

Red Threads

An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of place or circumstances. The thread may stretch or tangle but it will never break. - Chinese Proverb



UT-Austin Campus

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Newsletter for the Center for Asian American Studies

www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/aas/news/

Building Campus and Community Partnerships: Vietnamese Americans in Texas

One Sunday afternoon, April 27, 2008, the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum hosted a reception and exhibit showcasing 25 oral histories about Vietnamese Americans conducted and recorded by students of AAS 330 "Vietnamese Americans: Culture and History" in collaboration with the Vietnamese American Heritage Foundation (VAHF) and the Vietnamese Culture and Science Association. In the words of one of the students, Sehjong Hamjong, a 2008 AAS graduate, each transcript contained "a story of hope, a story of determination, of strength and courage."

The oral interviews were part of a project assigned by the course's instructor, Linda Ho Peché (featured on p. 5), a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology. The first to teach a course about Vietnamese Americans at UT, Ho Peché used her own experiences and networks to lay the foundations for the students' accomplishments and their public exhibition. The students' research was warmly welcomed in many quarters, in partial acknowledgment of how little we know, but should understand, of Vietnamese American experiences.

Each interview greatly enriches the lively mosaic of Texas history by adding the stories of Vietnamese flight, settlement, and adaptation to the already complicated mix of peoples and cultures inhabiting the Lone Star State. Although they are the largest population of Asians in Texas, their relatively recent arrival and largely foreign-born status have contributed to scholarly neglect which is being rectified by the ongoing activities of this class and VAHF.

The oral histories were also exhibited at the Little Walnut Creek Branch Library and the Union of North American Vietnamese Student Association's Conference. Future exhibitions include the Vietnamese Civic Center, the Vietnamese political Prisoner's Conference, and the American History Center. Linda Ho Peché

and VAHF President, Nancy Bui, are currently negotiating to have the transcripts archived in the Center for American History on UT Austin campus.



Front row, left: Jeanne Nguyen (VAHF), Bich Chau Tran (VAHF), Nancy Bui (VAHF President). Second row, left: Tuyet Tran (VAHF), Nicole Cao (Viet Civic Center in Houston), Hubert Vo (Tx House Rep. District 149). Third row: Ann Pham (VAHF), and AAS 330 students.

More information regarding this and other events can be found on the Vietnamese American Heritage Foundation's (VAHF) website at www.vietnameseamerican.org

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2000, the Center for Asian American Studies (CAAS) is the newest Ethnic Studies center at the University of Texas at Austin. As an interdisciplinary program, we provide diverse programming promoting awareness of Asian Pacific American issues and community through a undergraduate major and minor degrees, an honors program, lectures, films, conferences, speakers series, discussion forums, and collaborative partnerships with community and campus organizations. Through these programs, CAAS seeks to explore and highlight the perspectives and history of Asians in the south and Latin America.

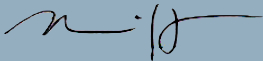
To join CAAS's Listserv, email us at:
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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

MADELINE Y. HSU, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

This inaugural issue of the Center for Asian American Studies (CAAS) newsletter, *Red Threads*, reflects the considerable growth and stabilization of Asian American Studies at UT, within the state of Texas, and throughout the central and southern regions of the United States. The field of Asian American Studies has expanded from its origins on the west coast and Hawaii and its continental leap to the east coast and New England. Its spread through America's middle states strains with past and ongoing struggles to encompass intellectually and institutionally the ever-diversifying strands of Asian American heterogeneity.

From Texas, CAAS hopes to enrich this shifting mosaic with the perspectives of southern Asians and hemispheric conceptualizations of migration and settlement. In 2008, we have over twenty core and affiliated faculty and two dedicated staff. In the near future, we plan to add faculty lines in anthropology and American Studies and to host the 2010 Association for Asian American Studies National Conference. To learn more of our programs and partnerships in building a richer Asian American Studies community, please read more in these pages and visit our website at www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/aas/.



Madeline Y. Hsu, Ph.D.
 Director, Center for Asian American Studies
 Associate Professor, Department of History

Center for Asian American Studies

Core Faculty Members

Madeline Y. Hsu,

Associate Professor of History
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Research Interests: Asian American studies, migration, transnationalism, and ethnic studies.

Publications:

- ♦ *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Culture* (Temple University Press, 2008). Essay collection co-edited with Sucheng Chan with contributions from Sucheng Chan, Josephine Fowler, Madeline Hsu, Karen Leong, Andrea Louie, Mae Ngai, K. Scott Wong, Judy Wu, and Xiaojian Zhao.
- ♦ *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford University Press, 2000). Winner 2002 Association for Asian American Studies History Book Award.
- ♦ Editor, "Transnational Politics and the Press in Chinese American History: Collected Essays of Him Mark Lai." Forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press.

