

Background

Yinyin Wen 0:16

So I'm not going to be using your name in connection with any of the recording or the results. Everything is confidential. Does that sound okay?

Interviewee 0:28

Yes.

Yinyin Wen 0:29

Cool.

I just also want to let you know that if you're uncomfortable at any point, you can feel free to let me know and we can stop the study. You're in no way obligated to continue participating.

Interviewee 0:43

Mmkay.

Yinyin Wen 0:47

So, I want to start off with some background questions about you. Could you just tell me a little bit about your major?

Interviewee 0:58

I'm currently a third year studying Political Science and Asian American Studies.

Yinyin Wen 1:07

So how did you decide on these two majors?

Interviewee 1:11

Um, so I went to a pretty liberal high school and I was able to do a lot of internships and one of the interviews that really stood out to me was the one where I create like, if I'm like, a hate crimes art exhibit to like, spread awareness of Asian American hate crimes, and do they're like, just like learning all about policy and the intersectionalities of both like race policy. And then what that look like was really intriguing. I think for like the political science aspect of it. And then I remember reading, the Joy Luck Club in my Asian American literature class in high school and finding stories and narratives that really like was relatable really stood out to me. So I was, I wanted to pursue Asian American studies to like kind of find more narratives like that, and read more stories that were similar to Joy Luck Club.

Yinyin Wen 2:06

Oh, wow, that's so awesome. Your high school had an Asian American literature class, in particular.

Interviewee 2:12

Yes. But it was taught by a white Jewish, like, teacher. So it was like an interesting mix. I think what also stood out about that class is that because he was an Asian American, and he was white and Jewish, he let the students or the Asian American students kind of like take reign of the class and like provide examples and share their stuff. So it was a really good space.

Yinyin Wen 2:38

So I just want to gauge how comfortable you are using technology. **So where do you usually use your computer and what activities do you use it for?**

Interviewee 2:51

So I personally prefer writing my notes, but my computer's used for like Google Calendar and like digital events. I'm kind of familiar with like Canva so I use that for a lot like creating flyers and events for groups and stuff right now I'm like using my computer almost like 24 seven because like, I like work as a writing counselor. So I help edit essays and that's like through the computer as well. I'm doing a lot of my like, events for my club online virtually as well. So it's like a lot of online meetings, a lot of online coordination. I think for technology wise, like if, like PowerPoint projections and anything that requires a cables, I'm not the most familiar with, but I think like searching up tools like research tools and like, utilizing like, research databases I'm very familiar with.

Yinyin Wen 3:49

It must be really difficult to like, transfer all of your events like onto like a computer virtual modality

Interviewee 4:00

So right now it's I think the intent it's like very hard because like you don't know people's capacities at the moment so like um, I think a lot of our events like cuz they're cultural events for the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American History Month next quarter right I think, um, when we publicize these events or like when we ask people for outstanding event events, we like really stressed that okay, like, your health and safety and like your own mental well being is like a priority, right? And then this is like, completely optional. And so just like gauging people's interest has been kind of like difficult, especially because we're working with so many different smaller organizations who have also become very fractured online.

So communication is definitely very difficult and like I think it was much easier in person expecting everyone's attendance versus online where it's like, oh, you're having like one on one individual calls with every single individual because people are in different time zones, people aren't on different schedules. And people think, Oh, it's just easier to facilitate online and like just have a meeting online, but then those that one meeting ends up turning into like 2, 3, 4 other meetings online as well. So I think the work has definitely, like increased, but hopefully, the product and like what we create will match that, the work level

Yinyin Wen 5:31

I think it's really meaningful. Yeah. Especially in these times its really difficult and what with like the political climate right now, I think it's really important that you guys are like, fostering connections still.

