



UCI

Department of Asian American Studies newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1-2 Message From The Chair; AAS Short Films; Upcoming Event Fliers
- 3 "Afterlives of War": SEAA Celebrates 30 Years
- 4 "Remembering Saigu": Upcoming Event Fliers
- 5 Lily Lee Chen Profile
- 6 AAS 4+1 Program
- 7 First ever AAS UCI Play: "I Dream of Chang & Eng"
- 8-9 Winter 2016 In Photos
- 10 Undergraduate student updates
- 11 Graduate student updates; Support AAS at UCI
- 12 Faculty updates
- 13 Staff updates
- 14 Alumni updates
- 15 Learn more about AAS at UCI
- 16 Homescapes/Warscapes Spring 2017 calendar

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Anteaters,

Welcome back to UCI! I hope you are refreshed from your spring break and ready for a new quarter of exploration.

We hope you will take advantage of the exciting array of programs that AAS is sponsoring for spring quarter. I will just highlight a handful below.

AAS is now accepting applications for the [4+1 program](#). Contact Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia at hinojosa@uci.edu to learn how to apply and join us on April 10, 5-6:30p.m., HG 3341 for pizza and information about the 4+1.

AAS invites you to attend [“Centering Stories: A Symposium on Undocumented AAPI Students”](#) on April 20 and 21. I’ve been working with a group of dedicated students, staff, and faculty since fall quarter to organize this two-day event. “Centering Stories” will feature film screenings, music, art, as well as panels showcasing innovative research, community activism, student experiences, and university best practices to address the needs of undocumented AAPI students.

AAS is collaborating with the Department of Drama, Illuminations, and Medical Humanities to sponsor a series of programs that explore [Chang and Eng Bunker](#), popularly



The 2017 Asian American Studies research interns Khaila Hall, Maribel Comparan, Justine Trinh, Cayla Zhang, Alex Nguyen and Vivian Luu [not pictured] have been researching the history of Asian American Studies at UCI under the supervision of Prof. Wu and Dr. Thuy Vo Dang. They will be sharing their discoveries this spring.

known as the Siamese Twins. They were physically conjoined brothers who performed on stages around the world in the 19th century. They obtained U.S. citizenship despite racial restrictions, married two white sisters and even lived as plantation and slave owners in North Carolina. How did the Bunkers navigate these social restrictions? How might we understand and analyze the cultural significance of their lives? Please join us to explore these questions.

AAS is partnering with Illuminations to bring filmmaker Robin Lung and her award winning documentary, "Finding Kukan" to UCI on May 1. Ms. Lung will take us on a personal journey to solve two historical mysteries. It is a search for the documentary "Kukan," a film about the Japanese invasion of Nanking in 1937. It was the first documentary to win an Oscar and the only one missing from the academy's archives. "Finding Kukan" also uncovers the creators of the film. Reporter/photojournalist Rey Scott received the Oscar, but Li-Ling Ai, the Chinese American female movie producer was overlooked. Robin Lung has 16 years of experience as a documentary filmmaker and a commitment to bringing untold people of color and women's stories to film.

Finally, I'm particularly proud to invite you to attend a roundtable on May 12, featuring the scholars and editors of *Gendering the Trans-Pacific World*, an anthology that I co-edited and is fresh off the presses this spring! My collaborators and I will discuss how we seek to introduce a new intellectual paradigm as well as foster mentoring opportunities within the academy.

Our current political context is shaped by divisive dialogue about immigration, health care, and national identity. I believe that Asian American Studies has much to offer to help us collectively understand historic and ongoing forms of inequality and exclusion. I also believe that AAS, through our collective explorations, can help to create a more just society. I invite you to join us in our endeavors.

Zot! Zot! Zot!

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu

Professor and Chair of Asian American Studies

AAS SHORT FILMS: "WE ARE ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES"



To help AAS celebrate our 25th anniversary, we asked filmmakers Julie Cho and Gary Gabisan to profile two of our students. Please check out these wonderful videos in our "We Are Asian American Studies" series. Erica Maria Cheung, our AAS newsletter editor and a doctoral student in Culture and Theory, explains how her life explorations led her to study Asian American food culture at UCI. Alex Nguyen, a student leader and a graduating senior, shares how his double major in Asian American Studies and Public Health complement one another and provides him with new insights about how to better serve the health needs of the AAPI community.

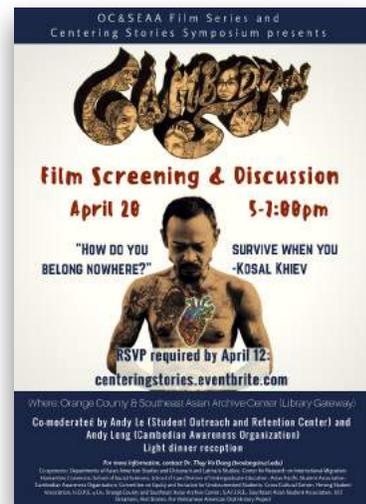
UPCOMING EVENT FLIERS



April 10 | 5:00-6:00pm | HG3341



April 20-21 | Multiple Times/Locations



April 20 | 5:00-7:00pm | OC&SEAA Center

"AFTER-LIVES OF WAR"

SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHIVE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT EXPLORES THE "AFTER-LIVES OF WAR"

By Dr. Thuy Vo Dan

This year, the UCI Libraries is celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Southeast Asian Archive through a spring quarter exhibit, "The After-Lives of War: the Southeast Asian Archive over 30 years."

