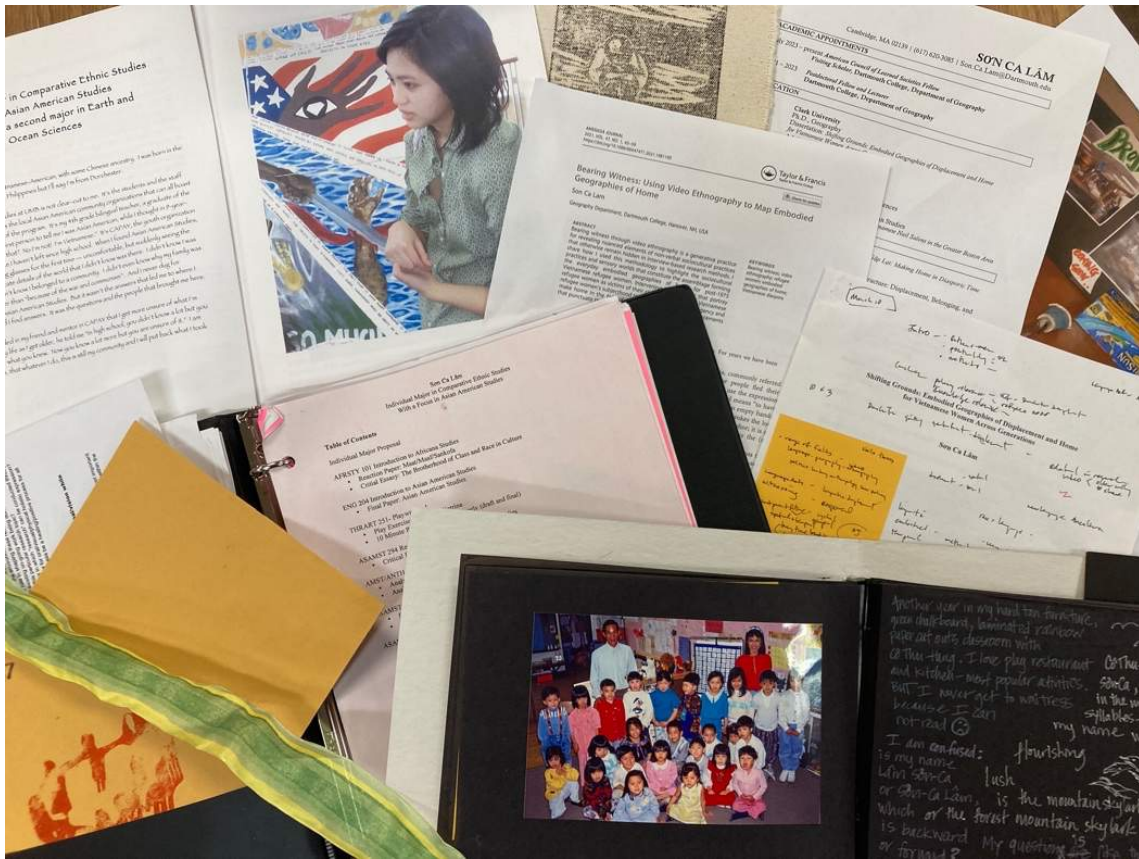


University of Massachusetts Boston Asian American Studies Program



Graduation Celebration
2023-2024

20 May 2024

Asian American Studies Program Core and Affiliated Faculty & Staff – May 2024

Ping-Ann Addo, Associate Professor and Chair, Anthropology
Pratyush Bharati, Professor, Management Science and Information Systems, College of Management
Elora Chowdhury, Professor and Chair, Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies
Patrick Clarkin, Associate Professor, Anthropology
Nia Duong, Production Assistant, Digital Storytelling Team, Asian American Studies
Christopher S. Fung, Senior Lecturer, Anthropology
Richard Hung, Associate Professor, School for the Environment
Peter Kiang, Professor and Director, Asian American Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development, CEHD
Pratna Kem, Lecturer, Asian American Studies
Marlene Kim, Professor, Economics; Associate Dean for Research and Student Engagement, McCormack Graduate School
Son Ca Lâm, Assistant Professor, Asian American Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development, CEHD [Fall 2024]
Andrew Leong, Associate Professor, Philosophy and Law
Raymond Liu, Professor and Chair, Marketing, College of Management
Lusa Lo, Professor, Special Education Program, Curriculum & Instruction, CEHD
Asa Peters, Co-Production and Archive Program Coordinator, Asian American Studies
Rajini Srikanth, Professor, English; Dean of the Faculty
Lakshmi Srinivas, Associate Professor, Asian American Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development, CEHD
Karen Suyemoto, Professor, Psychology & Asian American Studies
Shirley Tang, Endowed Distinguished Professor for Asian American Studies
Ammany Ty, Co-Production and Archive Program Coordinator, Asian American Studies
Kim Soun Ty, Lecturer, Asian American Studies
Linh-Phuong Vũ, Lecturer, Asian American Studies
Paul Watanabe, Professor, Political Science and Director, Institute for Asian American Studies
Zong-Guo Xia, Professor, School for the Environment
Wenfan Yan, Professor, Department of Leadership in Education, CEHD

The Program

For over thirty-five years, UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program has offered intellectually-challenging, emotionally-engaging, culturally-responsive, culturally-sustaining instruction in the classroom with holistic, high-impact practices of mentoring, community-building, service-learning, and advocacy to address the social and academic needs of students as well as the critical capacity-building needs of local Asian American communities. The Program offers the most Asian American Studies courses, faculty, and community linkages of any university in New England. The Program's alumni include teachers, social workers, health care providers, business entrepreneurs, and leaders of local Asian American community organizations. By grounding our curriculum, teaching, and applied research in the realities of local Asian American communities and by respecting the knowledge and bilingual/bicultural skills that many UMass Boston students bring to the classroom, the AsAmSt Program creates powerful learning environments for all students to gain critical understandings about the historical experiences, voices, contemporary issues, and contributions of diverse Asian populations in the U.S. Graduate students from any area who have Asian American Studies interests can serve as teaching/research assistants, mentors to undergraduates, and special project developers for the Program. AANAPISI students from Bunker Hill Community College and those from partnering pre-collegiate and community youth programs are encouraged to access AsAmSt's learning opportunities. Community members and organizations as well as alumni participate in our activities in many short- and long-term ways. Since 2010, UMass Boston has been the only AANAPISI research university in New England designated and funded each year by the U.S. Dept. of Education.

