



# APA STUDIES NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 7: FALL 2014

## Director's Welcome



**DR. ANNA PEGLER-GORDON**  
APA STUDIES DIRECTOR

What makes an Asian Pacific American (APA) Studies Program? Ten years after this program was created at MSU seems like a good time to reflect on this question.

Students, first and foremost! As an undergraduate program, we serve the needs of diverse students. Some readers may be surprised to know that most of the students who take our classes are not of Asian American or Pacific Islander descent. This is different

from programs at universities with larger APA communities. However, it means that we reach a wide range of students from varied backgrounds and provide a forum for engaged discussion about key issues facing Asian Americans and American society. As one of our graduates noted, "this program is important not only for APA students. The experiences of Asian Pacific Americans are the experiences of *Americans*, stories that are often left untold in schools, but increasingly relevant as minority populations grow, and as issues of race and culture continue to shape our society."

Of course, faculty and staff members are needed to teach and mentor students. MSU's APA Studies program was created by faculty and staff working together with students

and this continues to be a hallmark of our program. Staff members are centrally involved in teaching, bringing their practical experience into the classroom. This is very important as MSU has only a few faculty whose work focuses on APA Studies. In the next ten years, we hope to increase our faculty so that we can grow our program! We are distinctive among APA Studies programs across the United States in having a strong emphasis on social sciences and being housed in a College of Social Science.

More than any one of these groups, however, is the sense that we are part of a community. Our program is a focal point for people to come together across MSU's campus. As we enter our next ten years, we plan to strengthen this community by reaching out more beyond campus to East Lansing area and Michigan residents.

I hope in this short introduction, I have answered the question: what makes an APA Studies Program? And, more importantly, I hope I've given you a sense of what makes the APA Studies Program at MSU so special. During the last ten years, we have built a great program and a great community. We plan to continue building. I hope that—whether you are a student, faculty or staff member, or local resident—you will consider taking part in our community. In whatever way works for you. Please check out our website, get in touch with me at [gor-donap@msu.edu](mailto:gor-donap@msu.edu), or join us at one of our exciting events!

## Our move to South Kedzie Hall! by Meaghan Kozar

After nine wonderful years in Baker Hall, the APA Studies Office has relocated to South Kedzie Hall (368 Farm Lane, Room S206). The location is ideal as we share the same floor with the Chicano/Latino Studies Program.

The change in space offers a slightly larger gathering room to have either a meeting or a hangout place for MSU students, faculty and staff. Our official open house took place on September 12th where we were warmly welcomed by many students, faculty, and staff that attended.

In addition to our cozy gathering hangout space, we have a conference table that can seat up to eight comfortably. We also have a mini library that includes APA books and vhs tapes/dvds. The space is open Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00



(from left to right: Crystal Tsai, Claire Raymundo, Chesca Alvarez and Viktor Chen hang out during our first APA Studies Student Advisory Board meeting)

noon– 10:00 PM or by appointment during spring 2015. If you would like to reserve the space during times not listed, please email [kozarme@msu.edu](mailto:kozarme@msu.edu).

We would like to thank the College of Social Science and especially Trudy Wesley for their assistance in this exciting new relocation.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Asian Invasion Myth Symposium</i>	2
<i>10th Anniversary Gala</i>	3
<i>Detroit Cultural Trip</i>	3
<i>Fred Korematsu Event</i>	3
<i>APA Studies Minor</i>	4
<i>Awards &amp; Recognitions</i>	4
<i>Asian Am. Walking Tour</i>	4

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## Asian Invasion Myth Symposium by Meaghan Kozar

On November 8, 2013 the Asian Pacific American Studies Program hosted a symposium called “Asian Invasion Myth” that took place at Michigan State University’s Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center. The symposium sought to challenge perceptions of Asians as a threat by bringing together students, faculty and staff at MSU to explore such questions as “What is the ‘Asian Invasion Myth?’ ‘How has it shaped America historically?’ and ‘How does it impact us today?’”

