



Gathering a Basket of Knowledge about Vietnam and Vietnamese Americans • “Đi một ngày đàng học một sàng khôn”

In-person Workshop

Session Dates & Times:

- Monday, June 15
- Tuesday, June 16
- Wednesday, June 17
- From 9:30am-3:30pm PST
- Orias Departmental, UC Berkeley, 2111 Bancroft Way, 5th floor, Berkeley, CA 94720
- Parking: Permits will be provided for each day

Instructors:

- Dr. Ger Thao drgerthao@gmail.com
- Dr. Tham Tran
thutham1912@gmail.com

Workshop Description

“Đi một ngày đàng học một sàng khôn” - This proverb translates to "Go out and gather a basket of wisdom." In other words, it can be taken to mean "Expand your horizons, keep learning" or "the more you go, the more you will know." This captures the spirit behind this workshop, which is designed to help teachers learn more about the history, geography and culture of Vietnam, as well as content about Vietnamese American experiences, in order to best serve their students of all backgrounds. The workshop is also designed to help teachers engage multicultural and multilingual learners using culturally responsive-sustaining techniques, and by examining our own cultural assumptions and stereotypes.

Today, most Americans know very little about Southeast Asia and Americans of Southeast Asian descent, despite the nearly decade-long U.S. involvement in the region, in particular in Vietnam. After 1975,

several waves of refugees began arriving in the U.S. in connection with the Vietnam War, from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Southeast Asian Americans are among the lesser recognized groups in the U.S., which coincides with a general lack of understanding of the history and their reasons for settling in the United States, especially among Americans under 30. This has resulted in misunderstanding, prejudice, discrimination, and racism directed toward Southeast Asian refugees and Southeast Asian Americans. People incorrectly blamed Asian Americans for Covid-19, which led to a spike in anti-Asian hate and rise in attacks, especially on the elderly.

As educators, we routinely come into contact with the children of Vietnamese refugees. It is important to gain insight into the unique experience of the young members of this ethnic group in order to deal effectively with their challenges and to encourage their achievements.

The story of Vietnamese Americans is one of rapid growth. They are the fourth-largest Asian American group in the U.S. (U.S. Census, May 2025) and

Viet Workshop Tentative Syllabus - June 2026

Vietnamese is one of the most common non-English languages.

This workshop is part of the "Carrying Culture" Curriculum Development Project at the University of Hawaii's Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) and is designed to meet the needs of K-12 teachers. It is part of a pilot course being developed to offer professional development, so attendees who complete the course can purchase Professional Development credits issued through the University of San Diego.

Objectives

1. To help teachers to better understand the perspectives of Vietnamese students and families
2. To help teachers to develop an understanding of culturally responsive and culturally sustaining teaching, including arts integration and strategies that support multilingualism

To achieve these objectives, the workshop consists of a balance between

- Presentations from the Vietnamese community on history, geography, culture and the experience of Vietnamese students and families
- Hands-on art activities that help participants to synthesize information and learn concrete strategies for arts integration
- Modeling a range of active-learning strategies such as jigsaw reading protocols, gallery walks and object-based learning opportunities to build background knowledge through texts and film

Participants will receive

- The anchor text *The Mountains Sing*
- A sketchbook to participate in the visual arts integration components of the workshop
- Access to all course materials and resources
 - See below for additional recommended and optional art supplies

Participants are expected to

- Attend all the sessions of the workshop. While we understand that unexpected circumstances may arise, we encourage you to attend all sessions.
- Engage in all workshop activities and discussions.
- Read the Anchor text *The Mountains Sing* outside of class and come ready to discuss.

Technology

- Please bring a fully charged laptop to access course websites:
 - <https://www.cseashawaii.org/resources/gathering-a-basket-of-knowledge-about-vietnam-and-vietnamese-americans/>
 - <https://camodelcurricula.ucdavis.edu/vietnamese-american-experiences>
- The live sessions for this workshop will be conducted all in-person. Please arrive on time, but if you are going to be absent or late, please inform the instructors.
- Additionally, please feel free to email the instructors ahead of time if you have questions.

