



Spring 2024

Save the Date!

Fall Conference | Tuesday, August 20, 2024

CLASS Fall Conference will have a whole new look in August. We'll be gathering in URSA Minor for community events that will include our new strategic plan and lunch!

CLASS Events Calendar

Add the CLASS Events calendar in Outlook to your calendar now! All summer, we'll be populating the calendar with events that you won't want to miss.

New Leadership

Associate Professor, **Jason Turcotte**, has been appointed Chair of the Department of Communication, beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year.

Associate Professor, **Kevin Autry**, has been appointed Chair of the Department of Psychology, beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year.

Associate Professor, **Sarah Krainin**, has been appointed Chair of the Department of Theatre and New Dance, beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year.

Professor, **Anthony Ocampo**, has been appointed Chair of the Department of Sociology, beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year.

Philosophy

[Profile on Covina City Treasurer Neil Polzin](#) ('07, philosophy) highlights his activism as a steadfast champion for the inclusion of atheists, particularly secular youth, and the need to protect the separation of church and state. His advocacy gained [national attention](#) in 2009 when he was dismissed from his position as an Aquatics Director at a Boy Scouts camp in Southern California due to his atheism.

History

Tara Sethia, *Emerita* Professor of History, gave the opening keynote, "Nonviolence Education: An Existential Imperative," at an International Conference, "[A Call of Our Time: Awakenings to Nonviolence in Curriculum and Education](#)" hosted by Oklahoma State University, Tulsa, March 8-10, 2024. Earlier she was invited to give a talk on, "Nonviolence in the Present Social and Political Context," on January 29, 2024 at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune (India). The talk was co-organized and co-hosted by Amar Prerana Trust, the Gandhi National Memorial Society, and the Pune International Center, India.

Amanda Podany, Professor Emeritus of history, received the 2023 Nancy Lapp Popular Book Award from the American Society of Overseas Research for her book: *Weavers, Scribes, and Kings*. Additionally, Podany was recently invited to give the annual Carolyn Drucker Lecture in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University.

Communication

The Poly Post earns 5 awards from ACP/CCMA Spring conference: The California College Media Association awarded The Poly Post staff 4 awards at its spring student journalism convention in La Jolla, March 9. The Poly Post placed 2nd in editorial writing (**Matthew Acosta**); 2nd in Social Media Reporting (**Victoria Mejicanos, Noel Sanchez, Tessa Dufore, Kelsey Coen, Emely Bonilla**); 3rd in Arts & Entertainment writing (**Charlize Althea Garcia**); and 3rd in Magazine Cover (**Matthew Reyes, Bronco Guide**). The Poly Post marketing staff was also awarded 5th place in the Associated Collegiate Press' Best in Show competition for the media kit category.

Poly Post News, [La Voz Editor](#), **Fabiola Aceves** was selected for the nationally competitive Bloomberg Diversity Fellow program, a partnership between Bloomberg News and the University of North Carolina. Fabiola will travel (all expenses paid) to New York in May to participate in the fellowship and learn about business reporting from professional journalists.

Sunny Lie, associate professor of communication, was recently featured on The Poly Post's podcast, [Feasting for Feminism](#), which discusses feminist issues, highlighting women in the community and eat food.

In an [op-ed](#), Communication Lecturer **Mariusz Ozminkowski** argues that compensating “cultural taxation” — extra work faculty from underrepresented groups undertake to demonstrate good citizenship towards their institutions by serving its needs for ethnic representation and cultural understanding — lowers the bar for tenure for minority faculty members.

Hannah Harrer ('16, communication), director of strategy, digital infrastructure and high-tech for Trangistics, Inc., was hired to help shift the logistics company's focus to the high-tech industry and data centers. Read more about it in an [article by The Nugget](#).

Art Wilson ('75, journalism), [longtime horse racing columnist dies at age 71](#). The longtime horse-racing correspondent for the Southern California News Group who persevered through several illnesses, was remembered as a “very respected and loved pillar of the racing community.” His [final column](#), published two days before his passing, was about the late country music star Toby Keith and his love for racehorses.

