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Featured Bookshelf: 2021 Asian Pacific American Heritage

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Welcome to Asian Pacific American Heritage Month!

It has been a difficult 14 months for the world, but our Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) brothers and sisters have faced even more struggles. From small harassments to intense acts of violence, the AAPI community has borne the brunt of American fears and grief relating to the pandemic. These malicious acts demonstrate as a country we are not living up to the ideals of our nation. As Americans and Knights, we need to demonstrate these ideals are worth fighting for. Actions you can take range from learning more about the AAPI experience and history to using any privilege we have to push back against racism and violence.

One way to learn more about AAPI history and experiences is to visit the [Libraries' Readings on Race guide](#). This guide includes pages for general information about racism in America and how to have conversations about it to pages specifically addressing the experiences of marginalized communities in the United States such as Asian America Pacific Islander, African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Indigenous. Take some time to familiarize yourself with lived experiences beyond your own race or ethnicity so we can stand together and become a more inclusive Knight community.

If you witness or experience incidents of discrimination or violence, [report them to the university](#). If any of these incidents have impacted you, UCF has resources that can help. For more information, visit [UCF Cares](#), [Student Care Services](#) or [UCF Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) if you are a student, and the [Employee Assistance Program](#) if you are an employee.

For 2021 Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, UCF Libraries faculty and staff have suggested these 20 books from the library's collection by or about Asian Pacific Americans. Keep reading below to see the full list, descriptions, and catalog links. There is also an extensive physical display on the main floor of the John C. Hitt Library near the Research & Information Desk.

A Burning by Megha Majumdar

After a fiery attack on a train leaves 104 people dead, the fates of three people become inextricably entangled. Jivan, a bright, striving woman from the slums looking for a way out of poverty, is wrongly accused of planning the attack because of a careless comment on Facebook. PT Sir, a slippery gym teacher from Jivan's former high school, has hitched his aspirations to a rising right wing party, and his own ascent becomes increasingly linked to Jivan's fall. Lovely, a spirited, impoverished, relentlessly optimistic hjira, who harbors dreams of becoming a Bollywood star, can provide the alibi that would set Jivan free - but her appearance in court will have unexpected consequences that will change the course of all of their lives. A novel about fate, power, opportunity, and class; about innocence and guilt, betrayal and love, and the corrosive media cycle that manufactures falsehoods masquerading as truths.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions and Collection Services

American History Unbound: Asians and Pacific Islanders by Gary K. Okihiro

A survey of U.S. history from its beginnings to the present, this reveals our past through the lens of Asian American and Pacific Islander history. In so doing, it is a work of both history and anti-history, a narrative that fundamentally transforms and deepens our understanding of the United States. This text is accessible and filled with engaging stories and themes that draw attention to key theoretical and historical interpretations. Gary Y. Okihiro positions Asians and Pacific Islanders within a larger history of people of color in the United States and places the United States in the context of world history and oceanic worlds.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

American Panda by Gloria Chao

A freshman at MIT, seventeen-year-old Mei Lu tries to live up to her Taiwanese parents' expectations, but no amount of tradition, obligation, or guilt prevent her from hiding several truths-- that she is a germaphobe who cannot become a doctor, she prefers dancing to biology, she decides to reconnect with her estranged older brother, and she is dating a Japanese boy. Can she find a way to be herself, before her web of lies unravels?

Suggested by Pam Jaggernauth, Curriculum Materials Center

Asian American History: a very short introduction by Madeline Y. Hsu

Madeline Y. Hsu weaves a fascinating historical narrative of this "American Dream." She shows how Asian American success, often attributed to innate cultural values, is more a result of the immigration laws, which have largely pre-selected immigrants of high economic and social potential. Asian Americans have, in turn, been used by politicians to bludgeon newer (and more populous) immigrant groups for their purported lack of achievement. Hsu deftly reveals how public policy, which can restrict and also selectively promote certain immigrant populations, is a key reason why some immigrant groups appear to be more naturally successful and why the identity of those groups evolves differently from others.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

Eyes That Kiss in the Corners by Joanna Ho

A young Asian girl notices that her eyes look different from her peers'. They have big, round eyes and long lashes. She realizes that her eyes are like her mother's, her grandmother's, and her little sister's. They have eyes that kiss in the corners and glow like warm tea, crinkle into crescent moons, and are filled with stories of the past and hope for the future. Drawing from the strength of these powerful women in her life, she recognizes her own beauty and discovers a path to self love and empowerment. This powerful, poetic picture book will resonate with readers of all ages and is a celebration of diversity. *Suggested by Pam Jaggernauth, Curriculum Materials Center*