With the influx of more International students to MSU’s campus primarily from China, the reception toward Chinese International students has been both positive and negative. While MSU has created an overall welcoming environment by reconceptualizing the university as a “world grant” university, the change in demographics of MSU students has created tensions. These tensions have manifested themselves in damaged property as several Chinese International students’ cars were spray-painted while racist and xenophobic comments were made via twitter and overheard in the residence halls following remarks made by a parent who stated to his son, “I thought you were going to MSU not Chinatown.” Other seemingly non-threatening moments surfaced in describing cafeteria food as “Asian Invasion chicken wings,” “Asian Invasion BBQ,” and through the “Asian Invasion” radio program aired on MSU’s IMPACT radio station (The program has since changed its name to “Asian Music Mondays.)

While the degrees of harm in these moments could be debated, the suggestion of Asians as not-belonging is a message that is being reinforced implicating anyone who looks “Asian” including Asian Americans despite their American identity or how long they have been in the U.S. The context of the symposium sought to challenge the “message” and potential harm caused by language if used uncritically and that has resurfaced

throughout our history in different phrases, from “yellow peril” to now an “Asian Invasion.” Prior to the event, we created a promotional video asking random people what they thought of when they heard the words “Asian Invasion.” The results are not shocking as the phrase posits exclusion over inclusion. This video can be viewed at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=034q1mB8L\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=034q1mB8L_o). Our symposium began with a dynamic presentation featuring Dr. John Lee entitled, “Fear or Empowerment: ‘Asian Invasion’ in a Racist and Racialized Society.” Other highlights included a video screening and panel on the documentary *Imported from China* directed by Troy Hale & Geri Alunit Zeldes, Ph.D. who followed the lives of several MSU students from China by exploring their college experience as International students. At the closing of our day we featured a diverse student panel that spoke about the shared ways language is used to exclude members from diverse communities. This panel was made up of MSU students: Antonio Clements, Tera Loudon-Warn, Jovanska Neevia Almanza and William Kang. The students did an excellent job sharing personal stories while interrogating everyday language used to exclude people based on race, gender and sexual identity.

We were especially excited to bring to campus Dr. Shilpa Davé from the University of Virginia, as our keynote speaker. Dr. Davé’s keynote luncheon address entitled, “Indian Accents and Racial Masks: Heroes, Villains, and the Science Fiction Blockbuster” looked at moments within popular culture in which the imagery of Asians as a threat has been both reinforced and resisted.

A final highlight for this symposium featured an art exhibit by MSU’s International Photography Club (MIPC). This exhibit entitled “Spartan Pride” was an ensemble of photos capturing MSU Asian International students that disrupted notions of them as a threat by viewing them as a part of the MSU community, as MSU Spartans.



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(photos from top to bottom: Photo 1: posters from event, Photo 2: Dr. John Lee, Photo 3: panel discussion on “Imported from China” Dr. Geri Zeldes (Co-Producer of the film), Emanuele Berry (One of the film’s Student Producers), Dr. Andrea Louie (Associate Professor Anthropology), and Cecilia Tang (recent Graduate of APA Studies program), Photo 4: Keynote Speaker—Dr. Shilpa Davé, Photo 5: Student Panel members—Antonio Clements, Tera Loudon-Warn, Jovanska Neevia Almanza, and William Kang, Photo 6: Dr. Meaghan Kozar (APA Studies PC), MIPC members: Ryan Pun, Lydia Zheng, Jiyeon Choo, Simon Dong Ha Lee, and Dr. Anna Pegler-Gordon (APA Studies Director))

## 10th Anniversary Gala by Meaghan Kozar

On Saturday, October 11, 2014 at the East Lansing Marriott, the APA Studies Program hosted its 10th Anniversary Gala. It was an awesome night of dinner, dancing and celebration. We were pleased with the such a wonderful turnout among MSU faculty/staff, students and community members there to help us celebrate the many aspects that make up MSU's APA Studies Program. The program has flourished with the support, guidance and commitment of numerous faculty, staff, and students, too many to name, which is why the Gala focused on a group effort rather than on specific individuals.