Celebrating our 2023-2024 Graduates in Asian American Studies

We bilingually applaud Singho Chan (陳陞豪) as our 24th student to successfully propose and execute a 10-course individual major in Asian American Studies at UMB. In addition, seven students from 2023-2024 have completed at least six courses and all AsAmSt program-of-study requirements: Louis Miguel Arriaza Erazo, Thi Hoàng (Thí Minh Thi Hoang), Annie Huynh, Thi Huynh, Christine Le, Supriya Rai (सुप्रिया राई), and Nhi Vo. They are among 162 students who have graduated with AsAmSt concentrations since 2000. Additionally, we congratulate Cindy Bui in Gerontology and Mai Hu Vang in Higher Education for completing their doctoral degrees. Mai is the second student from a Hmoob (Hmong) refugee family—following Mai See Yang in Gerontology (2017)—to earn a UMass Boston PhD.

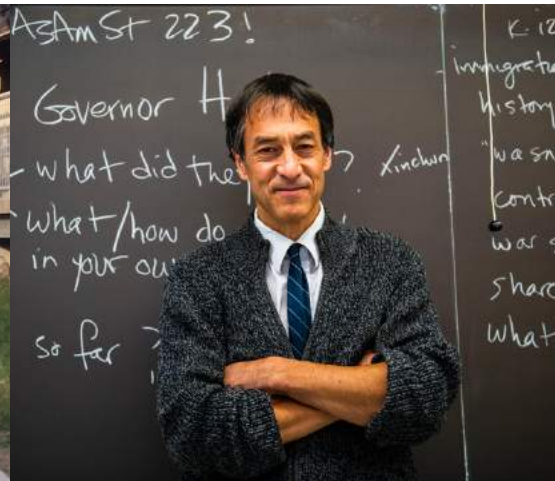
Many more cheers go to hundreds of other UMB students who are graduating with at least one AsAmSt course in their education and on their 2023-2024 transcripts. Few students at other local universities can say the same. We give thanks to our continuing AsAmSt students, faculty, staff, alumni, community partners, dedicated donors, and AANAPISI allies including IAAS, AARO, and SGISD/CEHD.

Being in the Moment; Being for the Long-Term

Among many specific accomplishments and overall priority progress achieved this year, none was as important or spacetime-bending as the successful hiring of Dr. Son Ca Lâm, given her remarkable reach from the past to create unique promises for the future of the AsAmSt Program. Son Ca is one of only two former undergraduates in our programmatic history who has asserted, with both passion in the moment and stamina for the long-term, that she wanted to become an Asian American Studies professor. Et voilà. The resilient, grow-your-own AsAmSt student/family/community roots of Vietnamese American Diasporic Community Studies at UMB are now poised to flourish with a fresh generation.



[photo of Kim Soun Ty and Son Ca Lâm by pk]



[photo of pk by LD Tran]

At the other end of faculty seniority and longevity, AsAmSt Professor and Program Director, Peter Nien-chu Kiang (江念祖), was honored in May 2024 with the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Scholarship, based on his career-long, 37-year scholarly record at UMB. He becomes the first "triple crown" winner in history to receive the university's highest honors in all three domains of faculty contribution and impact—the Chancellor's Awards for Distinguished Scholarship (2024), Service (2010), and Teaching (2007).

Individual Major in Asian American Studies

Singho Chan (陳陞豪)



I. ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES ESCALATES MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY.

My parents and I immigrated to the U.S. in 2015 from Hong Kong, and I speak Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. I will be graduating with a double major in Asian American Studies and Political Science. As an Asian American, I've witnessed our community become the target of discriminatory attacks and face hate crimes. Asian American Studies taught me about these issues in our community. If I hadn't had the worst math teacher of my life in middle school, I wouldn't have had the chance to take Political Science and Asian American Studies. The Asian American Studies Program helped me understand the meaning of education. In my middle school and early high school career, I got lost, like a boat that had lost its power and direction. Asian American Studies is like a beacon that gives me hope and clarity.

II. ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES EMPOWERED MY VOICE.

"America has power, but not justice. In prison, we were victimized as if we were guilty. Given no opportunity to explain, it was really brutal. I bow my head in reflection but there is nothing I can do." This historical

poem from Angel Island immigration prison is one example of the meaningful content I learned from my first Asian American Studies course, AsAmSt 223L Asians in the U.S. This poem was written in Chinese originally, and I chose to translate this and other poems into English. This is the beauty of Asian American Studies: its content always encourages me to do more and to do well. Through the classes, I was given countless opportunities to share my story and experience verbally and in writing in class; I was able to learn the context of the community and understand that the voices of our Asian American community are often ignored. I learned that our Asian American community needs a more powerful voice in city hall, in the courtroom, and in Congress.

III. ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES HELPED ME EARN A SEAT IN LAW SCHOOL.

I want to be a lawyer in the US and Hong Kong.

