

The background features a complex, abstract design with overlapping organic shapes in teal, maroon, and red. Various patterns are scattered throughout, including white wavy lines, small white dots, and short white dashes. A white, hand-drawn rectangular border frames the central text.

Orient-ing Ourselves: Asian Americans and Place-Making

MODULE 1

By Chesa Caparas

Learning Objectives

- Introduce the concept of "Orientalism" and apply it to the representation of Asians/Asian-Americans in the US
- Analyze the ways that racial/ethnic culture connects to physical spaces
- Research the history of local spaces associated with Asian-American communities
- Evaluate one's strengths when working in groups

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features large, organic shapes in shades of teal, red, and dark purple. These shapes are filled with various patterns: some have wavy white lines, others have small white dots, and some have white dashes. A prominent feature is a grid of white plus signs (+) in the lower center. The overall aesthetic is modern and graphic.

Lesson 1: What is Orientalism?

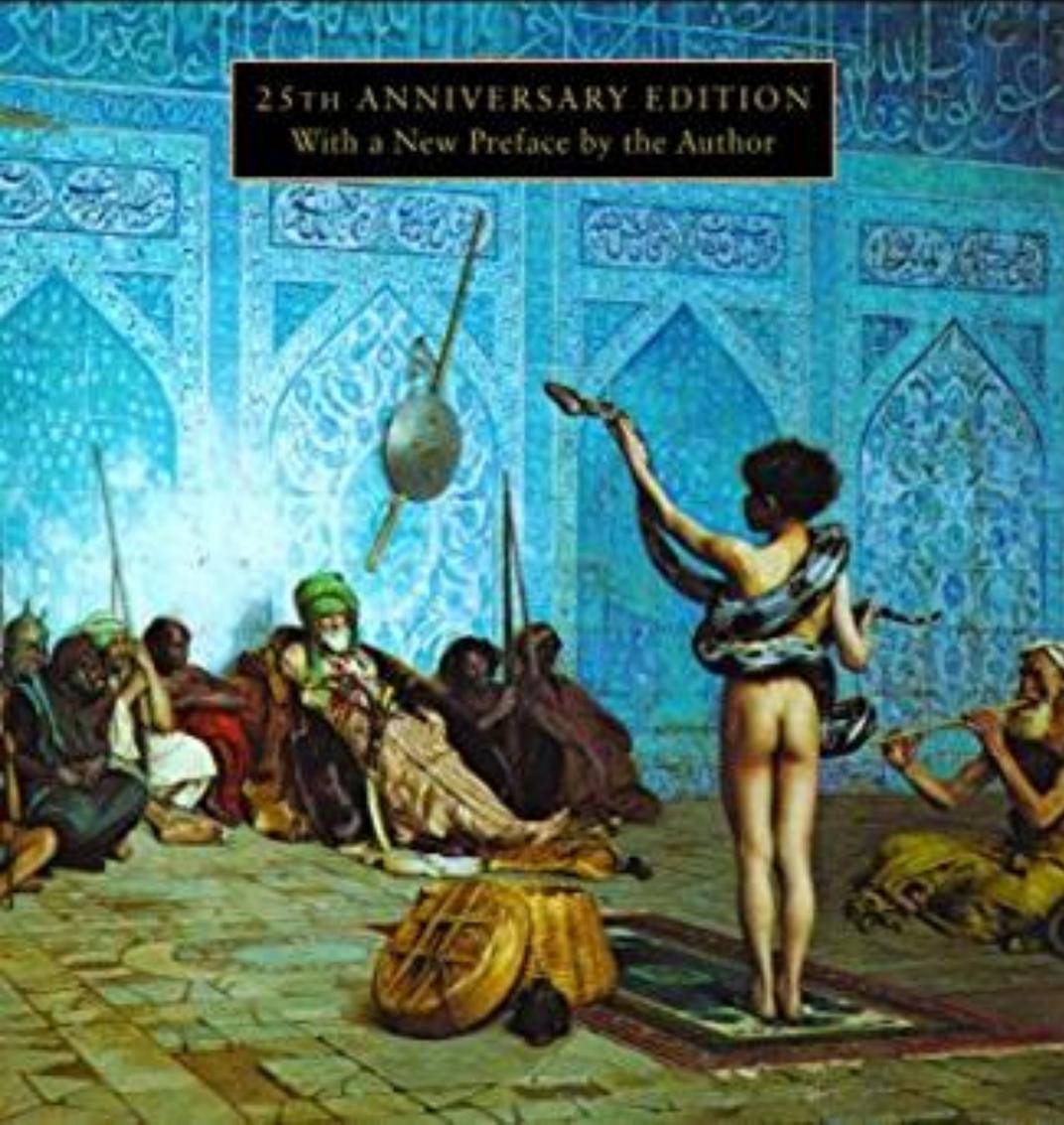
Warm-up questions

What is the root of the term to "orient"?

How does this connect to Asian American Studies?

Orientalism

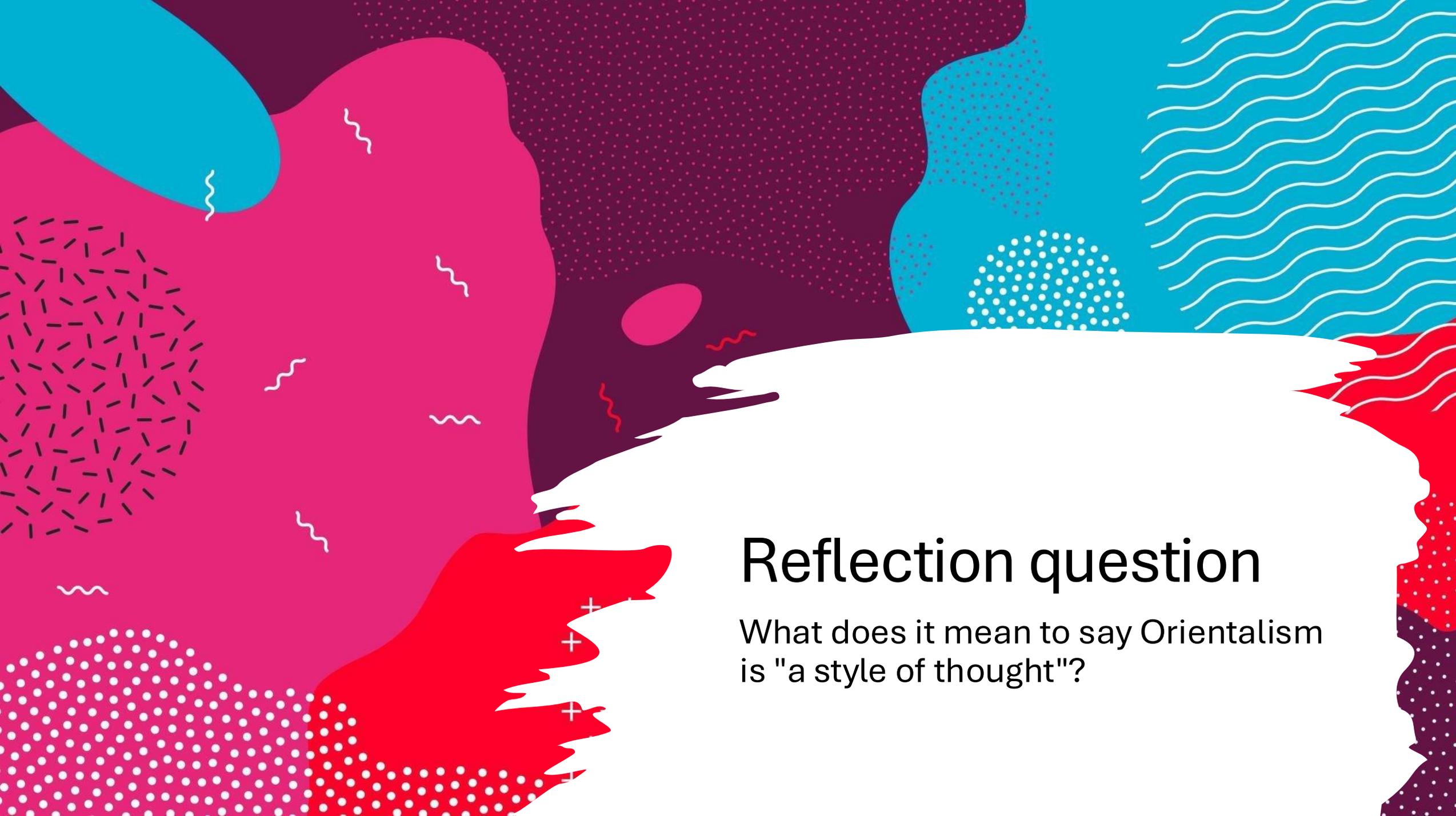
25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
With a New Preface by the Author



Edward Said's "Introduction"

Said argues that Orientalism is based on a binary opposition between "the East" and "the West":

"Orientalism is a style of thought based upon the ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features large, organic shapes in shades of pink, magenta, and red. A prominent blue shape in the upper right contains white wavy lines. Another blue shape in the center has a white dotted pattern. The bottom left corner is filled with a dense pattern of white dots on a pink background. Small white squiggly lines and red plus signs are scattered throughout the composition. A large, white, brush-stroke-like shape on the right side frames the text.

Reflection question

What does it mean to say Orientalism is "a style of thought"?

Important Vocabulary from Said

- **Ontological:** related to the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of being
 - Ontology asks: What is or what exists? What does it mean "to be"?
- **Epistemological:** related to the branch of philosophy that studies knowledge
 - Epistemology asks: How do we know what we know? What are the limits of our knowledge?
- **Discourse:** (drawing on Michel Foucault) refers to all the things that have been said or written about a particular topic which connect to the construction of knowledge about that topic. In other words, the ways we talk about a topic and come to *know* about that topic are connected to larger systems of power

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features a dark purple field with a fine white dot pattern. Overlaid on this are several organic, flowing shapes in bright cyan, magenta, and red. The cyan shapes include a large one with white wavy lines and another with a white dot pattern. The magenta area contains several small white wavy lines. The red area at the bottom left has white plus signs. A large, white, brush-stroke-like shape on the right side frames the text.

Key Takeaway

What we "know" about a culture (epistemology) shapes what we think that culture is (ontology) and manifests in the ways we talk about and represent that culture (discourse). This is all connected to systems of power.

More context on Said

- The East was an *object* of knowledge for the Western *subject*.
- This power dynamic can be seen in cultural representations, which is why he analyzes works of literature.
- He focuses primarily on countries that we would today consider the Middle East as it was imagined by Europeans (France and England) and is aware that the concept would take on a different US context.

Questions for discussion

- How do people in the US today come to know about Asians and Asian Americans?
- What are some widespread cultural representations that inform how people think about Asian Americans?
- What are the limits to what people know about Asians and Asian Americans?



Putting It All Together

Knowledge, Power, and Asian
American Studies



OUR NARRATIVE

A History of Asian American
Studies at De Anza

Review "Our Narrative"

Discuss: How did De Anza become a place for Asian American Studies?

The background features a dark maroon base with various abstract shapes and patterns. On the left, there's a teal shape with a dashed pattern. In the center, a large teal shape has a dotted pattern. On the right, a red shape has a wavy pattern. At the bottom, a red shape has a grid of white plus signs. A white horizontal line is positioned below the main text.

Lesson 2: Orienting toward Asian American Spaces

RECAP OF PREVIOUS LESSON

How we imagine or "know" a space is shaped by power dynamics tied to larger historical, social, cultural, political, and economic forces.



Asian Americans and Dance

[Watch video on Amit Patel, Bollywood dancer from Fremont, CA](#)

Discussion Questions

- How did Asian Americans like Amit Patel reclaim dance for his cultural identity?
- Connecting to the readings by Yutian Wong and Amy Taxin and Christopher Weber:
 - How did dance halls become associated with the Asian American community?
 - What role did dance halls play for the Asian American communities in Monterey Park?
 - What is the impact of incidents of violence in these culturally significant spaces?

Watch the Documentary
"Rising Against Hate: One
Day in March" (PBS, 2022)

**RISING AGAINST
ASIAN HATE**
ONE DAY IN MARCH



An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a large, irregular shape in shades of pink and magenta. To its left is a solid blue shape. Below the pink shape is a red shape with a white grid of plus signs. The bottom left corner has a pattern of white dots on a pink background. Several white wavy lines are scattered across the pink area. The background of the graphic is a dark purple with a fine white dot pattern.

First Discussion Question

- Connecting the video to the readings by Catherine Ceniza Choy and Mari Uyehara:
 - What were the historic, social, political, and economic conditions that led to spas being a space associated with Asian American women?

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition. It features a dark purple field with a fine white dot pattern. Overlaid on this are several organic shapes: a large blue shape with a white dot pattern, a red shape with a white plus sign pattern, and a red shape with white wavy lines. The text is contained within a white, torn-edge paper-like shape on the right side.

Second Discussion Question

After watching the video, how did it feel to hear from different people impacted by the spa shootings, such as family members, coworkers, and friends?

Individual stories as "historical inventory"

"The notion of writing a historical inventory is not to understand oneself, but to understand oneself in relation to others, and to understand others as if you would understand yourself."

--Edward Said (1998), *On Orientalism*



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Lesson 3: The "Taking Up Space" Project

Guiding Question

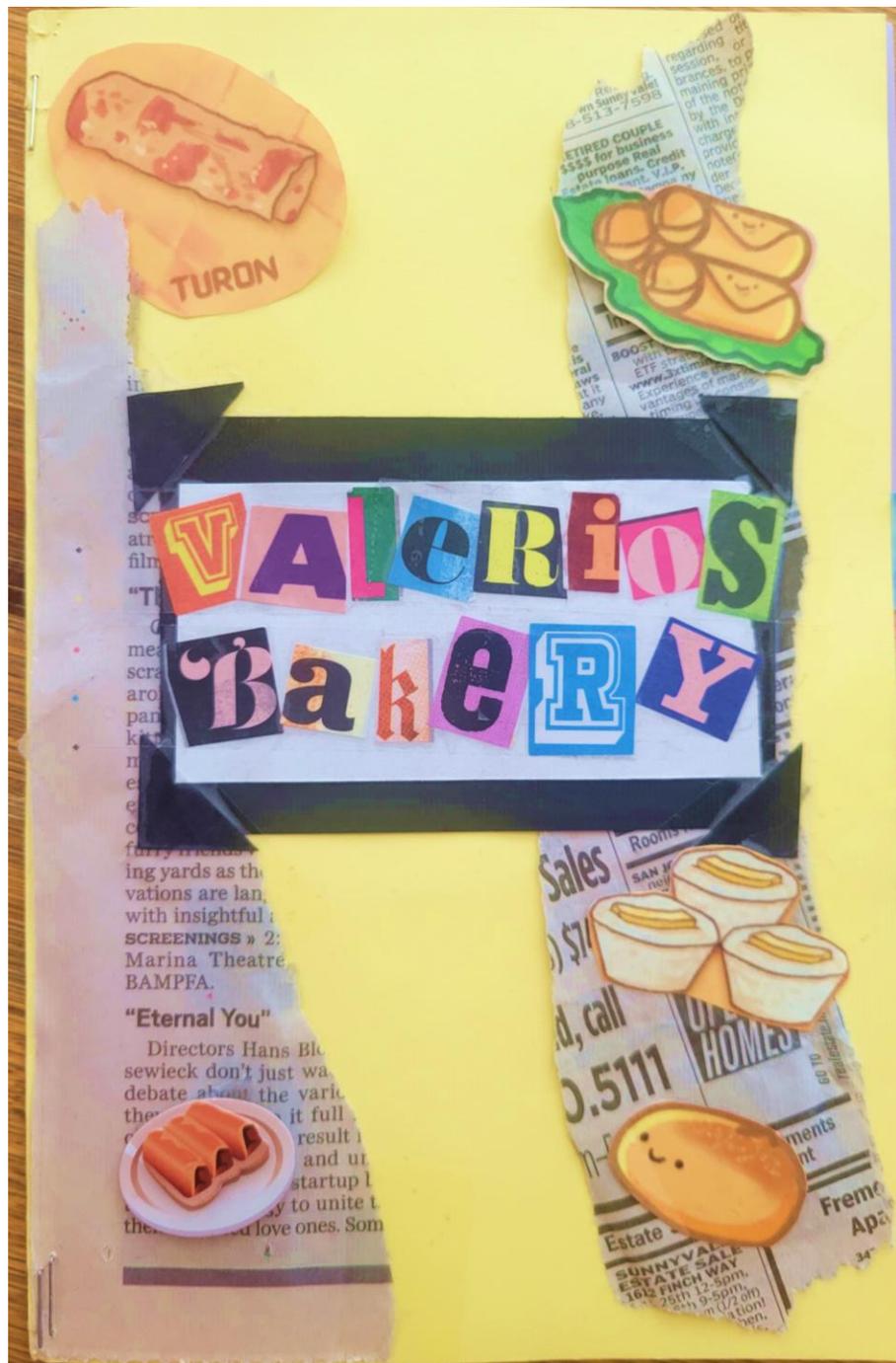
How do physical spaces connect to our knowledge and discourse about Asian American culture?

Required Project Components

Students will work in groups to create a set of resources on a specific Asian American cultural space. This will include:

- Conducting research on the specific place
- Recording an oral history interview of someone associated with the place
- Writing a narrative about the place based on the research and oral history interview
- Creating a zine that captures the narrative in an engaging and accessible way

Project examples



VALERIOS
CITY BAKERY

2518 Berryessa RD, San Jose, CA 95132

VALERIO'S City BAKERY

2518

PHOTO
CAMERAS » PAGE 2

HISTORY

1. Is a family owned and operated business. Established their first bakery in National City, CA on May 19, 1979
2. Became highly recognized within the community through the introduction of the Filipino staple bread known as "Pan de Sal"
Customers also enjoy their cheese rolls, ensaymada, sloopao, empanada, bicho-bicho and more!
3. The bakeshop was founded by Victor Valerio Sr. and his wife Milagros Valerio in the 1970s. Victor was a baker in the Philippines before he immigrated to the United States.

AMY'S office!



Impact's super
wonderful awesome
super duper cool counselor
Amy Wang!

But first, you should learn a little about...

impact



"IMPACT AAPI" to be specific is a program dedicated to students of AAPI background. It was created in 2008 and has been helping students since along with other support groups.

When does Amy come into the

Picture?

In 2019,
Amy joined DeAnza
as an outreach counselor



1 month later...
She transitioned to
the role of an **IMPACT**
AAPI counselor

Fast forward
to now...

Amy has been a counselor for
5 years at De Anza. She recently
received her tenure and has
solidified herself as an **AMAZING**
COUNSELOR here at De Anza.

The Beauty of Boba



PLACES

BAMBU

Santa Clara
Cupertino
San Jose
Milpitas

M-F 11am-6:30 PM
Sat-Sun 12pm-5 PM

M-F 12-7 PM
Sat-Sun 12-8 PM

FEEL EASY

Mateca
Oreo
Ube
Coconut

From Taiwan to the US...
Boba's spreading around
the Bay Area!

A cultural fusion with
many flavors to choose!
Asian or not, they are all
good!

Classroom activity

- Brainstorm: What are some spaces in your community that have been associated with Asian Americans?
- Some ideas include:
 - spaces of historical significance, such as cultural centers, landmarks, and ethnoburbs
 - spaces that represent aspects of Asian-American culture, such as food, music, art
 - spaces where large groups of Asian-Americans gather regularly

Next Steps

- Vote on which places from the brainstorm list you would be more interested to learn about.
- Form groups of 6 or more. Each group will be assigned one of the top voted places.
- Each group member will decide which role they'd like to take within the group based on their individual strengths and preferences.

The image features a vibrant, abstract graphic design on the left side. It consists of several overlapping organic shapes in shades of blue, red, and purple. The blue shapes contain white wavy lines and a circular pattern of white dots. The red shape has white wavy lines and a pattern of white dots. The purple background is filled with a pattern of white dots and small white crosses. The overall style is modern and artistic.

Module 1 Assessment: Preliminary Research and Oral History Ideas

Each group will conduct preliminary research on their assigned place and submit a 2-page document including:

- A list of important facts about the location that their group has learned so far and that will inform the group's narrative about the location. Reference list required.
- At least 2-3 possible interviewees for the Oral History and why they think those individuals would be good to interview.
- A list of preliminary questions for their interviewees.

Acknowledgements

- Slides were created with the help of MS Copilot