The Southeast Asian Archive (SEAA) was established in 1987 to document the experiences of refugees and immigrants from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (the countries constituting the former Indochina) who resettled in the United States after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975.

The SEAA collects, preserves, and provides access to materials related to refugees and immigrants who left their homes as boat people and land refugees, their resettlement in the United States (and to a lesser extent, worldwide), the development and growth of Southeast Asian American communities, and (to a lesser degree) the culture and history of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

A special emphasis is placed on Southeast Asian Americans in Orange County (home to UC Irvine) and the rest of California. The largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam, known as Little Saigon, has developed just ten miles north of the UCI campus, and the largest Cambodian community outside of Cambodia, known as Cambodia Town, is in Long Beach, about 20 miles up the coast. The largest concentration of Hmong community can be found in the California Central Valley and the largest population of Laotians are in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The 30th anniversary has been celebrated throughout this academic year in partnership with the Department of Asian American Studies's "Homescapes/Warscapes 25/30" program, as the department has also reached a significant milestone of 25 years.



The celebration will culminate in an exhibit titled "After-Lives of War: the Southeast Asian Archive over 30 years," co-curated by Dr. Thuy Vo Dang, archivist for the SEAA, and Professor of Art History, Dr. Cecile Whiting.

Thuy and Cecile have collaborated on integrating Art History undergraduate students into the planning of this exhibit, which will highlight a new collection of refugee artwork from Hong Kong. Their collaboration was sparked by Professor Whiting's role in co-convening the Mellon Sawyer Seminar on Documenting War during the 2016-17 academic year with Professor Carol Burke.

Documenting War explores the genres, rhetoric, and real effects of wartime documentation and postwar reflection, as carried out by journalists, soldiers,

civilians, and artists in verbal, visual, and mixed media forms.

The exhibit opens on May 16 at 6:30 p.m. with a special performance by Long Beach-based Cambodian American rapper, praCh, and keynote presentation by Professor Cathy Schlund-Vials, author of *War, Genocide, and Justice: Cambodian American Memory Work*.

For more information, contact Thuy Vo Dang: thuy.vodang@uci.edu.

"REMEMBERING SAIGU"

THE KOREA LAW CENTER AT UCI HOSTS FORUM FOR 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LA RIOTS

By Professor Sung Eun Kim

The Korea Law Center at UC Irvine School of Law will host a forum to remember the 25th Anniversary of the LA Riots ("Remembering Saigu"), which is regarded as a watershed moment for many Korean Americans.

The Korea Law Center was established in 2009 to serve as a platform for the knowledge transfer, exchange and collaborations between students, legal scholars, judges, prosecutors, policy makers, and lawyers from South Korea and the United States. Recently, the Korea Law Center hosted a comparative discussion of the U.S. and Korean Constitutions between UCI Law Dean Erwin Chemerinsky and Chaihark Hahm, Professor at Yonsei Law School and Berggruen Fellow at The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University (pictured here).

The Korea Law Center is directed by assistant professor Summer Kim. Professor Kim, born and raised in Seoul, Korea, is an expert in corporate law and financial regulation. Her scholarship examines how financial innovations outpace governing laws and regulations, and her work aims to close these gaps. Some of her recent work on private equity regulation draws from a comparative study of the implementation of laws in the U.S. and Korea.

The "Remembering Saigu" forum hosted by UCI's Korea Law Center is one of a series of events taking place across Southern California under the [Embrace Unity Symposium](#). Other campus hosts



From left: Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean, UCI Law; Chaihark Hahm, Professor at Yonsei Law School and Berggruen fellow at The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University; Summer Kim, professor of law and Director of the Korea Law Center; Charles Cannon, Vice Dean, UCI Law.

include UC Riverside, UCLA, and Loyola Marymount University. The Embrace Unity Symposium will gather community leaders, non-profits, and citizens for an opportunity to remember, engage, and share the strengths and challenges following the twenty-five years after the 1992 LA Riots.

The "Remembering Saigu" forum will take place on **Thursday, April 27, 2017 from 5-7 p.m.** at the Division of Continuing Education (510 E. Peltason, Room 2070-2080). UCI Law Professor Stephen Lee will moderate the discussions and UCI Law Vice Dean Charles Cannon will provide welcome remarks.

The event is free and open to the public.