Frankly in Love by David Yoon

High school senior Frank Li is caught between his parents' traditional expectations and his own Southern California upbringing. His parents have one rule when it comes to romance: 'Date Korean.' But Frank falls for Brit Means, who is smart, beautiful-- and white. Joy Song is in a similar predicament, and they make a pact: they'll pretend to date each other in order to gain their freedom. It seems like the perfect plan, until their fake-dating maneuver leaves Frank wondering if he ever really understood love-- or himself-- at all.

Suggested by Pam Jaggernauth, Curriculum Materials Center

Ghosts of Gold Mountain: the epic story of the Chinese who built the Transcontinental Railroad by Gordon H. Chang

The long-lost tale of the Chinese workers who built the Transcontinental Railroad, helping to forge modern America only to disappear into the shadows of history. In this groundbreaking book, award-winning historian Gordon H. Chang recovers the stories of these "silent spikes" and returns them to their rightful place in our national saga. Drawing on recent archaeological findings, as well as payroll records, ship manifests, photographs, and other sources from American and Chinese archives, Chang retraces the laborers' odyssey in breathtaking detail. He introduces individual workers, describes their hopes and fears, and shows how they lived, ate, fought, loved, worked, and worshiped. Their sweat and blood not only fueled the ascent of an interlinked, industrial United States, but also laid the groundwork for a thriving Chinese America. A magisterial feat of scholarship and storytelling, this book honors these immigrants' sacrifice and ingenuity, and celebrates their role in this defining American achievement.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

Good Enough by Paul Yoo

A Korean American teenager tries to please her parents by getting into an Ivy League college, but a new guy in school and her love of the violin tempt her in new directions.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Student Learning & Engagement/Research & Information Services

Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu

Everyday Willis Wu leaves his tiny room in a Chinatown SRO and enters the Golden Palace restaurant, where Black and White, a procedural cop show, is in perpetual production. He's a bit player here too, but he dreams of being Kung Fu Guy-- and he sees his life as a script. After stumbling into the spotlight, Willis finds himself launched into a wider world than he has ever known, discovering not only the secret history of Chinatown, but the buried legacy of his own family, and what that means for him in today's America.

Suggested by Ying Zhang, Administration

Last Witnesses: reflections on the wartime internment of Japanese Americans edited by Erica Harth

To the writers in this book - novelists, memoirists, poets, activists, scholars, students, professionals - the World War II internment of Japanese Americans in the detention camps is an unfinished chapter of American history that mars the nostalgic glow that often surrounds the World War II home front years. Former internees, like John Tateishi and Robert Maeda, and children of detainees and of camp officials join with others in challenging readers to construct a better future by confronting this dark episode from America's World War II scrapbook.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

Minor Feelings: an Asian American reckoning by Cathy Park Hong

With sly humor and a poet's searching mind, Hong uses her own story as a portal into a deeper examination of racial consciousness in America today. This intimate and devastating book traces her relationship to the English language, to shame and depression, to poetry and female friendship. A radically honest work of art, it forms a portrait of one Asian American psyche—and of a writer's search to both uncover and speak the truth.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Student Learning & Engagement/Research & Information Services, and Ying Zhang, Administration

Monstress by Marjorie M. Liu

Set in an alternate matriarchal 1900's Asia, in a richly imagined world of art deco-inflected steam punk, Liu tells the story of a teenage girl who is struggling to survive the trauma of war, and who shares a mysterious psychic link with a monster of tremendous power, a connection that will transform them both and make them the target of both human and otherworldly powers

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions and Collection Services

Paper Son: the inspiring story of Tyrus Wong, immigrant and artist by Julie Leung

An inspiring picture-book biography of animator Tyrus Wong, the Chinese American immigrant responsible for bringing Disney's Bambi to life. Before he became an artist named Tyrus Wong, he was a boy named Wong Geng Yeo. He traveled across a vast ocean from China to America with only a suitcase and a few papers. Not papers for drawing--which he loved to do--but immigration papers to start a new life. Once in America, Tyrus seized every opportunity to make art, eventually enrolling at an art institute in Los Angeles. Working as a janitor at night, his mop twirled like a paintbrush in his hands. Eventually, he was given the opportunity of a lifetime--and using sparse brushstrokes and soft watercolors, Tyrus created the iconic backgrounds of Bambi.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Student Learning & Engagement/Research & Information Services

