



Letter from the Department Chair

THANK YOU!

Truly, I can never say those two words often enough. I am deeply grateful to all of you – faculty, staff, students, and alumni – for a fabulous year! Despite the chaos, catastrophe, and loss happening all around us, we were able to come together to learn and be in community through gatherings that generated both sustenance and empowerment.

Fall 2024

In October, we gathered at the Mondavi Performing Arts Center to experience two moving dance performances choreographed by SanSan Kwan and Claudine Naganuma that engaged the topic of anti-Asian violence. The following week, Mark Jerng organized *Stars, Earth, and Coral: Pacific Entanglements and Futures Beyond the Human* with Professors Nicole Furtado, Frances Fran, & Aimee Bahng and a special performance by Astria Suparak at the Mondavi. In November, Professor Jasbir Puar came and spoke to a full house as part of the CST colloquium.

Winter 2025

In January and February, we hosted a series of fascinating lectures for a job search in Critical Empire and Militarization Studies. At the beginning of February, Ga Young Chung organized *Re/Imagining Abolitionist Practices* with Professors Vernadette Gonzales, Naomi Paik and Iyko Day. Towards the end of February, Natalia Duong organized Mimi Khúc who inspired students to map student unwellness and foreground Asian American mental health.

Spring 2025

At the beginning of April, Professor Jan Padios came to share her new research project on sugarcane plantations in Hawaii and the Negros Occidental province. In May, Professor Alike Bourgette (a UCD alum!) presented his research on the anti-eviction movement in Hawaii in the 1910s and 1920s and the ongoing resistance by Native Hawaiians. A week later, Ga Young Chung, with East Asian Studies, organized a book event celebrating *Bangtan Remixed: A Critical BTS Reader* with talks by two of the co-editors, Drs. Vernadette Gonzales and Yutian Wong. On May 22, we celebrated our graduating seniors, the retirement of Professor Sunaina Maira and the graduation of two special graduate students: Beshara Kehdi and Angel Trazo.

It's my pleasure to welcome two new hires who will arrive here in fall 2025: **Professors Najwa Mayer and Athia Choudhury!** Professor Mayer is coming from Loyola Marymount University. Her research on the intersections of US empire and war economies, religion and popular culture, and Muslim and SWANA diasporas is groundbreaking. Professor Mayer complements and builds on our existing strengths in transnational feminisms, migration studies, empire, and war. In the winter, she will teach ASA 114: Asian Diasporas from a critical refugees perspective and ASA 189: Muslim Movements in the US. In spring 2026, she will teach a seminar on Militarism from Below: Race, Security, and US Empire.

Professor Choudhury was a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Disability Studies at Brown University. Her interdisciplinary research at the intersections of public health and disability studies, fat production and consumption, eugenics and empire is innovative. Dr. Choudhury will be introducing new areas of study in Asian American Studies, offering courses in food studies, medical humanities, disability studies, and feminist and queer theory. She will be teaching ASA 1 in the winter and this coming fall, a seminar on wellness and the politics of eating.

We will also be offering courses in Asian American music, gender, sexuality and the law taught by Professors Grace Wang (AMS) and Rana Jaleel (GSW and ASA). Professor Mana Hayakawa will return in the spring 2026 to teach ASA 4 and the Japanese American Experience. We also have a number of events already scheduled in the fall including upcoming talks with Professors James Zarsadiaz and Valerie Francisco-Menchavez and artist Jeffrey Yoo Warren.

Letter from the Department Chair cont.



We are deeply grateful to our lecturers who taught a wide range of ASA courses this year: Mana Hayakawa, Catherine Fung and Angel Trazo. Special thanks to Edgar Wong Chen for his expertise, good vibes, and support as both an alum and visiting lecturer. We are deeply grateful to all of our alumni especially those who took the time to return to campus to share their career pathways and experiences post-UC Davis: Dale Maglalang, Edgar Wong Chen, Katherine (Kat) Parpana, Alyan Layug, and Aika Miranda.

If you are an alum and interested in speaking to students about life post-UCD or have internship and job opportunities, please let us know! And if you can contribute any money (small and large amounts are welcome) to help maintain the George Kagiwada Library, help expedite the scanning of Isao Fujimoto's archive, and/or invest in an endowed faculty position for Filipinx Studies, please donate here: <https://asa.ucdavis.edu/donate-asa>. We are always open to other ways alumni can help contribute to the survival and thriving of the ASA department.

