

The Symposium was an inspiring way to kick off a great year of CAPAY programming. The energy generated at the Symposium inspired the planning team to drop more knowledge. In December, CAPAY hosted a public workshop on consumerism. Youth from Chinatown, Dorchester, and Worcester discussed the importance of creating culture. If our current generation loses the cultures of our parents, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to recreate those losses.

And it doesn't stop there. Keep an eye out for more programming in May to celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and beyond.

Mount Hope Cemetery Database Project

by Laura Ng



Chinese Monument at Mount Hope Cemetery
(Photo by Frances K. Chow)

This past year, I was given the task of creating a searchable database for the Chinese section of Mount Hope Cemetery that would integrate cemetery records and gravestone photos taken in 2007 by UMB Asian American Studies Program students. Mount Hope Cemetery is a significant site because it is the final resting place for many of Boston's early Chinese immigrants. Around fifteen hundred Chinese Americans were buried in the cemetery between the 1930s and 1960s. Racism, even in death, is part of the story why Chinese were buried in their own segregated section of the cemetery.

I used FileMaker Pro to create the database for Mount Hope. So far, I have been able to input all of the names and grave locations of the people buried there as well as the gravestone photos from 2007. Not all of the gravestones were photographed, but I will be visiting Mount Hope to finish that part of the project, and it should be completed by the end of this summer. Another

component of the database project is translating the Chinese characters on the gravestones which often tell us the Chinese name and village of the deceased individual. Suffolk University professor Da Zheng has helped translate Chinese characters on some of the gravestones, but more volunteers are needed for this project.

Our collective work on the Mount Hope database has already aided one person researching his family's history. This April, I received an email from Raymond Chong requesting the gravestone photo of Chong Quock Hung, a Chinese man who immigrated to Boston, died in 1964, and is buried at Mount Hope. I was able to successfully retrieve his gravestone photo from the database in just a few seconds and email it to Raymond who was overjoyed.

Chong Quock Hung is important to Raymond because he was the one who gave his father, Gim Suey Chong, a "paper" name in 1932 which allowed him to immigrate to the U.S. During the Chinese Exclusion Period, 1882-1943, only certain Chinese such as merchants and their family members were able to immigrate to the U.S., so many pretended to be a merchant's son and held paper names. Raymond wanted to present the gravestone photo to Chong Quock Hung's adult grandchildren whom he will be visiting this summer when he makes a trip to their village in Kaiping (Hoiping), Guangdong, China. Having this photo in the grandchildren's possession is very meaningful because in Chinese tradition, it is important to be buried with one's family members and ancestors near the home village. As a restaurant worker in Boston's Chinatown, Chong Quock Hung was too poor to have his bones sent back to his ancestral village in China. I told Raymond to assure the grandchildren that in my future visits to Mount Hope, I would make sure their grandfather's gravestone was well-maintained.

Raymond's search for a piece of his family's history shows us how important the database is for preservation purposes, genealogical research, and honoring the lives of Boston's early Chinese American residents.



(Photo from Mount Hope Cemetery Database)

New Staff / Faculty

An Interview with Oiyon Poon

Interviewed by Laura Ng

Transcribed by Molly Higgins

Oiyon Poon is currently a Research Associate at the Institute for Asian American Studies and recently received her Ph.D. from UCLA's Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. She was the first Student Affairs Officer in Asian American Studies at UC Davis, the first APA Student Affairs Director at George Mason University, and in 2007, she was elected President of the University of California Student Association.



(Photo courtesy of Oiyon Poon)

Laura: Where were you born and raised?

Oiyon: I was born in Malden. My family lived in Somerville and then we moved out to western Massachusetts to a town called Ludlow, right outside Springfield, and my grandparents were in Boston's Chinatown. So, that's where I grew up.

Laura: Can you tell me what some of your research interests are?

Oiyon: Primarily, I'm interested in questions of where Asian Americans fit within race conscious policies. My dissertation was a campus racial climate study (of UCLA), looking at how Asian Americans are racialized. I was interested in how they learn about race and racism, how they are treated in terms of subversive and overt and not so overt racial experiences, and what students learn about racism from those day-to-day experiences.

Laura: What did the research you conducted for your dissertation tell you?

Oiyon: That race and racism still play an important role in subordinating Asian American students in a racial hierarchy. The UCs (University of California), all nine campuses, do these senior surveys to ask students various questions about their UC experiences, and several of the questions ask students about their sense of belonging on campus. And the group that has always felt the least sense of belonging is Asian Americans, even though on some campuses they make up almost half of the undergraduate enrollments. So, yeah, it's surprising, yet not at the same time because

if you think about it, how responsive are the campuses? Who runs the UCs? Even when there are people of color running our campuses, how responsive are they to students' needs and their interests? But one thing that I found that was really hopeful was that students were doing a lot of different things to resist those experiences, through intentional organizing, working with communities off campus, addressing educational inequalities, a lot of different things, even just interpersonally. Some were creating film and media and art in response in an effort to educate.

Laura: You're currently a research associate with the Institute for Asian American Studies. Can you describe some of the projects you're working on?