Run Me to Earth by Paul Yoon

Alisak, Prany, and Noi--three orphans united by devastating loss - must do what is necessary to survive the perilous landscape of 1960s Laos. When they take shelter in a bombed out field hospital, they meet Vang, a doctor dedicated to helping the wounded at all costs. Soon the teens are serving as motorcycle couriers, delicately navigating their bikes across the fields filled with unexploded bombs, beneath the indiscriminate barrage from the sky. In a world where the landscape and the roads have turned into an ocean of bombs, we follow their grueling days of rescuing civilians and searching for medical supplies, until Vang secures their evacuation on the last helicopters leaving the country. It's a move with irrevocable consequences--and sets them on disparate and treacherous paths across the world.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions and Collection Services

Searching for Sylvie Lee: a novel by Jean Kwok

A poignant and suspenseful drama that untangles the complicated ties binding three women--two sisters and their mother--in one Chinese immigrant family and explores what happens when the eldest daughter disappears, and a series of family secrets emerge. Sylvie, the beautiful, brilliant, successful older daughter of the Lee family, flies to the Netherlands for one final visit with her dying grandmother--and vanishes. Amy is too young to remember a time when her parents were newly immigrated and too poor to keep Sylvie, who was raised by a distant relative in a faraway, foreign place. Amy flies to the last place Sylvie was seen, retracing her sister's movements. It seems Sylvie kept painful secrets that reveal more about Amy's family than she ever could have imagined.

Suggested by Rachel Mulvihill, Downtown Library

Somewhere Only We Know by Maurene Goo

Told from two viewpoints, teens Lucky, a very famous K-pop star, and Jack, a part-time paparazzo who is trying to find himself, fall for each other against the odds through the course of one stolen day.

Suggested by Pam Jaggernauth, Curriculum Materials Center

Strangers from a Different Shore: a history of Asian Americans by Ronald Takaki

In an extraordinary blend of narrative history, personal recollection, and oral testimony, the author presents a sweeping history of Asian Americans. He writes of the Chinese who laid tracks for the transcontinental railroad, of plantation laborers in the canefields of Hawaii, of "picture brides" marrying strangers in the hope of becoming part of the American dream. He tells stories of Japanese Americans behind the barbed wire of U.S. internment camps during World War II, Hmong refugees tragically unable to adjust to Wisconsin's alien climate and culture, and Asian American students stigmatized by the stereotype of the "model minority."

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See

This beautiful, thoughtful novel illuminates a world turned upside down, one where the women are in charge, engaging in dangerous physical work, and the men take care of the children. A classic Lisa See story—one of women's friendships and the larger forces that shape them—this book introduces readers to the fierce and unforgettable female divers of Jeju Island and the dramatic history that shaped their lives.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

What We Carry: a memoir by Maya Shanbhag Lang

Lang grew up idolizing her brilliant mother, an accomplished psychologist who immigrated to the United States from India, completed her residency and earned an American medical degree while nurturing young children and keeping a traditional Indian home. Her mother's stories motivated her, encouraged her, offered solace when she needed it. When Lang becomes a mother herself, her mother becomes a grandmother who is cold and distant. Reexamining the stories of her childhood, Lang realized that being able to accept both myth and reality is what has finally brought her into adulthood.

Suggested by Ying Zhang, Administration

Your House Will Pay by Steph Cha

In the wake of the police shooting of a black teenager, Los Angeles is as tense as it's been since the unrest of the early 1990s. But Grace Park and Shawn Matthews have their own problems. Grace is sheltered and largely oblivious, living in the Valley with her Korean-immigrant parents, working long hours at the family pharmacy. Shawn has already had enough of politics and protest after an act of violence shattered his family years ago. But when another shocking crime hits LA, both the Park and Matthews families are forced to face down their history while navigating the tumult of a city on the brink of more violence.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions and Collection Services

Tumblr post: <https://ucflibrary.tumblr.com/post/649988847057420288/welcome-to-asian-pacific-american-heritage-month>

Blog post: <https://library.ucf.edu/news/featured-bookshelf-2021-asian-pacific-american-heritage-month/>