

# ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES (ASAM)

## **ASAM 0010 Freshman Seminar on Asian American Lit**

An introduction to writing about Literature, with emphasis on Asian American literature and culture.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0322

1 Course Unit

## **ASAM 0100 Introduction to Asian American Studies**

According to the U.S. Census, there are approximately 21 million Asian residents in the U.S. that comprise almost 6 percent of the total population. This relatively small number disguises the critical experiences Asian American communities face in both the local and transnational context. Yet, Asian Americans constitute one of the most heterogeneous racial groups within the U.S. Over the course of this semester we will read about and actively discuss the history of Asian immigration to the U.S., the social construction and experience of race in the U.S., and the political, economic, and cultural contributions of Asian Americans. We will also examine how Asian Americans negotiate/deploy their culture and ethnicity to achieve recognition in multicultural America and how the construction of Asian American identity intersects with class, gender, and sexuality.

Fall

1 Course Unit

## **ASAM 0101 Asian American Communities**

Who is Asian American and how and where do we recognize Asian America? This interdisciplinary course explores the multiple factors that define Asian American identity and community. In order to provide a sketch of the multifaceted experience of this growing minority group, we will discuss a wide variety of texts from scholarly, artistic, and popular (film, cinematic) sources that mark key moments in the cultural history of Asia America. The course will address major themes of community life including migration history, Asian American as model minority, race, class, and transnational scope of Asian America. In combination with the readings, this class will foster and promote independent research based on site visits to various Asian American communities in Philadelphia and will host community leaders as guest lecturers.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: URBS 0101

1 Course Unit

## **ASAM 0102 Introduction to Asian American History**

This course will provide an introduction to the history of Asian Pacific Americans, focusing on the wide diversity of migrant experiences, as well as the continuing legacies of Orientalism on American-born APA's. Issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality will also be examined.

Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 1155

1 Course Unit

## **ASAM 0103 Asian American Literature**

An overview of Asian American literature from its beginnings at the turn of the twentieth century to the present. This course covers a wide range of Asian American novels, plays, and poems, situating them in the contexts of American history and minority communities and considering the variety of formal strategies these different texts take. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1270

1 Course Unit

## **ASAM 0115 American Race: A Philadelphia Story (SNF Paideia Program Course)**

This course proposes an examination of race with a two-pronged approach: one that broadly links the study of race in the United States with a multi-disciplinary approach and also simultaneously situates specific conversations within the immediate location of Philadelphia, home to the University. The broad historical examination advances key concepts of race and racialization, explores key theoretical methodologies, and highlights major scholarly works. For example, students will engage with the study of race through Africana Studies, Asian American Studies, Urban Studies and through Latin American & Latinx Studies. Readings and methodologies will introduce students to critical issues in education, in literature, in sociology, and with methods in oral history, archival work, and ethnography. Most importantly, this extensive approach highlights the impact of race across multiple communities including Black Americans, immigrant populations, and communities that are marginalized to emphasize connections, relationships, and shared solidarity. Students are intellectually pushed to see the linkages and the impacts of racism across and among all Americans historically and presently. As each theme is introduced a direct example from Philadelphia will be discussed. The combination of the national discourse on race, with an intimate perspective from the City of Philadelphia, engages students both intellectually and civically. The course will be led by Fariha Khan and Fernando Chang-Muy but guest instructors with varied disciplinary backgrounds and guest speakers from local community organizations. Each instructor not only brings specific disciplinary expertise, but also varied community engagement experience.

Spring

Also Offered As: AFRC 1115, ANTH 1150, LALS 0115, SAST 1115, SOCI 2976, URBS 1150

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 0116 American Race: A Philadelphia Story (SNF Paideia Program Course)**

This course proposes an examination of race with a three-pronged approach: one that broadly links the study of race in the United States with a multi-disciplinary approach; situates specific conversations within the immediate location of Philadelphia; and examines the international human rights context of race with Greece as a case study. The broad historical examination advances key concepts of race and racialization, explores key theoretical methodologies, and highlights major scholarly works. Students will engage with the study of race through Africana Studies, Asian American Studies, Urban Studies, South Asia Studies, Latin American & Latinx Studies, and through international human rights law. Readings and methodologies will introduce students to critical issues in education, in literature, in sociology, and with methods in oral history, archival work, and ethnography. Most importantly, this extensive approach highlights the impact of race across multiple communities including Black Americans, immigrant populations, Asian Americans, and international communities that are marginalized to emphasize connections, relationships, and shared solidarity. Students are intellectually pushed to see the linkages and the impacts of racism across and among all Americans and from a thematic and legal perspective. As each theme is introduced a direct example from Philadelphia will be discussed. The combination of the national discourse on race, with an intimate perspective from the City of Philadelphia and travel to Greece, engages students both intellectually and civically. The course will be led by Fariha Khan and Fernando Chang-Muy along with local activists with varied disciplinary backgrounds from local community organizations. Each guest lecturer not only brings specific disciplinary expertise, but also varied community engagement experience. This course is a Penn Global Seminar, which includes a travel component. An application is required. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs>. The course is also supported by the SNF Paideia Program, the Asian American Studies Program and Africana, Latin American & Latinx Studies, Sociology, South Asia Studies, and Urban Studies.

