

APARRI 2026 Conference Program



Hope & Struggle:
Navigating Today, Nurturing Tomorrow

Digital Program



Unit 2 All Purpose Room*
2650 Haste Street
UC Berkeley

** All events will be held in the All Purpose Room (APR) unless otherwise noted.*

Tuesday | June 9

- 12:00 pm [Check-In](#) (UC Berkeley dorms, Unit 2 Towle Hall, 2650 Haste St.)
- 3:00 pm [Conference Registration & Reception](#)
- 4:00 pm [Keynote Address: Michelle “Mush” Lee, “Crates, Breaks & Catching the Spirit: Faith & Hip Hop from the Middle of the Story”](#)
- 6:00 pm [Dinner Reception](#) ([Raleigh’s Pub](#), 2438 Telegraph, back patio, for registered conference participants who have RSVPed only)

Wednesday | June 10

- 8:30 am [Coffee, Continental Breakfast, and Conversation](#)
- 9:00 am [Welcome to APARRI:
Introduction to the Conference & One Another](#)
- 10:15 am [Break](#)
- 10:30 am [Plenary Session #1: New Books in AAPI Religions](#)
Moderator: David Chao, Princeton Theological Seminary
Panelists:
Ju Hui Judy Han, [*Queer Throughlines: Spaces of Queer Activism in South Korea and the Korean Diaspora*](#) (University of Michigan Press, 2025), UCLA
Rebecca Kim, [*Estranged Pioneers: Race, Faith and Leadership in a Diverse World*](#) (Oxford UP, 2024), Pepperdine University
Janette H. Ok, [*The New Testament in Color: A Multiethnic Bible Commentary*](#) (IVP Academic, 2024), Fuller Theological Seminary
Sharon Suh, [*Emergent Dharma: Asian American Feminist Buddhists on Practice, Identity, and Resistance*](#) (Penguin Random House, 2025), Seattle University
- 12:00 pm [Lunch \(APR & APARRI Lounge\)](#)

1:30 pm

Concurrent Sessions I

Panel #1: Faith, Belonging, and Religious Identity in the South Asian Diaspora in the U.S. (L03)

Moderator: Esha Meher, Yale University

Nuwan Herath, University of Kentucky

"Transnational Monasticism: Packaging and Adapting Sinhalese Buddhism in the United States"

Snehal Sharma, University of Kentucky

"Ambassadors of Hinduism: Identity and Representation in the American Diaspora"

Shruthi Parthasarathy, University of Kentucky

"Embodied Religion: Caste, and Gender Among Brahmin Priests in the U.S."

Papers Session #1: Historical and Contemporary Case Studies of Hope: Migration, Nationalism and Transnationalism (APR)

Moderator: Grace Sill, Emory University

Zikang Hou, Rice University

"Transnational Epistemologies: Chinese Immigrants Navigating Faith, Secularity, and Diasporic Solidarity in America"

Seyoon Chun, University of Pennsylvania

"Adoption Wars: American Missionaries, Korean American Social Workers, and International Adoption in Twentieth Century South Korea"

Shirley Lung, University of Denver

"(Long-Distance) Nationalism within Taiwanese-in-name Churches"

Garam Han, UCSF Health at Hyde and Stanyan

"Finding Hope by Sharing our Struggles"

Panel #2: Resisting Empire: The Experiences of Buddhist Chaplains in a Safety Net Hospital (L06)

Moderator: Jesse Lee, Washington University in St Louis

Maya Lee, Harvard Divinity School

"'We Were Never Meant to Survive This': Meditative Silence, Story-telling, and Resistance in a Safety-net Hospital"

Jiamin Li, Harvard Divinity School

"Translating Care: Language, Ritual, and Chaplaincy in a Safety-Net Hospital"

Jeffrey Ng, Harvard Divinity School
"Who Am I When I Pray With You? Authenticity and Diffused Religious Identity as a First-Generation Immigrant Chaplain"

Dhondup Palden, Harvard Divinity School
"From Monastery to Hospital: Tibetan Buddhist Meditation and Compassion in American Interfaith Chaplaincy"