So some more general questions. I'm just trying to get a sense of what your everyday life looks like. **What kind of activities do you like to do outside of classwork?**

Interviewee 6:02

So I usually start the mornings like now like going virtual I like to like 30 and 40 minutes of like exercising and then I like shower and then start my day that way. I guess for virtual stuff I definitely tried to like create space and boundaries between like what I do like for work and I like using like my bed and like that space for like pure entertainment um then I go into my classes and then I have meetings for my writing program meetings and get their appointments during that time as well like in between my classes I make lunch. So I think making lunch and cooking and that whole aspect definitely takes a big chunk of my time because like when the class was like in session, I would just like pack it all look like a week before or like meal prep. But now like since I do have the time or like I'm at home I like take longer to prepare my meals which is a good thing as well because I'm getting more nutrients. And then at night, I like work on APC stuff. Right now I'm also kind of starting my research thesis about public health and Asian Americans. And it was kind of like inspired by COVID. But right now I'm doing like historical analysis about all day like anti Chinese laws that have to do with public health and like using

Chinese Americans as medical scapegoats to define what public health is starting in San Francisco. Yeah, and then at night, like I like to like chill and watch like Netflix for a little bit. But yeah, I think that's about it. I think my big like, thing is coffee and caffeine. So I always make sure sure I have like, a cup of coffee or like a cup of matcha throughout the day.

Yinyin Wen 7:54

Awesome. Thank you so much for sharing that.

What are some of the activities - could be in class or outside of class - that you enjoy the most and why?

Interviewee 8:06

Um, I think definitely my responsibilities position in Asia Pacific coalition, which is like a mother org of all both different Asian American social cultural organization on campus. And for that, I like creating products. I like creating events to facilitating events because there's something like tangible at the very end. And it's just a great space to finally communicate and speak with different people who are equally as passionate about same and different issues. So it's a great learning experience. I was also kind of like a legal assistant at the Santa Monica courthouse where I help like, tenants fill out responses to their unlawful detainers like eviction notices, but that sadly had to cancel because like all the courthouses I have closed down so I don't know when I will be returned if I will be returned to that, but I think I really enjoyed that because I've done previous like legal internships and like at law firms and didn't find that fulfilling because like, it was just pushing papers mostly but this is a one of the few things where it's like, oh, like, I know this terminology and like I can use this terminology and use my knowledge on like, how they want to help tenants potentially not be evicted from their homes. And then, I was like, I also really do enjoy like, my job as like a writing counselor because like, usually I involve myself in like, really like Asian American spaces. But my job as a writing counselor allows me to meet and like, socialize and interact with like people, other communities of color, and from all different backgrounds as well. So that's been an interesting ride. Yeah.

Yinyin Wen 9:53

Okay, so on the flip side, are there any frustrations that you've experienced either inside of classes or outside of class?

Interviewee 10:04

frustrations I think having different activities like in different spaces is difficult because people don't know how much work you're doing or like how much you're like taking on like, like overall in the much broader picture um secondly another frustration is I guess in workspaces like CPO,

Community Programs Office which is where my writing job is hosted under and also like at my legal clinic in San encore courthouse. It's like hard being the East Asian like woman in the sense that like CPO's mostly like black and brown space so like a lot of the student leaders are very loud and passionate and like, I guess my leadership style is more on like, the behind the scenes like supporting everyone so like, it's like a very different vibe. And so like what when what they see is like a quiet like shy East Asian girl versus like what I'm doing behind the scenes, like, it's hard to reconcile for them. Um, I think same goes for the legal clinic where I think my boss has commented like on my very first entry like if I was like a quiet type of person I think again, like I think it's me kind of like projecting but I definitely don't want to perpetuate like the quiet, docile Asian American female stereotype. Um, I think working on my leadership style and like taking up more the forefront where I do like stand up and do speak on certain things. I'm working on that. Yeah.

