

## Building Coalitions Amidst Anti-Asian Racism

with Mei Chiu

**Keywords:** Anti-Asian Racism, Racist Legislations, Systemic Racism, Coalitions and Unity, “Divide and Conquer,” Intersectionality, Human Rights

**Related Course Subjects:** Law, History, Human Rights, Humanities, Sociology, Immigration Studies, Political Science, Diversity and the Contemporary World, Public Affairs and Policy Studies, Race, Women’s Studies

Mei Chiu talks about the struggles of the Chinese Canadian community throughout history, ranging from the “Head Tax” to the recent surge in anti-Asian racist stances accompanying Covid-19. She talks about the difficulty in creating effective Pan-Asian coalitions and ways biased legislation has impeded the socio-economic development of the Chinese population within Canada.

### Video URL

<https://youtu.be/U6wb7Ac8ruo>

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### Goals/Objectives

After watching the video, students will be able to:

- Describe the “head-tax” legislation and its redressing and appeal process.
- Give examples of anti-Asian racism within systems or individual biases.
- Give reasons why Pan-Asian coalitions were challenging to build amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Give examples of how the Asian community supported each other and opposed racist instances during these past years
- Describe ways in which Asian communities have been affected by Covid-19 (economically, socially, psychologically)
- Research what is happening with “Chinatowns” all over Canada



#### About The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub

The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub is a student-led initiative to provide a platform for the community to collaborate and develop meaningful solutions to the systemic issues faced by underserved groups in academia. Our mission is to advance knowledge and understanding of these issues and provide a space to engage in research and learning that is open to all experiences each individual brings.

#### About the Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project

The Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project is a video library that showcases pre-recorded talks by local community activists, students and educators in Montreal and Canada and transforms them into anti-racist educational resources for the classroom. Undergraduate and graduate students from Concordia and McGill University created the content for these course packages. These resources exemplify the power of student leadership and their contribution to advancing antiracist education.

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### Pre-Class Self-Reflection Exercise (Educators)

Fully engaging with antiracist pedagogy starts with self-reflection and accountability. **If you are familiar with antiracist education, you know that the best way to teach antiracist pedagogy is to model antiracist praxis and thought.** As such, we have developed a series of self-reflection questions for you to consider before integrating anti-racist educational materials into your classroom. The night before class or at least a few hours before class, give yourself time, without distractions, to reflect on the questions below - you can write them down or reflect on them with yourself paper free!

#### Be reflexive

- What does antiracist pedagogy or education mean to you?
- What is the relationship between your identity and antiracist work? How would you describe your role in antiracist work?
- How do you view the mutualistic exchange between yourself and your students? Do you adjust your teaching style accordingly?
- What is the difference between engaging with our repository as a knowledge exchange versus a knowledge extraction?

#### Be accountable

- To what extent have you engaged with antiracist or anti-oppressive education or philosophies within your life/work? Why or why not?
- What has the silencing or exclusion of another person or group looked like in the environments that you frequent? What have you done, or what could you have done to remedy it?
- Reflect on how you have engaged with literature, presentations and other forms of knowledge led by Queer, Trans, Indigenous, Black, Asian, and other POC in your academic, personal, or professional lives.
- What has been your role in disrupting and mobilizing against racism and oppression interpersonally or in the environments you frequent?

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### Guiding Questions



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**Before watching the video****Pre-Video Questions -Students**

- What do you know about the Chinese Canadian immigration history?
- Do you know about the “head tax” of the “Chinese exclusion act”?
- What are some present or past stereotypes the Asian community experiences?
- Who holds the power to create immigration-related legislation in Canada?

**After watching the video****Post-video Questions**

- What are some of Mei’s examples of how the Chinese Canadian community has experienced systemic racism throughout Canadian history?
- What is the concept of a “perpetual foreigner”?
- What are the dangers of the “divide and conquer” strategy?

**Assignments / Writing topics**

- Develop a paper or presentation on epidemics and racism - specifically, how epidemics were often seen as being introduced into the larger society by “the others.” Is there a historical relationship between viral pandemics, stigma, and the Asian community? If so, explain regarding the video and course material. (You may use: [Lessons learned from HIV can inform our approach to COVID-19stigma](#) by Carmen H Logie)
- Some statistics claim that the Chinese have become Canada’s largest group of immigrants. However, research suggests it will take the new immigrants over 20 years to bridge the earnings gap with the general population. Use this research paper to summarize the potential reasons for those discrepancies as well as provide an extensive list of solutions (You may use: [Chinese Immigrants in Canada: Their Changing Composition and Economic Performance](#) by Shuguang Wang, Lucia Lo)
- Read this article: [Organizing the Suburbs](#), by Justin Kong, Edward Hon-Sing Wong, and Veronica Yeung and write a summary about how the government has legally restricted specific groups in their right to political involvement and how this plays into the concept of divide and conquer.
- Write a paper or create a presentation that answers the question: In what ways do Chinese Canadian communities experience barriers to citizenship and social mobility today? What other immigrant populations in Canada have experienced similar sanctions and restrictions?
- Make a visual timeline of the legal battles the Chinese population had to go through to have the “Chinese exclusion act” redressed. Present to class. Draw from [When Is Past Discrimination Un/Constitutional - The Chinese Canadian Redress Case](#) by Beverley Baines.
- Deliver a presentation to the class about a specific contribution Chinese Canadian scholars or community members have made community to your field of study. Think about theory and its impacts on Canadian history, identity, and culture.



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### Supplementary Readings

1. Lessons learned from HIV can inform our approach to COVID-19 stigma by Carmen H Logie)
2. Chinese Immigrants in Canada: Their Changing Composition and Economic Performance by Shuguang Wang and Lucia Lo
3. Organizing the Suburbs, by Justin Kong, Edward Hon-Sing Wong, and Veronica Yeung
4. When Is Past Discrimination Un/Constitutional - The Chinese Canadian Redress Case by Beverley Baines.

### Taking Action

- Attend an event organized by the “Asian Heritage Month” in Canada or organized by an Asian Heritage Association within your region or school.
- Attend a “Bystander Intervention Training” to be informed on how to act when witnessing instances of racism
- Support your local Chinese Canadian businesses, restaurants, stores, and non-profit organizations

### Student Group Reflection

1. What is something new that your group learned or began to consider from watching the video?
2. What type of educational videos on systemic racism would you like to see more of?
3. How can you combat systems of oppression and exclusion in your individual lives?
4. Why is having an anti-racist approach to your work/studies important?
5. After today’s exercise, write down two suggestions for your professor on making your class more inclusive.

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Thank you for implementing our resources and supporting anti-racism efforts in education. If you have any questions or feedback, please email us!



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