In the early fall semester of my senior year, I was admitted to The Juris Doctor (JD) Programme at the Chinese University of Hong Kong Faculty of Law. Asian American Studies became my greatest support. They've provided resources, academic direction, career guidance, and encouragement. I always believe in destiny. As a Christian, I believe God has the best plan. God guided me to UMass Boston and the Asian American Studies Program. Here, I met excellent professors and was able to broaden my vision, I could see further and step out of my comfort zone to accept new challenges. Asian American Studies taught me not to take things for granted. Thus, in the future, I also want to be a lecturer in Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston to provide legal education for undergraduate students in our community.

My supervisor from Greater Boston Legal Service, Janet Vo—a 2008 AsAmSt alumna herself—once said, "Learning and giving back to the communities will continue for the rest of the life." I will keep learning and carry the valuable knowledge and experiences I have gained from the Asian American Studies Program to apply those contents to law school assignments. My two years of work experience at GBLS Asian Outreach Center have encouraged me to become a community lawyer to provide affordable legal services and pursue justice for our Asian American community.

Justice will prevail.

Program-of-Study in Asian American Studies

Louis Miguel Arriaza Erazo

I'm a twenty-two-year-old, Salvadoran American man. Born in the city of Boston and raised in the city of Lynn. With a fluency in both English and Spanish. I have a bit of connection to my cultural heritage but not too much due to being born in America, along with my parents being more religiously focused. I'm graduating from UMass Boston with a bachelor's degree in Information Technology while minoring in Asian American Studies and Business Management. I have experience in management, leadership, teaching, videography, and photography.



I decided to include a focus on Asian American Studies because of the level of warmth and community the courses gave. There was the knowledge I always wanted to gain and learn and am working towards sharing. It was a different experience from any other course I had taken in my life. Especially in a college setting. All the friends I've made have been through these courses. Then the advocacy for the movement for justice and equality has brought to my attention how the journeys of the past aren't limited to their respective eras. They continue now in the present with us working towards a greater future filled with understanding, compassion, and support. All these ideas, direct and indirect, were what made me want to continue my involvement in AsAmSt as well as to be able to have a foundation to connect experiences with people as a whole.

In terms of plans. I will always find a way to remain connected with the AsAmSt Program. May it be through email, in-person, and hopefully through influence. I also hope to be able to be more involved in the community itself. The knowledge I've gained has enabled me to have a greater understanding of how to relate to and understand people—especially about the realities of people dealing with their experiences now and from the past or even over generations. The ideas of healing, coping, and growth are all ones that have been locked into my mind by the Program. It has also pushed me to continue to learn more about the Asian American community and others as well. With a drive to, one day, be able to provide a platform for them to voice their stories and experience, I wish to achieve my goal of opening a studio that develops and delivers works such as that. The AsAmSt Program reinforces my idea of wanting to use the power of creativity and memories to tell stories that will live not only on paper or digitally but in the minds and hearts of others.

Thí Hoàng (Thí Minh Thí Hoang)

My name is Thi (it sounds like tea). I was born and raised in Sài Gòn – one of the busiest cities in Việt Nam. My parents are from the North of Vietnam, so I am mixed between two cultures (North and South). My whole family came to America in 2016. I admire and appreciate that my parents moved from North to South, and then to America. It takes them a lot of effort and time to survive, and give their kids a better education and life.

I started studying ESL at the University of Massachusetts Boston in the same year of 2016. I major in Information Systems and Business Analytics, and minor in Asian American Studies. It took me a while to join the program-of-study in Asian American Studies. I was not confident with my English, and my family did not support me with this decision. It was fate for me to have my first Asian American class – Asian American Media Literacy (AsAmSt 370) when I needed a community – a safe SPACE the most. I felt clueless. When I had no motivation to study, my Asian Women in the U.S. (AsAmSt 228L) class helped me come back to my inner thoughts and inner strength. After Covid-19, I took Resources for Vietnamese American Studies (AsAmSt 294) and that was when I came back to my roots – Vietnamese. It is a major reason for me to choose to focus on Asian American Studies.

Then, I am interested more in the Asian community in America, their stories, VOICE, and value. Getting to know before doing more. After that, I took Boston's Asian American Communities (AsAmSt 423L), which I heard that it is difficult. I was scared, but I still wanted to learn more. Overcoming my fear. Finally, creating one more video for my AsAmSt 370 class was a key step in my journey which made me ready for a new door.

Asian American Studies had a big impact on my life, especially my self-growth. I am willing to listen, communicate, open up more, and do more for my community. After college, I take a little break as a pause for my journey – to reset my mindset. Even though I do not have a specific plan for my future, I believe that what I have learned from Asian American Studies classes will always be there, in my life. I can be a companion for any fellow. I will be in any role when my people need me. Keep learning, trying, and doing.

I appreciate the Asian American Studies Program, for everyone who taught me and who I met or be a part of to create such a space. I become braver each day and change every day. You all play significant roles in my life, future, and values. Thank you very much. I hope you all have good health and be happy, be a meaningful flower.



Annie Huynh

I am a first-generation Vietnamese American student. I am graduating with a major in English and a program-of-study in Asian American Studies. I'll be the first in my immediate family to earn a Bachelor's Degree. I was born and raised in Worcester, MA, where I was lucky enough to grow up in a home with seven other family members. There was never a dull moment, and even now as I've moved five different times since then, I look back on my grandma's house often as one of the most important places in my life.



Growing up, it was common to wake up to the bitter, nostalgic smell of incense in the air, bolero music blasting from the living room TV; followed by the shuffling feet of multiple family members getting ready as we would soon depart to the flea market or grocery store or temple. While I was always proud of my Vietnamese heritage, I never quite confronted what it meant to me until taking Southeast Asians in the U.S. during my freshman year at UMass Boston. It was the first time I would take a course that taught me about the history of my people. AAPI history and representation is so important, and while I sometimes feel sad knowing it took me until the age of eighteen to learn more, I acknowledge how lucky I am to have access to these courses at all because of Asian American Studies at UMass Boston. In getting to take more courses, meet more professors, and become more involved, I now urge every student I meet to take at least one AsAmSt course during their time at UMass Boston. It makes an entire difference in the experience you receive.