Respondent: Samuel Lowe, Boston Medical Center

Panel #3: Spiritual Retellings: Asian American Media, Secular Religious Idiom, and Popular Reception (Wada L15)

Moderator: Hatty Lee, Yale University

Isra Syed, Yale University
"Retelling Islamic Law on Screen: From Ramy to Deli Boys"

Karis Ryu, Yale University
"Retelling the Marriage Plot: Bridgerton's Asian Heroines"

Kaitlan Bui, University of London
"Poetry as Spiritual Eulogy and Material Resurrection: Diana Khoi Nguyen, Cathy Linh Che, and Re-memembering the Dead Vietnamese Refugee"

Panel #4: Religion, Spirituality, and Mixed-Race Asian Americans: A Round Table (Room) (L07)

Moderator: Paul Spickard, UC Santa Barbara

Lily Anne Welty Tamai, CSU Channel Islands
"Japanese/White Buddhist Experience"

Rena M. Heinrich, University of Southern California
"Filipina/White Catholic Experience"

Courtney Turner, Southern Nazarene University,
"Chinese/White Protestant Experience"

Naja Christmas, UC Santa Barbara
"Afro-Asian Nondenominational Christian Experience"

3:00 pm [Boba Break](#)

3:30 pm

Concurrent Sessions II

Panel #5: Multi-Faith Organizing Against Hindu Nationalism: Victories and Challenges (L03)

Moderator: Shashank Rao, Sadhana Coalition of Progressive Hindus

Vivek Kembaiyan, Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA)

"Stopping Censorship in Education: A Case Study of Ethnic Studies in Fremont"

Safa Ahmed, Indian American Muslim Council

"Combating Wedge Politics in the Diaspora"

Karthik S., Ambedkar King Study Circle

"Capturing Caste in U.S. Law: Challenges and the Fight for Legal Recognition"

Panel #6: Hope Under Constraint: Race, Gender and Theological Imaginaries in Asian Diasporic Christian Communities (L07)

Moderator: Gabi Kim, Emory University

Samuel C. Chao, Emory University

"Heathens for Heaven: Religion, Race, and Chinese American Relational Redemption, 1873-1920"

Yun-Ching (Victoria) Shen, Emory University

"Taiwanese American Christian Women's Transpacific Political Activism - A Case Study of Rev. Eileen YiYi Yang"

Sora Um, Emory University

"All Things Work Together for Good: The Triangle Where K-Wave, Mission, and Business Meet in Performing God's Work"

Joseph Cho, Emory University

"'To Make Dead Things Come Alive: Cultivating Relationship and Restoration at One Life's Sensory Garden"

Panel #7: Radical Belief (Wada L15)

Moderator: Hope Chang, Princeton Theological Seminary

Johaina Crisostomo, Johns Hopkins University

"The Romance of Rights: Catholic Social Justice in the Novels of American Philippines"

Andrew Leong, UC Berkeley

"Prefigurations of 'Prefigurative Politics': Arishima Takeo's Post-Christian Anarchism"

Colton Bernasol, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
"The Religion of Filipino Revolution: Unassimilable Filipino Subjectivity and Christian Form in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*"

Cheng-Chai Chiang, UC Berkeley
"Speaking in Tongues"

Roundtable #1: Servingness, Solidarity & Care: AANAPISIs in Higher Education (APR)

Moderator & Panelist: David Yoo, Asian American Studies, UCLA

Lisa S. Hirai Tsuchitani, Ethnic Studies, UC Berkeley

Mike Hoa Nguyen, Education, UCLA

5:00 pm [Break](#)

5:15 pm [Local Excursions and Activities \(meet in the All Purpose Room\)](#)

Excursion #1: Tour of UC Berkeley Asian American Library Religion Archives with Sine Hwang Jensen, Asian American Studies librarian (Ethnic Studies Library) | meet Helen Jin Kim in All Purpose Room to walk over together

Excursion #2: Thrifting with UC Berkeley pre-med graduate (Class of 2026), Kedhar Bartlett

Creative Workshop / Informal Roundtable with Karis Ryu, Colton Bernasol, Naomi Kim-Yu, Libby Kao

APARRI creatives, join us for a time of community building & collective dreaming! We'll have a low-key sharing session (open-mic-style) of recent work, followed by a free-flowing roundtable on building and sustaining creative practices amid academic work, political organizing, and/or faith and religious life — a conversation we'll continue over dinner as a group for those interested. Bring a snippet of your own projects to share — poetry, prose, visual art, soundcloud, new unrealized ideas — and come find out what other creative APARRIstas are up to!