Oiyon: I'm primarily working on public health projects. I really enjoy making maps. Right now, one of my projects now is using GIS (Geographic Information System) software to make a demographic map to show Asian American communities in Massachusetts - the darker the area, the more Asian Americans. And then I'm going to have a layer on the map showing where community health centers are in the state. Imagine little hospitals, and the colors will represent the different services, like languages spoken, or mental health, or dental and vision, and whatnot. The second map is a political map. The same demographic distribution map, then with political district boundaries, and who their elected officials are. Then we can make the argument, for example, "Look, Congresswoman Tsongas, you have this many Asian American voters in your district, and these are our issues, and we want you to address them." Public officials need to know who they work for, and we Asian Americans need to know that we have power. This map will hopefully serve to essentially map out our power. Another project is with ATASK (Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence). We're talking about putting together some type of community-based research project. Ten years ago, they did a study on violence in Asian American families and communities. We're looking to maybe update that.

Laura: Where do you see yourself five years from now?

Oiyon: Hopefully, an assistant professor going up for tenure in Asian American Studies or Ethnic Studies or Education.

Laura: And my last question for you - LA or Boston?

Oiyon: Being close to my family, Boston. Food, well, I get to eat my mom's cooking, but other than that, LA. And weather, LA. Sports? Boston. Always.

Molly Higgins interviews herself...

So, what do you do at UMass Boston?

I started working here this summer as an Americorps VISTA. I work mainly with the high school students through CAPAY, the Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth, but I do some stuff with Asian American Studies, too. You can always find me in the Asian American Studies Program office — especially if you want to know about the library. I'm a library expert.



(Photo courtesy of Molly Higgins)

Where do you come from?

I just finished my BA in Asian American Studies at UC Berkeley, but I grew up in Boston. When people ask why I came back, I tell them that California was too warm and friendly, and the grocery stores only sell organic, locally grown Twinkies.

But Twinkies are made with beef fat. I thought you don't eat beef or pork products?

Shut up.

So, why did you come to work at CAPAY?

I was part of CAPAY when I was in high school. It's where I came to terms with my identity as a multiracial Asian American, and where I dedicated my future to smacking injustice and ignorance upside the head. That's why I came back to CAPAY — to convince the next generation of high school students that their histories and communities deserve recognition and that justice deserves to be served.

Do you like UMass Boston so far?

There's nowhere else I'd rather be. Can I make a shameless plug for myself?

Of course.

Check out my blog at [movementsandmoments.wordpress.com!](http://movementsandmoments.wordpress.com/)

New AsAmSt-affiliated Faculty Kiran Arora

Kiran Shahreen Kaur Arora, Ph.D., joins the UMB faculty as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Graduate College of Education's Department of Counseling & School Psychology. Kiran received her doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy from Syracuse University. Her research interests include understanding the lives and relationships of survivors of torture and the connections which exist between trauma and oppression.

Her past research includes understanding the relational impact of the historical genocide of Sikhs in India, including its impact on Sikh diaspora families, as well as examining the influence of human rights in the therapeutic work of therapists. Further, her interests are composed of a deep investigation into therapeutic practice and theory: exploring, documenting, and evolving the presence of human rights in therapy, creating models of supervision which invite liberatory theories and practices to therapeutic conversations and communities of concern.



(Photo courtesy of Kiran Arora)

Kiran is based in the Marriage & Family Therapy graduate program teaching Introduction to Family Therapy, Family Therapy Theories, Contemporary Family Therapies, and Internship in Family Therapy. Her courses punctuate ideas of equity, specifically exploring the description, distinctions and overlaps of the ideas of self of the therapist, diversity, social justice, multiculturalism, and cultural competency, in an effort to provide clinical services which are sensitive across all dimensions of diversity.

Welcoming new Hmong American Doctoral Student Mai See Yang



(Photo courtesy of Mai See Yang)

Mai See Yang will enter UMB's doctoral program in Gerontology in Fall 2010. An experienced mental health community researcher, Mai See has assisted in the development of Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service for UC Davis and the State of California. Her current projects are focusing on antidepressant adherence in Southeast Asian populations and researching the relationship between

underrepresented communities and clinical trial enrollments. Mai See's academic interests are in mental health, equality care, and aging in Southeast Asian communities. She is an alumna from UC Davis and California State University, Sacramento. She enjoys cycling and other outdoor activities.

Filmmaker Screenings and Workshops

Autumn Gem at UMB



Adam Tow and Rae Chang engaging with students during the workshop
(Photo by Frances K. Chow)

by Laura Ng

On October 22, 2009, filmmakers Rae Chang and Adam Tow came to UMB to screen *Autumn Gem*, their new biographical documentary on China's first feminist, Qiu Jin (1875-1907). The film details the remarkable life of this Chinese revolutionary heroine and women's rights activist. Before the film screening, the filmmakers led a production workshop for our advanced media students in AsAmSt. Rae and Adam also gave a mid-day public martial arts demonstration for the campus community to participate in.