As we reflected over these ten years, it was exciting and humbling to consider the breadth of the program's work. We have hosted three major conferences. During our second conference "APA Intersections: Transcending Boundaries, Creating Coalitions," we brought to campus a spoken word performance group called ill-literacy. This kick-off was sponsored by two MSU student organizations: APASO (Asian Pacific American Student Organization) and BSA (Black Student Alliance) and, as noted by the APASO students, it was the first time that they could remember APASO working collaboratively with BSA. Through our conference, we were able to bring together two diverse communities. We have had many workshops and guest lecturers from Martin Manalansan to a Teacher's Workshop focusing on teaching "Asian-Pacific Americans" with area teachers, to looking at media representations in our "Re-thinking Hmong American Culture," to our many brownbag lunches highlighting graduate students and faculty research, to our mentoring program matching MSU students with Asian adoptees in the local area, to our collaborations with MSU's Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, to our work in raising awareness against Asian xenophobia in our "Asian Inva-

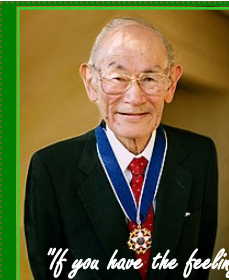
sion Myth symposium," to the work that we have done in our classrooms teaching many students in SSC 291. Notably, two years ago during our SSC 291 class we had two students become part of the APASO eboard. One of those students is now

the current co-president of APASO and will complete his APA studies specialization in the spring. The other will participate in our APA studies student advisory board. Last year we had another student from SSC 291 who became an APASO e-board member along with several other student leaders who are enrolled in our APA studies classes. We are also excited about the grand opening of a more visible APA studies office space in South Kedzie Hall.

The Gala ended with a silent auction in which proceeds will be given to students within the program for various leadership opportunities. It has been an exciting ten years to say the least. Thank you again to all those that have collaborated and put in the work to help continue to create APA awareness through our program. Here's to another ten years..and more!



(photo on left: R. J. Quiambo, part of the first cohorts of APA Studies graduates in 2005, and William Kang, APASO Co-President 2014-2015; photo on right: Ha Anh Le, Co-President for SASE Society of Asian Scientists & Engineers and Roland Hwang, one of the lawyers on the Vincent Chin case.)



### SAVE-THE-DATE!! January 30, 2015 @ MOSAIC\* (3:30 PM)

\*MOSAIC Multicultural Unity Center is located on the 2nd Floor of the MSU Union

The Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, and Asian Pacific American Studies Program at Michigan State University are coming together to recognize the legacy of civil rights activist, Fred T. Korematsu.

This event will feature guest speakers: Matthew Wesaw, Director, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Ron Aramaki, Department of American Culture, University of Michigan, Roland Hwang, Department of American Culture, University of Michigan, Mary Kamidoi, former internee, Rohwer Camp, Arkansas and Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, NBC Asian American Blogger

*"If you have the feeling that something is wrong, don't be afraid to speak up." - Fred T. Korematsu*

## Asian Americans and Community Organizing in Detroit by Anna Pegler-Gordon

In October 2014, students from two MSU courses traveled to Detroit on an all-day tour of Asian American history and contemporary community organizing in the city. Professor Terese Guinsatao Monberg organized the tour with Anna Pegler-Gordon, Director of the APA Studies Program. MSU alumnus and tour leader Soh Suzuki showed students an Asian American angle on Detroit, exploring the city's small Chinatown, changing Hmong neighborhood, and sites related to the 1982 murder of Vincent Chin, including a respectful visit to his grave. Students also learned about community engagement through tours of the Earthworks Urban Farm, where community activist Shane Bernardo joined to co-lead the group, the James and Grace Lee Boggs School, and the Boggs Center for Nurturing Community. Students, faculty and tour leaders also shared a delicious buffet lunch in and learned about Hamtramck's "Little Bengal." It was an insightful and inspiring day. The tour was made possible by the Residential College in Arts and Humanities, James Madison College, and the Asian Pacific American Studies Program.



(photo is of Soh Suzuki, tour leader, in front of Detroit's Chinatown Mural, which shows some of the shared experiences of African Americans and Asian Americans in the city.)

## Publications and Awards

APA Studies professors and staff have been very active over the last year, earning accolades and reshaping the field of Asian American Studies. Here are some of their accomplishments.

**Dr. Steven Gold** published "Undocumented Immigrants and Self Employment in the Informal Economy," pp 167-190 in Lois Ann Lorentzen (ed). *Hidden Lives and Human Rights in the United States: Understanding the Controversies and Tragedies of Undocumented Immigration*, Volume 3: Economic, Politics and Morality. Santa Barbara CA: Praeger, 2014.

