

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY'S

“Beloved Community”

THE NEED FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

Colleen Tonra, IWL Scholar '24

Social Action Project

Policy Track: Education, Law and Advocacy

December 13, 2023

AGENDA

- IWL Statement
- Addressing the Problem
- Mission Statement
- Intellectual & Conceptual Foundations
- Feminist Leadership
- Partnerships and Outreach
- Timeline
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Institute for Women's Leadership

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice* leadership *through* action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>.

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Current course offerings in SEA Studies (S24):

American Studies (050)

3 courses

- Asian American History
- Topics in American Studies
- Asian American Literatures in English

Asian Studies (098)

3 courses

- Elementary Filipino
- Intermediate Filipino/Culture II
- Southeast Asia and the World

Religion (840)

3 courses

- Religion in Asia
- Islam
- Buddhist Philosophy

MISSION STATEMENT

To centralize current information regarding Southeast Asian Studies and faculty at Rutgers University.

To address the hypocrisy of “Beloved Community,” as shown through the lack of academic resources provided to Southeast Asian students.

“Rutgers fails to adhere to its own ideals of inclusivity and limits its own academic research by undervaluing Southeast Asian studies in the greater context of Asian and Asian American studies. As a result, Southeast Asian students are unable to feel wholly accepted and appreciated at an institution that does not reflect their own culture academically.”

searu.univer.se

OUR COMMUNITY



689M

22M

29%

689M People in SEA

Over 689 million people live in the 11 countries recognized as Southeast Asia.

22M Asian Americans

Over 22 million Asian-identified people currently live in the United States of America. This statistic is not exclusive to Southeast Asians. This is the fastest-growing demographic in the nation.

29% of this is SEA*

In 2019, 29% of the Asian population in the United States were identified as Vietnamese or Filipino. Other Southeast Asian groups were listed under “Other,” which added to 15% of the total Asian population.

(Pew Research Center, 2021)

POSSIBLE COURSE TOPICS

- Buddhism in Southeast Asia
- Islam in Southeast Asia
- Communism in Southeast Asia
- Language courses
 - Vietnamese, Tagalog, Thai, Malay
- The Khmer Rouge
- American Imperialism in Southeast Asia
- Global Feminism in Southeast Asia

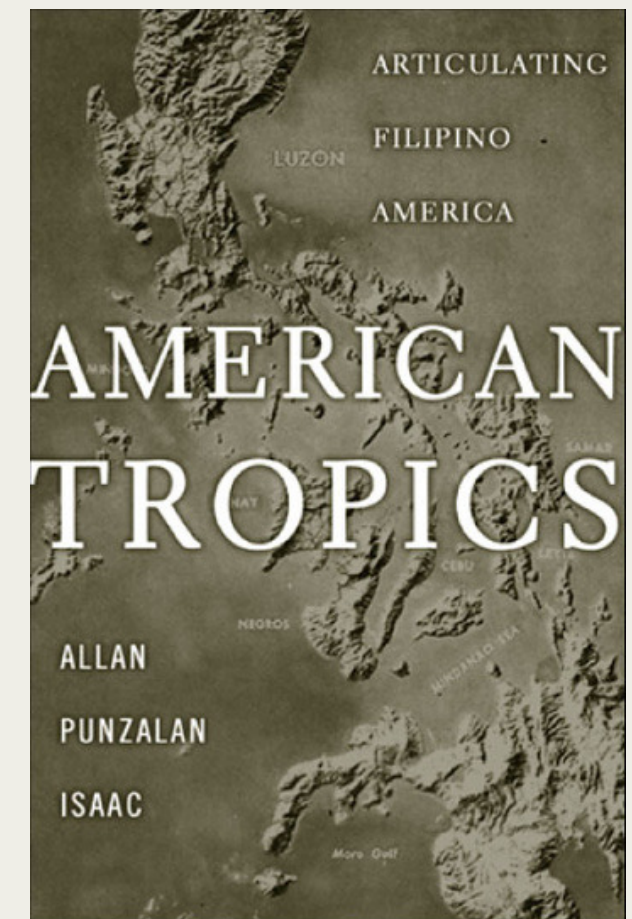
OTHER UNIVERSITIES

- Cornell University
 - Southeast Asian Studies Minor
- University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
 - Southeast Asian Studies Minor
- University of California, Berkeley
 - Department of South & Southeast Asian Studies (SSEAS)
 - Center for Southeast Asian Studies
- Stanford University
 - Southeast Asia Program
- University of Michigan
 - Center for Southeast Asian Studies

INTELLECTUAL/CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

“Obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all” (McIntosh, 1989, p.5).