Rae Chang and Adam Tow during Q&A after the screening
(Photo by Peter Kiang)

A Village Called Versailles at UMB and Viet-AID in Dorchester

On November 20, 2009, independent filmmaker S. Leo Chiang came to UMB to screen the Boston premiere of his multiple award-winning documentary, *A Village Called Versailles*. The film centers around Vietnamese American residents living in the Versailles neighborhood of New Orleans East that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Anchored by the Mary Queen of Viet Nam church, residents managed to return and rebuild their homes after Katrina, but soon faced a critical threat when the city government located a massive toxic landfill right in their neighborhood. Leo's vivid documentary captured many inspiring aspects of the Vietnamese community's resilience

and determination in fighting to preserve their community against racial marginalization and environmental injustice.

Prior to the film screening, Leo facilitated a



Nam Le, Soramy Le, Judy Mai, Kat Tran, and S. Leo Chiang
(Photo by Anh Đào Kolbe)

documentary film production planning workshop for the advanced media students in AsAmSt. The campus showing also gave Leo and the UMB community a chance to appreciate the UMB Asian American Studies students — especially Soramy Le, Judy Mai, Nam Le, Kat Tran, Jen Nguyen, and Phuong Nguyen — whose November 2005 early documentation of the Gulf Coast Vietnamese communities' losses, resilience, and rebuilding efforts were actually incorporated into the film.

Two days later, Leo joined Gulf Coast community



The audience at UMB
(Photo by Anh Đào Kolbe)

leaders James Dien Bui and Mai Dang — each of whom share important connections to Boston and UMB — in presenting the film and leading a bilingual discussion about multigenerational community organizing in Dorchester's Vietnamese community. Hosted by Ms. Van Lan Truong of Close to Home and UMB AsAmSt Program Director, Peter Kiang, the

bilingual community premiere of the film was held at the Vietnamese American Community Center with a packed crowd of over 100 community members.

Children of Invention at UMB



Signing-in at the Viet-AID screening
(Photo by Anh Đào Kolbe)



Mynette Louie and Tze Chun during Q&A after the screening
(Photo by Frances K. Chow)

by Laura Ng

It was standing-room only when writer-director Tze Chun and producer Mynette Louie came to UMB to screen their independent movie *Children of Invention* on February 25, 2010. It's not everyday that a multiple award-winning film written, directed, produced, and starring Asian Americans comes to us! Set in Quincy and Boston, *Children of Invention* is about a Chinese American single mom who struggles to provide for her two young kids. When money becomes tight and the family loses their home, the mom takes a job opportunity that promises quick money. Just when the future starts to look brighter, it turns out the job might just be a pyramid scheme, and even worse, the mom disappears. Home alone, the kids must deal with her disappearance.

The acting, particularly by the two children in the film, is what makes this movie shine, but the filmmakers should also be applauded for their non-stereotypical portrayal of a Chinese American family. For those who missed the film screening and its Boston theatrical run at the Brattle Theatre, you can still support the movie by buying a DVD copy at www.childrenofinvention.com.



Mai Dang, S. Leo Chiang, and James Dien Bui
(Photo by Anh Đào Kolbe)



Audience applause at the screening at Viet-AID
(Photo by Peter Kiang)



The audience at the screening at UMB
(Photo by Frances K. Chow)

Spring 2010 Events

Cambodian American rapper praCh Ly comes to UMB

by Laura Ng and Kevin Tan

praCh Ly is a Cambodian American rapper who hails from Long Beach, California. The 'C' is capitalized in his first name to represent Cambodia. praCh uses his music to address political issues surrounding the transnational Cambodian/Cambodian American community. He is known worldwide, but he first became famous in Cambodia when his album hit number one solely through the sales of bootleg copies before it was banned from the radio for its critique of the government and discussion of the Cambodian genocide.

On February 26, 2010, AASO (Asian American Studies Outreach) and KCA (Khmer Culture Association) brought praCh to UMB. In his workshop, he shared his story and vision, and students learned the process of writing and recording rhymes. Afterwards, he gave a public concert where he rapped in English and Khmer and shared his experiences as a refugee escaping from Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime.

praCh is inspirational because he uses his musical talents to illuminate marginalized histories, bridge generations, and bring about social change while encouraging youth to do the same.

For more information about praCh Ly and his music, please visit his website at www.mujustic.com.



praCh Ly with KCA members and organizers after the performance
(Photo by Peter Kiang)

What is KCA?

There are many student-run cultural organizations at UMass Boston, and the Khmer Culture Association (KCA) is one of them. With encouragement from the Asian American Studies Program, KCA re-formed itself in the fall of 2009 after being inactive for nearly six years. The group represents Khmer (Cambodian) students on campus and spreads awareness about Khmer culture, history, and current issues pertaining to Khmer American communities and transnational issues in Cambodia. Since becoming active again, KCA has hosted a number of events featuring a wide variety of guest speakers. The concert with praCh Ly was one event. KCA has also brought to UMass Boston Professor Daniel Kanstroom from Boston College for a talk on deportation issues. In the fall, KCA hosted a community-based story-sharing night at the Floating Rock Restaurant in Revere, where there was once a large population of Cambodians during the first refugee wave. The biggest event KCA put on this year was the Khmer New Year Festival. By continuing to work with the campus and nearby communities, KCA will continue to grow and provide a space for all students interested in learning about issues concerning Cambodians and Cambodian Americans.