Poly Post reporter and English major, **Danna Miramontes** was featured in a [Pasadena Star-News article](#) discussing the experience of pro-Palestine campus protests. Danna covered the April 29 protest at Cal Poly Pomona for the Poly Post and says she sought guidance from fellow student reports, faculty members, and mentors about navigating the nuances of covering her first big protest, despite concerns about her own safety.

Denisse Vasquez-Guevara and **Ivana Cvetkovic**, Assistant Professors of the Communication Department and CLASS will be collaborating as Co-PIs with Belal Hasan (PI) and Julie Lee (Co-PI) from the Nutrition and Food Science Department of the Don Huntley College of Agriculture as part of the project Training Cal Poly Pomona Students to Enhance the Underrepresented Minorities and Culturally Diverse Groups Access to Plant-Based Meat Analogues. The research team has been awarded by CPPs Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development Strategic Interdisciplinary Research Grant Program (SIRG). This project aims to develop a multidisciplinary approach to raise awareness of the benefits of meat analogs and develop community outreach initiatives to promote health, equity, and food access adapted to Southern California's diverse population.

Sociology

Mary Kunmi Yu Danico, professor of sociology, has been awarded the [2023-2024 Provost Award for Excellence](#). The award was developed to recognize faculty who have earned distinction in teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and service. Mary is the Director of the Michi and Walter Weglyn Endowed Chair and the Asian American Transnational Research Initiative at CPP. She has also served as the associate Dean of the College of Environmental Design and is the past president of the Association for Asian American Studies. Under her guidance, her students now work as professors, psychologists, therapists, and school administrators around the nation. Her commitment to a culture of care impacts the way she mentors her students and colleagues through intentional acts. Mary will be recognized at commencement and during the Provost's Awards Symposium, scheduled for Oct. 3, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Congratulations to **Bianca Haro**, assistant professor of sociology, and her team for [receiving recognition at this year's American Educational Research Association \(AERA\) Conference](#). This award honors scholarship that delves into policy and practice, contributing significantly to public understanding of education policy and politics. Bianca and her team will be acknowledged for their report, "[Beyond Suspension Decline: Transforming School Discipline](#)," derived from their statewide school discipline research study. Additionally, they recently published an article related to this project in AJE. Congratulations, Bianca, on this well-deserved recognition!

Peter Hanink, assistant professor of criminology, was [featured by the Los Angeles Times](#) discussing Murietta police's decision to post mug shots with Lego heads. Hanink questions the Murrieta Police Department's need to publish a mug shot of someone who has been arrested but hasn't been convicted or indicted by a grand jury, warning that publishing such pictures could damage someone's reputation. This story was picked up and republished by several outlets including [Yahoo! News New Zealand](#) and [Yahoo! News UK](#). Peter was also [interviewed by KNX-AM 1070music](#) which aired four times, including a re-broadcast with CBS-AM in the Bay Area. In other news, **Peter Hanink** has been elected Vice chair of the Academic Senate, congrats!

Anthony Ocampo, professor of Sociology, was featured in a [NBC News article](#) discussing how "Harold & Kumar" helped weed out stereotypes. Major studio films barely featured any Asian Americans in speaking roles in the early 2000s, but the most compelling part of "Harold & Kumar" was the unserious nature of the characters' adventure, says Ocampo. "Harold & Kumar" is a movie that shows that Asian Americans get to be hot messes, too."

José Gomez, '93 sociology, was [named as Superintendent and President of Pasadena City College](#) by PCC Trustees. The veteran educator and administrator has accepted the position in principle, with contract negotiations expected to conclude by mid-June.

NPR has recommended professor of sociology, **Anthony Ocampo's** book *The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino Americans Break the Rules of Race* as part of their celebration for Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month. Read more about the recommendation and more details on [NPR's website](#).

Peter Hanink, associate professor of criminology, was [interviewed by CBS LA/KCAL News](#) discussing law enforcement's use of Jan 6 riot techniques to identify UCLA protesters. Hanink says news footage and social media will provide starting points to investigators. "They would use clothing, they would use insignia, patches, decals," and warrants to get information from cellular phone providers for cellphone data to build cases.