Viet Workshop Tentative Syllabus - June 2026

Session Schedules - subject to change

Session 1 - Monday, June 15 [[Folder](#)]

Time	Activity	Description
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Pre-workshop opening and setup, Logistics	We will open the workshop room 30 minutes before each session to help participants with any logistics.
9:30 am - 9:45 am	Welcome, Overview and Goals	Welcome to the workshop; Brief description of the purpose, format, history and goals of the workshop; Introductions to instructors & participants.
9:45 am - 9:55 am	Opening Questions	Participants will rotate through 1-2 pairings with other participants and discuss a new question with each new partner.
9:55 am - 10:05 am	Sketchbook Intro and Watercolor Pencil Demo	Introduction to the practice of sketchbook journaling that will be utilized throughout the course to gather and synthesize new information; Brief artistic demonstration of how to use watercolor pencils.
10:05 am - 10:40 pm	Presentation: Visual Arts Integration	This presentation will explore how the Visual Arts can be integrated with other curricular areas such as Social Studies and Science; and how this integration can benefit both the arts and the partner subject within the context of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy.
10:40 am - 11:00 am	See, Think, Wonder	Participants observe a cultural artifact (or watch a short video) and use drawing and writing to record observations, inferences and questions about the objects, events and places depicted. The absence of contextual information and the sensory nature of this protocol aims to generate curiosity and to empower participants to take an active approach to the course material.
11:00 pm - 11:30 pm	Visual Notetaking and Gallery Walk	Participants use Visual Notetaking to gather information from a range of texts, graphs, photos and videos (Padlet); discussing what they have found with a partner midway through the Gallery Walk and at the end.
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch	
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Presentation: Vietnamese Americans	Historical context and background lecture and discussion on Vietnamese Americans.
1:30 pm -	Anchor Text Reading &	Participants will read and then share their initial

Viet Workshop Tentative Syllabus - June 2026

2:30 pm	Discussion	impressions of the book so far. Instructors will introduce some cultural notes based on pp. 1-76 of the book.
2:30 pm - 3:15 pm	Website Exploration / Lesson Planning	Instructors will walk participants through the 2 main course websites. Participants will pick a lesson/activity that they would like to adapt for their grade level or context.
3:15 pm - 3:30 pm	Closing & Overview of Day 2	Wrap up, Q & A

Homework for Session 2

Due: June 16

Assignment	Approx. Time to Complete
Read anchor text: <i>The Mountains Sing</i> by Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai Focus on reading: pp. 77-95 and 96-130, & 130-148	1-2 hours

Session 2 - Tuesday, June 16 [\[Folder\]](#)

Time	Activity	Description
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Pre-workshop opening and setup, Logistics	We will open the workshop room 30 minutes before each session to help participants with any logistics.
9:30 am - 9:50 am	Games/Songs/ Meditation Activities	This session engages educators in interactive activities, games, songs, and a brief mindfulness practice to bring culturally sustaining pedagogy to life. Participants will explore identity, practice culturally responsive strategies through role-play, and engage with cultural knowledge through proverbs and music. A short guided meditation will help ground participants in presence and deep listening, fostering a reflective and inclusive learning environment.
9:50 am - 10:40 am	Presentation: Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Pedagogy	In his 2012 essay, "Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice," Django Paris advocated the ideal of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy that supports "young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence (p.93)." This presentation will give teachers cultural background about Vietnam and Vietnamese culture, and then will include some important information for the classroom,

Viet Workshop Tentative Syllabus - June 2026

		followed by interactive discussion together. Participants will be able to reflect on their own culture and experiences, and then think about their classrooms as well.
10:40 am - 11:30 am	Cultural & Arts Integration	Participants learn about the use of Portrait of a Memory, Personal Dictionaries, and Map Drawings as adaptable strategies for students to visually communicate understandings in a variety of disciplines.
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch	
12:30 pm - 1:20 pm	Presentation: Multilingual Resources for Educators	We will share resources (including websites, print material, videos and vendors) to support Vietnamese students and multilingual learners. Participants will be able to reflect on their own culture and experiences, and then think about their classrooms as well.
1:20 pm - 2:15 pm	Anchor Text Discussion	Participants will share their initial impressions of the book so far. Instructors will introduce some cultural notes based on pp. 96-130 of the book.
2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Lesson Planning	Work to develop a draft lesson plan, incorporating something you've learned in the workshop so far. Discuss and share with a partner/group and get feedback.
3:15 pm - 3:30 pm	Closing & Overview of Day 3	Wrap-up, Q & A