To learn more about the Khmer Culture Association of UMass Boston, a student organization that promotes awareness and appreciation of Khmer culture among the campus community and beyond, please contact kca.umb@gmail.com, or visit our websites on Facebook and SAGroups.



praCh Ly during the workshop
(Photo by Peter Kiang)

Khmer New Year Festival



by Laura Ng

On April 16, 2010, students from the Khmer Culture Association (KCA) put on an event to ring in the New Year of the Cambodian (and also Lao, Thai, and Bengali) calendar. The festivities included delicious Khmer food, singing and music, traditional dancing, and artwork displays. The keynote speakers included Cambodian painter Chantha Khem, Cambodian American author/journalist Ly Y, and Vimala D. Phongsavanh of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, who is the first Lao American to be elected to a School Committee in the United States.



(Photos by Frances K. Chow)

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Iraq War Veterans and Refugees Forum

On April 22, 2010, the Asian American Studies Program, together with the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences and the Student Veterans Center, co-sponsored a history-making, bridge-building forum featuring a panel of several UMB student



From left to right: Katie Giovani, Timothy Davis, Michael Spinnato, Mosaab Alsaray, Alaa Rasheed, Ghiadaa Awad
(Photos by Frances K. Chow)

veterans and local refugee community members from the Iraq War. Building on last April's intergenerational forum organized by Matt Seto which brought together Asian American veterans from the WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War eras with new generation Asian American UMB student veterans (and was featured as the cover story of the 2009 issue of Ripples), this 2010 forum also was organized to nurture person-to-person story-sharing about the consequences of war. Planned and facilitated by Matt Seto and Widad Al-Edanie, the forum attracted a standing-room only audience of 80+ people. Modeling the principles and praxis of mutual support and understanding between veterans and refugees that has been at the core of UMB's Asian American Studies Program since its beginnings in the late 1980s, Matt and Widad share their parallel reflections on the forum in the following two articles.

— Peter Kiang

Another Generation by Matthew M. Seto

The 35th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War recently passed. It was at the end of the war that the world saw the fall of Saigon. Hundreds of South Vietnamese locals rushed to the U.S. embassy as the North Vietnamese communists drove their tanks near. At home in the United States, thousands of students across the nation rallied together and protested against the war. Soldiers came home to unwelcoming taunts and insults and a failing VA healthcare system that neglected to take care of its veterans. Around the same time, the first wave of Southeast Asian refugees began arriving in large numbers setting foot on a new land. The aftermath of a war brings these two communities to a new "home," where they try to find their place in society again, and for many of them into the classrooms of universities and colleges across the country. UMass Boston became one of those schools where many veterans and refugees sat in the same classrooms learning from each other about the

experiences of war. Who knew that a soldier and a civilian who just came from the same areas where battles were being fought could sit in the same room talking about war? These were the images of history 30 years ago.

Now, 30 years later, another generation of veterans and refugees come to do the same. This time, they are veterans and refugees of the Iraq War. On April 22, 2010, a historic event was held at UMass Boston that focused on the veteran and refugee communities affected by the Iraq War. The packed room was filled with students, faculty, veterans, refugees, and civilians sitting side by side to hear the voices of those who have experienced it. For some of the panelists, it was their first time sharing their stories. These stories were personal and powerful. Each individual spoke of the pain, loss, and the discomfiting memories that they carry with them. These were stories of homelessness, PTSD, mortar attacks, bombings, and many other images of war.

As a veteran of the Iraq War myself, it was painful and emotional to hear the panelists speak of their own experiences. I knew somewhat what they were going through. I had lost friends of my own to this war, some of whom I grew up with and had known at one time in my life, some of whom I trained with at one point of my military career. Having to relive those memories and moments of my life and to hear them speak through another person who has been there was painful and haunting. But at the same time, it was reassuring because they understood it and had lived it. I was part of the operations during the invasion of Iraq. I turned 21 over there before the war even began. At that age and at that point in my life, I did not realize how much a part in the war I played. I remember one day I was talking to another Marine about what we were about to do and why we were there. He felt confused and uneasy. We knew we were about to drop

bombs and missiles on a country, and thousands of people would be killed. A simple order given would do just that. I could feel the sense of guilt in his voice, and in a way, I felt it too. He felt he had a responsibility, and even though our roles were minor, they were still roles that held power. It was power that came with an unjust feeling knowing that we were all liable to some degree, and I had to agree with that. But at the same time, I did not want to feel what he was feeling, and I kept thinking about it to myself after the conversation ended. We were about to take lives, some whom may be guilty, but also many who were innocent. They were just ordinary people made out to be our worst enemies. Some of the other Marines and Sailors started using derogatory names, calling them 'ragheads,' 'sand niggers,' and 'haji.' I was beginning to feel the inherent racism that was happening around me. I guess that was their way of dealing with the situation. It was by finding some way to dehumanize the so-called "enemy" so we may not feel as much guilt. As everything was happening around me, I felt the mixed emotions of everyone. We were already a couple of months out there, and we missed home and our families. We did not want to be there, but it was our job. The feeling of being lost in war can be the most lonely feeling that you wish could be left behind.

