

Asian American Studies 1 (AAS 1): Introduction to Asian American Studies
3.0 units — Spring 2025 — 01/21/2025 to 05/23/2025

Asian American Studies Program
Department of Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
College of Social Sciences | San José State University



Photograph by Corky Lee



Contact Information

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Class Schedule and Location

Section 5. TR 9:00–10:15am in CL 234
Section 6. TR 10:30–11:45am in CL 234
Section 7. TR 3:00–4:15pm in CL 234
Section 8. TR 4:30–5:45pm in CL 234
Section 13. W 6:00–8:45pm in HGH 122



Office Hours

TR 12:00pm–1:00pm in DMH 211
Note: Please email me if you'd like to set up an appointment outside of these regular office hours.



Course Description and Requisites

This course will critically examine Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans (APID/A) through U.S.-national and transnational frameworks. It will be principally concerned with the contests over the production of racial knowledge, power, and citizenship and belonging. We will explore a range of scholarly, literary, and visual texts in order to understand how the interdisciplinary field of Asian American Studies has shifted from an investment in domestic social justice concerns to consider how immigration and migration, citizenship, war, American empire, race and identity, globalization, and social movements for racial and economic justice have shaped APID/A lives historically and in the contemporary moment.

This course pays particular attention to the ways in which APID/As negotiate these structural forces in their everyday lives. It also develops an account of racialization beyond the black-white binary in the context of US war and empire in Asia and the Pacific Islands, settler colonialism, globalization, migration, and popular culture. We will complicate existing narratives of immigration and assimilation; complicate the assumed homogeneity of the category of “Asian American”; explore the historical and contemporary production of the “model minority” myth; situate APID/As within global and transnational frameworks; and track the continuing evolution of the interdisciplinary field of Asian American Studies.

This course is organized by a series of major themes in Asian American studies and APID/A life. The clusters are also meant to give you a framework through which to organize the material as you work through the readings, prepare for your exams, and complete all written assignments.

Content Note: This course contains materials of a sensitive nature, including sexual violence, state violence, abuse, death, and other content. Please contact instructor before the course starts if this will be a concern

Classroom Protocols

- **Canvas.** All course materials, including readings and assignments will be accessed and submitted via Canvas. No physical paper submissions or email submissions will be accepted.
- **Class Attendance and Participation.** Although attendance is not factored into your grade per SJSU policy, I welcome your presence and engagement. There will also be graded in-class assignments/quizzes. Showing up prepared will always help ensure your success on class assignments. There’s no need to ask for permission from me to be absent; take responsibility for your decision to come through class or not. If you need to miss class, please (1) review the syllabus and (2) check in with a classmate. If there is a matter that is detrimental to your wellness or performance in the course, notify your professor as soon as you can.
- **Hella Strict Communication Policy.** Before you send me an email, please consider that I require your communications adhere to the following criteria (or I reserve the right to not respond):
 - Please include a clear subject line, greeting, and a sign off. This is a professional norm and a sign of respect that will serve you well beyond SJSU.
 - Double check that the question you are asking is not already answered in the syllabus, assignment prompts, or any other materials that have been distributed.
 - Evaluate whether the question you are asking is better suited for a conversation during office hours. Typically, email questions are better for simple yes or no questions or shorter responses. More involved conversations—including feedback for major assignments, clarification of prompts, and explanations for grading—must happen in office hours. Plan accordingly.
 - Expect your email to be returned within 48 hours, not inclusive of weekends.
- **Late Work.** For quizzes, there are no late submissions. For written assignments, no late work will be penalized unless it is not submitted by the time I grade it. If it is late/missing by the time I grade the assignment, I will retroactively deduct 5% of the assignment’s maximum point value per day (pro-rated on the basis of a 24-hour period) that it is late based on the original due date and time. I understand that emergencies arise, so please notify me as soon as possible (and ideally well before the deadline) if such emergencies might interfere with your class performance or participation.

General Education (GE) Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course! SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving. The General Education Program has three goals:

- **Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.
- **Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.
- **Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies at SJSU

Diversity Goals and Content

San José State University is committed to supporting a diverse community guided by core values of ethical conduct and inclusion and respect for each individual. Such a community enriches the intellectual climate of the university and the educational experiences of its students, promotes personal growth and a healthy society, and supports a positive work environment. By studying issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, students come to appreciate their rights and responsibilities in the free exchange of ideas that is the hallmark of a healthy and productive society.

All Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies courses are rooted in Access, Retention, and Community. It means that Asian American Studies is not just a subject matter based on surface representation or inclusion. Instead, it is a new consciousness. It's about combatting racism, poverty, and the misrepresentation of People of Color. Thus, this course will prepare students to accomplish the following.

- identify the lenses through which dominant society operates
- recognize that individuals are often subject to marginalization that creates positionalities of disadvantage
- engage in ways that help to mitigate societal inequities or deconstruct systems of oppression and colonization
- listen, act, and speak with open minds, and understand the impact of their viewpoints on others
- appreciate differing viewpoints and ways of knowing
- develop skills to work together in a cooperative manner on behalf of the common good

Asian American Studies, BA —Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

PLO 1. Demonstrate a core competency in interdisciplinary knowledge of major concepts, theories, and methods in Asian American Studies (AAS). For specifics, see below.

- Explain the sociopolitical, historical, contemporary, and comparative formations of race and ethnicity
- Analyze systems of power and hierarchies associated with the intersections of race and ethnicity to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, sovereignty, language, health, and/or age to understand the diversity and complexity of Asian American populations

PLO 2. Apply Asian American Studies theory and knowledge to the following:

- Addressing anti-racist and anti-colonial issues
- Identifying practices and movements that have and continue to facilitate the building of a more just and equitable society

PLO 3. Communicate knowledge in Asian American studies effectively and creatively appropriate to purpose and audience in the following forms: written, visual and/or oral forms.