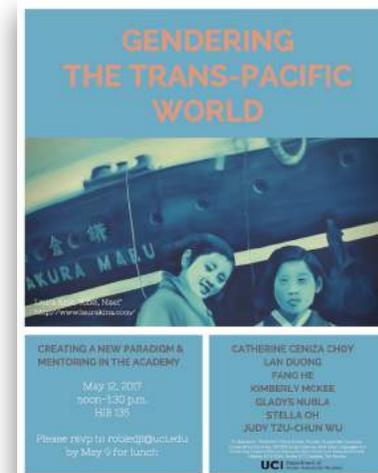
UPCOMING EVENT FLIERS



April 27 | 3:30-4:50pm | HIB 110



May 01 | 6:00-7:45pm | HG 1070



May 12 | 12:00-1:30pm | HIB 135

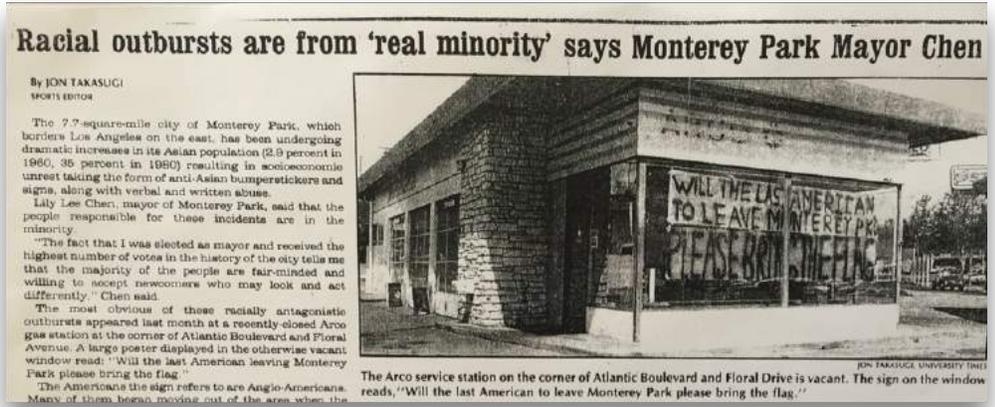
THE FIRST FEMALE CHINESE-AMERICAN MAYOR & HER LESSONS FOR TODAY'S LEADERS

By Ben Leffel



Lily Lee Chen is a legend in Irvine's back yard—that is, in Monterey Park, a city just east of downtown LA. Lily was the first female Chinese-American mayor of a U.S. city, Monterey Park in the early 1980s, but she also worked under President Ford on the National Council on the Rights and Responsibilities of Women, as well as under President Carter on the National Council on Adult Education, where her contributions led to the first nationwide English as a Second Language (ESL) program. While highly decorated, she is a humble, lifelong social worker, as well as a dear friend and esteemed mentor to me. Lily's message of servant leadership and career of fearless, proactive advocacy will be told in her forthcoming pictorial book, tentatively titled *Empowerment: The First Female Chinese-American Mayor, Lily Lee Chen*. It is an honor to be working on this book with her.

Through such advocacy as efforts as establishing the Chinese-American Political Action Committee and serving as a founding board member of the Committee of 100, Lily helped the Chinese-American community better participate in American politi-



cal life. Lily also fought for the rights of other Asian immigrants. She joined the Redress Group which was organized by the Japanese-Americans to ask for an apology from the U.S. government for the internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War. When the Korean American community was targeted during the LA riots in the early 1990s, Lily responded to calls from the Korean-American leadership to rebuild what was lost to the riots.

Lily's tenure in Southern California politics began in the 1980s, Monterey Park was experiencing an influx of Asian immigration that brought ethnic and other changes that was jarring for many old-timers. New Chinese language business signs appeared alongside the signs in English, which stirred local support for the larger "English Only" movement that was taking place at the time. Local old-timers were resistant to Chinese language signs, wanting there only to be signs in English, and resistance to Chinese investment in building projects also emerged. Some older residents moved away, unable to deal with the new diversity. One white gas station owner who left the city due to

the influx of immigrants famously hung a large banner which read "Will the last American to leave Monterey Park please bring the flag."

Such nativist resistance to Chinese immigration and investment is reflective of the same resistance that has taken place later in Southern California in cities such as Arcadia. Other cities are likely to experience such resistance in the future as more Chinese and other Asians join the American community. To learn and share the lessons of inclusivity and advocacy which Lily's career can teach is to invest in future Chinese-American leaders. As UCLA scholar Tritia Toyota wrote in her 2010 book *Envisioning America: New Chinese Americans and the Politics of Belonging*, Lily "is a catalyst for future organization, people who can carry the banner for other naturalized Chinese Americans" (113).

Ben Leffel is a Sociology Ph.D. student at UCI studying U.S.-China relations and the diplomacy of world city networks.

APPLY TO BE A PART OF THE COUNTRY'S FIRST 4 + 1 (B.A./M.A.) PROGRAM IN ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



We are pleased to announce the application process for the UCI AAS 4+1! This program is the first in the country to offer undergraduate students the opportunity to earn an M.A. in Asian American Studies after an additional year of study. All students interested in applying for the 4+1 should first meet with Professor Christine Bacareza Balance, the Director of Graduate Studies for AAS (cbalance@uci.edu) and Ms. Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia, School of Humanities Graduate Counselor (hinojosa@uci.edu).

IMPORTANT DATES:

1) Monday, April 10, 5–6:30pm: Pizza Party & Info Session (HG 3341)

RSVPs due to Jasmine Robledo (robledj1@uci.edu) by Thursday, April 6. Please do not wait until April 10 to make appointments with Prof. Balance and Ms. Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia. We recommend that you start the application process early and to approach your faculty mentor(s) for a letter of recommendation and advice about your writing sample and statement of purpose. We will discuss these topics at our info night as well.

2) Sunday, April 30: Spring deadline for AAS 4+1 applications.

Visit for more information on how to apply:
http://www.humanities.uci.edu/aas/spotlight_det.php?id=645.

"I DREAM OF CHANG AND ENG"

UCI'S FIRST ASIAN AMERICAN DRAMA PRODUCTION STARRING ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

By Professor Daphne Lei

"I Dream of Chang and Eng," written by Philip Kan Gotanda, tells the story of Chang and Eng Bunker (1811–1874). Joined only at the sternum by a small piece of cartilage, the original "Siamese twins" arrived in the US in 1829 and became almost an overnight sensation as they satisfied the 19th-century American audience's voyeuristic desire for extraordinary bodies.