The panelists' openness and honesty was truth that the dialogue was real and needed. Their stories and experiences did not just speak of the images of war but also the continuing social effects and issues of it. Even though they had come "home," they weren't at home yet. Home is where we can be physically and emotionally safe. Even though they have served this country, they still suffer from lack of care. Two of the Iraqi refugee panelists spoke of their experiences as interpreters for the U.S. military. They came to this country thinking that the U.S. government would help them find a home here and help them with some benefits, but then realized that they were on their own, even though they risked their own lives assisting the U.S. military. They persistently asked for more benefits, but all they can apply for are some food stamps and welfare. They suffer from cultural differences, transitional readjustment, displacement, lack of healthcare, minimal resources, and a lack of benefits. These are the same issues that many veterans are still suffering from and still fighting for.

This forum was just one of many forums, but what we need to do is to continue the conversation. The war is still going on, and for years to come the issues will come. As more and more veterans come home from war and enroll into college, the new voices will be there. And as a university and community, we have a responsibility to listen. Very few people know that UMass Boston has around
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500+ veterans, one of the largest veteran populations at any university around the nation. At the same time, there is a large Vietnamese American population in the same area where we attend school, and a couple of miles north is Lowell where we have the second largest Cambodian American population in the U.S. Now, there are growing Iraqi refugee populations in Lowell, Worcester, Chelsea, Quincy, and all around the country. There are also many other refugee populations from Sudan, Somalia, Haiti, Palestine, etc. It took a lot of effort and courage for these communities to come together. And it takes a community to form this space for them to do so. There are many ongoing projects and research being done at UMass Boston. We have the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences. We have, in the College of Public and Community Service, a program called C.I.R.C.L.E (Center for Immigrant & Refugee Community Leadership & Empowerment) and many more outside networks. These are all resources we can use to work with and help each other in understanding and learning. It was just about 30 years ago that this same dialogue was slowly being created with Vietnam War veterans and Southeast Asian refugees, and it is still continuing today. As long as there is war, there will always be dialogue. Now, this generation must do the same, because we too are liable to some degree.

This is the aftermath of war.



Voicing Sharing Suffering by Widad Al-Edanie

Hearing of the panelists' sufferings at the Iraq War Veterans and Refugees Forum made me want to stand together with others and say "no to wars, no to destroying people." The main goal that has driven me to put time and effort into organizing the forum was to show as many people as possible the impact of wars on peoples. The panelists told painful stories that made many in the audience cry.

The refugees and the veterans have different backgrounds, and they were in different cities in Iraq during the war. For this reason, we could hear different perspectives and

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experiences. At the same time, the panelists could meet at certain points and say “it also happened to me.” Alaa Rasheed, an Iraqi refugee and former English teacher, served as a translator to the American forces during the war. He came all the way from Worcester to share with us how he and his friends were trapped and injured. He told the audience, “When the bomb exploded, the car was locked. Several of us had deep wounds, but they were helping the British soldier who lost his legs. What about me, I shouted. My injuries are even worse than his.” Rasheed’s abdomen was torn up. He had many surgeries and did not heal for a long time. At this point, a question was raised by a veteran: who is the priority when these serious incidents happen? Rasheed was in an Iraqi hospital, unconscious for seventeen days while the British soldier was sent outside of Iraq. “I am lucky to be here talking with you and telling you my story. Doctors thought I would not make it,” Rasheed added. Yes, we are lucky to have him telling us about what wars cause. He has been in Worcester for eighteen months now, but his suffering did not end when he came to his new country. Rasheed, Mosaab Alsaray, and Ghiadaa Awad talked about the difficulties of living in the United States at the forum. Alsaray earned his bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering. He was also a translator and “assist[ed] the U.S. military and civilian to communicate effectively with the local population... and in establishing mutual understanding.” However, he is struggling to find a job. Today, he lives with the family of the veteran he translated for during the war. “Without them, I will be a homeless,” Alsaray said painfully. He hopes to finish his studies to have better opportunities, but money is his obstacle. Jobs, getting into school, cultural differences, and lack of government benefits were also some of the difficulties that the Iraqi refugees living in Lowell faced, Awad explained with tearful eyes. She told the audience about her non-governmental organization (NGO) she began in Iraq to empower women who had lost their husbands.

I already knew that the Iraqi refugees are facing homelessness due to the lack of jobs and the little benefits they receive from the government. But I was surprised at the fact that Iraq War veterans are also facing homelessness, an issue that was raised and discussed by a veteran at the forum. Another struggle the veterans talked about is the instability that they feel as a result of the war.

Why are Iraq War refugees and veterans suffering? Why do we deliver people to wars and then act as if they do not suffer? We tend to imagine that they are fine, but the panelists’ stories and experiences do not show that they are fine. Their tears do not show that they are fine. In fact,

the panelists left the people in the room asking themselves what their role should be to help the affected people, a goal I wanted to achieve.