Shanti Kumar,

Associate Professor of Radio-Television-Film
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Research Interests: Global Media, Postcolonial Theory, South Asian Popular Culture

Publications:

- ♦ *Gandhi Meets Primetime: Globalization and Nationalism in Indian Television*. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
- ♦ Co-editor, *Planet TV: A Global Television Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2003).

Julia H. Lee,

Assistant Professor of English
jlee@mail.utexas.edu

Research Interests: Asian American Literature, African American Literature, Twentieth-century American Literature

Publications: Dr. Lee is completing a book manuscript entitled, *Reciprocal Representations: Interracial Encounters in African American and Asian American Literatures, 1896-1937*.

- ♦ "Estrangement on a Train: Race and Narratives of American Identity," *English Literary History* 75.2 (2008): 345-365.
- ♦ "The Capitalist and Imperialist Critique in H. T. Tsiang's *And China Has Hands*" in *Recovered Legacies: Authority and Identity in Early Asian American Literature*, eds. Floyd Cheung and Keith Lawrence (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2005). 80-97.

Nhi Lieu,

Assistant Professor of American Studies
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Research Interests: Race and ethnicity in cultural studies and media representations; 20th century U.S. immigration, gender, and cultural history; social theories on popular amusements, leisure, consumer culture, transnationalism, exile, and diaspora; Asian American cultural politics and identity formation; and gender and beauty.

Publications: Dr. Lieu is completing a book manuscript tentatively titled: *The American Dream in Vietnamese: Diasporic Desires and Pursuits of Pleasure in Cultural Production*.

- ♦ "Performing Culture in Diaspora: Assimilation and Hybridity in Paris by Night Videos and Vietnamese American Niche Media" in *Alien Encounters: Popular Culture in Asian America*. Edited by Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu and Mimi Nguyen. (Duke University Press, 2007).

Madhavi Mallapragada,

Assistant Professor of Radio-Television-Film
 madhavim@mail.utexas.edu

Research Interests: New Media and Cultural Studies, Global Media, Diaspora and Transnational Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Television Criticism, Media and Minorities.

Publications: Dr. Mallapragada is completing "Web Technologies, Network Societies and Emergent Indian-American Alliances." in *Re-Orienting Global Communication: Indian and Chinese Media Beyond Borders*, edited by Michael Curtin and Hemant Shah and *Home, Homeland, Homepage: Indian-American Networks in the Digital Age*, forthcoming.

♦ "An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Study of Cybercultures." In *Critical Cyberculture Studies: Current Terrains, Future Directions*, edited by David Silver and Adrienne Massanari. (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 194-204.

♦ "The Indian Diaspora in the USA and around the Web." In *Web.studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age*, edited by David Gauntlett. (London: Arnold & OUP, 2000), pp. 179-185.

Sharmila Rudrappa,

Associate Professor of Sociology
 rudrappa@mail.utexas.edu

Research Interests: Race/ Ethnicity, Gender, Immigration, Political Sociology, Social Theory

Publications: Dr. Rudrappa is completing "Braceros and Techno-Braceros: Foreign Workers in the United States, and the Commodification of Low Wage and High Wage Labor." in *Transnational South Asians: Identity, Culture, and Belonging in a Neo-Diaspora*, edited by Susan Koshy and R. Radhakrishnan. Forthcoming from the Oxford University Press.

♦ *Ethnic Routes to Becoming American: Indian Immigrants and the Cultures of Citizenship*. (Rutgers University Press, 2004).

♦ "Law's Culture and Cultural Difference," In *Body Evidence: Intimate Violence Against South Asian Women In America*, edited by Shamita Das Dasgupta, (Rutgers University Press, 2007).

♦ "The Efficacy of Legislative Measures in Addressing the Issues that Accompany Offshore Outsourcing," Proceedings from the conference, "Working Borders: Linking Debates about Insourcing and Outsourcing of Labor and Capital." *Texas International Law Journal*, Vol. 40 (2005): 759-66.



(First Row): Madeline Y. Hsu, Shanti Kumar

(Second Row): Julia H. Lee, Nhi Lieu

(Third Row): Madhavi Mallapragada, Sharmila Rudrappa

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**COURTNEY BANAYAD, '07**

Photo Credit: Katherine Fan, AAS '08

"I was challenged to do my best and learned how to think and write critically. I formed friendships with people I cherish and who continue to make an impression on me."