Afterwards, it would be taking Resources for Vietnamese American Studies (AsAmSt 294) that would change my entire worldview of what I thought I knew about being, existing, and living as a Vietnamese American woman. Prior to learning more history and thinking more critically, most of my associations with Vietnamese culture had to do with music, dance, and food. In high school, I was involved with the Southeast Asian Coalition in Worcester and would attend Linh Son Temple. Having a grasp on the language and being able to speak to those in my community felt like enough for me. I never would have ventured outward into looking at the past or looking at the experiences of different regions—it simply never occurred to me. Knowing what I know now, I carry heavy boots with me in my attempt to continue to slowly heal our multigenerational trauma by finding/contributing to support and to sharing the stories of ourselves and our ancestors before us. One of the most powerful things we can do is to share our stories and narratives; something I learned to hone through my English major, and something I learned to do so freely, honestly, and often through Asian American Studies.

Spending the past almost two years working with the Asian American Resource Office on campus, I learned about what it meant to be attending an AANAPISI school. The current resources and courses we offer aren't guaranteed to stay here forever. It is an ongoing effort to continue to fight for our students

to have these opportunities, and there is a lot of work behind the scenes that goes unspoken. Meanwhile, there are other schools that don't have even a foundation yet of what we offer. I am beyond grateful for the knowledge and opportunities granted to me over my past five years in college by UMass Boston's Vietnamese Student Association, Asian American Studies, and Asian American Resource Office. Knowing this, I don't plan to walk away from these vital organizations/groups that helped shape such a major part of my identity. I hope to continue the work I've started here and keep on learning, giving back, and doing more. This is not the end of my time here, but merely the end of my role as an Undergraduate Student.

Thi Huynh

[Thi Huynh is out-of-country; the following is excerpted from one of her Fall 2022 writings in AsAmSt 423.]

Before taking Asian American Studies as a minor, I had some bad experiences with Vietnamese communities when I first came to America. But after going on field trips to see what Boston's Asian American Communities fought for and built, I feel that in a community there are always good people and bad people. I can't hate a whole community just because of one bad thing. Listening to those who worked hard, fought hard for our rights, voices and space day by day, I feel very grateful and want to give them a hand to build up our communities...



The thing about identity, as Hall points out, is that it can be just as much about “becoming” as about “being”; identity is who we were, who we are, and who we will become. Now is as critical a time as ever — culturally, politically, morally — to consider the image of ourselves that we want to construct, using our shared language and iconography. It matters how we choose to identify ourselves. It matters, in other words, how much substance we take with our sugar.” I like this passage very much. It makes me feel that young people know how to use their rights to develop more in the future. Thanks to the work of the previous generation, young people have been able to develop more easily, young people have easier access to learning, and they can sit in the same class with people of different races. They also have the right to speak for themselves more than before...

In the internship, every week I upload a photo and a post about what we have done and will be doing in the future to let our communities know we will always be ready to help. Originally, I only took AsAmSt 225 to fulfill my requirements, but after learning about Southeast Asians in the US, I want to take Asian American Studies as my minor. If I hadn't taken these Asian American Studies classes, I would always think America was paradise. After taking AsAmSt classes about history and experiencing fieldtrips, I learned how much the Asian American community has struggled to get to where it is today...

I wonder, ten years later, if we meet again, what will each one of our class members do for the Asian American Community?

Christine Le

I am a first-generation Vietnamese American college student. My parents immigrated to the United States in the early 1990s and moved around for a bit until they settled down and started their family. I was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts and I am the oldest with two younger siblings. In May of 2024, I am graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management with concentrations in Interdisciplinary Business and Marketing.



As a first-generation student, I felt very lost on what I wanted to do with my life. Sometimes, I still feel that way. Finding the Asian American Studies Program was what I consider to be lucky. I entered college in 2020—the pandemic. During this time, everything in my life felt like a haze, spending my days staring at a computer screen. I felt very withdrawn and disconnected. As I entered my second semester of college, I found myself in AsAmSt 225 Southeast Asians in the US with Prof. Shirley Tang. I felt very excited throughout this course and started to find myself engaging with my classmates, the content, and the course overall. This was unlike anything I'd experienced before. I truly felt like I had found a safe space for me to learn, openly discuss, and reflect on what it means to me, to be Asian American.

In the following school year, classes began to take place in-person. While I loved my experiences in AsAmSt 225, I felt very hesitant on committing to the AsAmSt Program-of-Study due to my own fears of learning about my family history, unpacking years of lost cultural identity, and more. After taking another course, AsAmSt 223, I met other students who were in the Program and listened to their experiences with Asian American Studies. I deeply resonated with their stories which encouraged me to formally declare an Asian American Studies Program-of-Study. Since then, I've taken many different courses within the Program that have enriched my knowledge, allowed me to deeply connect with my background, reflect upon buried traumas, experiences, and feelings, and build a community.

As of right now, I don't know what is in store for me. I'm focusing on incorporating my majors and concentrations of study to work within the marketing field. While Asian American Studies may not be the focus of my career path, I'm grateful for all that I've learned and all that it has given me, and I will continue to incorporate my AsAmSt learning into other aspects of my life.

Supriya Rai (सुप्रिया राई)

I am a first-generation Nepalese American. My journey began in Kathmandu, Nepal where I was born and spent the first 13 years of my life. At the age of 13, together with my little sister and mother, we immigrated to a small town in Cape Cod, Massachusetts to reunite with my father. Since then, Cape Cod has become my new home where I not only grew up but also completed my high school and earned an associate degree in Biology. Following my associate degree, I transitioned to UMass Boston to pursue a bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in Asian American Studies.