Yinyin Wen 11:44

I think that's a really interesting point that you brought up. In like a broader scene of like, maybe educational infrastructure or disseminating information. **How do you think we can kind of push back against that stereotype of East Asians of being docile or submissive? Even, like, vis a vis other communities of color.**

Interviewee 12:14

Mm hmm. Um, I think one, it depends on the classes. The mentors are the people who are in their life. Recently, I took, I mean, I do I have loved all my previous Asian American professors. I do think that Asian American Studies is very centered in academia. And sometimes like the professor's your works like be like, elaborate these like very difficult like terminologies and context and it's very hard to like relate it back to community. But more recently, like last quarter, I took a class with Professor Leanne Wang, who is like this dual sociology professor and Asian American professor and she's like, very into like black feminist ideology. And like very pro, anti prison abolition, like very social, social welfare like centered and I think she really like kicked it up a notch for me because she was one of my stronger mentor figures. And I think she like taught me that like to understand Asian America, or like, understand Asian America and political politics around that like, maybe take from other sources source of literature like black feminist ideology and like how powerful that can be. And so having her as a mentor for you really, like pushed me to like, go beyond my limits, and I think like, explore other concepts like gender studies, right, how that can be tied to Asian - that that perspective can broaden my understanding of Asian American Studies.

Observation

Yinyin Wen 13:59

I think that wraps up the background questions and we'll move into the search phase. So I want to give you a little bit of time to think about a time search about searched up something you were curious about any like, any topic or issue that you wanted to learn more about, feel free to use whatever websites or tools you'd normally use and to like think aloud as you do the activity.

Interviewee 14:29

Okay. Um, so I guess I can do like a search thing for my current research thesis I'm kind of working on right now. Because I did have trouble with it. And I think it'd be interesting to navigate through.

Interviewee 14:54

Okay, so my topic is kind of like all the anti Chinese public ordinances. So I first put anti Chinese and California. [searches on Google Search Bar at top of Chrome Browser]

See this one? [Scans results]

Chinese ordinances..[clicking on various results and clicking back out] [settles on one webpage]

Yinyin Wen 15:57

Can I just ask you quick question?

Interviewee 16:01

Yeah.

Yinyin Wen 16:01

How did you decide on choosing the links that you did? Like, was there something about the links that made you wanna click on it?

Interviewee 16:09

So I definitely prefer, like, easier to consume media. And I think PBS does a great job of like, catering to the larger population, because they have different re-. They have resources for both, like really young kids and like, older adults, and PBS is like one of my go-tos. I don't like Wikipedia as much because they just put a lot of information and it's like, hard to like siphon out, like what's really relevant? Yes, and I think that's about it for that initial portion. So for this

specific website I've been on. I like how they list out all the ordinances and just like a brief description because like, finding detail into like each of the laws and like anti Chinese laws. That's something I would use like a more specific source and dive into. So the for a lot of the four ordinances I'm kind of focusing on for my paper is Cubic Air ordinance, Sidewalk ordinance, Queue ordinance, and Laundry ordinance. Like I like how they like chronologically lifted out so that I can like know when and where that goes from. The second place I would go to for more information is JSTOR, which I have to connect to a VPN. So I got a campus VPN for online stuff because it's so far away. Because we're virtual. So let me just log in really quickly. [logs into campus VPN]

Yinyin Wen 17:47

Sure.

Interviewee 18:00

We're on and then so first thing I would kind of like search is "anti-Chinese California." [scrolling through results on JSTOR]. So this looks pretty good too "The Response of California's Chinese Populations to the Anti Chinese movement" and then like seeing how they frame this as like an anti Chinese movements something I would also search up or like if I wanted to like be more specific as anti Chinese movement [edits JSTOR search terms to "anti Chinese movement"] I think I would look into this as well [points to a result called "The Anti-Chinese Movement"].

And so being as it looks like they talk a lot about labor movements and politics, which is important because like a lot of these have to do with like Chinese businesses that have been forming and like white fears and like xenophobia that have like thrived because like Chinese people taking over their jobs and stuff. So that looks good and [clicks "Save" button for "The Anti-Chinese Movement" article] And JSTOR's good because you can just save it.

What I also love about JSTOR is like it cites everything for you in all this [clicks "Cite this Item" button which generates a citation in different formats for the selected article], which is really convenient for when you're doing a bibliography.

