: centering Asian Americans and US carcerality in undocumented student discourse."

(2022) Chung, Ga Young. "Dismantling the 'Undocumented Korean Box.'" *Contemporary Asian American Activism: Building Movements for Liberation*.

Wed:

(2024) Shih, Elena. "Combating the Slow Economic Violence of Rescue."

W12, 04/14-16

No Meetings. Work on Midterm 2.

W13, 04/21-23

**Communities, Sex, and Consent**

*How do queer and Trans\* Asian American and activist communities navigate the struggle for existence in the midst of epidemic violence and intimate partner violence?*

Key Terms: sexuality, queer, Trans\*, HIV/AIDS, epidemic

**Due: Reading Response (Sunday before midnight)**

Mon:

(2021) Wat, Eric. *Love Your Asian Body: AIDS Activism in Los Angeles* (excerpts)

Wed:

(2011) Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi and Ching-In Chen. *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Partner Violence Within Activist Communities* (excerpts)

W14, 04/28-30

**Presentations**

W15, 05/05-07

**Presentations**

W16, 05/12

**Work on Finals**

Fri 05/16

**Group Project Final Report Due**