6:30 pm [Dinner on your own \(meet at the whiteboard to either find dinner companions or join one of the dinner groups listed below; please note: everyone will pay for their own meal\)](#)

Jaisy Joseph - women in early career dinner group [note: Jaisy will not be able to attend the mentoring luncheon, so here's your chance to chat with her]

Russell Jeung - community-engaged scholarship dinner group

Peter Choi - vocational improv beyond academia (including writing for many publics) dinner group

Funie Hsu/Chhî - dinner group to a nearby, veg-friendly place

Kalpesh Bhatt - dinner group to a nearby, veg-friendly place

Justin Tse - "Silent Exodus and Other Shenanigans" dinner group

7:30 pm [Post-Dinner Graduate Student Gathering \(APARRTI\) at Derek Wu's](#)

University Village, Albany, accessible by the 52 or 18 bus lines; Please RSVP [using this link](#) or text Derek at 925-364-1367 by 7:00 pm for his APT # and for head count purposes; feel free to come later, but *before* midnight when the party ends

Thursday | June 11

8:30 am [Coffee, Continental Breakfast, & Conversation](#)

9:00 am [Plenary Roundtable: Interfaith Resistance to Fascism](#)

Moderator: Brad Onishi, Axis Mundi Media

Panelists:

Rita Nakashima Brock, Brite Divinity School

Rev. Laura Mariko Cheifetz, Presbytery of San Francisco

Sarah Merchant, UC Berkeley

Najeeba Syeed, Augsburg University

10:30 am [Break](#)

11:00 am [Pre-circulated Papers & Center for Asian American Media \(CAAM\) Storytelling Pitch Workshop](#)

Conference participants/attendees are expected to read pre-circulated papers ahead of the session so the authors can receive helpful feedback. Papers are available [here](#) for all to review.

Pre-circulated Papers #1: Imagining and Re-imagining the Church in Diasporic and Transnational Context (L07)

Moderator: Annie Li, Princeton University

Paper #1: Kristina Micu, St. Peter's University
"The 'Imagined' Global Church: Transnational Faith Networks Between the Philippines and the United States"

Respondent: Young Lee Hertig, Innovative Space for Asian American Christianity

Paper #2: David Chao, Princeton Theological Seminary & Stephen Chen, Wellesley College
"Diasporic Desires: Faith, Hope, and Love Across Asian American Generations"

Respondent: Russell Jeung, San Francisco State University

Pre-circulated Papers #2: Indigenous Sovereignty and Affective Evidence in the Wake of Violence (L03)

Moderator: Sarah Halabe, UC Berkeley

Paper #3: Nathan Samayo, Princeton Theological Seminary
"Giant Clams and Plundered Worlds: Learning with Hima at Sagan Kotturan CHamoru"

Respondent: Tammy Ho, UC Riverside

Paper #4: Sruti Suryanarayanan, CUNY Graduate Center
"cutwater: Insurgent scars in the Wake"

Respondent: Sangay Mishra, Drew University

Pre-circulated Papers #3: Contemplating Aesthetic Solace and Ambivalent Presence (Wada L15)

Moderator: Lisa Cleath, Princeton Theological Seminary

Paper #5: Naomi Kim-Yu, Washington University in St. Louis
"Beyond Repair: The Relief of Iconographic Beauty in Chang-Rae Lee's *The Surrendered*"

Respondent: Andrew Leong, UC Berkeley

Paper #6: Jane Hong, Occidental College,
"An Ambivalent Presence: Asian American Evangelicals and the Problem of Race"

Respondent: Derek Wu, UC Berkeley

From Research to Narrative: The Spectrum of Scholarship, Story, and Creative Collaboration (APR)

Moderator: Lily Qi, Center for Asian American Media (CAAM)

Filmmaker Panelists:

Zosette Guir
Dinesh Sabu + Lajwanti Waghray
Joua Lee Grande
Fatima Omar
Brian Lu

Although research and documentary filmmaking may seem to speak vastly different languages, there is an inherent connection between the two disciplines. Scholars must be effective storytellers who translate individual narratives into findings, while compelling documentaries are grounded in rigorous research. What does it mean to connect the two expressions to create empathetic and impactful work for the public?

