

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2018 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

POSTER SESSION 2

Commons East, Easel 62

1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

Politicizing Asian American Mental Health: Interpreting Trends

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Anthropology: Medical Anth & Global Hlth

Mentor: Connie So, American Ethnic Studies

Mentor: Skye Naslund, Department of Geography

This project is a discourse analysis of biomedical studies on Asian American mental health within the past twenty years, examining the extent to which trends are interpreted as due to cultural difference rather than sociopolitical factors. When researchers ascribe health outcomes to false and overgeneralized perceptions of Asian American culture, stereotypes are replicated as biomedical fact at the expense of Asian American wellbeing. For instance, many studies in Asian American mental health literature emphasize low help seeking. While some researchers cite preconceived monolithic notions of 'Asian' values surrounding shame and stigma, other research has revealed more compelling correlations such as lack of insurance, gender, and nativity status. Approaching from an American Ethnic Studies lens, I examine the extent to which research design and terms used in data analyses integrate understandings of Asian American history and politics. Examples include use of data disaggregation, to understand trends of individual Asian American ethnic groups, as well as references to landmark legislation.

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The Implications of the US Citizenship Exam on Concepts of Citizenship and Americanness

Izet Mendoza Ruiz, Senior, American Ethnic Studies

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Mary Gates Scholar

Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies

This research focuses on obtaining a better understanding of

people's knowledge regarding the US Civics Test or more commonly known as the Citizenship Exam. The US Citizenship Exam is taken by individuals who are in the process of becoming US citizens, meaning naturalized citizens. The purpose of this research is to survey individuals of different documentation status about their knowledge regarding the US Citizen Exam in order to obtain a better understanding of people's interpretations of citizenship and Americanness, and to observe the correlation between key demographics and participants' beliefs. This research was conducted through an interview of 15 participants. The survey used to interview participants comprised of three parts: 1) demographic information about participants' backgrounds, 2) five questions from the US Citizenship Exam, and 3) five conceptual questions about citizenship. This meant observing if participants knew the correct answers to questions from the Citizenship Exam, or were knowledgeable about the process to become a US citizen. Through the responses to the conceptual questions about citizenship, we obtained a better understanding of participants' interpretations of citizenship and Americanness. With this data, we observed correlations between the demographics (identities) and the results (knowledge and beliefs). As a result, we find that the US Citizenship Exam neither efficiently nor accurately captures the meaning of citizenship. In addition, we also find that citizenship is not synonymous with feelings of being American. One may have legal status but may not feel American, while one may feel American and not have legal status. Overall, the findings complicate the concept of citizenship, and question about what it means to be American.