



UNPROGRAMMING ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

October 5-6, 2019

UConn Hartford
(Hartford Times Building, Room 145)

program & further information:

<http://tinyurl.com/unprogramming>

**an East of California summit rethinking the futures of Asian
American studies within and without the programmed home**

UConn
AAASI

Thanks also to the generous support of:
University of Connecticut's Humanities Institute and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences;
Clark University's Center for Gender, Race, and Area Studies; and
Yale University's Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration.

(Image: Yukari Edamitsu, "The Color of Stars")

UNPROGRAMMING ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

East of California Caucus - Association for Asian American Studies

October 5-6, 2019 * tinyurl.com/unprogramming

UCONN Hartford (Hartford Times Building, Room 145)

Schedule Overview

Saturday 10/5

8AM *Registration*

9AM *Welcome*

9:30AM *Forum 1: ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES FOR THE UNPROGRAMMED*

11AM *Forum 2: SOME WAYS THE SMITHSONIAN APA CENTER AND AALR RE-SEE THE WORK, HOMES, OF THE FIELD*

12:45PM *Lunch*

3PM *Forum 3: THE PROGRAM HORIZON: LIMITS AND FUTURES OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAMS*

4:30 *Reception*

Sunday 10/6

9:30AM *Forum 4: BUILDING SPACES IN WHICH WE FLOURISH: THE POSSIBILITIES OF EXTRA-INSTITUTIONAL AND TRANS-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION*

11AM *Forum 5: THE TALKING SYLLABUS*

12:30PM *CLOSING*

NAVIGATION LINKS

[Program Committee](#)

[Sponsors](#)

[Registration](#)

[Site Information / Accessibility](#)

[Livestream/Webcast Information](#)

[Event Description](#)

[Schedule](#)

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- Jason Oliver Chang (EoC co-chair; jason.o.chang@uconn.edu)
- Betsy Huang (EoC co-chair; bhuang@clarku.edu)
- Michelle N. Huang (EoC Communications Manager; michelle.n.huang@northwestern.edu)

SPONSORS

- University of Connecticut Asian and Asian American Studies Institute
- University of Connecticut College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- University of Connecticut Humanities Institute
- Clark University Office of the Dean of the College and the Center for Gender, Race, and Area Studies
- Yale University Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration

REGISTRATION

- Registration is required for attendance and is free and open until filled to capacity (71 seats). Apply for travel subsidy within registration form. Application for funding is not a guarantee of award.
- Group Meals: All meals will be off-site at individual discretion. In the EoC tradition of fostering community, attendees will be able to opt into small groups for Saturday (10/5) lunch and supper.
- Eligibility: Faculty (any rank), teaching staff (temporary and permanent), and graduate students are eligible. Select undergraduates may be accepted with a registered faculty sponsor.
- [Click here for link to register](#)

SITE INFORMATION / ACCESSIBILITY

- Summit Location: [University of Connecticut, Hartford](#) (Hartford Times Building, Room 145)
- Hotel: [Hartford Hilton](#) (Discounted room code to accompany acceptance letter)
- Both locations are ADA compliant & live transcription will be provided

LIVE STREAM/WEBCAST INFORMATION

- The summit will be streamed live for people who wish to attend remotely (registration is required).
- Look to this page for updates on login details. (Updated 7/19/19)

EVENT DESCRIPTION

In the autumn of 1992, Professor Robert G. Lee opened the East of California (EoC) Asian American Studies Conference at Brown University with the following welcome.

“...As we watch events from Los Angeles to Rostock, we can not help but feel an even greater urgency in our work of developing Asian American Studies “East of California.” Building on the agenda that was set at the very successful symposium held at Cornell last year we have planned a program that focuses on the institutional building blocks of Asian American Studies. We hope that each of you will be able to take home concrete ideas and information which will help you in building Asian American Studies on your campus.”