Homework for Session 3

Due: June 17

Assignment	Approx. Time to Complete
Read anchor text: <i>The Mountains Sing</i> by Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai Focus on reading: pp. 131-148, 149-230, & pp. 294-end	2 hours

Session 3 - Wednesday, June 17 [\[Folder\]](#)

Time	Activity & Resource	Description
9:00 am - 9:30 am	Pre-workshop opening and setup, Logistics	We will open the workshop room 30 minutes before each session to help participants with any logistics.
9:30 am - 9:50 am	Games/Songs/ Meditation Activities	This session engages educators in interactive activities, games, songs, and a brief mindfulness

Viet Workshop Tentative Syllabus - June 2026

		practice to bring culturally sustaining pedagogy to life. Participants will explore identity, practice culturally responsive strategies through role-play, and engage with cultural knowledge through proverbs and music. A short guided meditation will help ground participants in presence and deep listening, fostering a reflective and inclusive learning environment.
9:50 am - 10:40 am	Jigsaw Reading Groups	Participants will discuss their article with others in same-topic discussion groups. Then participants join a new break-out group to teach other participants about their topic and to learn about the topics that the other representatives in their group researched.
10:40 am - 11:30 am	Parent & Student Panel	Vietnamese parents/students share successes and challenges in navigating education in the U.S. They will provide insight on how to support Vietnamese students/families.
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Lunch	
12:30 pm - 1:20 pm	Philosophy for Children (P4C)	Participants will share their initial impressions of the book so far. Instructors will introduce some cultural notes based on pp. 149-230 & pp. 294-end of the book. Following the Philosophy for Children methodology (P4C) participants select a question to investigate as they discuss the text,
1:20 pm - 2:20 pm	Lesson Planning	Finalize the lesson plan, incorporating something you've learned in the workshop. Discuss with a partner.
2:20 pm - 3:00 pm	Present Lesson Plan and Ask for Feedback	Participants present their lesson plans and receive feedback from fellow participants.
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Culminating Reflections	Participants write/share final take-aways from the workshop and future commitments to supporting their Vietnamese students.
	Workshop Feedback	Using a Google Form, participants will have the chance to provide feedback on the workshop sessions.

Meet the Instructors

	
<p>Ger Thao, Ph.D.</p>	<p>Tham Tran, Ph.D.</p>
<p>Ger Thao, Ph.D. is a Program Specialist at the Orange County Department of Education supporting the CA-statewide Model Curricula Project and spearheading the Hmong History and Cultural Studies Model Curriculum. Dr. Thao earned her Ph.D. in Education: Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She is a bilingual educator (having taught K-5), author, and educational consultant with ten plus years of classroom experience.</p> <p>She has published 3 books: “The Hmong Journey: Hmoob Txoj Kev Taug” (Bilingual Version, 2018), “Hmoob Txoj Kev Taug” (Hmoob Version, 2020), and “Hmong Teacher Experiences: Voices from the Field” (2022). Dr. Thao has a background in multilingual multicultural/social justice education and culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy developing curriculum and professional developments that reflect diverse populations, with a focus on Southeast Asian and Pacific Island communities.</p> <p>She comes from a big family of 9 total siblings. In her free time, she loves to travel, try new cuisines, and spend time with her family, especially her 21 total nieces/nephews.</p>	<p>Tham Tran, Ph.D. is Director of Buddhist Youth Education at a Vietnamese Buddhist temple in Lowell, Massachusetts, where she founded a youth program integrating practical Buddhist teachings and Vietnamese language instruction for culturally diverse youth. She also serves as Vice Chairperson of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association (East Coast).</p> <p>Dr. Tran earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, with a specialization in Language Arts and Literacy Studies, from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Her research focuses on bilingual and bicultural identity development among immigrant youth, multicultural education, and positive youth development. She has contributed to initiatives in Southeast Asian American family and community engagement and promotes culturally sustaining pedagogies.</p> <p>Her scholarship has been presented at national conferences, including AERA, and published in venues such as the Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies, the Tang Institute at Phillips Academy, and in the book chapter Educational Implications of Buddhist Values in Vietnamese Folktales. With nearly two decades of leadership in the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association,</p>