The University of Toronto Press has recently published the edited volume [Reconfiguring Global Societies in the Pre-Vaccination Phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), edited by the sociology professor, **Jack Fong**. The volume examines the pandemic's effects upon society during the more turbulent phase of its arrival: before vaccines were available. The effort was interdisciplinary and transnational, involving our CLASS colleagues (in alphabetical order). Anthropologist **Amy Dao**, sociology alumni **Emily Cooper** (now criminology MS student at George Mason University), geographer **Kelly Huh** (department chair), former lecturer and now sociologist at the University of North Texas, **Kevin McCaffree**, and sociologists **Anjana Narayan** (department chair), **Gabriele Plickert** (coauthored with **Emily Cooper**), and **Jack Fong** all contributed chapters on how societies fared during the turbulent period of the pandemic when it arrived in Vietnam, South Korea, California, and Texas, respectively. An additional 12 scholars domiciled in Germany, India, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, and other states in the US also contributed chapters covering their respective countries. Eleven additional universities, a New Zealand government agency, and a New York City hospital were also involved in the undertaking that spanned four years.

Theatre and New Dance

The Poly Post went [behind the scenes](#) with the **Theatre department** to feature their Spring production of "The Wolves."

English and Modern Languages

English professor **Dewey W. Hall** has received a prestigious award to be a [visiting professorship](#) at the University of Bristol in the fall 2024 where he will give a series of lectures to the academic community about the topic "Revisiting the Elgin Marbles: A Materialist Perspective." In addition, Professor Hall has also been awarded an RSCA (Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities) grant to support his research to complete his fifth book *Materialist Romanticism: The Matter of the Marbles* under contract with Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Other projects, Hall has been working on include chairing a panel titled "[Matter Really Matters: Materialism in Nineteenth-Century Literature](#)" and presenting his paper "[The Political Ecology of Matter: Marbles, Volcanoes, and Humans](#)" at the 55th Annual Northeast MLA Conference in Boston, MA in March.

Karen Tellez-Trujillo, assistant professor of English and modern languages, published a chapter, '*That's Where it Sleeps*' *What I Say When I Point to My Abandoned Project*, in [Revising Moves: Writing Stories of \(Re\) Making](#) published by University Press of Colorado, 2024. Tellez-Trujillo also co-chaired the Feminist Workshop titled *Feminist Latinx Imagination and Experience Through Testimonio* at the Conference for College Composition and Communication in Spokane, Washington on April 3, 2024. Lastly, Karen was awarded the English and Modern Languages Outstanding Graduate Faculty Award (2023-2024), congrats!

Political Science

Congratulations to the Cal Poly Pomona Model UN Team for taking home the *Outstanding Delegation award*, the highest honor at the National Model United Nations convention, and additional Outstanding Delegates honors! Led by associate political science professor, Marc Scarcelli, the group's annual trip to New York allows Broncos the opportunity to practice diplomatic engagement on some of our nation's top issues. "Year after year, this incredible program continues to be recognized for exemplifying what it means to be global citizens," shared President Soraya M. Coley [on her Instagram](#).

Jared Cuellar, political science assistant professor, was interviewed by [Axios for a post-election story](#). Cuellar discusses that Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff "took his name recognition and his war chest, and he played smart politics" in painting Republican candidate Steve Garvey as too conservative; opening an easier path to victory for Schiff in the general elections. Cuellar recently conducted the California Elections and Policy Poll, predicting outcomes for the primary and upcoming general election which is also [featured on CPP News](#).

Farrah Hassen, political science adjunct professor, says it is time the United States recognizes housing as a human right. She argues that the shortage of affordable housing "is a policy choice that can be overcome if our federal, state and local governments prioritize taking much-needed action" in a recent [Times-Republican article](#).