The organizing objectives of the EoC network were to a) institutionalize Asian American Studies (AAS), b) develop regional-specific research and publications, and c) provide mutual support to individuals and programs. Historically, the EoC has focused on the institutionalization of the field, supporting student-based movements for the establishment of AAS programs and the professionalization of faculty in those newly minted programs. Twenty-eight years later, the same urgency for the field exists amid cold wars, hot wars, and trade wars. Continuing this tradition, student-based movements fighting for Asian American Studies steadfastly struggle to win faculty lines and establish degree programs on their campuses across the country. The institutional and intellectual landscapes, however, have changed significantly. Victories and defeats in institutionalization have led to challenging and sometimes even toxic work conditions for faculty, previously and newly hired. What other models of development and support can the EoC caucus foster to embrace the work of AAS after the “struggle” or in the absence of it?

For this summit, the EoC committee was compelled by the widespread quandary of a two-sided problem. First, even with the successful creation of AAS centers, programs, institutes, and departments over the last twenty-eight years, many

who are east of California still inhabit an institutionally insecure place. These programs wrestle with budget cuts, student recruitment, along with admissions politics and visibility within their institutions that erode interest and viability of the curriculum. Second, AAS has grown to the extent that AAS scholars frequently hold positions in colleges and universities without AAS programs, which can engender isolation and hostile work environments. The focus on program building has left the other lives of AAS scholars and non-program-oriented modes of community building out of focus. It is for this reason that we have organized a summit of programmed and unprogrammed AAS scholars to re-calibrate our community resource models to suit the emergent conditions of AAS in today's context of EoC.

Drawing from the experiences, models, and strategies developed in programmed and unprogrammed settings, this summit gathers fresh thinking about how to serve existing AAS programs, support AAS scholars faculty outside of AAS programs, and identify other pathways for the work of AAS that are not tied to the pursuit of institutionalization. This summit also aims to comprehend AAS in a broader Critical Ethnic Studies context in which allies and collaborators are differently positioned. Rather than address the key academic conversations that shape our field, the EoC committee reflected on the feedback from members and wider conversations about the state of the field of AAS outside of the Pacific states to pursue a different order of inquiry. To do this work, the summit articulates the stakes of AAS in different spaces. What is the measure of success after institutionalization? To identify the stakes of AAS is to question the survivability of programs and faculty in the contemporary university. With these concerns in mind, this summit hosts five forums, each pertaining to a different debate that AAS faculty, in all sorts of environments, variously confront. Thus the summit de-centers institutionalization and program building to focus on dynamic responses to present concerns and settings of AAS. This collective conversation anticipates the need to address the situation of adjuncts, post-docs, and temporary assignments, the most vulnerable scholars in our field, while also underscoring the strength and vitality of invented communities and creative outcomes in unprogrammed conditions. Framed by these experiences and emergent structures, the summit seeks to renew an imaginative rendering of AAS community building, publishing, and teaching to more effectively communicate the reasons and values of AAS.

SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, Oct 5.

8-9AM REGISTRATION

9AM WELCOME: UNPROGRAMMING ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Jason Oliver Chang, University of Connecticut, Associate Professor of History and Asian American Studies and Director, Asian and Asian American Studies Institute

9:30-11AM FORUM 1

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES FOR THE UNPROGRAMMED: HOW TO BUILD YOUR SHELTER IN THE ACADEMIC STORM

Mai-Linh Hong, Assistant Professor of English, Bucknell University and Co-Chair, Circle for Asian American Literary Studies