Charismatic, canny, and extremely intelligent, they bought out their contract and toured themselves around the US and abroad. It is speculated they were the most seen entertainers in the 19th century. Within a few years, they had enough capital to transform their "Oriental" freakishness into "American" dignity: they settled down in a plantation in North Carolina, acquired their "Christian" name Bunker and American citizenship, married two white sisters and fathered 21 children between them.

Today, many of their 1500 descendants still live in the North Carolina region and have regular family reunions. They were the first Asian American pioneers and entrepreneurs who achieved their American dreams.

This is a play about how one battles xenophobia and other types of discrimination in an alien and hostile environment; this is also a story about how one takes the opportunity to thrive in "difference." Their yellow skin, strange bodies, and their unfamiliar language can often be seen as forms of disability or even disease. As we celebrate their legacies today on a campus with diverse population, how can we rethink and reevaluate the meaning of "difference"?

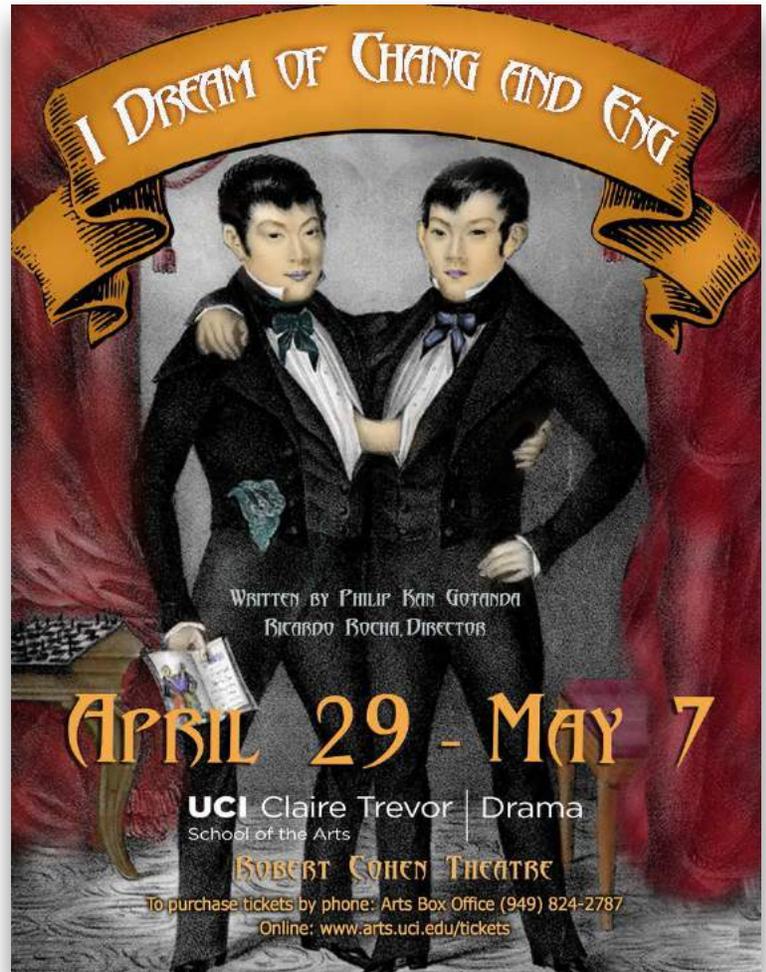
"I Dream of Chang and Eng" is directed by Ricardo Rocha. With a bilingual approach (English and Mandarin Chinese) and diverse casting, Rocha presents the spectacular 19th-century American theatre and society through the lens of "labor" and "production." This is the first Drama mainstage production that is written by an Asian American playwright and features Asian American students as leading roles, in the fifty-one years of UCI history.

The theme of the 2016–2017 Drama season is "Them." Who else can tell a better story about them than the legendary twin brothers? To further explore the theme and connect with our campus and local communities, Drama professor and dramaturg Daphne Lei is planning an interdisciplinary conference, "Thrive in Difference: An Interdisciplinary Conference on 'Strange' Body, Language, and Ethnicity," community-engagement and other events, and post-show discussions.

Please look for event updates on the [Drama website](#).

Performance dates: April 31 to May 7.

Performance location: Robert Cohen Theatre. Please contact UCI Arts Box Office at 949–824–2787 for tickets.





WINTER 2017 IN PHOTOS

CAPTIONS

- 1: Artist Trinh Mai opened her studio and shared her passion for art with UCI students from Asian American Studies and the Campuswide Honors Program.
- 2: Pulitzer-prize winner author Viet Nguyen had lunch and shared his brilliant insights about literature, war, and ethics with Asian American Studies students, staff, and faculty. (Pictured L to R: Justine Trinh, Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Viet Nguyen, Thuy Vo Dang, and Alex Nguyen).
- 3: Julie Cho arranged a tour of the Japanese American National Museum to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066. (Pictured L to R: Julie Cho, Kevin Chavez, Olivia Lok, Ann Huynh, and Jane Luong, and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu).
- 4: Our tour guide at the JANM was born in Stockton in 1921.
- 5: Patricia Nguyen, performance artist, doctoral student at Northwestern University, and the Anne Frank Visiting Researcher at the UCI Southeast Asian Archive, gave a brilliant presentation at the Alternative Inauguration. She interwove quotes from Yuri Kochiyama, Grace Lee Boggs, and Audre Lorde to inspire us. (Pictured L to R: Patricia Nguyen, Elizabeth Clark Rubio, and Erica Maria Cheung).
- 6: Some of the key collaborators and speakers at the Alternative Inauguration. (Pictured L to R: Anita Casavantes Bradford, Vicki Ruiz, Jade Agua, Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Jade Turner, and Patricia Nguyen).