Spring

Also Offered As: AFRC 0116, LALS 0116, SAST 0116, SOCI 0116, URBS 0116

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 0270 The Immigrant City**

This course focuses on immigrant communities in United States cities and suburbs. We survey migration and community experiences among a broad range of ethnic groups in different city and suburban neighborhoods. Class readings, discussions, and visits to Philadelphia neighborhoods explore themes including labor markets, commerce, housing, civil society, racial and ethnic relations, integration, refugee resettlement, and local, state, and national immigration policies. The class introduces students to a variety of social science approaches to studying social groups and neighborhoods, including readings in sociology, geography, anthropology, social history, and political science. Ultimately, the class aims to help students develop: 1) a broad knowledge of immigration and its impacts on U.S. cities and regions; 2) a comparative understanding of diverse migrant and receiving communities; and 3) familiarity with policies and institutions that seek to influence immigration and immigrant communities.

Spring

Also Offered As: LALS 0270, SOCI 0270, URBS 0270

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1000 South Asians in the United States**

This course investigates the everyday practices and customs of South Asians in America. Every immigrant group has its own history, customs, beliefs and values, making each unique while simultaneously a part of the "melting pot" or salad bowl" of American society. Yet how do people define themselves and their ethnicities living in a diasporic context? By taking into account the burgeoning South Asian American population as our model, this course will explore the basic themes surrounding the lives that immigrants are living in America, and more specifically the identity which the second generation, born and/or raised in American, is developing. South Asians in the U.S. will be divided thematically covering the topics of ethnicity, marriage, gender, religion, and pop culture. Reading and assignments will discuss a variety of issues and viewpoints that are a part of the fabric of South Asia, but will focus on the interpretation of such expressive culture in the United States.

Fall

Also Offered As: SAST 1000

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1010 Asian American Race Relations: Comparative Case Studies and Theories**

This course provides an introduction to comparative racial frameworks and case studies in Asian American Studies. In line with an emergent body of work that considers the relational nature of racializations, we will examine how Asian American racial constructions are not only formed in relation to whiteness but also to other groups of color. Starting from the premise that the US is dynamically multiracial, we will consider how Asian Americans have been both "lumped together" with and "counterpointed" to other racially marginalized communities across historical time. Moreover, we will explore how Asian Americans themselves have articulated racial positions both in solidarity with and opposition to other people of color. Lastly, we will survey the different comparative racial frameworks Asian American Studies scholars have developed to understand the shifting terrain of race relations. The course places a particular emphasis on Asian-Black relations and Afro Asian political theory, given the unique juxtaposition of these groups in US racial discourse, the significance of "Blackness" to Asian American political and cultural identities, and the seminal place of these discussions in Comparative Ethnic Studies. Course materials include primary and scholarly readings, media, and material collaboratively gathered by members of the class. We will focus on developing diverse research methods for understanding the relational nature of Asian American racialization and community formation, culminating in individual research projects on case studies chosen by students in consultation with the instructor.

Spring

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1020 The Asian American Entrepreneur**

From shopkeepers to motel owners, the Asian American entrepreneur is frequently celebrated and offered as proof that the American Dream is achievable and that the United States is a meritocracy. This seminar challenges this view. Through interdisciplinary texts, qualitative research assignments, and speakers, we will explore the transnational forces and structural limitations within the United States that produce Asian ethnic niches and the bamboo ceiling which limits the success of Asian Americans.

Fall

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1166 A Nation of Immigrants Reconsidered**

Many Americans widely accept the notion that the United States is a nation of immigrants despite the fact that immigration and border control has been a central feature of this nation's past. This course explores the United States' development of immigration and border enforcement during the twentieth century through an intersectional lens. It roots the structures of modern immigration and border enforcement in Native dispossession and histories of slavery, and interrogates how Asian, Black, and Latinx immigration has shaped and expanded immigration controls on, within, and beyond US territorial borders. In addition to historicizing the rise and expansion of major institutions of immigration control such as the US Border Patrol and Bureau of Naturalization, we explore how immigration controls were enforced on the ground and impacted the lives of everyday people.

Also Offered As: AFRC 1166, HIST 1166, LALS 1166

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1170 Beyond "Hate": Violence in Asian American History**

Since 2020, national media, political leaders, and nonprofit organizations have all called attention to a rise in what they labeled "anti-Asian hate."

But what does this framing of hate, and its centering of individual acts of hate violence, tell us about the roots of anti-Asian violence? This course takes recent attention to anti-Asian hate as a point of departure to investigate the history of anti-Asian violence as constitutive to the United States as a nation and an empire. Taking a historical and theoretical approach to the concept of violence, we will consider why certain forms of violence are privileged and others silenced within conversations about racial violence. Through a range of historical, cultural, and scholarly texts, students will examine different genres of violence throughout Asian American history, including state, imperial, gender-based, and hate violence. From 19th century lynchings of early Chinese migrants to post-9/11 Islamophobia, this course traces the function of violence as a tool for the racialization and disciplining of Asian bodies. At the same time, through engagements with postcolonial, Third World, feminist, and abolitionist theory, we will explore how Asian Americans have theorized, organized against, and been agents of violence themselves.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1200 Introduction to Creative Writing: Writing Asian American Lives**

What does it mean to be Asian American? How do religion, ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, and immigration status define this group?

This course will explore these questions through an introductory fiction, nonfiction, and poetry creative writing workshop. In addition to critiquing each other's short stories, essays, and poems, we will read works by a number of authors as springboards to examine representations of identity, inclusion, and exclusion. To learn more about this course, visit the Creative Writing Program at <https://creative.writing.upenn.edu>.