[scrolls through JSTOR results] I like this too [article called "The Wasp's "Troublesome Children: Culture Satire, and the Anti-Chinese Movement in the American West"], because it talks about immigration and also the anti Chinese movements I'm gonna save that. [saves article] Next with, as I mentioned, for like my topic kinda looks into public health as well. So I'm gonna put in Chinese and public health [queries "chinese and public health"]

Yinyin Wen 20:08

[Upon seeing that results are not relevant to her topic, adds "california" to search string] California.

Interviewee 20:21

Okay, so this one looks really good "Public health and the mapping of Chinatown", right? Because it has all the words I kinda like want: "epidemics", "living conditions" [refers to the list of tags that is linked in the search result], so I'm going to save that and I know Nyan Shah. Like even in Asian American Studies now that's like a really it's like very specific to Asian American Studies so I'll definitely make use of that.

Yinyin Wen 20:47

So were you familiar with Nyan Shah?

Interviewee 20:51

I am, so he's actually like kind of a leading proponent of like Asian American Public Health. My Professor mentioned him to me and so I've been doing a lot of research on him specifically so he's definitely like one of my favorites to read. Um, okay, aside from JSTOR I do also like Google Scholar [types in "google scholar" on browser search bar] [clicks link to Google Scholar]

and then so I can like look up like "public health ordinances chinatown" [queries phrase in Google Scholar] and then so they also have Nyan Shah there "Contagious divides" "Promoting health and safety in San Francisco Chinatown". So these are all good. Like this one's really good too: "Chinatown Declared a Nuisance: Creating a Public Health Crisis in Merced, California." That's interesting too.

And then another resource I really like. [types in newspapers.com on search bar]

Newspapers.com. So I have a subscription because I used to- I did an internship at an Asian American documentary series and they like gave me subscriptions to newspapers.com so this gives me all the newspapers for all the old, like back into the 18- So if you notice, all these ordinances are from 1870s. So what I'm going to plug in is "Chinatown." [queries "chinatown" in newspapers.com]

And I'm gonna limit-

Chinatown California [edits query to be "chinatown california"]

I'm doing California specifically because that's one of the most earliest like enclaves that formed. I think it's like much too early for like New York and other parts, other Chinatowns, other places to develop. And then I would enter a date range from let's see around 1869. [refines search by date range] [refers back to pbs.org timeline to check time period of ordinances] Okay, so since this is from 1870-1873 [pbs timeline], I'm gonna do 1869 to 1874. [refines search by location "California"]

So you have all these like kind of newspapers that like focus on Chinatown, right. So let's see. [scrolls down to scan results, returns to edit query] [adds "ordinances" to search: full phrase: "chinatown california ordinances"]

[clicks on first result: The San Francisco Examiner] So this is a newspaper from that time. [panning around the scanned newspaper]

Alright, so this is about funerals, so that's not helpful at all. [clicks back to results] Let's see what is there any other..[searches other results for California in the scanned paper]

Okay, let me take out - let me take out California and just do try Chinatown ordinances [edits query from "chinatown california ordinances" to "chinatown ordinances"]

And then click specifically on California. So all the newspapers during that time. [clicks first result and scans newspaper for key phrase "chinatown ordinances"]

Yinyin Wen 24:23

Is there anything in particular that you're looking for?

Interviewee 24:29

So I think a lot of this takes a long time, especially on newspapers.com. But the first thing to like kind of like take note of is like the date range you want, right and also the specific place in the area. So I like for this specific thing. I'm looking for newspapers that have like, like San Francisco or like, anything like near California near the ports where like the first Chinatown developed and then these newspapers have Chinatown, all these Chinatown words in it, but I'm like looking for words. I can't kind of describe Chinatowns as dirty and like unfit to live in.

So it's a lot to like, look through. [returns to search results]

Yinyin Wen 25:14

Yeah.

Interviewee 25:20

Do you want me to go on or? Wait, so this one has ordinance in it. [sees result with "ordinance" highlighted in newspaper scan] So I would probably look into that and see if it was the specific ordinance we're talking about

chain-gang ordinance. [was not the correct ordinance] So this is not it.

