



SAWYER SEMINAR AT RUTGERS NEWARK
**NATIVES AND NATIVISTS
MIGRANTS AND IMMIGRANTS
IN AN AMERICAN CITY**

RUTGERS
UNIVERSITY | NEWARK

SAWYER SEMINAR AT RUTGERS NEWARK
**NATIVES AND NATIVISTS
MIGRANTS AND IMMIGRANTS
IN AN AMERICAN CITY**
A CONVERSATION ABOUT WHO WE ARE AS A NATION

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
**RESPONDING TO
ANTI-ASIAN HATE: POLITICS,
ORGANIZING, AND EDUCATION**

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded a grant of \$225,000 dollars to Rutgers University—Newark to support a Sawyer Seminar on the Comparative Study of Cultures entitled “Natives and Nativists, Migrants and Immigrants in an American City.”

The seminar series will be organized by Belinda Edmondson, professor of African American and African Studies, Kornel Chang, associate professor in History and American Studies, and Sean Mitchell, associate professor in Sociology and Anthropology.

Based at Rutgers-Newark, a university with a highly diverse student body, a highly active scholarly faculty, and deep roots as an anchor institution in the city of Newark, this seminar series will examine the past, present, and future of Newark in order to examine race, inequality, and immigration in the constantly changing immigrant cultures of America's cities.

It comes at an especially critical moment in our nation's history, when race, immigration and inequality can no longer be ignored or sidelined.

In the project abstract, the researchers assert that during the current global pandemic, the future of US cities—of immigration and urbanization; nativism and inclusion; gentrification and urban abandonment—has been thrown into question in a way that has not been true for decades or perhaps more. “Newark, NJ has long been a microcosm of such conflicts, in both reality and in popular imaginations.

From the Jewish Newark threatened by US nativism imagined in Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*; to the Newark of an African American uprising and

white flight of the 1960s and 1970s; to today's Newark of diverse immigrant populations and fraught immigrant politics; to the always-on-the-cusp of gentrification Newark, imagined by developers to be “the next Brooklyn” there is no better site to think through the tensions of urbanization brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic than Newark.”

During the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters, “Natives and Nativists, Migrants and Immigrants in an American City” will comprise of a series of panels and workshops that draw on the expertise and research projects of Rutgers-Newark faculty and graduate students, local, national, and global scholars, and bring together community activists, scholars and local artists who focus on these issues.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

RESPONDING TO ANTI-ASIAN HATE: POLITICS, ORGANIZING, AND EDUCATION

Anti-Asian racism has roared back with the COVID-19 pandemic. The sentiments that have fueled soaring hate crimes against AAPI communities, including killings of Asian American women in New York City and Atlanta and serial brutalization of the Asian American elderly, didn't come from nowhere.

This kick-off seminar for the 2022-2023 Mellon Sawyer Seminar, "Natives and Nativists, Migrants and Immigrants in an American City," draws together prominent scholars, activists, and educators to trace the origins of today's anti-Asian hate, grapple with its continuing legacies, and envision ways to fight it in the present moment.

SCHEDULE

WELCOME ADDRESS BY CHANCELLOR NANCY CANTOR

10:00 am - 10:10 am

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MAE NGAI AND CATHY PARK HONG

10:10 am - 11:40 am

Mae Ngai, Columbia University
Cathy Park Hong, Rutgers University, Newark
Moderated by Rose Cuison-Villazor, Rutgers University, Newark

LUNCH: 11:40 am - 12:30 pm

FINDING COMMON GROUND: THE PROMISES AND PERILS OF IMMIGRANT AND INTERRACIAL ORGANIZING

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Deepa Iyer, SolidarityIs, Building Movement Project

Vivian Truong,
Swarthmore College
Ellen Wu, Indiana University Bloomington
Diane Wong,
Rutgers University, Newark
Chaired and moderated by
Jamie Lew, Rutgers University, Newark

MAKE US VISIBLE: THE FIGHT TO INCORPORATE AAPI AND IMMIGRANT HISTORIES IN K-12 EDUCATION

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Jason Chang, University of Connecticut
Julia Wang, Immigrant History Initiative
Kathy Lu, Immigrant History Initiative
Chaired and moderated by
Jack Tchen Rutgers University, Newark

MEET OUR PANELISTS

A KICK OFF CONVERSATION BETWEEN:



Cathy Park Hong, Rutgers University, Newark

Cathy Park Hong is an American poet, writer, and Rutgers Newark professor author of the New York Times bestselling book of creative nonfiction, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. Cathy's book *Minor Feelings* was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography, and earned her recognition on TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2021 list.