**Dr. Sheng-Mei Ma** published *Alienglish: Eastern Diasporas in Anglo-American Tongues* (2014). At the intersection of Asian American Studies, Asian Studies, and Comparative literature, this volume explores how "English has long emerged as the lingua franca of globalization but has been somehow estranged in the hands or mouths of aliens, from Joseph Conrad to Chang-rae Lee. Haltingly, their alien characters come to speak in the Anglo-American tongue, yet what emerges is skewed by accents, syntax, body language, and nonstandard contextual references—an uncanny, off-kilter language best described as Alienglish."

**Dr. Anna Pegler-Gordon** published "Shanghaied in Hoboken: Chinese Exclusion and Maritime Regulation at Ellis Island" in a *Journal for Maritime Research* special issue on Asian sailors (November 2014). She also contributed an essay to *From There to Here*, the catalog of an art exhibit about migration at the Paul Robeson Galleries at Rutgers—Newark (2014). The exhibit was curated by Anonda Bell.

**Dr. Desiree Qin** is the recipient of the 2013 Early Career Award from the Asian Caucus of the Society of Research on Child Development. Dr. Qin's research on mental health of high achieving Asian American students has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, the *Atlantic*, and the *Times of London*. She has is also a frequent guest for a [Voice of America Chinese language TV show on parenting](#).

**Dr. Naoko Wake's** current research concerns Japanese-American and Korean-American survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. In 2014, she co-authored *Hiroshima/Nagasaki Beyond the Ocean* with Shinpei Takeda. Published in both English and Japanese, this volume introduces oral histories of North American and South American survivors of the atomic bombs.

**Dr. Fred Leong** published the following handbooks in 2014: the *Handbook of career development : international perspectives* (Springer) <http://catalog.lib.msu.edu/record=b10460573~S39a> as well as the 2 volumes of the APA handbook of multicultural psychology (American Psychological Association) <http://catalog.lib.msu.edu/record=b10238411~S39a>

**Dr. Andrea Louie's** second book, *How Chinese Are You? Adopted Chinese Youth and their Families Negotiate Identity and Culture*, will be published by NYU Press in 2015.

## an APA Studies Minor?!

An APA Studies minor requires only **5 courses** to complete (i.e. 15-23 credits). These courses range from a selection of APA core courses along with Asian/APA heritage and race & ethnicity courses. SSC 293 is the only course that all APA Specialization students must take.

- Increase your cultural awareness!
- Small class settings allows you to get to know faculty & staff!
- Empower yourself by understanding the contributions, struggles, stereotypes, resistance of an APA history!
- Options for APA Studies minor credits include: study abroad, domestic study away courses, and independent study to conduct a research project are available!



## ASIAN AMERICANS AT MSU WALKING TOUR

by Anna Pegler-Gordon

Students in Anna Pegler-Gordon's Asian American History class worked on a joint project to create a walking tour of "Asian Americans at MSU." Some of the earliest Asians on campus include possibly the first Asian international students (Nagatane Soma and Tunetaro Yamaou who arrived at the Michigan Agricultural College in 1873) and Chinese international student Onn Mann Liang (who left a rich archive of his photographs and other materials from his time at MSU in the 1920s). Unfortunately, we were unable to identify the first American of Asian descent to enroll at MSU. However, the walking tour traces locations across campus associated with Japanese Americans after World War II, Hmong American refugees and students, Vincent Chin, the 1989 Black Students Sit-In, the founding of the Asian Pacific American Students Organization (APASO) and the APA Studies Program. It also features the cultural presence of Asian Americans on campus, including Asian Americans and the first Asian international student in the Spartan Marching Band, the MSU Dance Team, Cultural Vogue, and the Asian Music Mondays show on the college radio station. Students conducted primary research in the MSU Archives and MSU Museum and recorded new oral histories (which will be placed in the MSU Archives). You can take a virtual tour at <http://tourguide.cal.msu.edu/> or upload the app to your phone and take a walk around campus!

Asian Pacific American Studies Office  
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OPEN HOURS:

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12noon—10:00pm  
(or by appointment)

Contact [kozarmae@msu.edu](mailto:kozarmae@msu.edu) with questions.