Congratulations to the class of 2025!!! Thank you for taking our courses, coming to ASA events, and contributing your knowledge, energy, joy, laughter, snacks and support to shape ASA!!

As I reflect on this past year, I hope you will take the time to reflect on your time with us through this survey: https://ucdavis.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7Pwhnq41lIPWyNg. We are eager to hear and learn from your collective wisdom about next steps, and how we can shape this department for the next generation.

To returning students – Mobilizing ASA courses as a space to connect, exchange, learn, dream and spark change is contingent on all of you who took our courses. Life will become more turbulent over the next two years. There will be a need to stay focused and grounded in envisioning a better alternative future. As we head into the hot summer months, I want to underline that we are here for you, and we look forward to seeing you in the fall!

Wishing you a restful, healthy, and wonderful summer.

Susette Min
Associate Professor and Chair of Asian American Studies

Asian American Studies End of the Year Newsletter 2025

A DEPARTMENTAL YEAR IN REVIEW

FALL WELCOME | ASA BANQUET | FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Fall Welcome Event



Asian American Studies hosts an annual Fall Welcome event to meet faculty and staff and introduce incoming freshman and transfer students to the program. This year's Fall Welcome (Oct 2024) was a great opportunity for students to connect, meet fellow students interested in Asian American Studies, and discover research opportunities and jobs. It's an even greater opportunity to meet your fellow peers.





ASA Banquet 2025

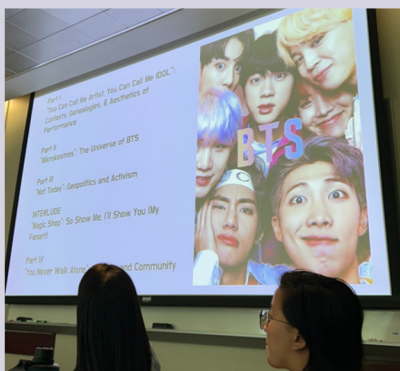
This year we celebrated our ASA majors and minors, and congratulated Dr. Maira on her retirement! We honor all of you and wish you a great summer break!





2024-25 Events

From guest lectures to performances, we had quite a year!



Asian American Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

FEATURING OUR FACULTY MEMBERS



SUNAINA MAIRA

My big news is that, after working at UC Davis for 22 years and teaching for almost 30 years, I have decided to retire from academia. It has been so rewarding to teach students at a public university who are so thoughtful, passionate, and creative and who also struggle with so many challenges in their personal, academic, and political lives. Witnessing these struggles over the years and in my involvement with community-engaged research and organizing propelled me to transition to work as a therapist with immigrants and refugees. I am so happy to have been able to design and teach the first South Asian diaspora, Arab American, and SWANA studies courses at UC Davis and to have mentored such amazing undergraduate and graduate students over the years, as well as courageous activists in SJP and the Palestine justice movement. I know that the coming generations will continue to fight to make the university a space not just of liberation but also of compassion, love, and healing for all.

KIEU LINH VALVERDE

As the co-curator director for the Ao Dai Festival in San Jose, I created educational programming that expanded the event from May 15th to a full week, making it the only Vietnamese heritage celebration recognized statewide. I initiated projects to renovate and revitalize Chinatown in Canton Square, Sacramento, and the Vietnamese area on East 14th in Oakland. Additionally, I helped support the Lunar New Year event at Davis, now in its fourth year of welcoming Vietnamese studies. My ASA 141 Fashion class was a highlight, culminating in a successful spring fashion show. We also launched a new Vietnamese Studies initiative with an office in Oakland and are working on a project exploring international contemporary youth culture through the lens of the ao dai. I aim to collaborate closely with global affairs to provide more opportunities for international and transnational research in Vietnam and its diaspora.



GA YOUNG CHUNG

In 2024-2025, I received a Faculty Development Award from the UC Davis for her excellence in teaching, mentoring, and service for the students, and the Emerging Scholar Award for the Global Studies Research Network. She was also selected as a recipient of the S.E.E.D Research Grant, MyShelf Grant, and the Global Affairs' research grant by UC Davis and the research grant from the Academy of Korean Studies. She published "Incomplete or Extraordinary Koreans?: 'Multicultural Soldiers' and the Racialized Reconstruction of Authentic Koreanness" in the Journal of Asian Studies (2025), "'This is What We Wanted to Learn': Anti-Racist and Anti-Colonial Education with 1st Gen Korean American Seniors in a Time of Asian Hate and Racialized Dread." Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies (2024), and "Beyond Perseverance: Developing Academic Resilience for a Better Normal" in Building a Better Normal (2024). Dr. Chung organized a symposium on the Abolitionist Future and the BTS Book Talk in 2025.



