

Field Notes: Asian Heritage Month

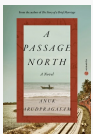
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Welcome to Field Notes, a new series from the Reconciliation & Inclusion team, offering curated resources to support deeper learning and inclusive practices across Seneca. Each issue will feature a bespoke collection of resources – such as books, TV shows and events – that the team has personally engaged with, reflected on and found meaningful in our own learning.

May is Asian Heritage Month in Canada. It is a month that invites us to reflect and learn about the diverse experiences, histories and cultures of Asian communities. This edition of Field Notes offers resources to deepen awareness and support inclusive practice across teaching, learning and community spaces.

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Read



A Passage North, by Anuk Arudpragasam

At once a powerful meditation on absence and longing and an unsparing account of the legacy of Sri Lanka's 30-year civil war, this procession to a pyre at the end of the earth lays bare the imprints of an island's past and the unattainable distances between who we are and what we seek.

Why: It was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2021.



Two Times Removed: An Anthology of Indo-Caribbean Fiction: Two Time Removed Series, edited and curated by Tiara Jade Chutkhan

A collection of short stories by Indo-Caribbean writers exploring identity, migration and family.

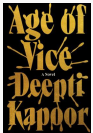
Why: It examines the Indo-Caribbean experience as part of the South Asian Diaspora.



The Story of Us, by Catherine Hernandez

A Filipino woman moves to Canada and becomes a personal support worker to an elderly white trans woman, who has a non-binary friend.

Why: It provides an intersectional lens to race and gender by a Canadian author.



Age of Vice, by Deepti Kapoor

A gripping crime novel set in modern India, full of power, corruption and unexpected twists.

Why: A saga of thrilling romance, gangsters and corruption. From the villages to New Delhi, it shows the deep inequalities in society and a picture of contemporary India.



Seven Moons of Maali Almeida, by Shehan Karunatilaka

This book focuses on a fictional account of Sri Lanka's civil war, the journalists who covered war crimes and those who tried to cover those crimes.

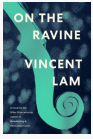
Why: It won the Booker Prize in 2022 and helps readers understand Sri Lanka's recent history through fiction.



Yellowface, by R.F. Kuang

A sharp, fast-paced novel about a white writer who steals the manuscript of her Asian friend and claims it as her own.

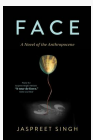
Why: What is the difference between appreciation and appropriation? While a work of fiction, it feels very real with identity theft. A great read and a compliment to any bookshelf.



On the Ravine, by Vincent Lam

A novel that explores the moral struggles of a Toronto doctor on the front line working with patients facing addiction, written by a Chinese-Canadian author.

Why: The story offers a powerful lens into community care, identity and the complexity of navigating ethical challenges across cultures.



Face, by Jaspreet Singh

Lila, a brilliant Indian-born science journalist and Lucia, an aspiring European-born writer, meet at a creative writing workshop in Calgary. Both try to use fiction to work through real-life trauma, but their entangled paths may reach all the way back to Lila's time as a geology student in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Why: It provides an intersectional lens to race, gender and the climate crisis and is by a Canadian author.



On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous, by Ocean Vuong

A poetic novel written as a letter from a Vietnamese son to his mother, touching on trauma, queerness and survival.

Why: It's deeply moving and highlights the emotional layers of immigrant life and intergenerational healing.

Watch

Sympathizer

A show about a half-French, half-Vietnamese spy during the final days of the Vietnam War and his life afterwards in the U.S., exploring identity, loyalty and the immigrant experience.

Why: It's based on Viet Thanh Nguyen's novel of the same name, which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2016. What is better, the book or the show? In this case both. A dark comedy of loyalty, starting over, and a complex portrayal of Vietnamese history.

The Queen of My Dreams

A coming-of-age story tracing the lives of a mother and daughter born three decades apart.

Why: It's funny, heartfelt and celebrates the diversity within South Asian identities.

Turning Red

A coming-of-age story set in Toronto's Chinatown about a Chinese-Canadian girl balancing cultural expectations, identity and self expression.

Why: It is a family must see. Familial relationships and mother-daughter conflicts are explored. The Director, Domee Shi, spent time answering Seneca students' questions in a previous student talk.

Local Favourites

Casa Manila

879 York Mills Rd., Unit #1, Toronto

508 Danforth Ave, Toronto

A warm, family-run Filipino restaurant serving traditional dishes like adobe, which is typically made with chicken or pork, and kare-kare, a peanut stew.

Why: Nature to nurture philosophy means no artificial flavours, no MSG, low salt and local meats, seafood and vegetables combined with imported Filipino ingredients.

Ba Noi Bakery

806 Bloor St W., Toronto

A Vietnamese-owned bakery offering pastries, warm beverages and savory fusion treats.

Why: The butter tarts are a must try – with a crispy, flaky crust, gooey maple filling and sea salt on top.

Maru

1402 Queen Street E, Unit B, Toronto

A cozy lunch and dinner spot in Leslieville serving Japanese dishes with a French twist.

Why: Their canapes are tiny works of art – each bite is fresh and beautifully balanced. The team's favourite is the salmon nori.

Other Recommendations

Asian Heritage Cultural Festival

400 Esna Park Dr., #21, Markham

Friday, May 23 – Sunday, May 25

This unique celebration features performances, art exhibitions, Asian fashion shows, food vendors, booths and kids' bouncy castles, etc.

Why: The festival offers a vibrant celebration of diverse Asian cultures through food, music, art and community, making it an enriching experience.

Asian Heritage Month Pop-up Market

308 Dundas Street W., Toronto

Sunday, May 25

The Asian Heritage Month Popup Market at Dzo Viet Eatery is a family-friendly event with free admission, featuring a variety of Asian vendors offering food, drinks and handcrafted goods.

Why: It has free entry, incredible food and performances and offers community connections.

The Reconciliation & Inclusion team knows the best learning happens in conversation. Let us know if you explore any of the resources above, or if there's something you'd recommend we

include in future editions.

Share your thoughts and suggestions in the comments, or email us at ri@senecapolytechnic.ca.

Seneca Polytechnic is celebrating Asian Heritage Month. Check out the [MySeneca space](#) to learn more about the events taking place, features on campus and more.

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