As a first-generation student, like many, I have always aspired to achieve the "American Dream" through education, making academics a top priority. Yet, despite its importance, there was always sort of a lingering sense of unfulfillment. I wanted to explore beyond the confines of my major studies, but I was uncertain about where to direct my attention. But this changed when I took Professor Srinivas's Becoming South Asian course (AsAmSt 226), a decision made on a whim that has not only profoundly altered my academic path but also various aspects of my life.



Transitioning to this vibrant city of Boston from a predominantly white town, I initially focused on assimilating, just as I did for the majority of my life, often sidelining my own cultural identity and heritage. My background, which is deeply rooted in one of Nepal's oldest indigenous cultures, already presented a challenge in aligning with the mainstream culture both in Nepal and the US, making it difficult to navigate my identity. Despite this struggle, I continue to hold immense pride in my culture, which is instilled by my parents who, though living in a completely different country, always emphasized the importance of our roots, particularly our indigenous heritage. However, reconciling this multifaceted identity felt daunting, and I often struggled to fully embrace and celebrate it. However, Professor Srinivas's class offered a comforting environment where, for the first time, I felt a sense of belonging in an academic space. Surrounded by peers with different backgrounds yet resonating stories, I began to explore and question my own identity as an indigenous South Asian woman in this country. This was the first academic setting where I could express myself. Inspired by this empowering experience, I expanded my academic pursuits to include more South Asian focus courses and delved into the Asian American Studies Program further with more classes, too.

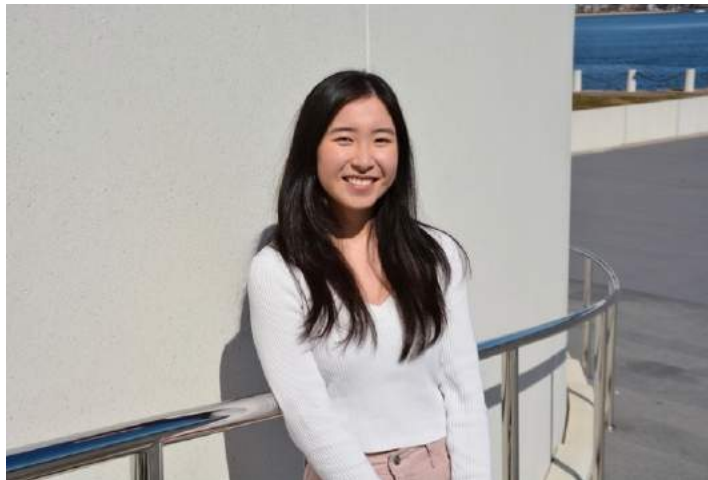
Engaging with the Asian American community's history and personal narratives of students has enriched me in indescribable ways for which I am eternally grateful. The AsAmSt courses presented challenges that

compelled me to dig deeper within myself, fostering a fuller understanding and empathy that has truly expanded my perspective in significant ways. Similar to Professor Srinivas's class, I encountered many other courses within this Program that offered a welcoming space for learning and reflection. This journey while completing the program-of-study highlighted the significance of community-building, leading me to join several cultural clubs and even establish one for the Nepalese students on campus. Through these experiences, I have learned the invaluable lesson of embracing and advocating one's identity and background as a source of strength and connection.

Upon graduation, my goal is to further my studies in public health and social work, with the ultimate aim of serving and uplifting the community around me. Reflecting on my education journey, I have experienced significant personal growth. The classes I have taken, particularly within this Program, have enlightened me on the power of being heard and the true essence of community. Experiencing firsthand the impact of being present and actively contributing to a community's well-being, I am committed to applying this same principle to both the communities I will serve and my own. Additionally, the faculty members of this Program have shown and instilled the importance of passion in life. I am deeply grateful for the invaluable wisdom imparted by this Program and the faculty members who make AsAmSt what it is. This Program has not only shaped my academic path but also my outlook on life and my commitment to making a meaningful difference in the world.

Nhi Vo

I am a 1.5-generation Vietnamese immigrant. I moved to the United States with my family at the age of five and grew up in Dedham, MA, but later relocated to Randolph, MA. My parents and older sister,



hardworking immigrants, arrived in America without any knowledge of the language, embarking on a difficult journey to establish themselves and make a living in a place where we now call home. My family's perseverance and support have been crucial in shaping the path that led me to where I am today. It feels surreal to say that I will be graduating from UMass Boston with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and a Program-of-Study in Asian American Studies.

During my Freshman year in 2020-2021, I started my journey with the Asian American Studies Program, taking AsAmSt 223 and AsAmSt 225 online due to the pandemic. During that time, I felt very disconnected with my education due to the fact that my very first year of college was through a computer screen. While there were challenges, I never felt disconnected with the Asian American Studies courses that I was taking at the time and continued to immerse myself in these courses, eagerly taking on more and more. I was

deeply intrigued by what the Program had to offer and the ways in which it pushed me to grow and overcome challenges. Growing up in a predominantly white suburban town, I often found myself surrounded by people who didn't share the same culture and background as me. I was so caught up in keeping up with their culture that along the way, I was suppressing my own Vietnamese culture. It wasn't until college where I discovered the Asian American Studies Program and began to explore and embrace my Vietnamese identity with pride. From my experience with the Asian American Studies Program, you never knew what you were walking into when you're entering the classroom. It was truly a roller coaster of emotions that kept you engaged and challenged. I never knew I had the ability to be vulnerable in a classroom setting with a group of people whom I barely knew, yet shared similar experiences with. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to learn and listen to the people around me, knowing that I am not alone in my journey of growth.

As for my career path, I'm planning to go into Information Systems and Data Analytics. I hope to still be involved with the Asian American Studies Program and the Asian community in the future. The Asian American Studies Program will forever hold a special place in my heart, shaping not only my academic journey but also my understanding of identity, culture, and community. It was truly a steppingstone to bigger things in the future, and I am excited to see where this journey takes me.

Recognizing Graduate Student Contributions

Cindy Nhu Bui, PhD, Gerontology

I grew up in Sacramento, CA. I am the youngest of five children, and the only one in my family who was born in the U.S. My parents had me later in life and my siblings are much older than me, so I have always been in an interesting, unconventional position in my family. But it gave me a unique view into my family and culture, which influenced how I enjoy bridging different perspectives together and brought me to where I am in my career today.



I did not grow up with a strong connection to a Vietnamese community. When I moved to Boston for graduate school, I wanted to represent the Vietnamese community in my work one way or another. I connected with students and faculty of the AsAmSt department, and I was amazed by how everyone was deeply rooted in the local community. Within and across cultural groups, people knew one another, looked out for each other, and worked together to move efforts forward. I was inspired to take opportunities to participate in the community whenever I could, which was a step out of my comfort zone. But I felt welcomed everywhere I went, and I am grateful for all of the experiences I had to get to know the local Vietnamese community, from talking with organization staff, to interviewing older

residents, to attending cultural events. I do not believe I would have had the courage to engage in the ways that I do now if I did not introduce myself to the AsAmSt community when I first started. The AsAmSt community of UMass Boston is such a genuine and powerful environment, and I am happy to be a part of it. I would like to shout out to Carolyn Wong, Loan Dao and Peter Kiang for their guidance and mentorship while I was at UMass Boston. The discussions and reflections we have shared still influence how I conduct my work, and I hope to serve as a beacon for future students just as you were for me.

I plan to stay connected to the AsAmSt community after graduating. I would like to stay updated on what people across the AsAmSt community are working on and what are key priorities throughout time. My expertise is on later life and aging among Asian Americans in the U.S., so I hope to contribute that perspective to support the work of others.

Completing a PhD was the most challenging thing I have ever done. Part of that challenge was overcoming a lot of self-doubt in whether I was “correctly” representing the experiences of Vietnamese people who I came to know and care about. I constantly felt way in over my head, and I was worried about letting people down. But through all of the self-doubt, I learned so much and pushed myself beyond limits that I once did not think was possible. I now feel proud that I was able to overcome the hard times so that I could be at this point where I can be even more proud of the end product—a dissertation that includes the voices of older Vietnamese adults. For all those who may feel this similar overwhelming sense of duty to your communities, trust yourself and trust that how much you care will light up in your work.

Maí H. Vang, PhD, Higher Education



To have capped off my formal education at an AANAPISI has been invaluable. I am a 1.5 generation Hmong American woman who grew up in a small Midwest city raised on the myths of small-town values that boasted a tight-knit community and meritocracy. My childhood was filled with bike rides to the local public pool and swims in rivers that rivaled any scene from a nostalgic 80's movie. Yet, these experiences also fostered a keen understanding of how the city was separated by race and ethnicity. Often, I felt that I did not have a genuine community outside of my family. At UMB, I found a caring community through Asian American Studies classes and events that taught me the wealth of knowledge and support available within the Asian American community.

I was welcomed by the Asian American Studies family even before I stepped foot on campus. I received encouraging emails and pledges from faculty to support me through my doctoral journey. As a first-generation doctoral student, I cherished the idea that other scholars were committed to my academic and personal growth. I also received guidance from an elder who encouraged me to step outside the box and take the *Boston's Asian American Communities* course. This class helped me find a place in Boston as a Hmong American living outside of the Midwest. The course introduced me to community building pedagogy and practice. I also found a community and made life-long friends who helped make Boston my adopted home. Ultimately, the Asian American Studies approach to teaching and learning sent me on my path to my dissertation topic—faculty who conduct activist scholarship at research intensive institutions.

As I close my UMB journey (for now), I am aware of how fortunate I was to be in a place where my identity and experiences are represented. I learned that a part of Asian American Studies was to provide insight into how we can build future possibilities for change that are built on the foundations of culture and group history. While I was completing my doctorate, I was also witnessing through Asian American Studies the many innovative ways to create programming centered on Asian American culture and needs. I have since taken these lessons to secure a grant to design and implement a Hmong Heritage Language curriculum at the local high school in my hometown. I try to replicate the spirit of community, academic excellence, and love for the Asian American community—all learned from Asian American Studies. This is one of the many ways that I carry Asian American Studies with me beyond UMass Boston.



from Fall 2016 AsAmSt 423: Mai's portrait with her family's original Paj Ntaub storycloth (photo: Sokpagna Chuon); Mai and classmates at a Boston Chinatown shop where Wisconsin Hmong-harvested ginseng is sold (photo: pk)

AsAmSt Program Sampling from 2023-2024

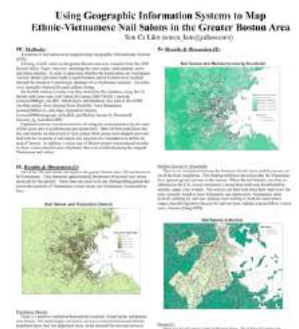
Son Ca Lâm Returns as Assistant Professor in Asian American Studies



Following a national search that brought four bilingual candidates to UMB for a series of interviews, teaching demonstrations, research presentations, and community interactions with AsAmSt alumni, Dr. Son Ca Lâm joins the AsAmSt Program as a full-time tenure-track Assistant Professor with expertise in Vietnamese American Diasporic Community Studies, beginning in Fall 2024. She was welcomed by the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) and AsAmSt at a reception in March 2024 [photos].

With a PhD from Clark University in 2020, she has been both an American Council of Learned Societies Research Fellow and a post-doctoral fellow at Dartmouth. Born in a refugee camp in the Philippines with parents who fled Vietnam as refugees, Dr. Lâm grew up in Dorchester, MA and attended Boston Public Schools for her K-12 education. She completed both her Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics and double BA degrees in Environmental Sciences and Comparative Ethnic Studies at UMass Boston.