Audrey Wu Clark, Associate Professor of English, United States Naval Academy

In this forum, we will discuss vulnerabilities and challenges of AAS scholars working outside AAS programs and/or R1/R2 settings. We invite the EoC community to imagine with us innovative, adaptable, and inclusive structures of care and support beyond “the program” (AAS, Ethnic Studies, or otherwise), using the idiom of shelter to guide us. “Solo” scholars often experience geographic and cultural isolation, hostile work environments (especially if they are “the first” person of a particular identity), harassment and bullying, disproportionate service loads, denial of institutional biases, and other forms of abuse and exploitation. Recognizing that women and gender-nonconforming junior scholars of color are particularly at risk of isolation and abuse in academia, including racialized sexual harassment, we approach this topic from an intersectional feminist perspective. This panel offers tools for recognizing harassment, bullying, and abuse at individual and institutional levels and possible avenues toward management of these problems.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Inspired by Christina Sharpe’s idea of care as “shared risk,” we ask Summit attendees to consider: What would it look like for external or program-based institutions (such as existing AAS programs and AAAS/EoC) to bring marginalized or structurally vulnerable members to the center of their agendas?

How might we redistribute risk and resources to more fully care for *all* in our communities? What structures of community-based support and mentorship can we adapt in resource-constrained settings?

How do we create more non-hierarchical spaces in which marginalized scholars can not only survive, but thrive? What possible models could we follow for such support?

11AM-12:30PM FORUM 2

THE WEE KINGDOMS OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES SEEN FROM HIGH ABOVE IN THE TATTERED AIR BALLOONS OF THE ARTS, OR: SOME WAYS THE SMITHSONIAN APA CENTER AND AALR RE-SEE THE WORK, AND HOMES, OF THE FIELD

Mimi Khúc, Editor, *Asian American Literary Review*

Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis, Curator, Smithsonian Institution, Asian Pacific American Center; Editor, *Asian American Literary Review*

This session begins with a pop-up wellness space co-created and run by attendees, with several stations drawing from past APAC and AALR arts interventions, 1 station collectively designed onsite by participants. The pop-up will lead into a conversation theorizing the hows and whys and wheres of interventional work. Examining APAC and AALR practice, as well as participants' own experiences, we will ask how arts work can bridge academia, organizing communities, and arts communities while navigating and often subverting institutional structures. We will think through the nuts and bolts and ethics of building participatory, community-curatorial structures as the work of Asian American studies.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Who do you want to reach but feel unable to?

What are your central Asian American studies commitments? How do you, or how might you, engage those commitments in public spaces?

What do you consider your usual "terrain" in your work, and how might the arts expand the limits of that terrain, dissolving existing boundaries?

Where in your particular contexts do you locate the most urgent social injustice, and how can artwork be a means to engage it?

12:45-2:45PM Lunch

3-4:30PM FORUM 3

THE PROGRAM HORIZON: LIMITS AND FUTURES OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAMS

Jennifer Ho, Professor, Department of Ethnic Studies and Director, Center for Arts and Humanities, University of Colorado Boulder; President-elect, Association for Asian American Studies

Robert Ji-Song Ku, Associate Professor, Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, SUNY Binghamton

Sue Kim, Professor of English, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, Co-Director, Center for Asian American Studies, and Southeast Asian Digital Archive Project Director, University of Massachusetts Lowell

This forum seeks to productively question what does a good Asian American Studies program/department look like? Confronting what Lisa Lowe has described as the “inevitable paradox” of institutionalized Ethnic Studies, we respond to Kandice Chuh’s recent call to radically rethink the intellectual and scholarly work of the field to embrace a model of Asian American studies program building that is more capacious than the project to create and protect programs/departments – a founding principle of the East of California Caucus. By addressing the limitations of institutionalized AAS spaces we can more concretely identify the ways to work within, around, and through these constraints.

With such a consideration, the forum aims to generate an inquiry for Asian American studies programs to know and assess themselves by measures not defined by the liberal university. While the EoC caucus has rightfully organized and supported work to that end, this discussion aims to “un-program” the institutional imagination for what Asian American Studies can be. Following the theme of the summit, participants will re-envision “program building” as a means of working within and without institutional structures to assess the limits and futures of Asian American studies.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What are the criteria by which to judge the success of an Asian American Studies Program/Department?

What is the purpose of the Asian American studies curriculum; what type of knowledge, skills, and capacities are being developed?