Asian American Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

FEATURING OUR FACULTY MEMBERS



RICHARD KIM

Dr. Richard Kim was busy teaching the capstone class for ASA as well as his popular ASA 1: Asian American History course. A documentary on Choe Soo Lee--a Korea-born immigrant to the United States who became a national rallying point for Asian Americans after being falsely convicted of murder, leading to a decade-long ordeal of incarceration, half of which was spent on death row--won an Emmy Award for best historical documentary that Prof. Kim served as a consultant. The film, *Free Choe Soo Lee* (2022), drew heavily on Choe Soo Lee's memoir, *Freedom Without Justice* (2017), which Kim edited. Prof. Kim also organized and hosted a public memorial for award-winning journalist, KW Lee, often referred to as "godfather of Asian American journalism."

MARK JERNG

Dr. Mark Jerng served his last year as Chair for the African American & African Studies Department. He has recently taught ASA 3: Methods in Asian American Studies and ASA 155: Asian American Legal History and has done much service for the department and the campus. He will be on sabbatical during the 2025-26 academic year.



RANA JALEEL

Dr. Rana Jaleel was on sabbatical this past 2024-2025 academic year though very busy doing important work as chair of Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure for the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). In winter 2026, she will be teaching her first class for Asian American Studies, ASA 113: Asian American Sexuality.



Asian American Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

CONTINUED...



SUSETTE MIN

Dr. Susette Min completed her fourth year as chair of Asian American Studies. In between chairing, she commissioned two dance performances choreographed by SanSan Kwan and Claudine Naganuma <https://www.mondaviarts.org/news/aavot/> and curated an exhibition, *beyond and through*, in the lobby of the Mondavi Performing Arts Center (funded by an MRPI grant with support from the AAVOT Team and Angel Trazo). She gave several talks, most recently on the topic of the archive. She continues working on an exhibition for the Manetti Shrem Museum that is grounded in the premise of abolishing the category of Asian American art. She is also writing two books: *Curating the Disorder of Things* and a book on immigration and terrorism in relation to the nexus of law and the exhibitionary space.

NATALIA DUONG

Dr. Natalia Duong completed her first year as an Assistant Professor of Asian American studies and science and technology studies. Her research interrogates the intersections between environmental toxicity, disability studies, critical refugee studies, and militarism.

In addition to courses on Asian American cultural studies and Science and Race, Dr. Duong developed a new ASA course on Disability Studies which analyzed how frameworks of disability and debility are critical for understanding Asian American racialization. As part of the course, she organized a class visit and public lecture from Dr. Mimi Khúc who gave a talk from her recent book on unwellness within the university. Dr. Duong contributed an article on "Performance" to The SAGE Encyclopedia of Refugee Studies edited by Dr. Yen Lê Espiritu which will be published in September 2025. She also continued her creative practice by serving as a dramaturg for Chance Theater's 2025 production, and regional premiere, of *The Chinese Lady*. The dramatic play written by Lloyd Suh retells the story of Afong Moy, the first woman of Chinese descent to arrive in the US, from her perspective, and contextualizes her story within longer histories of racialized and disabled persons being put on display for profit.



Captions:
The attached images are: an end of quarter class photo with ASA 189C: Disability Studies; a snapshot of a AAAS Panel on two disability studies books.

**Thank you to our instructors this year:
Edgar Wong-Chen, Mana Hayakawa and Catherine Fung!**

Asian American Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

CONTINUED...

EDGAR WONG-CHEN

What an incredible quarter this has been for all the ASA and SPH 132 students AND the awesome ASA 98F student and alumni teaching team! This year was packed full of critical thinking on healthcare equity, health access and the healthcare industry. With all of the terrible cuts coming from the federal government, I'm hopeful our amazing students will have taken what they've learned and turn it into a passion for health justice and advocacy.

This year's ASA/SPH 132 class kicked off with several students marching with UCD Medical Center RNs in the Picnic Day parade. It was such a blast, and the crowds showed their support and love to all the students and nurses.