Dr. Lâm's current book project is titled, *Có Duyên Gặp Lại: Making Home in Diasporic Time and Space*. Her 2020 dissertation was a bilingual, transnational ethnographic study of three generations of Vietnamese diasporic women with family and community roots in Dorchester titled, *Shifting Grounds: Embodied Geographies of Displacement and Home for Vietnamese Women Across Generations*. Remarkably, her 2009 undergraduate thesis project mapping Vietnamese-owned nail salons in MA still serves as a model of transdisciplinary bilingual community research. In Fall 2024, Son Ca will be teaching AsAmSt 223 - Asians in the US and AsAmSt 294 - Resources for Vietnamese American Studies.



NASA/AANAPISI Power & Purpose in Digital Storytelling Co-Production



Through multiyear grants from NASA and the US Dept of Education AANAPISI Program, Endowed Distinguished Professor for Asian American Studies Shirley Tang and her Digital Storytelling Team (DST) have generated a total of 27 new digital stories since 2022, co-produced with BIPOC participants focusing on STEM pathways. Additionally, in May 2024 through AsAmSt 398 and BHCC's AANAPISI Pride Storytelling program, Shirley and the DST (Ammany Ty, Nia Duong, Asa Peters, Kim Soun Ty) created and exhibited a series of *We are here, be clear!* multimedia story products by 14 BHCC and UMB students as part of a new zine about AANAPISI students' persistence visions and realities: Meanwhile, the DST's 2022 children's book, *Hira Makes a Sound*, is being actively used in varied educational settings.

Celebrating Three Decades of Refugee Alumni Entrepreneurship



Phoumara Nuon's award-winning Wellesley Bakery marked 30 years of sweet, savory, successful family operation in April 2024. Mara's caring values have been clear since taking AsAmSt 225 in 1989 (seated right).

A Memorable Day of Laundry Legacy Lessons



With microphones and cameras recording every precious minute, three elders—each of whom grew up in Chinese laundries run by their immigrant fathers during the paper-son, post-Exclusion, post-WWII, pre-Civil Rights era—visited AsAmSt 223/228/423 in November 2023 to share lessons, memories, and inspiration. Initiated by UMB 1974 alumnus, Walter Wong, together with Richard “Biggs” Chin and Dr. Raymond Chin, the panel of three spoke with wisdom, clarity, and heart—mirroring the working class, racialized, English-dominant, immigrant family realities of current students while representing the faces and ages of students’ generationally-distant grandparents.

During the first hour, the panel focused on specific childhood examples of family and work conditions in laundry settings, including vivid realities of racism, resistance, and resilience. In the second hour, they described how their laundry experiences influenced their educational, professional, and civic choices over the past 50 years, including specific examples of Chinatown YMCA leadership (Biggs), mental health and healing practice (Ray with his therapy dog, Dasher), and public/private sector leadership examples following graduation from UMB (Walter).

Amidst these remarkable laundry legacy reflections, Walter also shared his father’s Congressional Gold Medal earned through Chinese American WWII military service—poignantly adding to the layers of context and contradiction across service, struggle, and sacrifice for younger generations to understand. The panel concluded with why this history is important to document and why intergenerational sharing is so important for families, communities, and Asian American Studies.

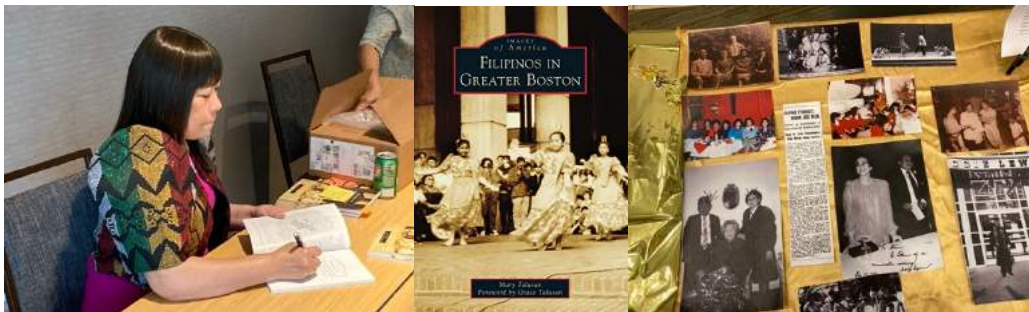


Community Documentation and Archival Development – New Donor Collections

Thanks to three scholars and community leaders who recently donated specific collections of documents and images for preservation and educational use by the AsAmSt Program, students in AsAmSt 423 and 390 worked with Co-Production and Archive Program Coordinators, Ammany Ty and Asa Peters, the donors, and Oscar Chen in 2023-24 to process and curate samples from these three valuable sources.



Dr. Chalsa Loo, retired clinical psychologist/scholar in Honolulu, donated 13 black & white photographs of SF Chinatown that were originally used for her 1991 book, *Chinatown, Most Time Hard Time*.



Dr. Mary Talusan Lacanlale, Professor of Asian American Studies at California State University Dominguez Hills, donated the entire collection of ~550 digital photographs gathered from local family and community sources that supported her 2023 photo history book, *Filipinos of Greater Boston*.



Vivian Wenhuey Chen, founding President of the Asian American Bank and Trust (AABT) in Boston Chinatown (currently owned by East West Bank after mergers/sales) donated her personal collection of documents and archival materials associated with the unique history of the AABT from 1993 to 2005.