AAS 2007 Graduate

Courtney Banayad

I graduated from the University of Texas in May 2007 with majors in Asian American Studies and American Studies. Armed with what I consider a quintessential liberal arts education, I entered the "real world" with a lot of questions, concerns and doubts. While I was a student, my family supported my choice of majors but would I be able to prove to them that I could find a decent paying job with a liberal arts degree? What would I do with my degree? How do I explain my degree to potential employers?

Fortunately, these worries did not plague me for long. Within a month of graduating, I made a relatively seamless transition from college student to employed graduate and accepted a job at the American Red Cross as a proposal writer and fundraiser.

There are few parallels between my life as a UT undergrad and my first real world job, the most notable being that I still spend a lot of time on the computer typing away. However, instead of writing research papers about ethnicity, authenticity, identity and all of the other -ities, I'm now writing long proposals about home fires, floods, volunteerism and Clara Barton. I still feel the same anxiety over the words I write and meeting deadlines. Yet, I'm no longer receiving letter grades that will affect my grade point average. Instead, my success is largely determined upon whether or not the check for the funds I have requested arrives in the mail.

As I approach the one year anniversary of my graduation, I'm still not sure how I ended up working at the American Red Cross and honestly do not know where I'll be a few years from now. Yet, as I reflect back upon my four years as an undergrad and what I've experienced since graduating, I can

say with certainty that deciding to major in Asian American Studies was one of the best things I did at UT. I was taught by professors who were passionate about both the curriculum and the students and I walked away from my classes learning more than enough to teach others a thing or two. I was challenged to do my best and learned how to think and write critically. I formed friendships with people I cherish and who continue to make an impression on me. My time spent at UT was extremely worthwhile and I'm proud to call myself a Texas Ex.

AAS MAJOR SPOTLIGHT**WILLIAM JIUNG-SHI LIU**

What factors were involved when you decided to become an AAS major?

It never occurred to me to be an Asian American Studies major until I participated in the Asian American Leadership Institute, hosted by the Multicultural Information Center at the University of Texas at Austin. That and encouragement from my mentors, Dr. Mamta Accapadi and Dr. Julia Lee.

How has being an AAS major reflected in your academic & personal life?

My Asian American Studies major keeps me honest about my identity whether at school, with my friends, and/or family.

What personal benefits have you received by being an active member of your UT-Austin community?

I have learned and continue to learn how to be a leader, a process that never stops challenging you.

In what ways have you been involved with the UT-Austin community?

You Bring Out the Asian American in Me, an event sponsored by the Multicultural Information Center and the Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective (i.e. APAC), in the Fall of 2006 brought me into the UT-Austin Asian American community. It's how I have contributed back to the university.

If someone was interested in becoming active members of their community, what would you advise them to do or think about?

Be true to yourself. Think deeply about what it is you want and why it is you want it. Constantly question your motives and evaluate your impact.

2007-2008 CAAS**Scholarship Recipients****Association for Asian American Studies Conference Award****Linda Ho Peché, M.A.**College of Liberal Arts
Anthropology Doctoral Student

The Association for American Studies Annual Meeting in April was stimulating and motivating. The theme centered on how Asian American Studies both reinforces and resists the framing of the Midwest as the “center” of the United States. This attempt to push scholars to “de-center” Asian American Studies away from an exclusive focus on the East and West coasts was an essential exercise that conceptually allowed for a space to include those topics generally “on the margins” of the discipline. I was lucky enough to attend the conference as an Anita Affeldt Graduate Fund recipient and presented on a panel that explored the multiple performances of identity in the Vietnamese American diaspora. The papers spanned the themes of ancestral worship, beauty pageants, the construction of “villages,” and comedic skits, emphasizing the ways in which diverse communities negotiate with modernity, tradition, religion, tourism, and nationalism across class strata and genders. I contributed a paper on ancestral altar practices in Vietnamese American homes, and was delighted that the topic of religion was included as a Mega Session called *Faith in a Time of Empire: Religion and Asian America*. Other panels such as *Looking for Religion* and *New Dimensions in Religion and Asian American Studies* centered religiosity as an important aspect of the Asian American experiences as well. The conference sought to complicate the Midwest as a key space of a homogenous “America,” and I believe that conceptually this worked excellently in terms of bringing other off-center and often overlooked dimensions of Asian American life (like religion) to the fore. I would like to thank the Center for Asian American Studies for

supporting my visit to the conference with a scholarship. This was an intellectually stimulating annual meeting, and I look forward to many more!