Viet Workshop Tentative Syllabus - June 2026

	she is committed to fostering youth development through culturally grounded and spiritually informed practices. In her free time, she enjoys meditating, reading, and hiking.
Here is my professional page: https://herpublisher.com/blogs/hmong-authors-and-artists/ger-thao	Here is my professional page: Tham T. Tran - University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Supplies

Since artmaking is central to this workshop, we will provide basic art supplies but encourage you to bring additional art supplies. There are two lists provided here, one marked “recommended” and one marked “optional.” The recommended items can all be purchased for under \$30. You will not be penalized in any way if you don’t purchase these recommended supplies, but they will allow you to hopefully explore some new artistic media, which will, in turn, help you provide your students with new avenues for artistic expression. Links are provided on the supply lists but you may also be able to find them locally as well.

Recommended Supplies

Item	Notes
Watercolor Pencils	Crayola, 12 ct (Amazon : \$7.77, Blick : \$5.32 + shipping) Faber-Castell, 12 ct (Amazon : \$10.46) Derwent, 12 ct (Amazon : \$21.35, Blick : \$18.61+shipping) The quality of color and control increases with the price, but the Crayolas are perfectly fine if you are looking to save. These don’t come with a brush, however you can provide your own or use the brush that accompanies the water-soluble graphite pencils (see below)
Watercolor Paper	Canson Watercolor Pad, 140 lb, 11” x 15” (30 sheets) From Amazon (\$15.26, free shipping with Prime) or Blick Art Materials (\$14.35 + shipping)
Micron pens	Sakura Pigma set of 3 (Amazon : \$8.49, Blick : \$6.68 + shipping)
Water-soluble graphite pencils with brush	Staedtler Mars Lumograph Aquarell Pencil from Blick \$8.01 + shipping or Faber-Castell Graphite Aquarelle Pencils from Amazon : \$15.99

Optional Supplies

Item	Notes
Detail watercolor brush	Princeton, Round, Size 3 (Amazon : \$6.37, Blick : \$6.37 + shipping) This is a smaller brush, which allows you to work on a finer level with watercolor or water-soluble graphite pencils.
Dust-free eraser	Faber-Castell dust-free eraser (Amazon : \$3.99 or pack of 4 for \$6.93; Blick : \$1.75 + shipping)
Pencil sharpener	Staedtler (Amazon : \$6.04; Blick : \$5.73 + shipping)
Black paper	Faber-Castell Black Paper Sketch Pad, 9" x12" (Amazon : \$8.00, Blick : \$7.55 + shipping)
Colored pencils	Prismacolor Scholar, 12-count (Amazon : \$9.34, Blick : \$9.49 + shipping)
Drawing pencils	Staedtler Lumograph Graphite drawing pencils, set of 6 (Amazon : \$10.34, Blick : \$10.33 + shipping)

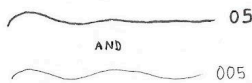
Here is a visual guide to supplies which you might want to purchase:

ART SUPPLIES

MEET THE MICRON!



★ SAKURA PIGMA MICRON PENS COME IN A RANGE OF LINE THICKNESSES LIKE:



ONE GREAT THING ABOUT MICRONS IS THAT THEY ARE WATERPROOF ONCE THE INK DRIES, MEANING YOU CAN COMBINE THEM WITH WATERCOLORS, AND THEY WON'T BLEED.



★ WATERCOLOR PENCILS LOOK LIKE AND BEHAVE LIKE ORDINARY COLOR PENCILS, EXCEPT THAT THEY ARE WATER SOLUBLE.

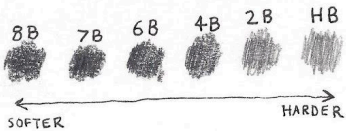


YOU CAN DRAW WITH THEM WITHOUT WATER FOR A DRY EFFECT LIKE THIS

OR YOU CAN USE WATER AND A BRUSH TO SPREAD AND COMBINE COLORS LIKE THIS



★ DRAWING PENCILS COME IN A RANGE OF HARDNESSES ALLOWING YOU TO CREATE A RANGE OF VALUES IN YOUR ART.