Also, this year marked the 5th year of the student and alumni run health equity lecture series course. This course challenges students to develop their own complete lecture on a new topic that they are passionate about. Topics such as: Healthcare injustice in the prison industrial complex, patients' rights, healthcare and technology, service trauma, and many more.

All in all, this has been an amazing year for all of us and big challenges are coming down the pipeline as we brace for severe budget cuts that will impact all citizens' access to good and accessible healthcare. I know we have many students now ready for the upcoming battle we have in front of us. I'm so proud of all of them! Have a great summer everyone!



KATJA ZIMMER

In fall quarter 2024, peer advisor Katja Zimmer returned to Hart Hall after their residency at the Yale Norfolk School of Art. This April, Katja debuted their solo show *QUOTA* at the Basement Gallery, and was invited to be a panelist at the 1st Annual Maria Manetti Shrem Art Studio Symposium. They also received the Asian American Studies Roy and Joan Doi Award. Katja is graduating with dual bachelors in Asian American Studies and Art Studio, and will continue their engagement with Asian American studies as a member of the Critical Filipinox Studies Scholars of Northern California.

ANEKA TORGRIMSON

Aneka Torgrimson enjoyed her second year working in the Asian American Studies office as a peer advisor. This year, she especially loved helping organize the Fall Welcome and the End-of-Year Banquet. She also enjoyed getting to know the new faculty who joined the department and is looking forward to meeting the incoming faculty in Fall 2025. Aneka is deeply grateful to Joe and Alex for their support and guidance, and she will miss her fellow peer advisor Katja, who is graduating this year. She's excited for everything that lies ahead Fall quarter!



Asian American Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

FEATURING THREE CAREER STAFF MEMBERS



TATUM PHAN

Congratulations Tatum on winning the Chancellor's Outstanding Staff Award!

On receiving the award, Tatum said, "It means a lot to feel seen and valued by my supervisors and peers. I'm so appreciative of everyone who's mentored me and supported me on this path."

JOE NGUYEN

This year I met with more students than previous years with advising. Made a lot of great friends and got to see a good friend child I've known since she was a just a baby graduate with a minor in ASA. In addition, I picked up a new skill with Photovoice and it inspired me to get back into an abandoned hobby in photography. You'll probably see my camera with me most times the upcoming year. This is thanks to the public health conference I attended with focus on workshops on Asian stereotypes. I've also become extremely more knowledgeable about my rights here in America from learning here at UC Davis and have taken necessary action to help my family and friends through the legal system. It's been a great year overall personally and professionally.



ALEX SLUSSER-BANH

Alex Slusser-Banh served her second year as the Asian American Studies department coordinator. Throughout this year, she was able to plan and organize a successful job search to bring two amazing new faculty members into the department. She has also maintained the ASA community student space to provide a space for our community to snack, unwind, and study. She also assisted in a myriad of events supported by the Multivocal Humanities Mellon grant, including guest lectures, research panels, performances, and discussions. She also attended the UC Davis ADMAN (Davis Administrative Management Group) conference, and will attend the APALA (Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance) convention in Los Angeles this summer.



Asian American Studies Spotlights

STUDENT AWARDS

Congratulations Audrey Jacobs and Emma Nguyen on receiving the Isao Fujimoto Research Award!



Audrey Jacobs (she/they) is a third-year undergraduate double majoring in Asian American Studies and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. They are passionate about increasing access to education to empower historically-marginalized communities. Thanks to the Isao Fujimoto Award, she is excited to continue her research on the effect of Asian American Studies on Asian American college students' civic engagement under the mentorship of Dr. Ga Young Chung. Outside of the CRC, she serves as the Student Advocate in the ASUCD Student Advocate Office, a Community Advisor for the freshmen dorms, the Student Observer to the UC Regents Academic and Student Affairs Committee, an intern with SA&PIRI, and as a Teaching Intern at Davis Senior High. In their free time, they enjoy crocheting, sewing, and all sorts of crafty hobbies.

Emma Nguyen is a 3rd-year undergraduate student majoring in Community and Regional Development and Asian American Studies. She holds research interests in Asian American agricultural histories in addition to urban infrastructure and planning impacts on ethnic communities. Her current research project explores community self-determination and the displacement of urban ethnic communities in transportation development. She also serves as a Bonnie Reiss Climate Action Fellow at the UC Office of Sustainability, a Global Impact Fellow at UC Davis Global Affairs, and an Intern at the UC Davis Student Farm. Her future career goals are in urban and community-centered agriculture. Her research is based in Seattle's Chinatown-International District, and it focuses on the implementation of self-determination in the transportation and urban planning process. Over the past year, she's been working with non-profit and community-based organizations to do her research on the Ballard Link Extension development.