To answer this question, the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), in collaboration with APARRI, invites Asian American filmmakers from the Midwest region and APARRI scholars to participate in a co-creation process to develop a series of short documentaries that combine research with storytelling. In this interactive session, the audience will hear from filmmaking teams about their proof-of-concept development process rooted in research findings, and participate in a group workshop to further explore the creative potential of scholarly work.

*Attendees are encouraged to [consider these reflection questions](#) before or during the workshop.

12:30 pm [Lunch \(APR & APARRI Lounge\)](#) + optional mentoring session for grad students + scholars at any stage of their career during lunch in Wada L15

Mentors: KC Choi, Chenxing Han, Jaisy Joseph, Janelle Wong, David Yoo: bios & mentoring topics are [here](#)

2:00 pm [Informal Roundtables](#)
Propose a topic for a roundtable on the conference whiteboard. Roundtable locations will be posted on the whiteboard right before this session.

3:00 pm [Break](#)

3:30 pm [Concurrent Sessions III](#)

Papers Session #2: Art, Performance and Aesthetics in AAPI Traditions (L03)

Moderator: Rudy Busto, UC Santa Barbara

Wenxuan Xue, Tufts University

"Papercutting as Praxis of Return: Dreaming, Ancestral Place, and Diasporic Taoism"

Chali Lee, Stanford University

"Cosmologically (Un)Placeable: Queer Hmong Spiritual Lifeworlds Through Film"

Linda Uyechi, Stanford University

"Centering Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in North American Taiko"

Sydney Kim Razo Moss, University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

"Satori with the Unarchived: Photography, Meaning-Making, and Korean-American Mediation"

Papers Session #3: Theorizing Hope and Hopelessness (L06)

Moderator: Tat-siong Benny Liew, College of the Holy Cross

KC Choi, Princeton Theological Seminary

"Asian American Armed Self-Protection: A Theo-Political Assessment"

Jae Jun Cho, Vanderbilt University

"Rest in the Midst of Struggle: Migrant Labor, Religious Hope, and Asian American Faith in the Diaspora"

Xianfeng Shi, Boston University

"Ritual as Praxis for Hope: Lunar New Year in a Buddhist Temple"

Ren Ito, Community Organizer

"Against Hope: A Theology of Political Hopelessness"

Papers Session #4: History and Archive in Asian American Religious Memories (APR)

Moderator: Seokweon Jeon, New York University

Aniket De, UC San Diego

"Religion and Anticolonial Federalism in South Asian American Radical Politics, 1914-1920"

Rachel Lim, CSU Sacramento

"Tracing the Path: Korean Diasporic Memory Work in Mexico and the United States"

Ken Miyagi, Princeton Theological Seminary

"Issei Christian Historical Formation: Religio-Racial Formation in Unfulfilled Racial Struggle of the Post-1924"

Ki-Eun Jang, Fordham University
"Affective Geographies of Intranational Diaspora in Japanese American Camp Church Bulletins and Newsletters Collection (1942-1945)"

Papers Session #5: Cultivating Spaces of Hope & Belonging (Wada L15)

Moderator: Sravya Tadepalli, Hindus for Human Rights

Justin Tse, Linda Kwak, Chanhee Heo, Ellen Zhou
"The Origins of the Silent Exodus Myth: Korean American Evangelical Oral Histories in the Greater Los Angeles Area"

Humayra Alam, Texas A&M University
"Making of Transnational Mosque Space: Program, Governance, and Collective Belonging in Greater Houston, Texas"