Filipina/x/o American Community Immersion and Inspiration



Visions of Pinoy pride, power, and purpose have resonated throughout 2023-2024 for leaders within the Hoy! Pinoy! Filipino student club through a well-organized Beacon Voyages for Service (BVS) trip during Spring Break focusing on the history, community, and war-flag contexts of Filipina/x/o Americans in the CA Bay Area as well as locally and nationally. Led by Fasha Banson with holistic support [and photos] from Pratna Kem and CA assistance by alumnus Janrey Javier, BVS students experienced unforgettable moments of deep learning, reflection, and affirmation while engaging with inspirational Pinoy high school youth, master teachers/mentors, elected officials, and residents of the I-Hotel. The need and desire for Filipina/x/o American Studies within AsAmSt have never been so compelling.



1975-2025: A 50-Year Vietnamese Diaspora Commemoration Initiative for Boston

With a bilingual project team that leverages multiple AsAmSt connections, including AsAmSt 294 student work, Ngọc-Trần Vũ and Linh-Phuong Vũ are leading an exemplary two-year, community-centered creative process to gather stories and design a public healing memorial for Boston's Little Saigon Cultural District in honor of 50 years of Vietnamese American diasporic community legacy and contribution.



Trần, Linh, chị Laurie and brainstorming in Dec 2023; AsAmSt 294 student sample designs in Apr 2024.

Planning Khmer-Centered Genocide Education with the Lynn Public Schools



Thanks to MA legislative action in 2021 (S. 2557) to require Genocide Education for middle/high schools statewide, a freshly-funded project for the next two years with the Lynn Public Schools promises to provide unique opportunities for LPS faculty/staff professional development, curricular innovation, and LPS-AsAmSt student-alumni engagement—all in relation to Khmer family/community-centered history and legacies of the Cambodian genocide. This special partnership began with an invited visit in December 2023 by

Kristen Tabacco, the LPS History Curriculum Coordinator, to witness Cambodian shadow puppet performances by students in Kim Soun Ty's AsAmSt 270 Cambodian American Culture and Community course, and also to meet with alumni from LPS who are current UMB students taking AsAmSt courses.



Forever Gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Chen



With COVID cautions relieved, AsAmSt students/alumni and faculty/staff finally offered proper in-person appreciation for the treasured contributions by beloved Mr. & Mrs. Stanley & Josephine Chen who established and sustained our SCCS program from 2010 to the present. Joining their sons, Rodney and Sidney, together with local family, friends, and community leaders who benefited from the Chens' philanthropic visions, alumni Yan Wong and Richard Sann co-planned a warm celebration of life at UMB in July 2023, including heartfelt remembrances by alumni Matt Seto, Yan Liang, Kim Soun Ty, and others.



[photos: Nía Duong]

In the decade from 2010 until COVID quarantine, the SCCS Program supported a total of 41 AsAmSt students, including 17 immigrants and 24 US-born with immigrant/refugee parents, all of whom had significant financial need and nearly all who were the first in their families to attend college. Of the 41, 39 successfully completed their undergraduate degrees; nine also completed master's degrees, one is in a PhD program, and seven children were born. During those years when they still lived in MA, Mr. and Mrs. Chen loved interacting with the students directly in person, sharing experiences and life lessons. Over time, these gatherings became treasured moments of inter-generational care and communication. As we identify new generations of deserving students to support, our loving gratitude continues each day.

The Asian American Studies Program recognizes with appreciation:

- each of our core AsAmSt faculty, staff, and students as well as our committed donors, alumni, community partners, and allies within and beyond the university.
- our community of leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and scholars who provided a wide range of collaborative opportunities and resources, from internships for advanced AsAmSt students to material support and direct service, including Laurence Louie & Rubato, Just Thai Kitchen, Tommy Lam Productions, Boston Little Saigon, Lan Nguyen (Mather School), Jerry Qiao (JQES), Janet Vo & Asian Outreach Center, Mary Chin & AACA, Darren Le, David Washburn, Matthew Allen, Shubha Sunder, Susan Lieu, Mia Wenjen, Hon. Tram Nguyen, and many others.
- Co-Production and Archives Program Coordinator, Ammany Ty, who completed her MS Degree in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archives Management from Simmons University in May 2024; AsAmSt alumna, Ivy Bui, who transitioned from the AsAmSt Digital Storytelling Team in March 2024 to a full-time professional staff role as an Advisor in UMB's Academic & Career Engagement and Success Center.
- Accomplishments by alumni, including Minh Phan ('18) who received his MPH degree from Tufts Medical School and was the speaker for his class commencement ceremonies in May 2024 and LD Tran ('23) who begins the MEd program at Harvard Graduate School of Education in Fall 2024.
- Faculty and administrative leaders, including Caitlin McGovern, Prof. Christine Leider, and Doctoras Georgianna Melendez, Liya Escalera y Cindy Orellana—each of whom transitioned to new positions outside of UMB during 2023-224—and gratitude to Sarah Paterson, Steve Ward, Paloma Britt, Trieu Ly, Vivian Tran, and others whose resolute, resourceful support continues.
- Dr. Demeturie Toso-Lafaele Gogue who brings his expertise in the study of AANAPISIs and Pacific Islander populations to the tenure-stream faculty of the CEHD Higher Education Program in Fall 2024, having completed his PhD in Higher Education and Organizational Change at UCLA under renowned former colleague, Mitch Chang.
- the sustained leadership for our US Department of Education AANAPISI-funded grant activities, by co-PIs Peter Kiang, Paul Watanabe, and Shirley Tang; AARO core staff led by Sara Hoang with Karen Chi, Sokpagna Chuon, and Helen Ngo; and our sister AANAPISI faculty colleagues at Bunker Hill Community College, led by Profs. Maria Puente and Aurora Bautista.

Please visit UMB's Asian American Studies Program at www.umb.edu/asamst. For updates of local community news, resources, events, and new content creation, see: <https://www.instagram.com/plantjustseeds/> and <http://www.facebook.com/UMB.AsAmSt>. Please give to the Asian American Studies Program Capacity Fund: <http://www.alumni.umb.edu/AsAmSt30>.