Raquel Salazar-Castillo ('26, political science), a communications intern at Lopez Urban Farm, [accepted the proclamation certificate designating March 19 as Ignacio Lopez Day](#) in honor of the late civil rights activist and longtime Pomona resident. Salazar-Castillo says Lopez, the main plaintiff in the landmark [Lopez vs. Seccombe](#) case that planted the seeds for Brown vs. Board of Education, inspired her to pursue higher education to become an immigration lawyer.

Los Angeles County Supervisor **Hilda Solis** ('79, political science) [reflects on the role higher education has played in her life and career](#). Solis was a first-generation student recipient of the Cal Grant and Pell Grant, and her success "helped my younger siblings understand that they too could see themselves going in a path to go to college."

Over 100 political science graduating seniors and MPA graduate students presented their capstone projects at the **Political Science Department** Capstone Conference. From the impact of populism to the role of media in shaping public opinion, from environmental policy to judicial behavior, the conference covered a wide range of topics reflecting the diverse interests and expertise of students. The event was a true learn-by-doing, polytechnic experience that prepared Poli Sci graduates for the future of work!

Geography and Anthropology

Congratulations to Dr. Katie Kinkopf, assistant professor for the department of Geography and Anthropology, for being named this academic year's **Outstanding Faculty Advisor for the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**. Katie was acknowledged at an awards reception on April 23rd.

Gaby Widjaja gave an oral presentation project entitled, "What do Multigenerational Households View as Risks and How do They Navigate These Feelings of Vulnerability?" at the 2024 RSCA on Saturday, March 4th. The project was funded by NSF and Widjaja is supervised by Dr. Amy Dao.

Francisco Gutierrez gave an oral presentation project entitled, "Decision-Making Roles During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Multigenerational Households" at the 2024 RSCA on Saturday, March 4th. The project was funded by NSF and Gutierrez is supervised by Dr. Amy Dao.

Annie Danis, assistant professor of anthropology, was featured in an [article in The Colorado Sun](#) about a project to bring together youth descendants from Amache, a Japanese Internment Camp from WWII, and the Sand Creek Massacre, a site of US military violence against Cheyenne and Arapaho people in the mid 1800s.

Professor of geography, **Kristen Conway-Gómez**, led a drone camp with Dr. Jeff Marshall from Geological Sciences. Geographers Sophie Whitaker, Anna Marie Contreras, and Alexandria Salazar learned a lot about the geology of Costa Rica's Pacific coast, human-environment geography, and using drones to collect data at river mouths, including setting up flight plans and flying missions.

Gaby Widjaja, anthropology student, [presented her research paper](#) entitled "Beyond Individuals: COVID-19 Risks in Californian Multigenerational Households" at the Society for Applied Anthropology meetings in Santa Fe, New Mexico on March 28. This is her first national conference presentation. She is supervised by Dr. Amy Dao (Anthropology)

Dr. **Amy Dao** [presented her research](#) entitled "How did multigenerational households mitigate infection risks during the COVID-19 Pandemic?" at the Society for Applied Anthropology meetings in Santa Fe, NM on March 28, 2024. Her presentation is based on data collected and analyzed alongside Anthropology undergraduate students enrolled in her Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience (ANT4900).

James Blair, associate professor of geography and anthropology, spoke on the tradeoffs and potential harms of the lithium industry in [Politico: California Climate](#). Environmental justice advocates are increasingly worrying about how much of the Imperial Valley's dwindling water supply could go to the emerging lithium industry. "Green hydrogen production, data centers, all of this has a significant water footprint," says Blair. Additionally, Blair recently [published an article](#) "Sinclair on Blair, 'Salvaging Empire: Sovereignty, Natural Resources, and Environmental Science in the South Atlantic.'" on H-Environment.

Anthropology students and **Annie Danis**, professor of anthropology, got a special tour of the archaeology collections at the San Bernardino County Museum with Deputy Director and Anthropology Curator Tamara Serrao-Leiva. They met with the registrar of the museum, CPP Anthropology Alumnae Sara Mercado, who shared her experience in the field with students. Students used their knowledge of

Native Californian culture and community-based archaeology to better understand how museums can be part of decolonizing the field.