Asian American Studies Spotlights

WELCOME TO ASA DR. MAYER AND DR. CHOUDHURY



NAJWA MAYER

Professor Najwa Mayer is a scholar of race, gender, Islam, and U.S. empire, working at the intersections of politics, aesthetics, and critical theory. She earned her Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University and was formerly a Society of Fellows scholar at Boston University and a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Dartmouth College. Her current book manuscript examines the unprecedented proliferation of so-called “Muslim American” popular cultures within 21st-century War on Terror markets, theorizing their circulations—from counter extremism programming to social movements—through neoliberal relationships between racial and secular politics. Her next research project traces the supply chains of the War on Terror by following the geo-capitalist movements of, and relationships between, weapons, art, and refugee labor. Her teaching in university classrooms is informed by years of public education work with youth and community-based nonprofits and museums, as well as organizing with refugee, abolitionist, Muslim, and SWANA collectives.

Professor Mayer can't wait to teach and learn with UC Davis's student organizers and all students interested in questions of power. In an email to our marketing and public relations intern, Tyler Bell, she writes, “I am also humbled to contribute to Critical Militarism Studies in the Asian American Studies department—particularly as a refugee who was raised with war stories but honed the language to analyze and challenge militarized structures as a student within the Ethnic Studies classroom.”



ATHIA CHOUDHURY

Athia N. Choudhury (she/her) is coming from Brown University where she was a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Disability Studies housed within the Department of American Studies, STS Program, and Cogut Center for Humanities. Prior to arriving at Brown, she was a Postdoctoral Associate in Asian American and Diaspora Studies at Duke University. She holds a Ph.D. in American Studies and Ethnicity from the University of Southern California where she was a recipient of the Wallis Annenberg Endowed Fellowship and earned a graduate certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies.

Athia specializes in Asian American/Third World Feminisms and Postcolonial Theory with emphasis on 20th century body politics and militarized food cultures. She has taught courses on race, gender, sexuality, and the body at USC, Pomona College, and Duke University as well as facilitated public workshops on race, identity, and belonging at various institutions.

Her current project, *Gut Cultures: Metabolic Personhood and the Promise of Wellness*, engages a diverse array of literary, visual, and sonic texts to thicken the relationship between nation, desire, and the science of health from a decolonial fat studies and disability studies lens. Her research project interrogates how wellness and diet culture become major ideological exports of U.S. empire that produce global consumers whose nutritional and medical decisions become racially coded and gendered during the American century.

Asian American Studies Course List 2025-2026

Fall 2025

ASA 1 (Kim) Historical Experience of Asian Americans
ASA 4 (Duong) Asian American Cultural Studies
ASA 150E (Valverde) Southeast Asian American Experience
ASA 189A (Kim) War and Asian American History
ASA 189C (Choudhury) Eating and the Politics of Wellness
ASA 189B (Wang) Asian American Music
ASA 92/192 (Min) Internships

Winter 2026

ASA 1 (Choudhury) Historical Experience of Asian Americans
ASA 2 (Chung) Contemporary Issues of Asian Americans
ASA 3 (Min) Methods in Asian American Studies
ASA 102 (Kim) Theoretical Perspectives in Asian American Studies
ASA 113 (Jaleel) Asian American Sexuality
ASA 114 (Mayer) Critical Refugee Studies / South and West Asian Diasporas
ASA 130 (Min) Asian American Literature
ASA 150D (Chung) Korean American Experience
ASA 189C (Duong) Disability Studies
ASA 189I (Mayer) Muslim Movements in the US
ASA 92/192 (Min) Internships

Spring 2026

ASA 2 (Valverde) Contemporary Issues of Asian Americans
ASA 4 (Hayakawa) Asian American Cultural Studies
ASA 116 (Chung) Asian American Youth
ASA 141 (Valverde) Asian Americans & the Political Culture of Fashion in the U.S. & Asia
ASA 150 (TBA) Filipino American Experience
ASA 150B (Hayakawa) Japanese American Experience
ASA 189F (Mayer) Militarism from Below: Race, Security, and US Empire
ASA 92/192 (Min) Internships

This newsletter was created by Aneka Torgrimson, Tyler Bell, and Alexandra Slusser-Banh.