Yeah. So I would look through here, but overall, Google Scholar JSTOR are my two best bet. And like once I have an idea of like, how specific I want my topic to go into, I would go into then I would go into Wikipedia. People think like Wikipedia is like people usually use Wikipedia as like an overall like, understanding of the topic. But I use Wikipedia like once I know the topic well enough, I can go into their bibliography and like pinpoint specific authors and texts I want to read. Yeah, so I use it like after I get my own background from trusted sources, because I want my foundation to be good. And then I would go and like search to more specific bibliographies.

Yinyin Wen 26:31

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I think I've seen a lot and I've gained a lot of insight about how you're searching for the information. Thank you.

Was there anything else that you were looking for, but you weren't really able to find all the searches?

Interviewee 26:53

Um, I think usually I think it just depends on the topic. Have sometimes they have great articles written about this for my specific thing, because it's kind of like a niche new topic with like COVID being also new and like public health, that being revisited, I have to kind of do my search process in two steps, right: one, anti-Chinese sentiment and that movement and then to public health and Chinatown. And then I would do that my thesis and my research would be like formally combining those together creating an idea of what that looks like or what that means. Yeah. Yeah, I think that's mostly what I need. Another great resource is actually the UCLA library as now that everything's moving online. [searches "ucla library" in browser search] [doesn't see the right link, edits search to "ucla library login"] They do have their some of their

books online as well. So you can have access to the articles online. But I think the key thing is getting a UCLA VPN so you can have access to all these things for free.

Yinyin Wen 28:13

Right

Interviewee 28:16

So that's that. [queries "anti chinese" in UCLA library search] And then one last thing if you're interested is this cool website my professor kind of sent us.

A bunch of the University Press books have been sending out free copies of their books online. [opens link in professor's email] Because everyone, all the research is doing online. So if you just like click the press right they have a list of books. So if I were to use this, I would probably look at the more liberal presses or what I perceive as liberal, so I would probably look at University of California, Cornell University Press because I know they have a really good Asian American Studies program there. So I bet there's a lot of information. University of Hawaii press as well. Yeah, probably like New York University Press too.

Yinyin Wen 29:23

And are these links to archives?

Interviewee 29:29

So if we click on one of the like Columbia University Press, they give us actual books.

You would have to actually do one by one by one [have to open links/books one by one], but they're linked to MUSE, which is like another online article database, right? So normally, we'd have to pay for this but they're giving it for free

Yinyin Wen 29:55

For free for all the public or only if you're on VPN?

Interviewee 29:59

I think it's free for everyone. But so it's free for everyone. But then if you like, do the VPN and go on project MUSE from the UCLA library right, then you have access to a lot more.

So this is for public public.

Yinyin Wen 30:21

Super awesome, thank you for showing me all those different sources. I just have a couple questions related to like your searches on this stuff in general. **How often do you think or guess that you search for information, events, or news related to racial or ethnic minority communities?**

Interviewee 30:48

I do think I think, at least once every day? It's not necessarily like I look for it, but it's like I need it for work wherever or any of my other stuff

I'm currently also working on this like remote job where it's like I'm a project coordinator for another hate crimes preventing art contest. And so for that like to like come up with curriculum and agenda I have to do it every day. It also depends on like what kind of worker I am like that week if I like want to hammer things down on Monday then I'll just spend Monday doing everything at once. If I want to intersperse the work throughout I'll intersperse it throughout [the week]. But since we're talking about events as well, because I'm in APC and I'm like kind of in charge of all the cultural events, I have to keep tabs on it every day just to make sure like all the material is like ready and I get inspiration from how other clubs are doing their events as well.

Yinyin Wen 31:52

So on a similarly related note, how much do you search for this stuff like outside of your like work responsibilities. Just for leisure?

Interviewee 32:03

I don't at all, um, I think because I have enough like, I see enough during work and all my extracurriculars that like I don't really need to outside. But one thing that's different is because everything's online, I've been looking up online talks. So MOCA which is a museum of Chinese in America in New York, they are doing a lot of online talks as well.

And I think I'm subscribed to a lot Asian Am conferences and journals and stuff because like, I have attended or presented at some of them and so they all always give me an email listing of these events. I don't actively search but they can just appear in my inbox and I can see it I'm like, okay, I want to attend this event online. Yeah.