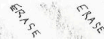


YOU CAN ALSO ACHIEVE A SMOOTH TRANSITION OF VALUES BY CHANGING THE PRESSURE YOU APPLY AS YOU DRAW.

HIGHER QUALITY ★ COLOR PENCILS, SUCH AS PRISMACOLOR, PRODUCE NICE SATURATED COLORS.



UNLIKE MARKERS, YOU CAN CONTROL THE VALUE OF THE COLOR BY CHANGING THE PRESSURE YOU APPLY.



★ DUST-FREE VINYL ERASERS DO A BETTER JOB THAN PINK ERASERS AT REMOVING GRAPHITE FROM THE PAGE WITHOUT LEAVING SMUDGE MARKS.



★ WATERCOLOR BRUSHES COME IN A RANGE OF SIZES. HAVING A SMALLER SIZE ROUND BRUSH LIKE A 2 OR A 3 WILL ALLOW YOU TO CAPTURE FINER DETAILS. LARGER SIZES LIKE 7 OR 8 ALLOW YOU TO QUICKLY COVER LARGER AREAS. IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE JUST ONE SIZE, 4 IS PRETTY VERSATILE FOR CREATING A RANGE OF LINE WEIGHTS.



COLOR PENCILS, WATER-COLOR PENCILS, DRAWING PENCILS AND WATER-SOLUBLE GRAPHITE PENCILS ALL HAVE SOFTER LEAD THAN NO. 2 PENCILS, AND THEY BREAK EASILY IN CONVENTIONAL SHARPENERS. A SMALL



★ HAND-HELD SHARPENER WILL ALLOW YOU TO GET A GOOD POINT AND TO EXTEND THE LIVES OF THESE SOFTER PENCILS.



★ WATER-SOLUBLE GRAPHITE PENCILS BEHAVE LIKE WATERCOLOR COLOR PENCILS BUT ALLOW YOU TO CREATE WASHES OF GRAY TONES.

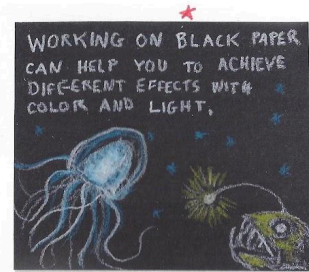


UNLIKE INK, YOU CAN AT LEAST PARTIALLY ERASE WATER-SOLUBLE GRAPHITE.

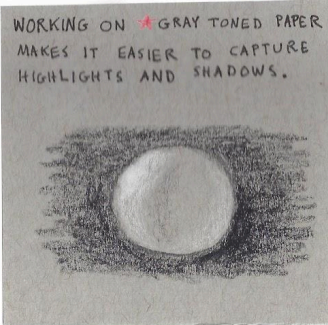
PAPER



WATER COLOR PAPER ★ CAN HOLD WATER, ALLOWING YOU TO WORK WITH WET MEDIA, FLUIDLY COMBINING COLORS. THE HEAVIER THE PAPER, THE THICKER IT WILL BE, AND THE MORE WATER IT WILL BE ABLE TO HANDLE WITHOUT BUCKLING OR PILING. PAPER THAT IS RATED 140 LB OR MORE WILL HOLD UP WELL FOR A VARIETY OF USES.



★ WORKING ON BLACK PAPER CAN HELP YOU TO ACHIEVE DIFFERENT EFFECTS WITH COLOR AND LIGHT.



★ WORKING ON GRAY TONED PAPER MAKES IT EASIER TO CAPTURE HIGHLIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

THERE ARE AN ALMOST INFINITE NUMBER OF WAYS YOU CAN COMBINE THESE VARIOUS MEDIA. YOU WILL LIKELY GRAVITATE TOWARDS PARTICULAR MEDIA, AND FIND YOU HAVE NEW THINGS TO SAY AND THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO EXPRESS DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF YOURSELF AS YOU TRY OUT DIFFERENT MEDIA.