Southeast Asian America
January 2018 Learning Cluster
Soka University of America

Instructor
Dr. Shane Barter  sbarter@soka.edu
Office: Maathai 310
Class: MAA 304
Hours: 1000-1130, 1300-1430

Tracy Bartolome
Mark Chia
Abigail Felix
Sara Gareeb
Mahesh Kushwaha

Raymond Ly
Nikita Sukmono
Kano Umezaki
Vasko Yorgov

Overview
The United States has long featured thriving communities of Asian descent, especially in California. Against a legacy of exclusion and prejudice, Asian-American communities have gained recognition within the fabric of American society, their hard work and success leading to new stereotypes of representing a ‘model minority’. This concept recognizes Asian-American success, but may also suggest that other minorities need to work harder or that all persons of Asian descent must succeed. A massive world region, Asia is of course home to diverse cultures and peoples. The idea of Asians as a model minority is primarily intended to describe persons of East Asian descent. Meanwhile, Southeast Asian communities, most notably persons of Vietnamese, Khmer, Hmong, Thai, and Filipino descent, face distinct American experiences.

This Learning Cluster is organized around a series of questions. How does the model minority stereotype affect Southeast Asian Americans? Who are Southeast Asian Americans? What countries do they come from? How do they work to sustain their community in the United States? To what extent have they assimilated into the US Melting Pot? How do these experiences vary over time, among second and third generation migrants? Do persons of Chinese descent from Southeast Asia conform more to East Asian experiences? How do the experiences of Southeast Asian Americans vary with those of South Asian Americans or Southeast Asians in other Western countries? What contributions have Southeast Asian Americans made to their country, how are they involved in Southeast Asian development, and what does the future hold?

Our Learning Cluster hopes to answer these questions through a variety of readings, documentary, and on-site visits to Southeast Asian diaspora communities in southern California. We hope to emphasize the tremendous diversity of the Southeast Asian American experiences.
### Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 OCT</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>Submit LC name, class information, draft syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-17 NOV</td>
<td></td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08 JAN</td>
<td>MON</td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 JAN</td>
<td>MON</td>
<td>MLK Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 JAN</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>To Los Angeles (3 nights)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 JAN</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>Return to Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 JAN</td>
<td>THURS</td>
<td>To Westminster, Irvine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 JAN</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>LC Ends, LC Fair</td>
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### Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Course Planning</td>
<td>Up to 08 January&lt;br&gt;Student will earn a participation grade based on their early efforts to construct the course. For those who join later, the professor will try to create additional opportunities to earn this grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing&lt;br&gt;Participation means many things: Speaking up in class (quality over quantity), doing the assigned readings, communicating effectively regarding assignments and other course matters, supporting your classmates, and being an active student during off-campus events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Community Presentations</td>
<td>On Wednesday 10 January&lt;br&gt;Student will select a Southeast Asian community, and then provide an overview their experiences in the United States. Presentations can be individual or in groups. Presentations should be 8-10 minutes long. Remember, see yourself as a teacher and teach the way you want to be taught!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Documentary Discussion</td>
<td>On Thursday 11 January&lt;br&gt;Student will select a documentary related to Southeast Asia America, and in class, will engage in an informal presentation / discussion about their film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Novel / Biography Review</td>
<td>Due Tuesday 23 January&lt;br&gt;This assignment consists of a written review of individual experiences associated with migration of Southeast Asian peoples. The media reviewed could be a biography, memoir, novel, documentary, or perhaps an interview (please consult with the instructor first). The written review should be 3-4 pages long, encapsulating some of the major themes and challenges faced by the persons in question. <em>Students may also write a review of an academic book if they would prefer</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Paper Outline</td>
<td>Due Friday, 26 January&lt;br&gt;This is intended to get students thinking about their research papers. 5% of your course grade will be earned through submitting an outline, hard copy in class, that provides an overview of your paper. Please provide your research question, a tentative hypothesis, a tentative outline, and an annotated bibliography with at least three academic sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>LC Fair Participation</td>
<td>On Wednesday 30 January&lt;br&gt;This participation grade focuses on student efforts to prepare for the LC Fair, communicating to the campus the many things we have learned in this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Research Paper (7-9 pages)</td>
<td>Due Thursday 01 February&lt;br&gt;Students will write a research paper based on an area of their interest from the course. Papers should include a clear research question and argument. Citation style does not matter, so long as you cite to academic standards.</td>
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</table>

### Budget (see Appendix II for details)

- **Budget: $4300**
  - $3700 Four days in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and West Covina
  - $600 Day trip to Westminster and Irvine
## Schedule

### Day One: Monday, 08 January

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 01</th>
<th>Introduction: Southeast Asian America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Model Minority, Diaspora, Enclaves, Assimilation, Jungle Asians &amp; Fancy Asians</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Session 02 | Model Minorities? |
| **Readings** | **East Asian Success, Stereotypes, Southeast Asian Challenges / Opportunities** |

### Day Two: Tuesday, 09 January

| Session 03 | About Southeast Asia |
| **Readings** | **The Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam** |

| Session 04 | History of Southeast Asian America |
| **Readings** | **Galleon Trade, Philippine Colonialism, Vietnam War** |

| **Film** | Island Roots: A Filipino-American Story, directed by Don Sellers and Lucy Ostrander (2007) |
### Day Three: Wednesday, 10 January

| Session 05 | **Southeast Asian America Today**  
Why are there many Vietnamese, Khmer, and Filipino Americans, but few Burmese, Indonesian, and Malaysian Americans?  
**Political and Identity Factors, Students, Workers, Refugees** |
| --- | --- |
AND  
SKIM  
AND  
| Session 06 | **Southeast Asian American Communities: Presentations** |
| **BREAK** | |

### Day Four: Thursday, 11 January

| Session 07 | **Media Portrayals**  
How are Southeast Asian Americans portrayed in popular culture?  
**Invisibility; Gran Torino; Hmong Gangs; Vietnam War; exoticism; Eurasian celebrities** |
| --- | --- |
| **Readings** | Amanda Hess, “*Asian-American Actors Are Fighting for Visibility: They Will Not Be Ignored*,”  
AND  
Kimberley Yam, “*Kelly Marie Tran Promotes ‘The Last Jedi’ in Traditional Vietnamese Garb*,”  
*Huffington Post* (30 November 2016).  
AND  
| Session 08 | **Southeast Asian America: Documentary**  
Students will watch a documentary before class, then discuss their films in class (see Appendix I for some potential films) |
| **Film** | PBS SoCal, “*Pass or Fail in Cambodia Town*,” *America By the Numbers* (2016) |
| **BREAK** | |

### Day Five: Friday, 12 January

| Session 09 | **Generational Challenges**  
What are some of the intergenerational challenges faced by Southeast Asian Americans?  
**First and Second Generation, Families, Gender** |
| --- | --- |
AND  
| **BREAK** | |
### Session 10

**Minorities among Southeast Asian Americans**

What other identities intersect with ethnicity among Southeast Asian Americans?

- **Sino-Southeast Asians; Christian minorities; Indigenous identities; LGBTQ**

**Readings**

- AND

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**Monday, 15 January:** No class, Martin Luther King Jr Holiday

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### Session 11

**Southeast Asian America: Community**

How do Southeast Asians maintain a sense of community in the United States?

- **Community Associations, Student Associations, endogamy and outsiders; Bayanihan**

**Readings**

- AND

**BRAKE**

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### Session 12

**Southeast Asian American Enclaves**

Are enclaves products of external pressure or internal preference?