WINTER 2017 IN PHOTOS

CAPTIONS

- 1: [Viet Stories](#) celebrates its 5th anniversary! (Pictured from L to R: Jack Toan, Sergio Contreras, Linda Vo and Tram Le).
2. Prof. Linda Vo escorted 44 UCI students to see South Coast Rep's production of "Orange"! (Pictured in front row are actors: Anjali Bhimani, Karthik Srinivasan and Pia Shah).
3. Prof. Eric Tang gave a talk on his research and discussed the film, "Eating Welfare" in Prof. Dorothy Fujita-Rony's classes. (Pictured from L to R: Destiny Torres, Keilani Coquia, Van Pham, Michelle Nguyen, Eric Tang, Brandon Hanthip, Thao Ho, Tuongvan Ngo).
4. Opening ceremony of new Asian Americans Advancing Justice-OC office in Santa Ana with Yoko Yagi (Co-Chair, Executive Advisory Council), Stewart Kwoh (President & Executive Director), Sylvia Kim (OC Regional Director), Prof Linda Vo (Co-Chair, Community Advisory Council), and Gloria Lee (Co-Chair, Executive Advisory Council).
5. Alvin Lau, writer, essayist & three-time international poetry slam champion featured on HBO's Def Poetry Jam, performed in Prof. Vo's Asian American Communities class.
6. Prof. Christine Balance collaborated with Professors Bridget Cooks Cumbo, Nicole Mitchell, and Michael Dessen to bring the Purple Gums Ensemble (Bobby Bradford, William Roper, Francis Wong) & Dancer/Choreographer Lenora Lee to perform at UCI.

FEATURED STUDENTS

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



Maribel Comparan

4th year / Spanish and Asian American Studies Double Major

My journey in declaring a double major in Asian American Studies echoes begins with my first year at UCI when I was taking my general education requirements in tandem with upper division Spanish courses. I wanted to get involved in ethnic culture so I sampled Chicano/Latino Studies courses and "Asian American Communities," taught by Professor Vo. I completely fell in love with the material and stayed with the course for the quarter. What drew me in were the similarities between Hispanic communities and Asian American communities. I learned more about my hometown, Stockton, CA, in the course than I ever did while in school in Stockton.

Declaring a major in Asian American Studies was one of the best decisions I have made. I have learned so much about California's history, about the Asian American experience, but most importantly I have learned that minorities endure similar experiences in the U.S. I have learned that it is best to teach our individual communities histories with other communities because with the knowledge of shared experiences among the communities it can unite us all.

I'm very happy that I am able to participate in the research internship to document the history of UCI's AAS department. This experience has taught me valuable skills that could help me in the future. I learned how to properly do research and catalog artifacts that will be crucial for future research. More importantly, I have learned of the rich history of how our department was founded. I was astonished to learn about *Rice Paper*, an Asian American student newspaper at UCI. I also learned about the level of organization of hundreds of students to protest for a field of study that the student body felt that the campus needed. In doing research on how these revolutionary students and professors paved the way for the coming generations, I couldn't help but feel excited to be able to read and see the formation of our department. Reading about how these students did a hunger strike, stormed the Chancellor's office and how administration reacted to these students was fascinating. As we began doing oral histories of alumni and staff, I felt elated to be able to hear them reminisce about the past.

I advise those considering declaring AAS a minor or as a major to do so. I have learned and continue to learn so many incredible things about the community, about my peers and about myself. Taking a course in AAS is the gateway to expanding your mind on many relevant hot topic issues around the world. I have had such a wonderful experience in AAS and have been given so many opportunities to grow as an individual and community member, that I hope AAS will do the same for you.



Justine Thuy Tien Trinh

4th year/ Triple Major in Asian American Studies, Classics, & Mathematics

I enrolled in Asian American Religious Traditions without knowing it was an upper division class. I thought about dropping, but after talking to the professor, I ended up staying for the whole quarter. This class was about me. I grew up in Orange County. To see articles and books mention Little Saigon and OC was amazing. I was showing my dad my textbooks and pointing out the home temples in Westminster. One Saturday, my dad ended up driving me to Little Saigon and showing them out to me. I never paid attention to them. That class opened up my eyes and showed me how much I missed.

The AAS research internship is amazing, and I am glad that I took the opportunity. I am surprised

how we discovered so far and how serious people were. We have seen footage of student protests. They occupied the Chancellor's office and even went on a hunger strike. I am excited that we are doing oral histories. To hear people talk about their experience and watching them reminisce and be transported to the past is incredible, and they are taking the time to share that with my peers and me. It is crazy what they had to go through and how determined they were. It makes me proud that I am majoring in AAS, because they paved that pathway for this to be possible at UCI. AAS opened the doors to so many things for me. I was able to go to LA Chinatown for the first time as well as make a short video about my grandfather's record player. I am able to discover a lot about myself as well as my family. I was able to make a connection with my grandmother through the oral history project and learn about her journey coming here, and it made me realize how lucky I was or how remarkable my grandma was. I am grateful for the opportunities that AAS gave me. It has been an amazing experience.

