

AASPIRE



2018–19 NORTHWESTERN
ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES **NEWSLETTER**

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

SHALINI SHANKAR



Dear Northwestern Alumni and Friends,

I hope you are having a wonderful summer! The Asian American Studies Program has had a dynamic, event-filled year that has furthered our commitment to academic excellence and community building at Northwestern.

Throughout the year, we've had esteemed speakers address our students and faculty. In Winter quarter, we chose from among dozens or highly qualified applicants to hire our new Assistant Professor of Instruction. We are delighted to welcome Dr. Patricia Nguyen as our newest faculty colleague! We are also very pleased to welcome Dr. Raymond San Diego, who will join us as a Visiting Assistant Professor.

The highlight of the year was watching our extraordinary undergraduates present at the Association for Asian American Studies conference in Madison, WI. Five students presented original seminar research on a panel organized by Professors Yuh and Nguyen, followed by a thoughtful and confident Q & A. AASP is especially thankful for the fundraising efforts and generous donations of the NU Asian American alumni who made this trip possible.

It has been my pleasure to serve AASP in my one-year term as Interim Director. I remain very grateful to lead one of the most dynamic and engaged academic units at Northwestern, and look forward to working with Nitasha Sharma when she resumes the director position in September.

We are so glad you are part of the Northwestern Asian American Studies community. Please send us your alumni perspectives, news, and updates on your life and career. We would love to showcase them in our next edition of this newsletter. As always, we hope to see you at events and look forward to staying in touch.

Have a great rest of the summer!

Yours truly,
Shalini Shankar
Interim Director
Professor of Anthropology

Northwestern

SO WHAT HAPPENED IN 2018-2019?

ACADEMIC DIRECTIONS FAIR

During Wildcat Welcome, some of our work studies and faculty attended the academic directions fair to promote Asian American Studies Classes to incoming students. With nothing like Asian American Studies or ethnic studies in high school, many students were interested in our program and even registered for classes.

AASP work study, Laura Carther giving first year students an overview of Asian American Studies.



Professor Yuh, Director of Undergraduate Studies encouraging students to register for Asian American Studies classes



WELCOME RECEPTION

To kick-off the 2018-2019 academic year, AASP and LatinX Studies program invited their faculty, staff and students to a welcome reception.



Michelle Huang (AASP faculty), Patricia Nguyen (AASP faculty), and Myrna Garcia (LatinX Studies Faculty)

Will Paik and Jessica Liu ('20)

Celestine He (AASP minor, '19), Elvia Mendoza (LatinX Studies faculty), Justin Tse (AASP faculty)



OUTINGS WITH ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES MAJORS AND MINORS

The Asian American Studies program hosts quarterly outings with their majors and minors ...



Fall 2018 Walking Tour and Dinner in the Southeast Asian community

First Sip Café, Argyle St, Chicago



Cambodian Rock Band at Victory Gardens Theatre, a drama/comedy/musical about the Cambodian Genocide



FACULTY LECTURES

This year, the Asian American Studies program hosted two talks by their faculty. These talks are both an opportunity for both the faculty to workshop ideas for upcoming books and for students to learn about their professor's research interests.

April 23, 2019 Professor Patricia Nguyen gave a presentation titled "Collapsing Time and Imagining Refugee Futures." Prof. Nguyen analyzed Tuan Andrew Nguyen's futuristic dystopic film, *The Island*, to meditate on the poetics of water, time, mythology, and spirituality at the site of the refugee camp. In the subsequent discussion, the audience asked questions about Asian American spirituality and the discipline of Critical Refugee Studies.



Collapsing Time and Imagining Refugee Futures

Professor Patricia Nguyen





On February 7th, Professor Huang gave a talk titled "Japanese American Internment Narratives after 9/11." She examined neo-internment novels—novels that imagine the U.S. returning to Japanese internment—such as Perry Miyake's *21st Century Manzanar*. Following her lecture, students and faculty posed questions about literary form, the affordances of genre fiction, and the political context of 9/11.



Japanese American Internment Narratives after 9/11

Professor Michelle Huang



2019 SPECIAL RECOGNITION

We want to give special recognition to two of our faculty whose projects came to fruition this year. Professor Shalini Shankar published her third book titled *Beeline: What Spelling Bees Reveal About Generation Z's New Path to Success*, and Professor Patricia Nguyen and John Lee's design was selected to design the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial.



"In this engaging book, **Shalini Shankar** tells the story of the extraordinary kids who participate in competitive spelling bees, and through them, in turn, the story of Generation Z. Shankar shows us how these kids become entrepreneurs of their own lives, and do it with amazing discipline, poise, and good spirit." — Sherry Ortner, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at UCLA



Professor Patricia Nguyen and architectural designer, **John Lee**, are deeply humbled with the great honor of building the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial (CTJM) as part of the Reparations Ordinance in the continued fight for justice. From 1972 to 1993, Jon Burge (a Chicago Police Department commander) led the charge torturing over 125 (and counting) predominantly Black and Latinx men, women, and boys into forced confessions of violent crimes, which resulted in decades of incarceration and over 10 sentenced to death row. The Reparations Ordinance is the first U.S. law ever passed to provide reparations for racist law enforcement violence.