- **Thai Town (Los Angeles), Historic Filipinotown (HiFi, Los Angeles), Cambodia Town (Long Beach), Little Saigon (Westminster)**

**Readings**

- AND
- AND

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### Day Seven: Wednesday, 17 January

**Travel to Los Angeles, Thai Town**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0800</td>
<td>Leave Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0843</td>
<td>Metrolink leaves Laguna Niguel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1004</td>
<td>Metrolink arrives Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td>Get TAP Cards, drop off bags</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lodging**

Three Nights, VRBO 731 S. Rampart Blvd (6 bedrooms, 12 beds, 7 baths)

Walk 15 mins from Westlake / MacArthur Park or bus 51/52

Contact: Rick (310-729-6256)

Alchemist Coffee: 698 South Vermont. OB Bear: Chicken Pub, 3002 7th St

**Meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Lunch: Palms Thai Restaurant (5900 Hollywood Blvd, West of Hollywood / Western)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1330</td>
<td>Thai Community Development Center (6376 Yucca St, Suite B, 323-468-2555)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530</td>
<td>Meet with Dusit (818-287-1086), Wat Thai Temple (8225 Coldwater Canyon Ave)</td>
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</table>
Day Eight: Thursday, 18 January

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings in Los Angeles: Thai Town, Historic Filipino Town</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings (Tracy)</td>
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Day Seven: Friday, 19 January

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings in Little Cambodia, Long Beach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings (Nikki)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings (Kano)</td>
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Day Eight: Saturday, 20 January

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings in West Covina (via Metrolink)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings (Abigail)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
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</tbody>
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Day Nine: Monday, 22 January

**Class at 4pm at Shane’s House: 12 Benchmark Lane. Let’s cook!!**

**Session 13**

**Southeast Asian American Cuisine**

How does food help to maintain identity?

*Fast food, traditional food, authenticity, cultural roles*

**Readings**


AND


AND

Wa Vue et al, “Hmong Food Helps Us Remember Who We Are: Perspectives of Food Culture and Health Among Hmong Women with Young Children,” *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 43:3 (2011); pp. 199-205.

AND

### Day Ten: Tuesday, 23 January

**Session 14** Southeast Asian American Spirituality
How does faith help to maintain identity?
*Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Cao Dai, conversion*
Special Guest: Dr. Jeremy Guida, PBRC Post-Doctoral Scholar

**Readings**

**BREAK**

**Session 15** Southeast Asian America: Experiences
Student Presentations: Novels, Documentaries, Interviews

### Day Eleven: Wednesday, 24 January

**Session 16** Vietnamerica
*History, Arrival, Challenges, Enclave, Religion, Politics, Student Associations*

**Readings**

### Day Twelve: Thursday, 25 January

**Meetings in Westminster**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0740</td>
<td>Enterprise (23591 Rockfield Blvd) (open 730am-6pm), Confirmation: #1256030499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0800</td>
<td>Leave Soka University (be ready, although I may be late)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0900</td>
<td>Meet with Tri Ta, Mayor of Westminster 8200 Westminster Blvd (714-366-0376)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1030</td>
<td>Meet with Phuong (657-242-5203) Cao Dai Temple (8791 Orangewood Ave)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1515</td>
<td>Meet with Julie Nguyen (657-456-9405) (12831 Western Ave, Ste B, Garden Grove) Secretary, Union of Vietnamese Student Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Meeting at Cambodian Mosque, Santa Ana (1610 E, First Street) Contact: Halima (714-585-7462)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch Duyen Vegetarian Restaurant (8851 Garden Grove Blvd)</td>
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*Day Twelve: Thursday, 25 January*

Meetings (Vasko)

Meetings (Sara)
Day Thirteen: Friday, 26 January

| Session 19 | Comparisons: Southeast Asian Diasporas  
How do Southeast Asian communities vary in Europe, Canada, and Australia?  
*Vancouver (Acehnese, Filipinos, Karen); Indonesians in the Netherlands; Malaysians in Australia*  
AND  
AND  

| Break |

| Session 20 | Comparisons: South Asian America  
How do the experiences of South Asians vary with those of Southeast Asians?  
*Sikh Planters, Indian Tech Firms*  

Day Fourteen: Monday, 29 January

| Session 21 | Southeast Asian Americans in Asia  
*Return trips, investment, transnationalism*  
AND  

| Break |

| Session 21 | Southeast Asian America: Conclusions / Looking Ahead  
*Future Directions, course evaluations, LC Fair Preparation*  
AND  
AND  

Day Fifteen: Tuesday, 30 January

| Working Day |

Day Sixteen: Wednesday, 31 January

| Learning Cluster Fair!!! |

Day Seventeen: Thursday, 01 February

| Essays due hard copy and drop box, 6pm |
Appendix I: Academic Research, Novels, and Documentaries