FEATURED STUDENTS

GRADUATE STUDENTS



Elizabeth Clark Rubio

Elizabeth Clark Rubio is a second year PhD student in the Department of Anthropology at UCI. In 2012 she graduated from Georgetown University with an M.A. in Latin American Studies with a disciplinary focus in Anthropology. She has conducted ethnographic research with indigenous rural tourism entrepreneurs in Northern Argentina as well as with undocumented Guatemalan immigrant organizers fighting for comprehensive immigration reform in Washington D.C..

After receiving her M.A. she worked for four years as a community organizer and legal advocate for undocumented immigrants at the non-profit organization CASA de Maryland. During her work at CASA de Maryland, she gained an intimate knowledge of immigration law and received accreditation from the Board of Immigration Appeals, allowing her to represent clients in immigration proceedings.

Since arriving at UCI she has been active with undocumented student organizing on campus and has been assisting Professor Judy Wu in organizing the AAPI Undocumented Student Symposium, which

will take place in late April. She conducts her dissertation research on the way that race operates within immigrant rights activism in the U.S. She is seeking to understand how Latinx and Asian American immigrant rights organizers contest, perpetuate and reconfigure dominant U.S. racial hierarchies to make claims to national belonging.

In recognition of her work with the undocumented community, Elizabeth was awarded the 2017 Tom Angell Fellowship for excellence in mentoring (pictured here receiving the award with her mother).

SUPPORT ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES AT UCI

Our spring newsletter reflects the tireless efforts of our faculty, students, alumni and broader community in creating a vibrant intellectual community for the study and appreciation of Asian American studies. As we celebrate 25 years, we encourage you to show your support for the department with an unrestricted gift. While unrestricted donations can be the most difficult to raise, they are arguably the most important type of funding we can hope to receive as they allow the department to meet its most pressing needs. To make a gift online, visit <http://bit.ly/UCIAAS> and type "Asian American Studies" in the note section. For additional information on giving to the UCI Department of Asian American Studies, please contact Nicole Balsamo, executive director of advancement, at nbalsamo@uci.edu or 949.824.2923.

Thank you for your continued support, and here's to the next 25 years of Asian American Studies at UCI!

FACULTY UPDATES



Professor Daphne Lei

Daphne Lei is Professor of Drama, at the University of California, Irvine. She is the president of American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR, 2015–2018), a professional national organization on theatre research.

She is internationally known for her work on Chinese opera, intercultural theatre, and diasporic and transnational performance. She is the author of many scholarly articles, both in English and Chinese. She has published two books: *Operatic China: Staging Chinese Identity across the Pacific* (Palgrave, 2006) and *Alternative Chinese Opera in the Age of Globalization: Performing Zero* (Palgrave, 2011). She has a forthcoming book on border-crossing Chinese drama, and an edited volume on interculturalism and

performance.

Daphne Lei has been recognized for her endeavors in advocating multicultural performance and promoting diversity and equity through performance at UC Irvine. She is the founder and director of "Multicultural Spring," a program that promotes multicultural performance since 2007. She also created "Dramatic Transformations", an annual research-performance project to raise awareness of diversity through drama in 2012. In 2015, she founded Theatre Woks, a theatre group to promote diversity and inclusion and to cultivate Asian American talent at UCI. In spring 2017, she will be serving as the dramaturg for "I Dream of Chang and Eng," UCI's first mainstage production by an Asian American playwright and with Asian actors in leading roles.



Professor Julia Lee

Professor Julia Lee is finishing up a new book called *Understanding Maxine Hong Kingston*, to be published by the University of South Carolina Press. The book is meant to be a resource for students or faculty who are interested in learning about or are starting research on Kingston. She expects it to be published by the end of 2017. She is continuing to work on her book *The Racial Railroad*, which examines the train as a space for understanding race and racial difference.



Professor Linda Trinh Vo

Congratulations to Prof. Linda Vo for being featured on the UCI homepage as part of the "[Making their Mark](#)" feature for Women's History Month. "As director of Viet Stories: Vietnamese American Oral History Project at UCI, Vo and her team – including students – actively assemble, preserve and disseminate the life stories of Vietnamese Americans in Southern California. To date, they have captured more than 450 personal histories – over 180 of them fully digitized – about the legacies of war and struggle to craft a new life."

She was also featured in a *Daily Pilot / Los Angeles Times* article, "[Amazing stories of survival: UCI oral history project preserves Vietnamese refugees' hopes, fears and challenges](#)," "There are so many in that first generation who want to tell their stories to their children and grandchildren, about what happened to them, what they did to survive, who they were — and they wanted to leave some sort of legacy."