I have been working with Iraqi refugees since 2008. I knew about the increasing number of refugees coming to the United States from Iraq and its neighboring countries and the hardships they face. I felt I had to get involved and help them. They suffered enough in their native countries, and they suffered enough in their host countries. I used the knowledge I gained from the Asian American Studies classes I took at UMass Boston. I was fortunate enough to meet Dr. Shirley Tang. One of her specialties is studying the consequences of wars. She became my mentor. I took six classes with her and developed a curriculum about Iraqi refugees and completed an internship with the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants. The Asian American Studies classes I took with Dr. Tang taught me responsibility, how to make a change in society, and to care about other people.

Last fall, I began working as a graduate assistant for the Asian American Studies Program. The Iraq War Veterans and Refugees Forum was one of the projects I worked on. Matthew Seto and I have been working on this forum since February. Matthew is an Iraq War veteran and I am an Iraqi woman. We were both affected by wars, and we could connect in some ways. I decided to work on this forum to help the refugees and the veterans connect, the same way we did. We met with our sponsors - Dr. Peter Kiang, Director of the Asian American Studies Program, Kevin Bowen, Director of the William Joiner Center, and Caroline Necheles, Coordinator of the Student Veterans Center - and discussed with them the different issues. They enriched us with advice. We thank them all for encouraging us to organize this educational event. My hope is to continue organizing events like this forum. My future plan is to work on different projects to help get more Iraqi refugees into school or help them settle in their new country.



Widad Al-Edanie and Matt Seto

Heritage Month Student Productions

Counterstories: Critical Race Theory and the Asian American Experience

Students from AsAmSt 420 Advanced Special Topics “Critical Race Theory and the Asian American Experience,” a course taught by Sam Museus and Jon Iftikar in Spring 2010, organized and administered a symposium based on what they learned about CRT and its major tenets. On May 7, 2010, sessions were held that featured presentations and panel discussions on racial stereotypes, dating preferences, and interracial relationships, LGBT, multiracial, and adopted Asian Americans, domestic violence in the Asian American community, and the value of ethnic studies in higher education. Speakers and panelists from the community were invited to share their stories and insight.

“Conducting Research on Asian Americans in Higher Education”

by Sam Museus

In the summer of 2009, the book titled, “Conducting Research on Asian Americans in Higher Education” was released. This book emerged from the collaborative efforts of colleagues at UMass Boston and across the nation who were concerned with the absence of the voices of Asian Americans from research and discourse in the field of higher education. This volume was focused on discussing critical areas of inquiry and useful research methods that can be used to generate knowledge about Asian Americans in postsecondary education. And, the production of this book held special meaning for me, both personally and professionally.

For me, graduate school was a time in which I developed a more sophisticated understanding of many things, such as the multiple purposes of higher education and the importance of diversity in college. I also, however, came to the realization that the voices of Asian Americans were often invisible in the literature that informed higher education policy and practice, as well as discussions that took place on a daily basis in our field. In other words, as I state in the editor’s notes of the book, “it became clear that our authentic interests were ignored by many scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in the field of



higher education.” In my mind, this is unacceptable for many reasons and needed to be addressed.

While a handful of scholars, like Peter Kiang and Karen Suyemoto, have produced a substantial amount of important research on Asian American college students, a majority of the discussions taking place in the field of higher education continue to be framed within the common Black-White paradigm that permeates so many other areas of American life. In the new book, Mitchell Chang and I discuss how it is a moral and social obligation of higher education researchers to incorporate Asian American voices into discussions revolving around important issues, such as college access and success, affirmative action, and the benefits of diversity. We also explain how the incorporation of our voices is beneficial for everyone – both Asian Americans and non-Asian Americans, alike – because it contributes to a more complete and complex understanding of critical issues that affect us all because we are all a part of the same education system. Indeed, as Asian American voices continue to emerge in the field of higher education, it will lead to major beneficial shifts in the understanding and crafting of broad educational policies, how theories shape practices on many campuses, and how all students experience college.

This book is just one manifestation of a larger movement within higher education and around the nation – a movement by Asian Americans in many professional and public arenas to claim our voices. Within the field of higher education, we are making great strides in claiming those voices, and this is evident in multiple recent reports and new public policies that are focused on understanding the experiences and fostering success among Asian Americans. My hope is that our book contributes to that advancement by serving as an awakening for the vast majority of scholars who have continued to ignore Asian Americans. I also hope that it serves as a catalyst for current and aspiring researchers who are interested in studying this population, as well as a tool for those researchers to justify the importance of their work. Such advances are nothing less than critical, if we wish to claim our voices and representation on a broader scale. For the students in Asian American Studies at UMass Boston, I hope the book offers an example of how their voices can have an impact and effect large-scale change in the future.

In closing, I leave readers with a comment and a question. My comment is in the form of a special thanks to everyone who made the production of the book possible, especially my colleagues at UMass Boston – Peter Kiang, Patricia Neilson, Karen Suyemoto, and Tara Parker. With my other colleagues and students in Higher Education and Asian American Studies at UMass Boston, they have provided an important space where this critical aspect of my own research agenda can flourish. Finally, my question is for the students in the Asian American Studies Program – When you have found your voice, how will you use it to have an impact and effect your own change?