Katherine Kinkopf, assistant professor of anthropology, has been awarded the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend for my project: *Connecting Disability and Debility with Anatomical Collecting in the 19th Century*. The funds from this award will go to complete her book revisions this summer and work on two other papers in this research stream. The book project combines historical archaeology, bioarchaeology, and critical disability studies to look at experiences of disability in the 19th and 20th century United States and is under advanced contract with University Press of Florida.

Music

Jessie Vallejo, associate professor of music, was featured in an article by CPP News [for](#) her selection of Music Teachers “40 under 40” by Yamaha Music USA. Additionally, Vallejo was also [interviewed by a TV reporter from KCBS/KCAL](#) to discuss her recognition as a top music educator by Yamaha.

Assistant professor of Music, **Niké St. Clair**, was featured in [Broadway World](#) for directing Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s haunting ‘Requiem’ mass at The La Verne Church in April. St. Clair is the director of Cal Poly Pomona’s Concert Choir and Chamber Singers and The La Verne Church of Brethren Sanctuary Choir.

From concept to showcase, Cal Poly Pomona music industry studies students, **Juan Nuñez**, **Rowan Gordon**, **Damian Torres**, and **Jessica Garcia** produced “It’s Not a Phase” music festival in downtown Pomona on March 23. These music industry studies students were the innovative minds behind the senior project, “It’s Not a Phase” music festival, referencing the phrase musicians hear from their parents who question their children’s musical aspirations. [Read more about it on the Poly Post.](#)

Music professor, **Janine Riveire**, was [featured in recent EdSource article](#). Most families assume their children are getting some form of arts education, says Riveire. Many also hoped that the passage of Proposition 28 — a ballot measure that passed in November 2022 that would allocate about \$1 billion toward arts education each year — would lead to better outcomes for their children.

Ethnic and Women’s Studies

Ayana Jamieson, Cal Poly Pomona ethnic and women’s studies assistant professor, was [featured in a recent LAist](#) article highlighting the hope in her stories. “No one has the right answers, but we just have to do our best ... what we can, at the time when we have to make the decisions,” says Jamieson, a scholar of Butler’s life and founder of the Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network. “I think that’s really powerful.” ([Audio version](#))

EWS faculty **Jocelyn A. Pacleb**, **Shayda Kafai**, **Laureen Hom**, and **Marimas Hosan Mostiller** contributed to the publication of "[Asian American Studies Now! Contemporary Opportunities and Challenges in Higher Education](#)" (Spring 2004)! This is a special issue in *AAPI Nexus Journal: Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Policy, Practice, and Community*.

The California State University system recently received a \$1.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation's Affirming Multivocal Humanities initiative to expand **ethnic studies programs** in colleges and universities. According to the foundation's press release, the grant aims to grow new and existing ethnic studies programs, focusing on those linked with gender and sexuality studies to include discussion of intersectionality in the curriculum. [Read more about the grant in The Poly Post.](#)

CLASS

The nonprofit women's chorus VOX Femina Los Angeles, founded and led by **Dean Emerita Iris S. Levine**, is the recipient of the prestigious [Margaret Hillis Award for Organizational and Artistic Achievement](#). The honor is conferred by Chorus America, which will celebrate the 2024 recipients of its awards program at the 2024 Chorus America Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on June 6-8. Recognized for innovative concert programming and her extensive knowledge of women's choral literature, Levine is a sought-after guest conductor, adjudicator, and clinician. "Many years ago, I had the distinct privilege of studying with Ms. Hillis, a trailblazer for women in the choral arts," said Levine. "Having VOX connected to her name and legacy is a tremendous honor, and we are truly grateful for this wonderful recognition."

Submit your news!

CLASS Kudos is a monthly list of shout outs to brag about the incredible work you are doing! Keep us up to date on what is happening in your departments and tell us about upcoming events, share exciting news, announce student successes, and more by [submitting your news on our website!](#) For questions, contact CLASS Communications Specialist Ashley Bagwell, adbagwell@cpp.edu.

Connect with CLASS on social media: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