STAFF UPDATES



Dr. Thuy Vo Dang

Dr. Thuy Vo Dang is the Archivist for the Southeast Asian Archive, overseeing the Orange County & Southeast Asian Archive Center (OC & SEAA). She is also the UCI Libraries Research Librarian for Asian American Studies, serving as liaison to the department's faculty and students. Thuy holds a Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from UC San Diego. She has conducted research and taught courses on race and ethnicity, oral history, cultural studies, immigration and refugee studies. She volunteers on the Board of Directors for the Vietnamese American Arts and Letters Association (VAALA), and has led programs such as the Viet Film Fest. Vo Dang was featured in the OC Weekly's Inaugural People Issue as the "Studs Terkel of Little Saigon" in 2013 and received the "Public Image Award" from Asian Americans Advancing Justice in 2015. She is co-author of a new book, *Vietnamese in Orange County*. Her current project is "A People's Guide to Orange County," a guidebook that centers places and communities left off the mainstream map.

http://www.faculty.uci.edu/profile.cfm?faculty_id=6008



Jasmine Robledo and Arelle Hinojosa-Garcia

AAS congratulates Jasmine Robledo and Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia for being honored with Departmental Staff Appreciation and Recognition (STAR) awards. They were both selected by the School of Humanities Dean's office for these much deserved recognitions.

Jasmine Robledo is an indispensable member of three departments: African American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies. We very much appreciate her strong work ethic, enormous dedication, extreme efficiency and reliability. Jasmine's warm and welcoming presence is appreciated by all. She is extremely approachable, and attentive to faculty, staff and student needs. Between the three Departments, Jasmine receives an immense number of requests from faculty, lecturers and students, and we are impressed by how efficiently she attends to these. In addition, she performs all tasks with such a cheerful and positive attitude and enthusiastically takes on new projects. She goes out of her way to meet everyone's needs and to meet the goals and deadlines of the units.



Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia is a model staff member who has devoted time and energy to implement the Asian American Studies 4+1 program. Since AAS was approved for this B.A./M.A. program in fall 2016, Arielle has met regularly with AAS faculty. She advised us about how to fine-tune the program as well as propose new curriculum and program requirements. She worked tirelessly to help present our proposals for change with Humanities Executive Committee and the UCI Grad Council. Arielle even is volunteering her time to work on a symposium on undocumented Asian American and Pacific Islander students for this spring. For all that she has done to support AAS and our 4+1 program, we believe Arielle is truly deserving of a STAR award.

FEATURED ALUMNI



Vivian Luu

Program Coordinator, Parent and Family Campus Connections, UCI Student Transition Services

I decided to major in Asian American Studies because it was an interdisciplinary program, so I got to learn about Asian American history, stories, and experiences in different lenses. Growing up, I remember filling out surveys and questionnaires in which I always identified myself as Asian American without much thought. Once I got to UCI, I started really asking myself what it meant to be Asian American. I was able to explore this identity and community through campus and community organizations as well as AAS classes. One of the most important things I learned through AAS courses is to ask questions! You don't know what you don't know, so asking questions helps you learn and engage within the classroom.

My background in AAS allowed me to learn about and explore intersectionality in identities and experiences. This is especially important in my current work at Student Transition Services as a Program Coordinator for the Parent and Family Campus Connections program. The program was developed to support the parents and families of first-generation, low-income students and connect them to the university. When developing intentional programming and services for our families, I keep in mind the challenges families face in navigating the university such as limited family resources (time, transportation childcare) or communication barriers. Understanding the intersectionalities of identities and experiences allows me to provide personalized and specific support to our families as they transition into or through the university.

AAS was such an integral part of my time at UCI. I chose to volunteer for the AAS research internship because my experience with this history was very limited to what I had heard in my AAS classes. My professors briefly mentioned how students fought to have AAS at UCI and how there was a hunger strike in the 1990s. Being a part of this internship allows me to analyze and contextualize the history of AAS as a living process with many people involved instead of a single or defining moment. The founding of AAS at UCI happened on Ring Road, in front of buildings we pass by everyday, and in the spaces we study or work in. The thought of that really excites me! There's so much history around us when we take the time to look around and listen. Looking through the archival collections, in general, has been very exciting! My favorite has to be reading through Rice Paper, which was a newspaper for Asian American and Pacific Islander students in the 1990s. Students, staff, and faculty contributed articles, artwork, and creative writing pieces relating to the AAPI community and what it means to be AAPI. It was neat to see that students created this space for themselves to explore their identities and cultures as well as have conversations that we are still having today!

A lot of the classes in AAS are small and intimate. Not only do you get to know your professors well, but they get to know you as well. Have you ever felt intimidated to approach a professor or speak up in class? That was me when I first started at UCI. When I was taking my first upper-division course, I was surprised to find out that my professor knew my name even though we had very few and brief interactions. My professor knowing my name meant a lot, especially in a university setting where we meet countless people everyday. It gave me the courage to use my voice and share my ideas. Besides the class size, taking an AAS course is a challenging yet rewarding experience. You'll question what you know, learn and unlearn constantly, and find connections in things you once thought were unrelated.

Learn more about Asian American Studies at UCI

Interested in majoring, minoring, or joining the Friends of Asian American Studies listserv? Contact Assistant Department Administrator Jasmine Robledo at jasmine.robledo@uci.edu.

Want to pitch a story to this newsletter? Email Graduate Student Assistant Researcher and newsletter editor Erica Maria Cheung at ericamc1@uci.edu.



Playwright Aditi Kapil & actors Anjali Bhimani, Pia Shah, Karthik Srinivasan from play "Orange" at South Coast Repertory did a wonderful guest performance in Prof. Linda Vo's AA Communities class. Students asked great questions about "what it means to be an artist."