More information at www.chicagotorture.org

STUDENT EVENTS

In addition to special events off campus for majors and minors, Asian American Studies also hosted a wide variety of events on campus and in Evanston.

CUPITOL TUESDAYS

AASP held coffee chats at Cupitol cafe. These monthly events were open to any student who wished to have casual conversation with other Asian American studies students and faculty on a variety of academic and social topics.



Attendees were able to share their own personal relationships to Spam, and discussed its historical significance throughout the world and the ways in which its consumption is tied to global colonialism and U.S. militarization.

SPAM MUSUBI INTERACTIVE LECTURE

On February 20, 2019, Professors Patricia Nguyen and Justin Tse held an interactive lecture where students learned how to assemble their own Spam Musubi (Spam, rice and edible nori).



CAREER ROUNDTABLE

What happens after graduation? On January 22, 2019, Alumni of the Asian American Studies Program visited to talk about how Asian American Studies helped their careers. Stacy Tsai ('18) talked about race in medicine as a Feinberg medical student. AJ Aguado ('10), was skyped in from California, talked about the importance of diversity as the Senior Growth Marketing Manager at Adobe Creative Cloud. Phan Le ('17) shared her experience working at Fullstack Academy of Code, and Sarah Oberholtzer ('17) talked about working with youth at North Lawndale College Prep.





ASIAN AMERICAN ACTIVISM IN CHICAGO

On November 15th AASP hosted a roundtable with students and faculty who are involved with activism in Chicago. It featured Patricia Nguyen, who founded Axis Lab, a community arts organization in Argyle; Seri Lee, who works with the LatinX Asian American Collective, Students Organizing for Labor Rights, and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum; and Julia Song, who works with Students Organizing for Labor Rights, Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago, and Grassroots Collaborative.



KAN-WIN WORKSHOP: ERADICATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN APIDA COMMUNITIES

On April 18th AASP, Asian Pacific American Coalition, Multi-Cultural Student Affairs, and KAN-WIN, a community organization working to eradicate gender-based violence, hosted an event about dating violence in APIDA (Asian Pacific Islander Desi American) communities. Asian American Studies major and KAN-WIN organizer Jessica Wang lead conversations about healthy relationships and the history of Asian American sexuality. Students also discussed their own personal experiences with dating at Northwestern.



2019 AAAS CONFERENCE

UNIV. OF WISCONSIN, MADISON

The Association for Asian American Studies held their annual conference at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. AASP sponsored an undergraduate student thanks to generous donations from the Northwestern Asian and Asian American Alumni Association. The student panel consisted of research students conducted in Professor Nguyen's Asian Americans in Chicago class.

Students from Professor Patricia Nguyen's Asian Americans in Chicago class presenting their research at the Association for Asian American Studies conference in Madison Wisconsin.





From left to right:
Professor Ji-Yeon Yuh
Professor Patricia Nguyen
Akash Palani
Tianjiao Li
Savion M. Jean-Pierre
Vy Na Duong
Christian Tam
Anisa Codamon

This year's CED coordinators were Mishana Garschi (African American Studies '21) and Julian Glover (African American Studies '19). CED showcases ethnic studies scholarship and fosters a cross-discipline dialogue encouraging collaboration between numerous departments and programs. This year's schedule comprised of four speakers chosen to address ethnicity in America, and/or comparative studies in race, ethnicity, migration, and diaspora.

Mishana Garschi
(African American Studies '21)



Julian Glover
(African American Studies '19)



AASP HONORS



KATHERINE LO
('19)

Katherine used study abroad in Merida, Mexico to travel in Yucatan and Chiapas, write a blog, and turn her fieldwork into a thesis that uses Asian American Studies methods and theories to examine indigeneity and mestizaje in Mexico.

She focuses on four locations: Luna Maya, a midwifery house, La Rueda del Tiempo, an acro-theatrical performance, a local textile shop in Chiapas, and Yaxunah, an indigenous municipality. Through participant observation and interviews, she delves into the history and practices of these four locations where indigenous culture and peoples are present, performed, and perceived.

She uses the theoretical work of Asian American Studies scholars working in performance, theater, critical race, settler colonialism, and gender studies to analyze the four cases and examine orientalism in a Mexican content. She concludes that mestizaje unwittingly employs orientalist tropes and subsumes indigeneity, sometimes erasing it, sometimes romanticizing it, and sometimes denigrating it. Yet she also argues for the potential benefits of mestizaje, for the possibilities when indigenous people take that concept and craft it for their own purposes. She also takes a modest perspective, noting that conclusions are necessarily tentative and contingent, specific to time and place, and subject to revision or rejection based on further research.

Her thesis is notable for its deep interdisciplinarity, its broadening of Asian American Studies to encompass locales and peoples outside the United States, and for its excellent demonstration of the utility of Asian American Studies as a methodology that can illuminate the experiences of people other than Asian Americans. Her work is on the leading edge of Asian American Studies.

Katherine also presented her project at the Undergraduate Research Expo on May 29, 2019.



