



# APIDA/A Crossroads: 180 Years of Inclusion, Exclusion, and (In)Visibility

Asian Pacific American Studies Program  
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI & Virtual  
March 22 & 23, 2024

**"Asian Americans are a part of the American fabric but we are often invisible...We [as a nation] cannot do better unless we know better."**

Illinois State Representative & TEAACH Act Co-Sponsor Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

180 years ago, a young Japanese fisherman landed on American shores via a whaling vessel. "Manjiro," whose ship had been wrecked in a storm before a timely intervention by American Captain William Whitfield, set foot in Massachusetts as the first acknowledged Asian immigrant to the United States. The Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) and Asian (A) population has since become the fastest growing racial or ethnic group in the United States. Communities that have comprised this grouping have experienced both celebration and tumult, in the past and present. In recent memory, the electrifying joy of seeing Chloe Kim cinch the gold at Beijing's 2022 Winter Olympics came only a year before the 2023 Lunar New Year mass shooting in Monterey Park, which claimed the lives of Valentino Marcos Alvero, Hongying Jian, Yu Lun Kao, Lilan Li, Ming Wei Ma, My My Nhan, Muoi Dai Ung, Chia Ling Yau, Wen Tau Yu, Xiujuan Yu, and Diana Man Ling Tom. COVID-19 still lingers in our daily lives, while coups in Myanmar, crackdowns in Hong Kong, and militaristic acts by the People's Republic of China and North Korea against Taiwan and South Korea, respectively, have exposed divisions within the global panethnic APIDA/A community. Out of these significant events, there are many reasons to contemplate the ways in which APIDA/A individuals and communities are rendered hypervisible and/or invisible in the public sphere.

The Midwest, where MSU is based, offers particularly fertile ground from which to study issues of (in)visibility of the APIDA/A population. Despite the growing political, cultural, and demographic representation of Asian Americans, they all too often continue to be framed as perpetual outsiders within the predominantly white-coded space of the American Midwest. For example, would you have been able to guess that APIDA/A students were enrolled at MSU as early as 1873? For a community that can trace its roots to within the first twenty years of this university's founding, the fact that a palpable sense of 'otherness' persists speaks to the unique set of challenges facing those living in this corner of the world.

## SYMPOSIUM BACKGROUND

For the past two years, the Asian Pacific American Studies Program has hosted the APA Studies Symposium, an event designed to further the work of bringing APIDA/A communities together across this region, this nation, and beyond. Drawing inspiration from Representative Gong-Gershowitz's recent appeal for inclusive APIDA/A education nationwide, this year's symposium stands with her in its quest to promote underexplored APIDA/A stories, combat isolation, and cultivate spaces where community and allies can forge new connections.



## GUIDING QUESTIONS

We welcome proposals that address critical issues facing APIDA/A communities in the Midwest and beyond, including (but not limited to) the following questions:

- What can we learn from the joys and traumas that the APIDA/A community has faced as the world attempts to carry on with life “post-pandemic”?
- How do we make sense of personal (in)visibilities amid recent upsurges in public racism, sexism, and xenophobia?
- To what extent do persistent racial geographies play a role in the construction of APIDA/A experiences and (in)visibilities?
- Has violence against APIDA/A communities taken on new meanings and consequences in light of the contemporary climate?
- Do current APIDA/A experiences represent a cleavage from the past, or are there lingering continuities that can inform present and future activism?
- How is the current sociopolitical environment shaping the global and national landscapes for Asian American and Asian Studies, and to what effect?
- To what extent can we reconcile the institutional, geopolitical, and epistemological distance between Asian and Asian American Studies?
- How do we promote an expansive understanding of Asian American and Asian Studies across academia?
- How do we forge and sustain cross-racial alliances considering differing relationships to (in)visibility within the American public sphere? What potential exists for coalitional resistance against anti-Asian racism and xenophobia?

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Please submit your paper proposal by completing a form here: <https://bit.ly/APAS24CFP>

The form asks you to indicate your name, affiliation, a short bio, and a 300-word proposal. The form will also ask you to choose one or more of your preferred presentation format(s).

**PROPOSALS DUE: Monday, January 3, 2024**

Applicants will be notified of the Selection Committee’s decision by early February 2024.



QR code for  
proposal submission

## PRESENTATION FORMATS

**Panel:** Panels will consist of three to four 15-minute presentations, followed by 30 minutes allocated for Q&A. The panels will be organized by the Selection Committee around themes shared across the presentations. In addition to featuring the panelists, panels will also include a chair and discussant.

**Workshop:** Workshop is a discussion-centered session exploring one or more of the questions listed above. Instead of presenting papers, workshop presenters will spend most of the session addressing Q&As from a discussant and the audience. Workshop presenters must submit their papers by March 1st, 2023, to be pre-circulated among all symposium participants. Papers should be no longer than 30 pages, double-space.

**Research Flash Talk:** This format will facilitate a shorter, faster talk such as the one you might engage in when networking at a conference, meeting with an editor, or talking with a potential employer. Each participant will talk about their research project in 2-3 minutes. A discussant will offer feedback.

## MODALITY

This year’s symposium will be a hybrid of online and in-person sessions. The keynote speech will be in person at MSU, and will also be live streamed. Details of the keynote speech date and time will be made available closer to the symposium time. Sessions will either be completely online or completely in person. This is a symposium that aims to build a foundation for long-lasting critical connections. In this spirit, we ask all participants to please come to all sessions throughout the symposium.

## TRAVEL GRANT

If you are a student and planning on traveling to East Lansing to present in-person, you are eligible for consideration for a travel grant. Questions? Please contact [apastudy@msu.edu](mailto:apastudy@msu.edu)