Yinyin Wen 32:58

How much of these like - the newsletters for conferences and journals, like online talks, how much of that is readily available for public?

Interviewee 33:10

Um, I think again, these are very niche things. So it's just like, I guess like, similar to shopping stuff. Your shopping subscriptions, right? If you want to subscribe, you get subscribed, and you have to have like at least one sort of connection, whether it's like attending their event, or signing up for newsletters, right, there's that the action of signing up that you have to kind of get in touch with so like if you're the public and you want to like involve yourself in these things like one search can lead you into so many different organizations and each organization has their own newsletter.

Yinyin Wen 34:04

I think you already mentioned this but, in your opinion what is most useful source of information on racial/ethnic minorities or Asian Americans?

Interviewee 34:19

I think it's very hard to ask, for me, because like there is the most important source and then there's also the easiest to digest right and so because like I have a background in Asian American Studies and like all these topics, I definitely will look for sources like JSTOR and everything. In terms of like the most easiest to digest, and for the public to understand, Advancing Justice [queries "advancing justice" in browser] So they publish information where the larger public about what's going on, like important things, also highlight important events like this is a documentary I've worked on kinda, but like those things are really cool too. I really like podcasts as well for information and not just Asian American information but like NY Times anything that's easy to consume so I definitely look into like easy consume media. So podcasts, Netflix shows netflix documentaries, like there was one that David, some person did about like Chinese food. "Ugly delicious" So I like watch that. Yeah.

Yinyin Wen 35:45

Okay. Do you ever use like social media sites or like forums?

Interviewee 35:50

Oh, yeah.

Yeah, um, Facebook, especially because a lot the internships I've done, they all post a lot online. So then it's easier for them to consume because when they, project information or they want create information they want people like see and understand, like, do it in really simple terms like "apply to this" or "this is what's happening you should do this." And as I mentioned like I joined Asia Pacific coalition because all the peers share similar interests. So they would share about that as well. And they would share what's happening and, I think on my wall too, I share resources. Some people have like- I don't really comment on the resources or share per se because, I think it's just out there I just want spread information. I think sitting down like writing like an opinionated piece about like, why I want to share this resource, and why this is important. I don't really do that. Only because I think, I'm sharing someone else's resource and also I just want the information out versus like me having a political stance on something, if that makes sense.

And I think something else to notice is that the importance of sharing resources to your different groups is because like a lot of the COVID-19 resources are first come first serve. So there was like this one California group that gave \$500 of relief, like straight away to students who need it and like that, like form, closed, like within 10 minutes, because everyone was like on it already. And it's like, if you think about the people who are from low income communities, like they probably don't have access to internet, right, and they probably won't give them information as fast as everyone else. So that's something to consider about, like, how we're spreading information and like how, I think be more purposeful with how we spread information so that like people from all different backgrounds can access it at a more equitable level

Wrap-Up

Yinyin Wen 38:00

I think that leads kind of naturally into one of our last questions. If you can create like a source of information, whether it's like resources or just information on history or current events that's accessible to everyone, and maybe not just people have internet. What would that source look like?

Interviewee 38:30

I think that's a very hard question because any sorts of media you create, like, to disseminate and to know who needs it is very difficult. I think when you're creating a new website, a new thing, it's like, okay, these people know about it, but how do we get so many others to know about as well? I don't know if like a website is the best thing.

Something I will say is that like, I see that like a lot of like these Asian American orgs, they are already disseminating the same information to their specific populations, right? So maybe like thinking about working with specific orgs and like collaborating so that each org can like congeal their information to like one larger website or one larger medium where like everyone can see at the same time and digest that information the same time. And I think more reason why that's so hard is because each different org serves a different type of population with specific needs. So yeah.

Yinyin Wen 39:46

I definitely agree it's a really difficult problem to solve. I really appreciate the insight. You're definitely very knowledgeable about this and it's very evident that you've been immersed in this stuff for a long time. I really appreciate you taking the time and sharing this knowledge with me.