Fall

Also Offered As: ENGL 3025

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1210 Topics in Asian American Literature and Culture**

This seminar explores Asian American literature and culture intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 1272

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1211 Narrating Survival**

This course critically examines the way in which "survival" has been/ continues to be defined as individual triumph in the 20th and 21st century. The intent here is to dig deeper into current buzzwords like "resilience," "wellness," "grit," and "care" to ask how such concepts have been constructed in different socio-historical moments, by and for whom, and towards what (social, cultural, political, economic) ends. We will pay special attention to the central role that the child plays in these discourses as an icon of both ultimate vulnerability and idealized resilience, and we'll consider the burdens and privileges that such centering might confer upon real-life children. We engage with a generically diverse body of contemporary multiethnic and transnational literature featuring children and young people in crisis, including texts from Black, Latine, Native, Asian and White U.S. writers as well as Dutch, Argentine, Iranian, Malaysian, and Afghan authors. All non-English texts will be read in English translation, with the option for students to read in the original language if they wish and are able. Learning to dialogue across cultures and learning from such interactions with these texts and one other will be an essential part of our approach to exploring these complex questions.

Also Offered As: COML 2192, ENGL 2192

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1226 Introduction to Creative Writing: Writing Real Science**

Most if not all fiction and nonfiction requires some kind of research. Our readings will explore how writers incorporate scientific knowledge into their prose without compromising craft. This course will explore ways to bring real science into our pieces and make them fun, exciting and fresh. To learn more about this course, visit the Creative Writing Program at <https://creative.writing.upenn.edu>.

Also Offered As: ENGL 3026

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1300 Asian American Cinema Movement: Fighting For Representation**

Providing a broad introduction to the history of persons of Asian descent living in the United States, this course will specifically examine the Asian American & Pacific Islander American experience as told through the cinematic lens. Equal parts socio-political history and media studies, this course will comprehensively assess factors contributing to the historical under representation of AAPIs in mainstream American media. By contrast, the media texts that we study will reveal a cinematic history that runs parallel to the mainstream, consisting of independently produced films created by and/or starring AAPIs that feature authentic portrayals of the community they represent. Topics will include economics of film production, broadcast television ratings, film festivals as a mechanism of distribution, negative stereotyping, Hollywood whitewashing, cultural appropriation, and media activism. The course will take place once a week and will consist of a brief discussion of the previous week's readings, followed by a lecture, and ending with a full or partial film screening relating to the current week's topic. Additional out of class assignments will be given that involve attending the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival, tentatively scheduled November 8-18, 2018. Students will have the opportunity to engage with and learn from AAPi filmmakers in attendance at the festival, with additional volunteer opportunities available for extra credit.

Fall

Also Offered As: CIMS 1302

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1400 Asian American Gender and Sexualities**

This course explores the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race in Asian America. Through interdisciplinary and cultural texts, students will consider how Asian American gender and sexualities are constructed in relation to racism while learning theories on and methods to study gender, sex, and race. We will discuss masculinities, femininities, race-conscious feminisms, LGBTQ+ identities, interracial and intraracial relationships, and kinship structures.

Spring

Also Offered As: GSWS 1400, SAST 1400

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1410 Asian American Women: Nation, Self and Identity**

This course examines the literary constructions of Asian American Women's identity in relation to the U.S. nation state. How have the figures of the tiger mother, the Asian nerd, the rice queen, the trafficked woman, the geisha, the war bride, emerged to represent Asian American women, and how have Asian American feminists responded to these problematic racial stereotypes? How does the scholarship on such racialized representations illuminate historical and contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race, class, nation, citizenship, migration, empire, war, neoliberalism and globalization as they relate to the lives of Asian American women? In exploring these questions, this course examines Asian American histories, bodies, identities, diasporic communities, representations, and politics through multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, including social science research, literature, popular representations, film, poetry and art.

Spring

Also Offered As: GSWS 1410, SAST 1410

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1500 Asian Americans In Contemporary Society**

This course will explore Asian America through sociological frameworks and research. At the outset, we will establish a strong theoretical foundation by studying key sociological theories related to race and ethnicity, assimilation, and racial stratification. Additionally, we will briefly review key turning points in Asian American history. Throughout the semester, we will explore a broad range of contemporary topics, such as racial and ethnic identities (including multiracial identities); racialized desire and interracial relationships; controlling media images and subversive representations; transracial adoption; affirmative action; anti-Asian racism; and the role of the "model minority" myth in contemporary U.S. politics. Above all, this class will critically evaluate the viability of an Asian American panethnic identity while also exploring important axes of heterogeneity (e.g., class, gender, and sexuality) within the broader Asian American category.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: SOCI 1140

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1510 Race and Ethnic Relations**

The course will focus on race and ethnicity in the United States. We begin with a brief history of racial categorization and immigration to the U.S. The course continues by examining a number of topics including racial and ethnic identity, interracial and interethnic friendships and marriage, racial attitudes, mass media images, residential segregation, educational stratification, and labor market outcomes. The course will include discussions of African Americans, Whites, Hispanics, Asian Americans and multiracials.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: AFRC 1060, LALS 1060, SOCI 1060, URBS 1060

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1515 Gender, Work, and Family in Global Asias**

In the context of an increasingly globalized world, this course explores the complex interconnections between gender, labor practices, family structures, and broader socio-cultural dynamics within and across Asian societies. Drawing on perspectives from sociology and gender studies, this course offers a comprehensive examination of how global forces shape individual experiences and societal structures in contemporary Asia and beyond. The course is divided into six thematic sections: In the first section, we will learn and critically analyze the key concepts, perspectives, theories, and debates in the literature on gender, work, family, and globalization. This foundational understanding will frame our explorations throughout the course. The second section delves into the rise of globalized beauty standards and the hidden economies of sex work in transnational Asia. The third section focuses on the globalized care chains in which domestic care work is outsourced to underprivileged populations. In the fourth section, we will investigate how intimacy is commodified and shaped by transnational and socio-economic forces. The last two sections look at untraditional, transnational families and their children, examining how parenting styles, immigration decisions, and division of labor are influenced by race/ethnicity, class, and gender.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: EALC 0411, SOCI 2934

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1520 Asian American Activism**

Providing a broad introduction to the history of activism in the United States, this course will specifically examine the roles that Asian Americans & Pacific Islander Americans have fulfilled within both larger advocacy struggles, and the emergence of a distinctly Asian American activist movement. Firmly rooted in a critical race studies approach toward history, this course will comprehensively assess factors contributing to the historical oppression of AAPIs in mainstream American society, exploring how different groups throughout history have found ways to advocate on their own behalf. Additionally, the course will provide a deeper context behind many of the major advocacy issues, providing a context for how contemporary activist framework evolved out of various movements over the past two hundred years. Topics will include immigration and naturalization, America's role in empire, decolonization and postcolonial thought, inter-minority tensions and solidarity building practices, Pan-Asianism in the American context, socio-political divides within AAPI communities, Asian settler-colonialism in occupied Hawaii, the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, and media activism. Lectures will combine historical content and discussion of various activists and movements, sometimes featuring guest speakers whose advocacy work relates to the current week's topic. Additional out of class assignments will be given that involve participation in the virtual programs and in-person community events being offered by various Asian American advocacy groups. Students will be required to participate in at least two community events during the semester, providing an opportunity to engage with and learn from AAPI activists first-hand. Speakers listed in syllabus are subject to change based on speaker availability.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit



**ASAM 1530 Asian American Popular Culture**

This course will examine the ways in which Asian Americans have constituted and positioned their identities through various mediums of popular culture, community building and activism. First, students will become familiar with major concepts relating to Popular Culture, Cultural Studies, and Asian American Cultural Studies. Second, students will have a deeper understanding of the Asian American Movement. Third, students will make connections between representations and dominant images of Asian Americans within various mediums.

Spring

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1540 Asian American and Black Communities and Coalition Building**

"Asian American and Black Communities and Coalition Building" explores the intersection between Black and Asian American activism, organizing, and coalition building. The course will examine the historical and contemporary connection and tensions between the two diverse communities, diving into the various movements defining the communities' pursuit for equity. The course is organized to examine various periods from the Civil Rights Era to present day. It will consider the conditions that led to why coalitions formed and the multiple ways Black and Asian American communities engaged in activism and organizing.

Fall

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1610 Sonic Reverberations of Asia America**

This is a course about music as sonic cultural practices of intercultural communication and as lived experience in which racial, ethnic, diasporic, religious, gendered, sexual, national identities are formed and transformed. This course specifically examines how various ideas and meanings of Asia America are enacted and embodied through music performances and other sonic practices. The course also considers how the production and consumption of Asian American as cultural difference through music and sound impacts the making and unmaking of multiculturalism and the American self. Topics will include questions about how music and sound is mobilized within the history and stories of Asian immigration and migration to the U.S.; the impact of the transnational circulation of Asian and Asian American music; representations of AAPs in popular culture; the potentials and limits of music to mitigate social and political problems encountered by Asian American communities; and community building through sonic encounters of Afro-Asian, Asian-Latinx and Caribbean, East Asian/South Asian American solidarities. Critical and reflexive theoretical approaches from ethnomusicology, anthropology, and performance studies, among other related disciplines, will be used to examine a range of styles and genres through close listening to assigned sound recordings and music ethnographies. No previous musical training is required for this course.

Spring

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1620 Madness and Mental Health in East Asian Worlds**

Madness, however conceived, can trouble the limits of our worlds. Since COVID-19, questions of mental health have resurfaced with a sense of urgency, as many faced unprecedented changes in collective and intimate life. This course explores madness and mental health in East Asian worlds, across geographies, histories, social-political transformations, and racialized imaginations. How do East Asian therapeutics approach madness, through and beyond the concepts of psychiatry, neuroscience, or even 'mental health'? What happens when Euro-American diagnostic categories and treatments travel to East Asia as part of missionary and empire-building projects? Bringing together readings in medical and psychological anthropology, as well as history, literature, psychoanalysis, and transcultural psychiatry, we will explore themes such as: shifting concepts of madness in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese medical and spiritual cures, colonial legacies of 'culture-bound syndromes,' and race as a site of psychic struggle in Asian American diasporas.

Also Offered As: ANTH 1151

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1700 Asian Am Religions**

This course examines the changing religious landscape of the United States through a focus on the religious life of Asian Americans. Through interdisciplinary texts and ethnographic field assignments, students will consider how religion and race intersect to inform notions of cultural and political citizenship, community, and culture. Topics to be explored include the impact of 9/11, religious political activism, and the appropriation and commodification of "Asian" religious practices.

Fall

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1800 Psychology of Asian Americans**

Using a cultural perspective, this course is intended to provide knowledge of Asian American personality, identity, and its relationship to mental well being; analyze psycho-social research pertinent to Asian Americans; and develop critical thinking skills on Asian American issues through experiential learning/discussions.

Spring

Also Offered As: SAST 1800

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1810 Asian Americans and Higher Education**

Course will explore issues in higher education with an Asian American focus.

Spring

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1900 Asian American Politics**

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial minority group in the United States – what are the varied ways Asian Americans have been engaging in politics and how have they shaped the terrain of American politics? This course will survey the different facets of political life in Asian American communities, focusing on three major themes. First, we will examine the origins and evolution of “Asian America” as a political project. Second, we will explore how Asian Americans have been engaging in a variety of political arenas, from electoral politics to community organizing. We will consider topics such as voting, political representation, and grassroots activism around gentrification, anti-Asian violence, and immigrant detention and deportation. Third, we will consider the politics of interminority relations; in other words, how Asian Americans engage with other communities of color. We will focus on the political and ethical questions around affirmative action, Black Lives Matter, and multi-racial solidarity. Throughout the course, we will grapple with the multiplicities and pluralities of Asian Americans, including both the limitations and possibilities of identity politics in a diversifying America.

Fall

Also Offered As: PSCI 1292

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1910 Policing, Prisons, and Asian America**

In the era of Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate, how do Asian Americans fit into national conversations about the role of police and prisons in society? Some Asian Americans have pushed for prosecuting anti-Asian incidents as “hate crimes” and activating other carceral responses in light of pandemic-related anti-Asian violence. Others have grappled with how Asian Americans themselves face different forms of carceral violence and what solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement looks like. This course asks: What are the varied ways Asian Americans are entangled with the prison industrial complex, as invested in, impacted by, and seeking to resist policing? What can the experiences of Asian Americans tell us about the politics of race, violence, and the carceral state? First, we will examine the debates over “hate” frameworks and carceral solutions in the Stop Asian Hate movement and the broader contemporary movement against anti-Asian violence. Second, we will consider how Asian Americans are impacted by the carceral state in multiple ways, including but not limited to post 9/11 surveillance, immigrant detention and deportation, and the policing of sex work and other forms of gendered and precarious labor. Third, we will explore how Asian Americans have been resisting carceral violence, building alternatives, and engaging in projects for police and prison abolition.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: PSCI 1293

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 1990 Topics in Asian American Studies**

Topics will vary by semester. Please see [asam.sas.upenn.edu](http://asam.sas.upenn.edu) for more information.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2010 Migration and the Middle East**

This reading-and discussion-intensive seminar examines the phenomenon of migration into, out of, within, and across the Middle East and North Africa. We will focus on the period from the late nineteenth century to the present, and will emphasize the cultural (rather than economic) consequences of migration. Along the way we will trace connections between the Middle East and other regions– notably the Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Caucasus, and Western Europe. Readings are interdisciplinary and include works of history, anthropology, sociology, medical research, literature, political science, geography, and human rights advocacy. As students develop final projects on topics of their choice, we will spend time throughout the semester discussing tactics for research and writing.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MELC 1615, NELC 1615, SAST 1615

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 6615

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2093 Psyche, Trauma, Culture**

What shapes our psychic lives today? How are histories of pain and creative possibility transmitted, ruptured, and transformed? The language of mental health and trauma have become more present in recent years. These vocabularies have made room for conversations about forms of violence that may have been difficult to put into words before. In the United States, this includes the insidious effects of racialization, indigenous dispossession, and other forms of exclusion, extraction, and misrecognition. Yet, the rise of mental health discourses also poses new conundrums, as self-care is increasingly promoted in times of collective crisis, and trauma becomes a basis on which to seek rights, recognition, and resources. This course draws on the works of anthropologists, psychoanalysts, and decolonial thinkers to explore tensions between trauma, culture, and the psyche. We begin with common encounters that inform and disrupt our lives, examine historical and contemporary concepts of trauma, and close with questions of what lives on.

Also Offered As: ANTH 2093

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2100 The Wartime Incarceration of Japanese Americans**

This research seminar will consist of a review of representative studies on the Japanese American internment, and a discussion of how social scientists and historians have attempted to explain its complex backgrounds and causes. Through the careful reading of academic works, primary source materials, and visualized narratives (film productions), students will learn the basic historiography of internment studies, research methodologies, and the politics of interpretation pertaining to this particular historical subject. Students will also examine how Japanese Americans and others have attempted to reclaim a history of the wartime internment from the realm of “detached” academia in the interest of their lives in the “real” world, and for a goal of “social justice” in general. The class will critically probe the political use of history and memories of selected pasts in both Asian American community and contemporary American society through the controversial issue of the Japanese American internment.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 3150

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2110 Yellow Peril, Red Scare: Cold War Asia in America**

This course explores how the Cold War in Asia has shaped dominant ideas about race, militarism, and citizenship, with particular consequences for both Asians and Asian Americans. As decolonization movements in Asia confronted a growing US empire, Cold War paranoia became linked to longstanding tropes of Asian invasion—merging the so-called “Yellow Peril” and “Red Scare” in the American imagination. Taking a cultural history approach, students will draw on both archival sources and popular media to examine the Cold War emergence of lingering tropes such as the communist spy, the war bride, the peasant insurgent, and the model minority. Topics covered include the Korean and Vietnam Wars, McCarthyism, the Third World movement, Asian/American military service, Cold War refugee policy, anti-imperialist activism, and the legacy of Cold War geopolitics in Asia today.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 1120

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2159 The History of Family Separation**

This course examines the socio-legal history of family separation in the United States. From the period of slavery to the present-day, the United States has a long history of separating and remaking families. Black, Indigenous, poor, disabled, and immigrant communities have navigated the precarious nature of family separation and the legal regime of local, state, and federal law that substantiated it. In this course, we will trace how families have navigated domains of family separation and the reasoning that compelled such separation in the first place. Through an intersectional focus that embraces race, class, disability, and gender, we will underline who has endured family separation and how such separation has remade the very definition of family in the United States.

Also Offered As: AFRC 2159, GSWS 2159, HIST 2159

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2200 Asian American Literature Seminar**

This course is an advanced-level seminar on Asian American culture and politics. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2270

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2272 In/Visible: Asian American Cultural Critique**

This interdisciplinary seminar examines how popular cultural representations frame Asian Americans as either invisible or hypervisible—our explorations will move across race and national origin, language and class, gender and sexuality. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ARTH 3749, ENGL 2272, GSWS 2272

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2310 18th-Century Seminar: China in the English Imagination**

This course explores the material culture of china-mania that spread across England and Europe in the eighteenth century, from chinoiserie vogues in fashion, tea, porcelain, and luxury goods, to the idealization of Confucius by Enlightenment philosophers. The course texts include travel writing, poetry, essays, and plays, and is designed to provide historical background to contemporary problems of Orientalism, Sinophilia, and Sinophobia. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: COML 2031, EALC 1321, ENGL 2031

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2500 Topics in Asian American Sociology**

Topics vary. Please see our website for more current information:

[asam.sas.upenn.edu](http://asam.sas.upenn.edu)

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2600 Asian American Food**

You are what you eat. Asian American Food explores the history, politics, and ethnic identity of food through a cultural lens. Growing food, eating, and sharing meals serve as intimate expressions of self and community. By examining the production and consumption of food, the course investigates the ways that Asian Americans navigate traditions, gender norms, religious dietary laws, food habits, and employment as they create lives in the United States. The course overviews the history of Asian American foodways, but has a particular focus on Philadelphia’s Asian American communities.

Spring

Also Offered As: SAST 2600, URBS 2600

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2610 The Asian Caribbean**

Although Asians have lived in the Americas for centuries, the Asian American community and experience tends to be defined by the post-1965 wave of immigration to the United States. In an effort to correct this narrative this course will explore the histories, experiences, and contributions of some of the forgotten Asians of the Americas. In particular, we will focus on the earlier labor migrations of Chinese and South Asian individuals to the Caribbean and the United States. The experiences of these individuals, who built railroads, cut sugarcane, and replaced African slave labor, complicate our understandings of race today. By examining the legal and social debates surrounding their labor in the 19th century and exploring how their experiences are forgotten and their descendants are rendered invisible today, we will complicate what is Asian America and consider how this history shapes immigration policies today.

Spring

Also Offered As: GSWS 2610, LALS 2601, SAST 2610

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2620 Global Chinas and Chinese Diasporas**

This seminar delves into the global imprint of contemporary Chinese diasporic communities, examining their significant influence from the lens of multiple sectors and regions—from Wenzhou migrants shaping the fashion industry in Italy to copper mining enterprises in Zambia to Chinese-owned nail salons and massage parlors dotting New York City. This exploration situates Chinese communities within the context of an interconnected world. As China has ascended to become the world’s second-largest economy, its impact is not confined within its borders but extends into international politics, culture, commerce, technology, and beyond. This class endeavors to unpack the complexities of China’s global engagement and deepen students’ understanding of Chinese communities worldwide. The course is divided into two main sections. The first section provides an overview of the historical journey of China on the global stage and an introduction to research methods specific to studying this phenomenon. In the second half, the course adopts a more granular approach, delving into critical topics such as race and ethnicity, gender and family dynamics, transnational identity, educational achievement, labor, entrepreneurship, and soft power.

Also Offered As: SOCI 2933

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2910 Asian Human Rights / Asian American Civil Rights**

The last few decades have seen mass migration and movement of people from one place to another: from South, East, and Southeast Asia in the 1970s and 1980s, from Central America in the 1990s, from Africa in 2000s, and in this decade from the Middle East. In Asia, as a result of human rights violations, North Koreans have fled to China, Tibetans to India, and over 3 million individuals fled Southeast Asia in the 1980s. More than one million refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, fled temporarily to Hong Kong, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, before resettling in the United States. Philadelphia is host to all of these communities. Some of our own students at Penn are 1st or 2nd generation South and Southeast Asian Americans. This course provides a comparative overview of the history, ethnicity, religion, and cultures of Southeast Asia (and the deep connections with South Asia and East Asia), and their human rights, temporary settlement, and treatment in host countries in the region. The first part of the course will use an international human rights framework to explore the human rights issues that forced people to flee from their countries of origin. The course will challenge and expand students' understandings of international human rights in the past and in the present with a focus on human rights violations such as: A. Vietnamese fleeing the war in Southeast Asia. B. North Koreans seeking refuge in China and in South Korea. C. Tibetans hoping for protection by crossing the border into India. Given the deep diplomatic and economic relations between Vietnam and India, this international portion of the course will highlight how the two countries in the region, an Asian communist country, and the other, an Asian democratic country handle human rights in similar and different ways. The second part of the course will pivot to the US and explore the civil rights of Asian Americans in the US such as the right to migrate, seek and enjoy asylum, education, housing, employment and health. The course will feature Penn professors as guest speakers so as to expose students to our own in-house experts, their fields and their departments. In addition, As part of a Asian American Studies, South Asia Center, Netter Center ABCS course, students will visit neighborhoods where Asian Americans live, work and play: South Asian neighborhoods in Jersey City, New Jersey; Korean neighborhoods in Olney; Vietnamese and Cambodian neighborhoods in South and West Philly. Students will also intern in host organizations to learn about community needs and strengths.

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 2920 Compassionate Leadership: Power Love, Service and Inner-Work Experiencing the Life of Gandhi**

This course invites students to explore the legacies of Compassion-based leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Grace Lee Boggs, Nipun Mehta, Tony Hsieh and more. Through analysis of their lives, teachings and practices, participants will examine and practice the principles of nonviolence, service, the transformative power of love, and the "inner-work" required to have deeper impact in the world. The course will highlight how these leaders' approaches to social change and ethical living can be applied in today's globalized world. For example, understanding the powerful life work of people like Grace Lee Boggs will help guide us in digging deeper in what it means to simultaneously build and serve our respective communities. The course will focus on constructive and experiential application, reflection and critical analysis, personal practices and experiments ("inner-work") that the students will do to experience the philosophy and actions of these leaders first-hand and not just intellectually. It will require stepping a bit deeper into the Philadelphia community as well, through group activities such as a walking pilgrimage in the city, a volunteer service project, a campaign utilizing the power of 'non-violence' and more. The course will culminate in January 2026 with a service trip with Nimo and Chaz to the Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India to explore the learnings and ideas practiced through the course. The Gandhi Ashram is one of the most iconic sites in India, as it is the birth-place of the non-violent freedom movement of India that Mahatma Gandhi started in 1917, after moving back to India from South Africa. Ahmedabad city, is the 1st UNESCO World Heritage City of India and one of only 3 in the Country.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 3100 American Expansion in the Pacific**

This course examines America's expansion into the Pacific with a focus on the colonization of Hawai'i and the Philippines. The class deals with various issues, including the meaning of "frontier," imperialism, development of capitalist economies and trade relations in the region, diplomacy and militarism, migration and racism, and colonial histories of the US West, the Pacific Islands, and East Asia.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 1785

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 3110 Immigration and the Making of US Law**

This course illuminates how debates over immigration have transformed the legal contours of the United States. We examine the evolution of federal immigration policy and the legal battles immigrants waged against exclusionary practices in the U.S. from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1980s. The key federal and state cases explored in this course center on national citizenship, housing segregation, and school segregation. In addition to considering the key legal issues at stake in these cases, this course also encourages an analysis of the roles race, disability, gender, and labor play in shaping U.S. law within the context of immigration history.

Also Offered As: HIST 3910, LALS 3911

1 Course Unit



**ASAM 3130 The Chinese Body and Spatial Consumption in Chinatown**

This is a primarily an art and planning course that centers on the representation of the oriental, specifically the Chinese, in both its historical and present contexts. The localization of the Chinese throughout the Americas within Chinatown precincts were also subject to representational imaginings that were negotiated through the lens of civic planning. This course will study the often fraught negotiation between representation and planning. The hyper-urbanization of China over the past several decades has radically altered traditional conceptions of public space in China. Mass migration from rural to urban areas has meant very high population densities in Chinese cities. Traditional courtyards surrounded by housing and other modestly scaled buildings are rapidly disappearing, incongruent with the demands of heated property development. Moreover, Chinese cities have comparatively little public green space per resident compared to equivalents in the West. Zoning in Chinese cities is also much more varied for any given area than what one would find in cities such as New York, Paris, and London. Intensifying density of urban areas precludes the construction of large public squares. Furthermore, large public squares tend to be either intensively congested and overcrowded or underused due to their oversight by government that render such spaces somewhat opprobrious in terms of use. Historically, the urban courtyards of temples, native place associations, and provincial guilds served as public spaces of gathering. They were also sites of festivals and the conducting of neighbourhood and civic business. These spaces have become increasingly privatized or commodified with entrance fees. The air-conditioned concourses of enclosed shopping malls or busy outdoor market streets have become de facto public spaces in China where collective window shopping or promenading is the primary activity rather than bodily repose as one might find in a public space in a large Western city. The seminar/studio will investigate the meaning of the term public in the constitution of Chinese space, audience and critical voice through firstly the enclave of Chinatown and secondly through examples from China. The course will look into the changing conceptualization of public space in Chinatown as it has declined in its traditional form and become reinvented in the form of high-end shopping centered districts. This flux has its roots in post 1979 China as well as the post 1997 reversion of Hong Kong to China. As such, the course will examine the situation of rapid urbanization in China and the concomitant relationship to new Chinese (and Asian) districts in the North American urban and suburban landscape ie Vancouver, Toronto, Arlington (Virginia), Oakland, Los Angeles valley and Queens (Flushing), New York. In what ways can artists and designers respond to and challenge these conceptualizations of the old and the new within the context of urban change? What of the changing formations of the Chinese subject through the experiences of embodiment? How is public space produced through an ethnically bracketed bodily presence. Findings will be translated by the student as tools for design and public art imaginings. This course will include a week s trip to San Francisco to study how intense growth in the city has all but usurped old Chinatown while new and more vibrant Chinese centers have emerged in multiple other districts within the city and the suburbs.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2275, FNAR 3060