UCI Department of Asian American Studies
3000 Humanities Gateway
Irvine, CA 92697-6900
(949) 824-2376

HOMESCAPES/WARSCAPES ²⁵/₃₀

A series of talks and workshops to commemorate
the 25th Anniversary of the UCI Department of Asian American Studies and
the 30th anniversary of UCI Southeast Asian Archive.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

APRIL

10 Learn about the AAS 4+1: Information Workshop and Pizza Party
5:00 - 6:30 p.m.
HG 3341
RSVP to robledj1@uci.edu by April 6.

4+1 applications are due Apr. 30.
Contact Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia at hinojosa@uci.edu for more information.

20 Centering Stories: A Symposium on AAPI Undocumented Student Experiences
RSVP by April 12 at <http://bit.ly/2mb5EDj>

Apr. 20, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Screening of Cambodian Son
OC&SEAA Center

21 Apr. 21, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Centering Stories Symposium
Cross-Cultural Center
Dr. Joseph L. White Room

26 Economies of Vulnerability: Humanitarian Imperialism and Performance in the Burmese Diaspora
Emily Hue (UC Riverside)
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
OC&SEAA Center

27 Siam's Twins and America's Anti-Chinese Racism
Joseph Orser (University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire)
3:30 - 4:50 p.m.
HIB 110
RSVP by April 26 at <https://goo.gl/n2yO3Y>

30 Thriving in Differences: Interdisciplinary Symposia on 'Strange' Body, Ethnicity, and Language' Symposium Part 1
Philip Kan Gotanda (Playright of *I Dream of Chang & Eng*, UC Berkeley)
Joseph Orser (author of *The Lives of Chang & Eng*)
Ricardo Rocha (director of *I dream of Chang & Eng*)
Daphne Lei (dramaturg of *I Dream of Chang & Eng*)
10:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Contemporary Arts Center Colloquium Room (3rd Floor)

MAY

01 Screening of Finding Kukan (2016) and conversation with filmmaker Robin Lung
6:00 - 7:45 p.m.
McCormick Screening Room
HG 1070
RSVP by April 30 at <https://goo.gl/GW428n>

Class visits:
May 1, 3:30-4:50: Asian American Women and Film, HH 143
May 2, 11-12:20: Asian American Documentary Film, HH 143
May 2, 3:00-4:20: Pacific Rim: U.S.-China, SST 122

04 Asian Socialism, Magical Realism
Colleen Lye
3:00 p.m.
HG 1010

Making it in the Asian American 'Showbiz'
Snehal Desai, artistic director of East West Players
7:00 - 7:45 p.m.
Contemporary Arts Center Outreach Room

Asian American Studies attends *I Dream of Chang and Eng* 8:00 p.m. (performed April 29-May 7, Robert Cohen Theatre.
For tickets see: <http://bit.ly/2nNEUVS>)

06 Thriving in Differences: Interdisciplinary Symposia on 'Strange' Body, Ethnicity, and Language Part 2
James Kyung-Jin Lee (Asian American Studies)
Jerry Lee (English)
Mei Zhan (Anthropology)
10:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Contemporary Arts Center Colloquium Room (3rd floor)

12 Gendering the Trans-Pacific World: Creating New Paradigms and Mentoring in the Academy
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
HIB 135
RSVP to robledj1@uci.edu by May 9 for lunch.

13 The Ends of Adoption: A Symposium on Korean Transnational Adoption
For more information, see:
<http://humanities.uci.edu/criticalkorean/>

16 The After-Lives of War: the Southeast Asian Archive over 30 Years
Cathy Schlund-Vials (University of Connecticut, Storrs)
PraCH Ly (Musical Performer)
6:30 p.m.
Crystal Cove Auditorium, Student Center

Reception and Art Exhibition
7:50 p.m.
Muriel Ansley Reynolds Gallery, Langson Library

17 Critical Voices Workshop
Christopher Fan, "Asian American Silicon Valley Narratives"
Commentary by Jim Lee (AAS) and Ted Martin (English)
2:00 - 3:20 p.m.
HG 1341
RSVP to robledj1@uci.edu by May 11 to help us plan for refreshments.

24 Critical Voices Workshop
Jacob Lau, "Potholes of the Past: Incorporable Neoliberal Identities, & Trans-Temporality's Affects in R. Zamora Linmark's *Leche*"
Commentary by Christine Balance
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
HG 1341
RSVP to robledj1@uci.edu by May 18 for lunch and to receive the paper.

JUNE

01 Critical Voices Workshop
Joseph Darda, "Like a Refugee: Veterans, Vietnam, and the Making of a False Equivalence"
Commentary by Linda Vo
12:00 - 1:20 p.m.
SST 777
RSVP to robledj1@uci.edu by May 25 for lunch and to receive the paper.

Please note that seating is limited.

Co-sponsors of events include: Access Asia; Asian Pacific Student Association; Cambodian Awareness Organization; Center for Asian Studies; Center for Critical Korean Studies; Center for the Global Peace and Conflict Studies; Center for Research on International Migration; Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies; Committee on Equity and Inclusion for Undocumented Students; Comparative Literature; Cross-Cultural Center; Division of Undergraduate Education; Drama; East Asian Languages and Literatures; English; Film and Media Studies; Gender and Sexuality Studies; History; Hmong Student Association; H.O.P.E. 4 Us; Humanities Commons; Humanities Core; Illuminations; Medical Humanities; Mellon Sawyer Seminar on Documenting War; School of Law; School of Social Sciences; S.A.F.I.R.E.; Southeast Asian Student Association; UCI Dreamers; UCI Libraries; Viet Stories: the Vietnamese American Oral History Project