Heritage Month Student Productions

The Sixth Annual Digital Stories Exhibition



Spring 2010 AsAmSt 370 class: Tri Quach and Shirley Tang (far left) with students and peer mentors
(Photo by Frances K. Chow)



(Photo by Peter Kiang)

On May 11, 2010, the Sixth Annual Digital Stories Exhibition was held to share the work of the AsAmSt 370 Asian American Media Literacy class. Every spring, students in the class are trained to research, write and produce digital stories based on their personal, family and community experiences. Administrators, faculty, AsAmSt 370 students from past years (some of whom become peer mentors for the next year), and the community came to watch these fresh stories of real life and real people and to show their support.

Applied Research Performance

On May 17, 2010, students in AsAmSt 398 Applied Research in Asian American Studies gave their culminating multi-media performance/production, as part of their research on ethnic studies resources at UMass Boston, to an audience of primarily faculty and administrators affiliated with ethnic studies programs and institutes at UMass Boston. The performance was followed by a meeting amongst the faculty and administrators about the future of ethnic studies at UMass Boston, including the possibility of a Ph.D. program.



Students reflect and debrief after the performance
(Photos by Frances K. Chow)

Student Awards



Grace Paley Award organizers and recipients - second from left is Son Ca Lam, the 2009 recipient; Richard Sann is fifth from left
(Photos by Frances K. Chow)

William Joiner Center's Grace Paley Award presented to Richard Sann

So, when I heard that I had won the Grace Paley Award, I had to reread the email twice to understand it. I was thinking that this was spam, but why would someone trick me in something that was so prestigious like this. After I received another email from Peter Kiang, Director of the Asian American Studies Program, confirming the award, I had to believe it was true. Although I was confused about the committee's decision in selecting me as the winner, my close friends brought me back to reality by reminding me of my accomplishments. I realized that I don't look back in my life as much as I should. The Grace Paley Award struck me as a surprise because I never expected it.



Richard Sann with his mother

I wasn't supposed to expect it. I realized you would do things not just to receive an award but to help others, and that is the most rewarding part about doing it. If you would ever receive something, then someone is watching over you.

Additionally, when I received the Grace Paley Award, it felt like someone took a snapshot of what I did and brought it into perspective. I'm very fortunate to be surrounded by inspirational people such as the students at UMass Boston, professors from the Asian American Studies Program, and lastly, my mother who has stood by me when I was in the shadows. Just to name some of the individuals — Peter Kiang, Shirley Tang, Jon Iftikar, Sam Museum, Liliana G. Mickle, and many others who offer a beacon of guidance that allows me and others to make a difference in our community. I also would like to acknowledge my great friends, such as the previous Grace Paley Award winner Son Ca Lam, my close friend Matthew Seto, and many others who have supported everything I've done. They are a source of my inspiration, and this award goes not just to me, but to everyone around me that was able to bring out some change in our communities.

The award will push me internally to be more involved and appreciate others in what they do, because Grace Paley would want to continue this beautiful legacy of helping others. I hope to lead that legacy with dignity and pass the torch with sincerity. Thank you once again.

— Richard Sann

Asian American Studies - Summer 2010 Course Listing

UMB Summer Session I (CE2) — June 1 - July 15, 2010

AsAmSt 221 Introduction to Asian American Writing

Giles Li

[tentative]

MW 1:30pm - 4:30pm

Why read the literature of Asian America? Do Asian American writers bring different sensibilities to the creation of literature? What do they know, feel, or experience that is unique — or universal? Students will read personal narratives, poems, and works of fiction by writers who trace their ancestry to East, Southeast, and South Asia.

AsAmSt/AmSt/Soc 225L Southeast Asians in the U.S.

Shirley Tang

TuTh 10:00am - 1:00pm

Focusing on the experiences of Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao, Hmong and ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia who came to the U.S. since 1975, the course addresses topics such as refugee flight and resettlement, trauma and acculturation, changing family roles, homeland politics, community development, and new generations.

UMB Summer Session II (CE6) — July 19 - August 26, 2010

AsAmSt/Psych 238L Asian American Psychology

John Tawa

TuTh 10:00am - 1:00pm

This course provides students with an in-depth understanding of theories, practices, and community resources in Asian American psychology and mental health related to racial identity formation, refugee trauma and resilience, and immigrant acculturation.

AsAmSt 333 Asian American Politics and Social Movements

Staff [Shirley Tang & Tri Quach]

[tentative]

TuTh 1:30pm - 4:30pm

Students examine the historical development and contemporary dimensions of political and social movements in Asian American communities. Through directed readings, presentations, multimedia, and critical case studies, students analyze ways in which Asian Americans have organized politically through electoral participation, ethnic/cultural forms, neighborhood-based organizing, labor unions, multi-racial coalitions and virtual forms to affect issues in their communities, their homelands, and in U.S. society. The focus of this summer's course will be on local Asian American youth community organizing and the roles of web 2.0 social media technology in supporting civic engagement.

AsAmSt 478 Independent Study

1-3 credits by arrangement

Contact: Dr. Peter Kiang — peter.kiang@umb.edu or 617-287-7614

Summer online registration begins on March 29.