Bibliography
Bulosan, Carlos. 1943. America Is In The Heart: A Personal History.
Novels / Memoirs
Bui, Thi. 2018. *Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir.*

Documentaries
*All Points of the Compass: A Vietnamese Diaspora,* directed by Judy Rymer (2006)
*Anatomy of a Springroll,* produced by Paul Kwan (1994)
*A Wok-in-Progress,* produced by Paul Kwan (2000)
*Becoming American,* New Day Films (1982)
*The Betrayal: Nerakhoon,* directed by Ellen Kuras and Thavisouk Phrasavath (2008)
*Bolonia 52: The Vietnamese Boat Refugees,* directed by Duc Nguyen (2007)
*Bui Dai: Life Like Dust,* directed by Ahrin Mishan and Rick Rothenberg (1995)
*Death of a Shaman,* directed by Richard Hall (2003)
*Daughter from Denang,* directed by Gail Dolgin (2002)
*Filipino Americans: Discovering their Past for the Future,* produced and directed by John F. Wehman (1994)
*Kelly Loves Tony,* produced and directed by Spencer Nakasako (1998)
*The Learning,* directed by Ramona Diaz (2011)
*Letters to Thien,* directed by Trac Minh Vu (1997)
*Mai’s America,* produced by Marlo Poras (2002)
*Master Hua’s Requiem,* directed by Scott Edwards (2015)
*Monkey Dance,* directed by Julie Mallozzi (2005)
*Mr. Cao Goes to Washington,* produced and directed by S. Leo Chiang (2012)
*New Year Baby,* directed by Socheata Poeuv (2008)
*Pins and Noodles,* produced by Paul Kwan (1997)
*Precious Cargo: Vietnamese Adoptees Discover their Past,* produced by Janet Gardner & Pham Quoc Thai (2001)
*The Split Horn: The Life of a Hmong Shaman in America,* directed by Taggart Siegel (2008)
*Vietnamerica: The Story of the Nation’s Largest Refugee Group,* directed by Scott Edwards (2017)
## Appendix II: Course Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimated</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$4300</td>
<td>$3823.47</td>
<td>$476.53</td>
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</table>

1) **Three Days: Los Angeles (17-20 JAN)**

- Driving to San Juan Capistrano: $3700 - $3240 = $460
- Metrolink to LA: $300 - $93 = $207
- Three nights lodging: $1500 - $1494 = $6
- LA Metro (13x2x$7): $170 - $220 = +$50
- Metrolink to Aliso Viejo (13x$10): $130 - $ - $130
- Taxis: $100 - $330.28 = +$230.28

- 17 JAN: $20.07, $9.42, $15.08, $5.60, $12.31, $10.12, $26.42, $11.69 → $110.71
- 18 JAN: $10.18, $5.87 → $16.05
- 19 JAN: $15.47, $12.20 → $27.67
- 20 JAN: $69.62, $106.77 → $176.39

2) **Jeepney Tour**

- $225 +$225

3) **Meals (4x3x13*$8.50)**

- $1330 - $888.07 = -$441.93

- 12 JAN Hidden House: $55.45
- 17 JAN: $145.73, groceries $46.43, pizza $40 → $232.16
- 18 JAN: $79.80 ($45.37, $12.53, $21.90), dinner $146.62 → $226.42
- 19 JAN: $119.56, dinner ($10, $9, $112.45) → $251.02
- 20 JAN: $123.02

4) **Misc (gifts for interviewees, snacks, water)**

- $170 - $90.46 = -$69.54

5) **Day Trip: Westminster / Irvine (25 JAN)**

- 15-person van, one-day rental: $210 - $193.29 = -$16.71
- Gas, Tolls, and Parking: $100 - $27.92 = -$78.88
- Meals (2x13*$8.50): $220 - $228.52 = +$8.52
- $118.04 lunch, $50.48 Coffee, $60 donation to Mesjid

- Misc (gifts for interviewees, snacks, water): $70 - 0 = -$70