When is institutionalization not the best choice for advancing the field and meeting our highest aspirations for radical social change?

How do programs/departments work together and against campus cultural centers?

How can Asian American studies programs work with local communities?

What resources can be drawn on to help build Asian American studies programs?

4:30-6:30 RECEPTION - UConn Hartford Atrium

Asian American Tarot Salon

6:30 SUPPER

SUNDAY, Oct 6.

9:30-11AM FORUM 4

BUILDING SPACES IN WHICH WE FLOURISH: THE POSSIBILITIES OF EXTRA-INSTITUTIONAL AND TRANS-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION
A Verge on the Road project

Tina Chen, Professor of English and Asian American Studies; Editor, *Verge: Studies in Global Asias*

Asian American Studies often exists at the margins—of institutions and programs, but also of disciplines and intellectual community. This forum will focus on the importance of transforming the conditions for the cultivation of Asian American Studies, its scholars and its scholarship, at institutions that continue to practice curricular diversity via minimal inclusion. Minimal inclusion manifests differently at different institutions, ranging from hiring a single scholar to work in the field to creating minors by virtue of credit hours instead of field integrity to ensuring precarious programmatic survival as the status quo.

In other words, the institutional embrace of subsistence, the maintenance of existence at a minimal level, as a model for diversifying curricula and community must be countered by an alternative vision. Despite a lack of resources, it is incumbent on Asian Americanists to imagine into possibility our own flourishing. Working in isolation and often without the support of programs and colleagues within our institutions, it is still possible to develop critical resources that make flourishing possible by cultivating extra-institutional and trans-institutional collaboration. Focusing on two issues—mentorship and publication—we will consider how East of California and *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* were created outside of traditional models of institutionalization and program building and how they operate to facilitate such collaboration.

The forum aims to help participants identify the ways in which looking outside of their own institutions might help create new conditions of professional possibility and support.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How does minimal inclusion operate at your institution?

What are the specific resources (including but not limited to the financial) that minimal inclusion prevents you from accessing?

What kinds of community and mentorship would make a difference in your ability to move beyond existence to flourishing?

11AM-12:30PM FORUM 5

THE TALKING SYLLABUS: A FORUM ON INTERSECTIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN PEDAGOGIES

Christine Mok, Assistant Professor of English, University of Rhode Island

Martin Joseph Ponce, Associate Professor of English and Director, Sexuality Studies Program, The Ohio State University

Crystal Parikh, Professor of English and Social & Cultural Analysis, New York University

Moderated by: Betsy Huang, Associate Provost and Dean of the College, Klein Distinguished Professor, and Associate Professor of English, Clark University

The *Talking Syllabus Forum* considers the critical role of Asian American Studies in intersectional curricula and the challenges of centering both in contemporary institutions of higher education. Faculty of varying ranks from different institutional, regional, and disciplinary backgrounds present "guided tours" of their most effective syllabi or syllabi-in-progress. Talks

encompass the process of syllabus building and teaching, from initial conceptualization and text selection to assignment creation and surprises in teaching the course. Participants dive deeply into each other's courses, exchange teaching materials and pedagogical methods, and explore a variety of course models. In addition to the courses presented by the panelists, discussion will draw from a repository of AAS syllabi collected from Summit participants.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Purpose: Why do you teach this course? What motivated its offering?

Content: How do you go about selecting or changing the course texts? What are the pleasures and challenges of the process? In what ways do questions of the canon and literary form impact our text selections?

Implementation: What worked? What didn't? What challenges around content and assignment creation persist from year to year? What surprised you?

Implications: How do we ensure that courses like ours retain their critical edge and resist co-optation by neoliberalist marketing or by established networks of power (as cautioned by Roderick Ferguson in *The Reorder of Things*)? How has the institutionalization of "diversity" in the neoliberal university shaped our and our students' understanding of the politics of representation, identification, and otherness?

12:30PM CLOSING