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 3131 The Chinese Body and Spatial Consumption in Chinatown (SNF Paideia Course)**

This is a primarily an art and planning course that centers on the representation of the oriental, specifically the Chinese, in both its historical and present contexts. The localization of the Chinese throughout the Americas within Chinatown precincts were also subject to representational imaginings that were negotiated through the lens of civic planning. This course will study the often fraught negotiation between representation and planning. The hyper-urbanization of China over the past several decades has radically altered traditional conceptions of public space in China. Mass migration from rural to urban areas has meant very high population densities in Chinese cities. Traditional courtyards surrounded by housing and other modestly scaled buildings are rapidly disappearing, incongruent with the demands of heated property development. Moreover, Chinese cities have comparatively little public green space per resident compared to equivalents in the West. Zoning in Chinese cities is also much more varied for any given area than what one would find in cities such as New York, Paris, and London. Intensifying density of urban areas precludes the construction of large public squares. Furthermore, large public squares tend to be either intensively congested and overcrowded or underused due to their oversight by government that render such spaces somewhat opprobrious in terms of use. Historically, the urban courtyards of temples, native place associations, and provincial guilds served as public spaces of gathering. They were also sites of festivals and the conducting of neighbourhood and civic business. These spaces have become increasingly privatized or commodified with entrance fees. The air-conditioned concourses of enclosed shopping malls or busy outdoor market streets have become de facto public spaces in China where collective window shopping or promenading is the primary activity rather than bodily repose as one might find in a public space in a large Western city. The seminar/studio will investigate the meaning of the term public in the constitution of Chinese space, audience and critical voice through firstly the enclave of Chinatown and secondly through examples from China. The course will look into the changing conceptualization of public space in Chinatown as it has declined in its traditional form and become reinvented in the form of high-end shopping centered districts. This flux has its roots in post 1979 China as well as the post 1997 reversion of Hong Kong to China. As such, the course will examine the situation of rapid urbanization in China and the concomitant relationship to new Chinese (and Asian) districts in the North American urban and suburban landscape ie Vancouver, Toronto, Arlington (Virginia), Oakland, Los Angeles valley and Queens (Flushing), New York. In what ways can artists and designers respond to and challenge these conceptualizations of the old and the new within the context of urban change? What of the changing formations of the Chinese subject through the experiences of embodiment? How is public space produced through an ethnically bracketed bodily presence. Findings will be translated by the student as tools for design and public art imaginings. This course will include a week s trip to San Francisco to study how intense growth in the city has all but usurped old Chinatown while new and more vibrant Chinese centers have emerged in multiple other districts within the city and the suburbs.

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 3211 Modern Chinese Poetry in a Global Context**

The tumultuous political and economic history of modern China has been mirrored in and shaped by equally fundamental revolutions in language and poetic expression. In this course, we will take Chinese poetry as a crucible in which we can observe the interacting forces of literary history and social change. From diplomats who saw poetry as a medium for cultural translation between China and the world, to revolutionaries who enlisted poetry in the project of social transformation, we will examine the lives and works of some of China's most prominent poets and ask, what can we learn about modern China from reading their poetry? In asking this question, we will also reckon with the strengths and limitations of using poetry as an historical source. In addition to poems, the course will include fiction, essays, photographs, and films by both Chinese and non-Chinese artists that place our poets in a broader context. We will pay close attention to how these poets represent China's place in the world, as well as the role of language in social change. Topics of discussion include: national identity, revolution, translation, gender, the body, ethnicity, and technology. Familiarity with Chinese or related cultural context is beneficial, but not required. This course introduces students to Chinese poetry in English translation. Students will leave the course with an in-depth understanding of the main figures, themes, and techniques of Chinese poetry, and will be introduced to some of the major developments in the history of China. Through a focus on primary texts, students will develop the vocabulary and analytical skills to appreciate and analyze poetry in translation and will gain confidence as writers thinking about literary texts.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 3211, EALC 3211

Mutually Exclusive: EALC 7211

1 Course Unit

**ASAM 3356 Asian American Nonfiction Workshop**

Contemporary literature has seen a recent rise of Asian American nonfiction writing, particularly in the form of essays and memoirs. Asian American writers are reshaping the form of the immigration story and the personal narrative, and are adding their voices to the pressing topics of political activism, STEM, and mental health. This course will include readings by authors such as Hsu, Hong, Nunez, Chang, Fan, Wang, Jacob, and Kalanithi, among others. For memoir and personal pieces, we will discuss how these writers transform their own material through craft, structure, and perspective. For essays, we will discuss how writers use research (and, yes, craft!) to present difficult and/or technical information in an engaging way. Students will write and workshop their own pieces of nonfiction (8-12 pages), with a choice of memoir or essay. No prior experience is necessary except for an eagerness to engage with the material and an open-mindedness during workshop discussions.

Also Offered As: ENGL 3356

1 Course Unit