



STUDENT TESTIMONIALS: THE BENEFITS OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

1. Promotes 21st Century Skills: Critical Thinking, Communication, Cultural Competencies

I like the problem-posing nature of Asian American studies. We're presented with heavy historical and present day issues. It thus cultivates a critical kind of learning, and definitely whets one's appetite for the things that we're passionate about, for the things yet to be seen, and for the story yet to be told.

– Boaz Tang

Asian American Studies gave me the opportunity to think more critically about the way we frame history to understand who we are, where we are in connection to the American state, and how we operate today, given the challenges that we face.

– Richard Lim

To me, Asian American studies represents new possibilities and new directions that you didn't think you could do before. It offers critical concepts that people deserve to explore before they make adult decisions.

– Elizabeth Mason

2. Increases academic performance

Seeing myself represented in AAS courses boosted my confidence and sparked a fire in me to learn more about our histories. I was in the front of the class every day writing notes and was so passionate about learning. Once I saw myself in the textbooks, it flipped a switch and I finally felt competent.

– Charlene Cayanan

I wasn't that model minority student that everyone thinks Asians are growing up, so I would often feel like I wasn't good enough in school. After taking AAS classes that piqued my interest, I felt driven to read widely and really devote myself to the course material. This, in turn, made me have so more confidence in other areas of my academics. I felt like if I could put in this much effort into these classes, then I can do that for all my other classes too.

– Eunice Kim



AAS courses were very important to me because I felt like the discussions had real-world impact and I would come away from them with a better understanding of how to tackle certain issues, how to communicate with other marginalized groups, and how to build solidarity among our communities.

– Julia Biswas

3. Improves race relations by addressing racial differences and similarities

Asian American Studies pushes you to foster a more critical, but also contemporary perspective about race relations, about our role to play when black and brown folks are consistently penalized. All in all, to what extent do we perpetuate racism and what can we do to transform and dismantle it?

– Richard Lim

I've been learning to apply what I've learned in AAS. As I'm in a lot of cross-cultural relationships, I'm constantly trying to figure out how we can coexist with all of our stories and different, lived experiences.

– Queenie Serano

Through Asian American Studies, I've learned that we have always been portrayed as the silent minority and that we're always fighting against other minorities because of white supremacy. But in reality, we need to come together in solidarity and fight for what we believe is right.

– Charlene Cayanan

4. Reduces stereotypic attitudes

AAS has helped me to understand anti-Blackness in the Asian community and the racial divide better. I gained the language to explain these concepts and the realization of how and why race was constructed in the US, and how that plays out into our everyday lives helps me to understand why these racial tensions exist.

– Krysty Shen

AAS gave me the knowledge to have my own voice when speaking about racial tensions rather than just keeping quiet because I don't know if I'm saying the right thing or I don't know if I'm going to offend someone.

– Eunice Kim

Asian American Studies allowed me to foster my understanding of what solidarity is and what we can imagine it to look like. It played an important role in showing me that I, as an Asian American, can think more deeply about my impact on other people of color and the politics that will support or engage others within the American liberal democracy.

– Richard Lim

5. Builds civic engagement for an inclusive democracy



I'm definitely more of an organizer and advocate now after taking AAS than I was before. I now understand that every vote does count and it's really important to do my due diligence to help elect officials who reflect my beliefs and the changes I want to see.

– Krysty Shen

AAS made me feel that I could actually make an impact—we can stand together as a community, we can advocate, we can fight for legislation, we can take to the streets. Being around people with the same vision and building a community of advocates helps me with my own sense of agency and realization that even though I am one person, together, we can make a huge difference.

– Julia Biswas

The first advocacy project that I did in AAS helped me realize that I love advocacy—I loved speaking out for someone who has experienced discrimination, or someone who just got the short end of the stick. Regardless, I knew I wanted to do more projects that had to do with advocacy. Asian American studies showed me what my passion was—to advocate for marginalized communities and bring people together in solidarity to have a collective voice.

– Eunice Kim