ANDREW OH (’19)

Andrew’s project defies convention and therein lies its brilliance. He researched the history and experiences of North Koreans and North Korean refugees, researched Korean and Korean American cultural production, especially dance and music, and then created his own original dance choreography narrating his interpretation of North Korean refugee experiences.

In an accompanying paper, he defends his argument that North Korean refugees face “unsettlement” – a profound psychic displacement – as a consequence of their refugee status and resettlement abroad. His work engages with dance, performance studies, critical refugee studies, and diaspora studies to present an insightful analysis and a compelling narrative.

His work flies high above the bar for honors. Four faculty have written letters of nomination for Andrew, and each emphasize his creative intellect. Prof. Tse in particular notes that Andrew has taken control of his education, choreographing a unique education adventure that will serve him well for a lifetime. New Ph.D. Yuri Doolan discusses the obstacles that Andrew has overcome to pursue his education and identifies him as a student possessing genuine intellectual creativity. The DUS, Prof. Yuh, notes the remarkable work involved in his dance choreography, and Prof. Ngyuen extolls his excellent work in refugee studies.

END OF THE YEAR RECEPTION



Top left: Julia Song, Annie Lee, Celestine He, Alice Wu, Esther Han

Top right: Departing faculty, Tatsu Aoki

Bottom left: Just-retired former program coordinator for AASP, Greg Jue

Bottom right: AASP faculty & staff, (from left to right) Patricia Nguyen, Michelle Huang, Ji-Yeon Yuh, Shalini Shankar, Greg Jue, Cheryl Jue, Justin Tse, Tatsu Aoki

Students, faculty, and staff celebrated the end of the academic year by recognizing outstanding achievement in Asian American Studies. The program acknowledged graduating AASP majors and minors, awarded several prizes, and offered heartfelt farewells to outgoing faculty and former staff. The capacity crowd enjoyed food, music performances, and stand-up comedy.



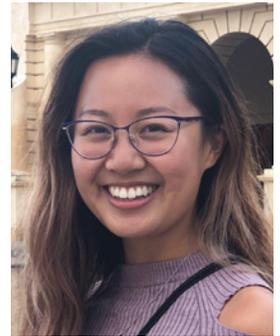
Top Left: graduating majors – Jessica Wang, Andrew Oh, Katherine Lo, Justine Kim
Other 3 photos: The Garnetts: Jessica Wang, Laura Carther, Seri Lee

STUDENT AWARDS

These awards honor and recognize outstanding students in Asian American Studies. Undergraduate students are formally nominated by faculty in the spring quarter and then approved by the Committee on Asian American Awards.

Outstanding Achievement

Outstanding Achievement in Asian American Studies is presented to graduating seniors who excel in AAS coursework and foster initiatives and demonstrate leadership, both within the classroom and in co-curricular activities sponsored by the Asian American Studies Program.



Katherine Lo
(Weinberg '19)

Distinguished Essay

Distinguished Essay in Asian American Studies is presented to students who have written the best essays on any topic related to Asian American studies.



Philip Zehnder
(Weinberg '20)
<GAZE>



Will Paik (Weinberg '20)
*Land Paved with Gold
American Fantasies in the
Korean Diaspora*



Justine Kim (Medill '19)
*Asian American Bermuda
Triangle*

Asian American Summer Community Fellowship

Asian American Community Summer Fellowship awards one or more Asian American Studies Majors or Minors a \$4,000 grant to pursue an internship at a non-profit community organization that serves the Asian American community.



Lillian Guo (SESP '20)
(Summer internship at Kan-Win, whose mission is to eradicate gender-based violence v. women)



Will Paik (Weinberg '20)
will join the Asian American comedy troupe, *Stir Friday*

Good Citizenship

Good Citizenship in Asian American Studies is presented to students who actively and regularly participate in activities sponsored by the Asian American studies program and honors their meaningful contribution towards community building.



Ying Dai
(Weinberg '20)



Laura Carther
(Weinberg '20)

TRANSITIONS

FAREWELL



Professor Justin Tse has been Visiting Assistant Professor in Asian American Studies for the last three years. We are sad to see him go, but excited for him at his new job as an assistant professor of instruction at Singapore Management University.



Tatsu Aoki is a reknown jazz musician who has taught Asian American Studies classes for the last fifteen years. Tatsu has been a part of the creative spirit of the Asian American Studies program. We wish him the best!



Greg Jue was the administrative assistant for AASP from 2006 to 2010. A participant in the 1969 Third World student strike at UC Berkeley, he brought his personal experience and enthusiasm to NU's AASP. We wish him a long, fun and happy retirement.

WELCOME



Patricia Nguyen has been selected as AASP's Assistant Professor of Instruction



Raymond San Diego is the incoming Visiting Assistant Professor for 2019-2021



Mishana Garschi ('21) will be the Graduate Assistant in 2019-2020

SUPPORT ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



WE NEED YOU

Your donations allow us to create community-based learning and enrichment opportunities for our students and host events that enlighten the broader Northwestern community.

Please give what you can - your contribution matters!

Click here to support the program with a donation or visit our website at asianamerican.northwestern.edu.

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