Jaya Soni, M.A.College of Liberal Arts
Sociology Doctoral Student

I had a phenomenal experience at the 2008 Asian American Studies Annual Meeting which would not have been possible without the financial support from the UT Center for Asian American Studies. During the conference, I served as chair of two panels, attended several sessions, and networked with peers from institutions across the country. I met other students who use similar types of qualitative methods and received great input on how to apply certain techniques within my research. This was my first experience in chairing panels, and I feel extremely lucky to have had such a great time. The first panel that I chaired was titled *Moving Bodies: Asian America and Dance*. Although my research interests focus upon immigration and work, I found chairing this panel extremely useful as the presenters referenced several race/ethnicity scholars that I study in my sociology graduate classes. While listening to their presentations and helping guide discussion I was able to see how race theory can be applied within the context of Asian American dance and performance, something I had not thought of before. The second panel that I chaired was titled *Asian American Political Activities*, which I thoroughly enjoyed as both the presenters and audience members were highly engaged in a discussion about contemporary politics, including the 2008 presidential election. This conference experience exposed me to the professional world of Asian American Studies. I gained confidence of my own work and left feeling motivated to continue my research in Asian American Studies.

Kimberly Tran, M.A.College of Education
Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student

I am very grateful to have received the Center of Asian American Studies’ conference scholarship award as it enabled me to participate in the dynamic experience of attending the 2008 Association for Asian American Studies Annual meeting. As a counseling psychology doctoral student whose research, teaching and clinical interest is multicultural populations, the conference allowed me to gain perspective of Asian Americans from a variety of disciplines. The film screening, “A Moral Debt” brought to life the hardships and political struggles that Filipino American veterans have endured since WWII. This historical framework is very useful, especially in counseling Filipino Americans at the Veterans Administration. Presentation panels such as “Asian American Multiethnic Theoretical Intersections” and “Becoming and Contesting the Model Minority” provided scholarship helpful towards my research endeavors. Further, the roundtable “Teaching Race, Seeing Race: Using Popular Culture as Pedagogical Tool” provided a place to share teaching best practices. Most importantly, the conference was a forum for me to interact and have engaging discussions with a community of people that broadened my knowledge of Asian Americans beyond psychology and education. The conference was definitely an experience that not only benefited my current graduate studies, but my future career aspirations of being a scientist-practitioner of cultural psychology as well.

Research Award Recipient**William Jiung-Shi Liu***Service & Research Award Recipient*
Asian American Studies & Psychology,
College of Liberal Arts**Service Award Recipient****Yongoh Jung**Doctoral Program in
Rehabilitation Counselor Education,
Department of Special Education**Graduate Grant Award****Recipient****Maryam Kashani**First Year Cohort in Social Anthropology,
Doctoral Program,
College of Liberal Arts

Fall 2007 Conference

Asia in Latin America: Across Four Continents



This conference explored new intellectual and institutional partnerships concerning the many historical and

contemporary intersections between Asia and the Americas, seeking to reimagine the boundaries--regional, disciplinary, and conceptual--that occlude the complicated legacy of Pacific crossings and their manifestations in the twenty-first century. CAAS, in conjunction with the Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, the South Asia Institute, the Center for Mexican American Studies, the South Asia Institute, the College of Liberal Arts, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, and the Department of History, convened this gathering of multifaceted and richly talented scholars to spur new ways of conceptualizing the Pacific as an interconnected region; racial and cultural hybridities; the political and economic underpinnings of global systems of labor migrations; and the contrapuntal trajectories of Asian and Mexican border movements and settlement. This conference represented CAAS's initial foray in locating Asians--and Asian American Studies--in Texas and in the south.

Some highlights include Professor Jeffrey Lesser of Emory University's keynote address, "How Shizuo Osawa became 'Mario the Jap' and Other Stories of Brazilian Ethnicity;" and panels such as "Asia's America: Historical



Jeffrey Lesser, Ph.D.
Emory University

Overviews;" "Four Continents, Five Oceans: Systems of Labor and Migration;" "Border Contestations: Comparing Mexican and Asian Migration and Settlement;" "Asian Mexicans;" and "Inscribing a Latin American Orient." We were happy to welcome to Austin other leading scholars in Asian Latin American Studies such as Evelyn Hu-Dehart (Brown University), Lane Hirabayashi (UCLA), Aisha Khan (NYU), Lok Siu (NYU), Kathleen Lopez (CUNY-Lehman), Nestor