Mae Ngai, Columbia University

Mae Ngai is Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies, Professor of History, and Co-director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race at Columbia University. She is author of the award winning *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (2004); *The Lucky Ones: One Family and the Extraordinary Invention of Chinese America* (2010); and *The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics* (2021). She has held fellowships from the Guggenheim foundation, the Institute for Advanced Study, the Library of Congress, among others and is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Moderated by Rose Cuisson-Villazor, Rutgers University, Newark

Rose Cuisson-Villazor is Interim Dean, Professor of Law and Chancellor's Social Justice Scholar at Rutgers University School of Law in Newark, New Jersey. Between 2019 and 2021, she served as Vice Dean. She is also Director of the Center for Immigration Law, Policy and Social Justice.

FINDING COMMON GROUND: THE PROMISES AND PERILS OF IMMIGRANT AND INTERRACIAL ORGANIZING:

Deepa Iyer, Solidaritytly, Building Movement Project

Deepa Iyer is Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives at Building Movement Project where she builds projects, resources, and narratives that support nonprofits, networks, and individuals engaged in progressive social change. Iyer is a South Asian American writer, lawyer, strategist, and facilitator whose areas of expertise include the post 9/11 America experiences of South Asian, Muslim, Arab and Sikh immigrants, immigration and civil rights policies, and racial equity and solidarity practices. She served as executive director of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) for a decade and has also held positions at Race Forward, the US Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center, and the Asian American Justice Center. Iyer's first book, *We Too Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim and Sikh Immigrants Shape Our Multiracial Future* (The New Press 2015), received a 2016 American Book Award.



Vivian Truong, Swarthmore College

Vivian Truong is Assistant Professor of History at Swarthmore College. She is a community-engaged scholar whose research and teaching interests include Asian American, urban, and social movement history. Her book project, *Policing and the Construction of Asian America*, examines Asian American and multiracial movements against police violence in New York City to argue that policing was a major site of Asian American racialization in the late-twentieth century. She co-coordinates two public history initiatives, A/P/A Voices: A COVID-19 Public Memory Project and a second project preserving the archives of the grassroots organization CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities (formerly the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence). She earned her Ph.D. in American Culture at the University of Michigan.



Ellen Wu, Indiana University Bloomington

Dr. Ellen Wu researches, teaches, and writes about race and migration in United States history. She is Associate Professor of History at Indiana University Bloomington and author of *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (2014). Her scholarship has been supported with fellowships from the Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, and New America. Her work has been featured in a variety of academic and public-facing platforms, including *Modern American History*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post's* Made By History, NPR's Code Switch, goop, the comedy show *Adam Ruins Everything*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, and the PBS documentary series *Asian Americans*. She is currently writing on *Overrepresented: The Surprising History of Asian Americans and Racial Justice*, a new story about diversity, data, and democracy in the United States forthcoming from Princeton University Press.

Diane Wong, Rutgers University, Newark

Diane Wong is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University, Newark and an affiliate faculty of Global Urban Studies, American Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies. Her research and teaching interests include American politics, race and ethnicity, critical urban studies, comparative immigration, gender and sexuality, cultural and media studies, and community rooted research. Her current book project, *You Can't Evict A Movement: Intergenerational Activism and Housing Justice in New York City*, combines ethnography, participatory mapping, archival research, augmented reality, and oral history interviews to examine intergenerational resistance to gentrification in Manhattan Chinatown. Her other book, *Contemporary Asian American Activism: Movement Moments and New Visions in the 21st Century* (co-edited with Mark Tseng-Putterman), examines a diverse range of issues from sex work decriminalization to abolition, deportation to decolonization, ecological justice to intergenerational memory. Her work has appeared in *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *Urban Affairs Review*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Amerasia Journal*, *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, *Gateways*, *Asian American Policy Review*, and a variety of edited book volumes, anthologies, podcasts, and exhibitions. As a socially engaged artist, Diane is a member of the Chinatown Art Brigade and co-founder of The W.O.W. project, a queer, non-binary, trans youth-led initiative based out of Manhattan Chinatown that uses arts activism to combat displacement.