Major or Minor in Asian American Studies!

We hope that you consider a major or minor in Asian American Studies! If you would ever like to learn more about majoring or minoring in Asian American Studies, please come through office hours and let's chat! You can also always send an email to our AAS Program Coordinator at asianamericanstudies@sjsu.edu.

AAS1 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to ...

CLO 1: Learn various methodologies, concepts, and theoretical contributions of Asian American Studies to comparative critical race analyses of power and structure, including white supremacy, liberation, sovereignty, and settler colonialism

CLO 2: Identify the intellectual contributions and shared experiences that link Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans together, as well as the internal diversity (class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age) that characterizes this diverse group;

CLO 3: Describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements among Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans as well as other racial and ethnic coalitional groups to build a just and equitable society

CLO 4: Explain and assess how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced, enacted, and studied by Asian Pacific Islander Desi/Americans are relevant to current and structural issues such as in immigration, anti-immigrant sentiment, trans-misogyny, and settler-colonialism

GE Area F Learning Outcomes (GELOs)

Upon successful completion of the course, students will meet three out of the five learning outcomes listed below:

GELO 1: Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism;

GELO 2: Apply ethnic studies theory and knowledge to describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements that have and continue to facilitate the building of a more just and equitable society;

GELO 3: Critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age;

GELO 4: Critically review how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation are relevant to current and structural issues such as communal, national, international, and transnational politics as, for example, in immigration, reparations, settler-colonialism, multiculturalism, language policies; and,

GELO 5: Describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements that have contributed to the building of a more just and equitable society

Course Materials

All course materials are available for free via Canvas or the SJSU Library. You must be logged into your SJSU account to access course materials. Note that required texts may be different from those required for AAS 33A/B sections taught by other professors or instructors. There are both cost and pedagogical reasons for this.

Course Assignments and Grading (Overview)

The final course grade will be based on the following:

In-Class Participation Quizzes	= 20% of course grade
Weekly Quizzes / Discussion Posts	= 20% of course grade
Assignment 1: Critical Autobiography	= 15% of course grade
Assignment 2: Comic Book Narrative	= 15% of course grade
Assignment 3: Final Class Reflection	= 15% of course grade
Group Project: Feast of Resistance	= 15% of course grade
Total	= 100% of course grade

AAS 33A Course Assignments and Grading (Detailed)

Class Participation (20% of course grade)

Your in-class participation is important to me! I track in-class participation throughout the semester through in-class written assignments and “check in” quizzes that will be graded for general thoughtfulness, completion, and effort (with some attention to precision, accuracy, and comprehension of course content). There will be 2 longer in-class quizzes that will assess your comprehension of the ideas, concepts, and content covered in the course; I will announce the dates/times during the semester and provide a sense of what to expect.

Quizzes & Discussion Posts (20% of course grade)

Students will complete weekly quizzes or discussion posts that respond to the assigned texts for the week. These are meant to encourage students to assess their understanding of the class content after we have had a chance to complete the assigned texts and discuss them together. Discussion posts should demonstrate thoughtful consideration of course material, including class discussions and assigned readings. To earn an excellent grade, students must consistently demonstrate a strong connection between their reflections and the course material.

Three Assignments (15% each, for a total of 45% of course grade)

Critical Autobiography (15%). Students will be tasked to write a critical autobiography detailing how their life intersects with history. Details about this assignment will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. Approximately 4-5 pages, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double spaced, 1” margins.

Comic Book Narrative (15%). In groups, students will create a comic book narrative of one of their classmate’s critical autobiographies. This assignment will be graded on thoughtfulness, completion, effort, and careful attention to representing and honoring their classmate’s family history. Students will submit a 1-page summary of each group member’s contribution. 12 pt font, Times New Roman, double spaced, 1” margins.

Final / Analysis Paper (15%). Students will be tasked to analyze selected key concepts from the course. Prompt will be discussed in class. Details will be released the week before and posted on Canvas. Submit on Canvas. 4-5 pages, 12pt font, Times New Roman, double spaced, 1” margins.

Group Project: Feast of Resistance (15% of course grade)

W15: Group Project: Feast of Resistance (15%). In groups of 3-4, students will organize a Feast of Resistance. This activity tasks students to bring food, ingredients, and dishes, and use them to tell histories of struggle and resistance in the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. Project will culminate in a short presentation, write-up, and sharing of food at the Feast at the end of the semester.

Grading

Final letter grades will be determined at the end of the semester. They are based on the following qualitative criteria:

- A** – Performance of the student has been of the highest level, showing sustained excellence.
- B** – Performance of the student has been good, though not of the highest level.
- C** – Performance of the student has been adequate, satisfactorily meeting the course requirements.
- D** – Performance of the student has been less than adequate.
- F** – Performance of the student has been such that course requirements have not been met.com/home

The final course letter grade is based on the following (strict) scale:

94.00–100.00 = A	80.00–83.99 = B-	67.00–69.99 = D+
90.00–93.99 = A-	77.00–79.99 = C+	64.00–66.99 = D
87.00–89.99 = B+	74.00–76.99 = C	60.00–63.99 = D-
84.00–86.99 = B	70.00–73.99 = C-	0.00–59.99 = F

Here is an alternative visualization of the same scale:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
≥ 94%	≥ 90%	≥ 87%	≥ 84%	≥ 80%	≥ 77%	≥ 74%	≥ 70%	≥ 67%	≥ 64%	≥ 60%	≥ 0%

This is a strict scale, and final grades will not be rounded. There may be extra credit throughout the course of the semester, and I will announce the guidelines for those extra credit opportunities as they come up.

University Policies & Supplementary Syllabus Information

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g., learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.