Rodriguez (University of Houston), Anna Pegler-Gordon (MSU), David Manuel Hernandez (UCLA), Julia Maria Schiavone-Camacho (UT El Paso), Grace Pena Delgado (Pennsylvania State University), Jerry Garcia (MSU), and Mauricio Tenorio (University of Chicago). In addition, we learned from the papers presented by graduate students such as Benjamin Narvaez (UT Austin) and Zelideth Maria Rivas (UC Berkeley). UT participants included Kimberley Alidio (History), Jonathan Brown (History), Sharmila Rudrappa (Sociology), Nhi Lieu (American Studies), John McKiernan-Gonzales (History), Su Yeong Kim (Human Ecology), Seth Garfield (History), Julia H. Lee (English), Virginia Raymond (English), Jose Limon (English, American Studies, and CMAS), and Cesar Salgado (Spanish and Portuguese).

CAAS would like to thank in particular Bryan Roberts (Sociology and LLILAS) and Virginia Burnett (History and LLILAS) for their many contributions to the success of this conference.

FALL 2008 PROGRAMMING CALENDAR

CAAS FALL OPEN HOUSE - SEPTEMBER 15, 2008 FEATURING DR. JUDY YUNG & EDDIE FUNG

This event will feature Eddie Fung's life from a Chinatown childhood through World War II POW in Burma, and after.

CAAS SPEAKER SERIES

- September 26, 2008: Dr. Gilbert Gee, UCLA School of Public Health
- October 24, 2008: Dr. Lisa Park, University of California, San Diego
- November 21, 2008: Dr. Sheba George, Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science

APA (ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN) LUNCH DISCUSSION DR. SHALINI BATRA, COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

- September 11, 2008: How do you Define Yourself
- October 2, 2008: Forming Healthy Relationships in the APA Community
- November 6, 2008: Consciousness-Raising and Activism

CINEMA TRUTH CO-SPONSORED WITH SAHELI

- September 25, 2008: *The Children We Sacrifice* (2000), Featuring Poet, Mamata Misra
- October 23, 2008: *And Thereafter: A Korean "War Bride" in an Alien Land* (2004)
- November 13, 2008: *Covered Girls* (2003)



CAAS Graduation Dinner and Awards Ceremony, May 15, 2008
 (above) Dr. Madeline Hsu, Sehjong Hamjong (AAS '08 Graduate), & Linda Ho Peché

Center for Asian American Studies 2007-2008 Programming



September 17, 2007
CAAS Open House
Featuring Singer/Songwriter, Cynthia Lin



September 25, 2007
Film Screening:
El Paso Vietnam (2003)
Featuring Director, Ina Adele Ray



October 16, 2007
Film Screening:
Displaced in the New South (1995)



October 19-20, 2007
Asia in Latin America: Across Four Continents Conference



November 6, 2007
Book Reading:
My American Kundiman
Featuring Poet, Patrick Rosal



November 27, 2007
Film Screening:
No Turning Back (2003)



January 29, 2008
Film Screening: Anna May Wong: Frosted Yellow Willows
Featuring Director, Elaine Mae Woo



February 12, 2008
Performance:
Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Featuring Performer, Kristina Wong



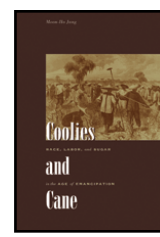
April 3, 2008
Panel Discussion:
Featuring Book: Asian Texans (2007) edited by Irwin Tang



April 24, 2008
Discussion: "Fair & Lovely"
Featuring Psychologist, Shalini Batra



April 24, 2008
Film Screening:
NEVER PERFECT (2007)
Featuring Director, Regina Park



April 30, 2008
"Revisiting the Color Line"
Featuring Speaker, Dr. Moon-Ho Jung, University of Washington

**GIFTS &
DONATION FORM**

We invite all individuals who are interested in Asian American issues to support our Center. Our goal is to increase awareness of Asian American issues by facilitating multidisciplinary teaching and research enabling students to become active members of their community. Contributors will allow our Center to develop new courses, provide scholarships for students, increase research opportunities, and sponsor university and public programs.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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Phone Number: (_____) _____ - _____

Targeted Giving

(Please check any of the following)

_____ Student Scholarships

_____ Faculty Development

_____ Community Outreach

Please find enclosed check for:

_____ \$50 Supporter

_____ \$100 CAAS Family Member

_____ \$300 CAAS Leader Circle

_____ \$500 500 Club Member

_____ Other (please specify amount \$ _____)

*Thank You for your
contribution & continued
support!*

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