Auds Jenkins, Community Organizer
"Liturgies We Made: Ritual Innovation, Coalition, and Care"

Kalpesh Bhatt, University of Mary Washington
"Building Hope in Hostile Ground: Hindu Temples and the Struggle for Belonging in America"

Rachel Bundang, Sacred Heart Schools
"Anamnesis: Creating Canon from Community"

Panel #8: Deepening our Understanding of Confucianism and Daoism for Clinicians & Social Activists: Enriching Applied Approaches for Asian American/Pacific Islanders (L07)

Moderator: Stephen Chen, Wellesley College

Nancy H. Liu, UC Berkeley

Heng Du, Wellesley College

5:00 pm [Break](#)

5:15 pm [Conference Wrap-up & Conference Photo](#)
You don't want to miss this!

7:30 pm [Closing Banquet \(Great China, 2190 Bancroft Way, for registered conference participants who have RSVP'd only\)](#)

APARRI 2026 Sponsors

Special thanks for the generous sponsorship and support from:

Henry Luce Foundation
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APARRI 2026 Conference and Site Committee

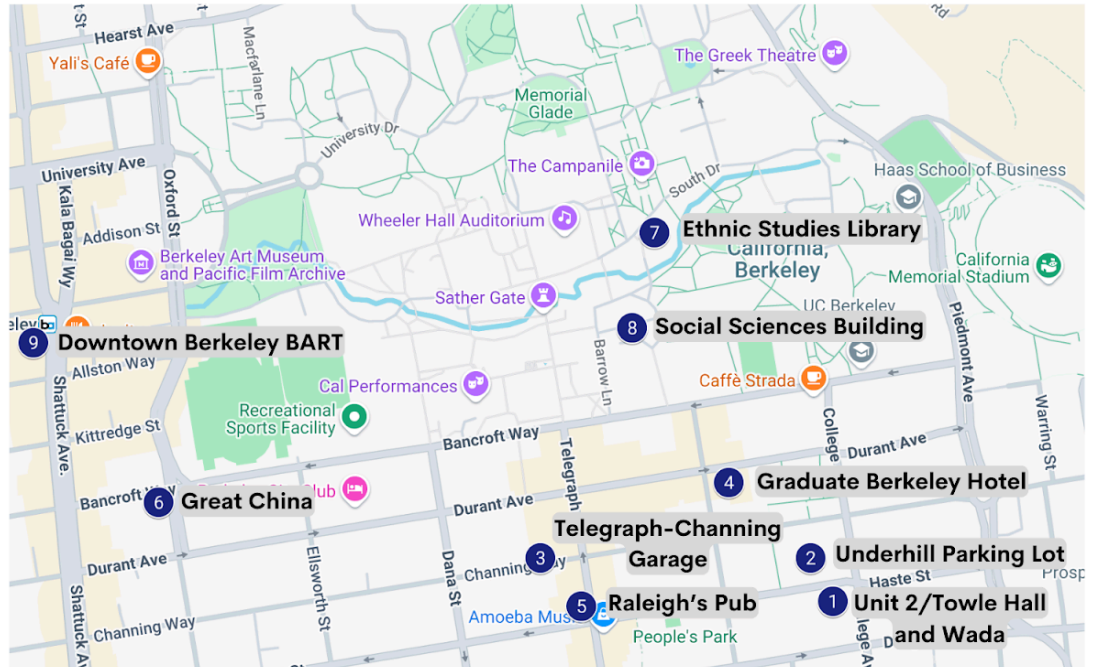
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Iliana Morton
Patty Dunlap
Breana George

Notes

APARRI 2026 Map

Conference Locations

- 1 Underhill Parking Lot
- 2 Telegraph-Channing Garage
- 3 Graduate Berkeley
- 4 Raleigh's Pub
- 5 Great China
- 6 Ethnic Studies Library
- 7 Social Sciences Building
- 8 Downtown Berkeley BART
- 9 Unit 2/Towle Hall and Wada



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[@apareligions](#) #APARRI2026

Upload your photos



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At the end of the conference, please take our post-conference survey:

