

The Origins of Asian American Studies

Did you know?

Asian American Studies was born out of a student activist movement in the 1960s and 70s.

Students wanted

their college curriculum to reflect their experiences as children of immigrants and people of color in the United States.

They were inspired

by movements for Civil Rights and against the Vietnam War. They joined forces with other students of color to demand change on their college campuses.



Asian American Voices for Education

Who are Asian Americans?

A Chosen Identity

Before the late 1960s, there was no sense of “Asian American” as a collective identity. Instead, people identified more often with their individual ethnic identities.

Shared Experiences

Global and domestic changes in the 1960s made many Asian Americans realize they had common experiences of racism and discrimination in the United States.

Parts of a Whole

Coming together as “Asian Americans” was a way of finding strength in unity, and a collective voice to speak out against injustice.

Asian American Voices Make a Difference!

The “Model Minority” Myth

says that Asian Americans are more “high achieving” than other ethnic minorities and do not suffer from or speak out against racial injustice.

This is a harmful stereotype

because it ignores the real history of anti-Asian racism, and the diversity of Asian American experiences. It also pits Asians against other ethnic minorities.

Student activists spoke out

in defiance of this stereotype to represent their communities, support others, and demand that their stories be included in U.S. history classrooms.



Asian American Voices for Education

What is Asian American Studies?

Going beyond culture

Asian American Studies is about much more than celebrating holidays, food, and famous figures!

Understanding power

Asian American history teaches us about the origins of many issues that remain today, including immigration restriction, war, and imperialism.

Highlighting resistance, solidarity, and diversity

Asian American Studies recognizes the diverse histories and experiences of different Asian groups in the U.S. while celebrating that we are stronger together!



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