Moderated by Jamie Lew, Rutgers University, Newark

Jamie Lew is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University. Her current research project explores how urban refugee families and children negotiate their sense of belonging and placemaking in cities in the U.S. and abroad. In this study of urban refugees, She explore how urban spaces and its institutions of schooling, housing, and work are changing and being changed by contemporary migration.

MAKE US VISIBLE: THE FIGHT TO INCORPORATE AAPI AND IMMIGRANT HISTORIES IN K-12 EDUCATION:

Jason Chang, University of Connecticut

Jason Oliver Chang is Associate Professor of History and Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut, where he serves as the Director of the Asian and Asian American Studies Institute. Chang holds a PhD in Comparative Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley as well as a Masters in Public Policy and Administration from UMass Amherst. He is a scholar and educator as well as a public servant. Chang is an elected official sitting on the West Hartford Public Schools Board of Education and Co-Chair of the Community Awareness Subcommittee of Governor Lamont's Hate Crimes Advisory Council. As co-founder of the Make Us Visible campaign, he fought for the inclusion of AAPI studies as a mandated curriculum and lead's his state's effort to meet this new education law.





Julia Wang, Immigration History Initiative

Julia Wang is the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of the Immigration History Initiative. She has also published several articles on immigration and Asian American identity. Since co-founding IHI, she has developed official PBS Learning Media lesson plans for the award-winning PBS documentary, *Asian Americans*, and led trainings in Asian American history, law, and identity for many institutions and educators, including the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, and public and private secondary schools on the East Coast. Julia obtained her J.D. from Yale Law School, a MPhil in History from the University of Cambridge, and her AB in History from Harvard University.

Kathy Lu, Immigration History Initiative

Kathy Lu is the co-founder of the Immigration History Initiative (IHI), a non-profit that produces educational resources on immigrant histories and aims to fundamentally change how we learn, talk, and think about race, migration, and social justice in America. She has over ten years of experience working with AAPI immigrant communities, and at IHI has partnered with PBS to create lesson plans for the series *Asian Americans*, provided programming for Boston Public Schools and Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, and organized with communities in the Northeast. Ms. Lu grew up in Oregon and holds a Juris Doctor from Yale Law School and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Chinese from Pomona College.



Moderated by Jack Tchen, Rutgers University

Jack (John Kuo Wei) Tchen is a historian, curator, dumpster-diver, and teacher surfacing the disappeared stories othered by systems of power and wealth. Dr. Tchen is the Clement A. Price Professor of Public History & Humanities and Director of the Price Institute on Ethnicity, Cultures, and the Modern Experience Rutgers-Newark. He is the founding director of the A/P/A (Asian/Pacific/American) Studies Program and Institute at New York University, NYU. He co-founded the Museum of Chinese in America. His ten-years of work on anti-Asian xenophobia, a two-hour PBS documentary on the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, and exhibition at the New-York Historical Society led him to focus on intersectional history of American eugenics. Via a series of exhibits, conferences, and performances, he has been retelling NYC-US history from the largely disappeared and unperceived frames of the "rights of nature," settler extractive colonialisms, and "Nordic" eugenics hierarchies of "fit" elite, white Protestants versus the world's "unfit" others. He currently serves on the NYC Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) and is building teams of faculty, staff, and graduate/undergrad students to be collaborating with communities and community organization is grappling with the immediate impacts of climate change on water, soil, and food.

MADE POSSIBLE BY OUR TEAM:



Belinda Edmondson, Principal Investigator

Belinda Edmondson is a scholar of Caribbean literature at Rutgers University, Newark, where she holds a joint appointment in English and Africana Studies. Her most recent book is *Creole Noise: Early Caribbean Dialect Literature and Performance* (Oxford UP, 2022).