“Although an impressive number of Americans whose ancestors are from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (‘Southeast Asian Americans’) have achieved tremendous success in education, a disproportionate number have found it difficult to succeed academically. Yet their difficulties are largely invisible to policymakers, who end to look only to the aggregate data on Asian Americans—data that suggest that, as one large undifferentiated group, Asian Americans are doing quite well” (Yang, 2004, p.1)



American Tropics by
Allan Punzalan Isaac
book cover

FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

The Southeast Asian diaspora is largely made up of refugees or descendants of refugees. Many of these refugees are women and children, yet do not receive specific care based on these identities, making the state of Southeast Asians a feminist issue.

Almost half of the migrants of Southeast Asian origin — 11.7 million — are women. However, in some countries, the percentage is much higher; in Thailand, for example, it is 61 per cent, and more than 55 per cent in Malaysia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (UN DESA, 2020).

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

- Southeast Asians of Rutgers University
- Vietnamese Student Association
- Rutgers Association of Philippine Students
- Rutgers University Asian American Cultural Center

TIMELINE

Research

June-Aug. 2023

In order to advocate for Southeast Asian Studies, I needed to have the proper historical and academic context on the field. Why is this discipline important?

Collaborate

Sept. 2023

Once I had a concrete idea of my project process, I needed to meet with various campus groups and organizations, including faculty, the Asian American Cultural Center, SEARU, VSA, and RAPS.

Write

Oct.-Nov. 2023

Along with gathering information, I wrote a short piece advocating for more Rutgers resources dedicated to Southeast Asian Studies.

Gather

Nov. 2023

When the Office of the Registrar released the list of course offerings for Spring 2024, I looked in-depth for courses that could relate to Southeast Asian Studies. At this time, I additionally looked through the Global Asia's department for relevant faculty to include.

Design

Nov.-Dec. 2023

With the External Social Chair of SEARU, Sophia Delrosario, I designed the Instagram graphics and website visuals of the information we would be publishing.

GRAPHICS (COVER)



GRAPHICS (CONTINUED)

AMERICAN STUDIES (050)

01:050:253

3 cr

Asian American History

3 cr

01:050:377

Asian American Literatures in English

**Cross-Listed with: 01:358:389

RELIGION (840)

01:840:211

3 cr

Religion in Asia

3 cr

01:840:369

Buddhist Philosophy

ASIAN STUDIES (098)

01:098:102

4 cr

Elementary Filipino

3 cr

01:098:252

Southeast Asia and the World

Cross-Listed with: 01:508:250

IMPACT AND EVALUATION

- Closed sections of various courses
- Online engagement
 - @searutgers on Instagram
 - 613 followers


How to continue?

- Updates each semester to the list of courses
- Contact other universities' Southeast Asian departments and centers to arrange panels to foster greater interest
- Email SAS Dean with cultural organizations (SEARU, VSA, and RAPS) advocating for SEA studies

Post Insights

Messaging-related insights, such as shares and replies, may be lower than expected due to privacy rules in some regions. ×

[Learn More](#)



December 6 at 10:58 AM

124
10
22
11

Overview ⓘ

Accounts reached	620
Accounts engaged	133
Profile activity	71

Reach ⓘ

620
Accounts reached



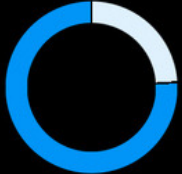
424	196
Followers	Non-Followers

Impressions **824**

From Home	557
From Other	235
From Profile	23
From Explore	9

Engagement ⓘ

133
Accounts engaged



101	32
Followers	Non-followers

Post interactions **167**

Likes	124
Shares	22
Saves	11
Comments	10

Profile activity ⓘ **71**

Profile Visits	57
External link taps	10
Follows	4

REFLECTION

- Time management
- Self-care as an activist
- Collaboration

Ongoing question:

How can we make student activism transformative, in which we can impact academic institutions?

Thank you!

**PROFESSOR VIOLA LASMANA
THE INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP
SOUTHEAST ASIANS OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
SOPHIA DELROSARIO
ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER
VIETNAMESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
RUTGERS ASSOCIATION OF PHILIPPINE STUDENTS**

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