Summer 2010 - <http://ccde.umb.edu/credit/summer10/>

How to Register - <http://ccde.umb.edu/moreinfo/registration/how/>

Summer 2010 Fees - <http://ccde.umb.edu/credit/summer10/fees/>

Register in person at Corporate, Continuing, and Distance Education (CCDE), UMass Boston, Wheatley Building, 2nd Floor, Room 203.

Directions to UMass Boston - http://www.umb.edu/parking_transport/directions.html

UMass Boston Asian American Studies Program on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Boston-MA/UMass-Boston-Asian-American-Studies-Program/46642856725>

For information about classes, independent studies, a six-course program-of-study or 10-course individual major, contact the Asian American Studies Program, W-2-097, peter.kiang@umb.edu, 617-287-7614, or contact Shiho Shinke, Associate Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center, CC-1007, shiho.shinke@umb.edu or 617-287-5526.

Asian American Studies - Fall 2010 Course Listing

AsAmSt 200 Introduction to Asian American Studies

Mr. Jon Iftikar Section I #1584 MW 4:00pm - 5:15pm TBA

This collaboratively taught course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to a variety of issues related to Asian Americans. Possible areas of exploration may include: particular communities (e.g. South Asians, Cambodian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, local communities, etc.), women and gender, history, civil rights, media portrayals, art and performance, health and mental health issues, literature, local issues, etc.

AsAmSt/AmSt/Soc 225L Southeast Asians in the U.S.

Dr. Peter Kiang Section I #20350 MWF 11:00am - 11:50am TBA

Focusing on the experiences of Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao, Hmong and ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia who came to the U.S. since 1975, the course addresses topics such as refugee flight and resettlement, trauma and acculturation, changing family roles, homeland politics, community development, and new generations.

AsAmSt 228L Asian Women in the U.S.

Dr. Patricia Nakamoto Neilson Section I #3707 Tuesdays 4:00pm - 6:45pm W-1-060

Drawing on women's voices in literature, sociocultural research, and historical analysis, this course examines the experiences of Asian women in the U.S. from 1850 to the present. Topics include the transformation of traditional cultural roles; resistance to oppression as defined by race, gender, class; and the impact of global relations.

AsAmSt/Psych 238L Asian American Psychology

Mr. John Tawa Section I #3853 TuTh 11:00am - 12:15pm S-2-0063

This course enables students to understand theories, practices, and community resources in Asian American psychology and mental health related to racial identity formation, refugee trauma and resilience, and immigrant acculturation.

AsAmSt 397 Applied Research in Asian American Studies I

Staff Section I #3710 MW 4:00pm - 5:15pm TBA

This course will enable students to conduct documentary research focusing on themes of culture, health, and religion in local Chinese diasporic communities. Methods include oral history interviews, visual and multimedia representations, mapping, and archival analyses. Students with bilingual/biliterate skills are especially encouraged to participate.

AsAmSt 397 Applied Research in Asian American Studies I — Models of Practice

Dr. Joan Arches Section 2 #20335 Tuesdays 11:00am - 2:30pm TBA

This course will enable students to conduct documentary research focusing on themes of culture, health, and religion in local Chinese diasporic communities. Methods include oral history interviews, visual and multimedia representations, mapping, and archival analyses. Students with bilingual/biliterate skills are especially encouraged to participate.

AsAmSt 398 Applied Research in Asian American Studies II — Working on a Youth Issue

Dr. Joan Arches Section I #20334 Thursdays 11:00am - 2:30pm TBA

This course will enable students to conduct documentary research focusing on themes of culture, health, and religion in local Chinese diasporic communities. Methods include oral history interviews, visual and multimedia representations, mapping, and archival analyses. Students with bilingual/biliterate skills are especially encouraged to participate.

AsAmSt 420 Advanced Special Topics: Race & Students of Color in Higher Education

Dr. Sam Museus Section I #3342 Thursdays 4:00pm - 6:30pm TBA

This course gives students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds an opportunity to consider issues of race in their own college experiences and to think critically about topics such as racial diversity in higher education, racial identity development, campus environments and race, and solving racial problems through research in higher education.

AsAmSt 423L Boston's Asian American Communities

Dr. Peter Kiang Section I #3711 MWF 2:00pm - 2:50pm W-1-040

This capstone course examines the complex dynamics of Asian American community development based on historical examples, research and policy reports, case-studies, simulations, site visits, and presentations by community-based practitioners. Students carry out community-based research projects and consider longer-term research interests.

AsAmSt 478 Independent Study

1-3 credits by arrangement

Dr. Peter Kiang - Section I #1585; Dr. Karen Suyemoto - Section 2 #3713; Dr. Shirley Tang - Section 3 #1586

Asian American Studies Program Graduation Celebration

Wednesday, May 26, 2010
12:00 - 3:30 pm
Healey Library 11th Floor

Come celebrate the work of undergraduate AsAmSt majors and programs-of-study students and other graduating AsAmSt students who have made a difference.

For more information, please contact: Peter.Kiang@umb.edu

RIPPLES

Asian American Studies Program Newsletter

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UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program offers culturally-responsive instruction in the classroom with holistic 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. For more information, questions, comments on the program and/or newsletter, please contact us.



(Photo by Frances K. Chow)

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