Kornel Chang, Co-Principal Investigator

Kornel Chang is Associate Professor of History and American Studies at Rutgers University, Newark. His research and teaching interests include Asian American history, the United States in the Pacific world, and race, migration, and labor in the Americas. His current book project, tentatively titled *Occupying Knowledge: Expertise, Technocracy, and De-Colonization in the U.S. Occupation of Korea*, examines the role of technocrats and expert knowledge in the U.S. Occupation of Korea.





Sean T. Mitchell, Co-Principal Investigator

Sean T. Mitchell is Associate Professor of Anthropology and director of Peace and Conflict Studies at Rutgers University, Newark. He writes about inequality politics in Brazil and elsewhere. He is the author of *Constellation of Inequality: Space, Race and Utopia in Brazil* (Chicago 2017) and co-editor of *Precarious Democracy: Ethnographies of Hope, Despair and Resistance in Brazil* (Rutgers 2021), among other works.

Bernie Lombardi, Postdoctoral Associate

Bernie Lombardi is Postdoctoral Associate in Africana Studies at Rutgers University, Newark and has been on the team at the Newark City of Learning Collaborative since 2016. His publications have appeared or are forthcoming in *Research in African Literatures*, *College Literature*, *The Black Scholar*, and the edited collection *Langston Hughes in Context* (Cambridge UP 2023). He also blogs about books and contemporary literary culture on Instagram: @bernie.lombardi.



Mi Hyun Yoon, Graduate Assistant

Mi Hyun Yoon is a PhD candidate in American Studies at Rutgers University, Newark. Her research looks at the history of the Korean diaspora in the United States through the transnational context of Asian America and Korea. Her latest article is "Kung Flu and Roof Koreans: Asian/Americans as the Hated Other and Proxies of Hating in the White Imaginary" (*Journal of Hate Studies*, 2021).

Iliana Smith, Graduate Assistant

Iliana Smith is an English Master's Candidate at Rutgers University, where she focuses on Caribbean postwar literary movements and visual culture. She has presented at the 2022 Black Portraiture Conference, where she co-organized the panel "Performance, Poetics, & the Story: A Merging of Interdisciplinary Expression and Identity." She is currently working on a profile of the Caribbean writer and one of the founders of the Caribbean Artists Movement, Andrew Salkey.



Sara Márquez Durst, Graduate Assistant

Sara Márquez Durst is pursuing an MA in English here at Rutgers-Newark. Her background is in Old English Literature and Japanese Folklore Studies, which she studied at Rutgers-NB. Sara is a published short story author and combines her academic and creative interests to explore identity, time, and place.

Arshy Hernandez, Social Media Associate

Arshy Hernandez has an AA in graphic design and a BFA in Graphic Design. She is experienced in visual communications, social media management, illustration, and motion graphics. As a Dominican native female, she merges a strong connection to her culture and traditions with vibrant and bright colors to create beautiful pieces with a critical approach to design. Hernandez has created designs for the Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute, NJSBDC State Office as a graphic design intern.



Christina Strasburger, Department Administrator, History and Africana Studies

Christina Strasburger is an administrative and academic professional with over two decades of experience in higher education. She provides a range of education, information, and advocacy services for students, faculty, staff, and community. She is co-founder of the award-winning Queer Newark Oral History Project, a community-directed initiative dedicated to recording and preserving the history of LGBTQ+ people in and of Newark, NJ.

FULL SCHEDULE

**RESPONDING TO
ANTI-ASIAN HATE:
POLITICS, ORGANIZING,
AND EDUCATION**
SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

**POLITICS ACROSS
BORDERS:
IMMIGRATION,
NATIVISM, ACTIVISM
AND TRANS-BORDER
POLITICAL SENTIMENT**
OCTOBER 27, 2022

**MIGRATION,
DISPLACEMENT,
AND THE ARTS**
NOVEMBER 16, 2022

BLACK CITIZENSHIP
MARCH 8, 2023

**PANDEMIC AND THE
CITY**
APRIL 12, 2023



**PROGRAM DESIGNED BY ARSHY
HERNANDEZ**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO SAYA
WOOLFALK FOR PERMISSION
TO USE HER ARTWORK**
*ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CLOUD
DIVISION (PLATE I) (2018)*



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