

Gunindu Abeysekera

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EDUCATION

University of California, Irvine — September 2018 - June 2019

M.A. Asian American Studies | Thesis [Film](#) & Written [Thesis](#)

University of California, Irvine — September 2015 - June 2018

B.A. Film & Media Studies | Minor: International Studies

Irvine Valley College — June 2012 - May 2015

Significant Transferable Units | Earned concurrently with High School Diploma

EXPERIENCE

YALU: Youth Advancement, Leadership & Unification

Co-founder — November 2018 - Present

- Created original logos, marketing materials, and [website](#)
- Organized inaugural pen pal letter exchange program between 60 youth from the United States and Sri Lanka in partnership with Sarvodaya
- Created and run @SpeakInSinhala on [Instagram](#) to teach Sinhalese and engage our community in social justice (850+ following)
- Created Project ISLAND: Introducing Sri Lankan American Narratives in the Diaspora, a community-based ethnographic project

UC Irvine FRESH Basic Needs Hub

Basic Needs Outreach & Engagement Coordinator — September 2019 - April 2020

Basic Needs Marketing Manager — July 2017 - June 2019

- Created original graphics, videos, [website](#), and marketing material
- Developed formal marketing plan and outreach strategies
- Managed annual marketing budget of \$10,000
- Presented on student's basic needs insecurities to increase awareness and advocate for funding resources
- Organized fundraisers, life skills events, and awareness programs
- Facilitated collaboration with campus departments and administration
- Attended UC systemwide basic needs conference at UC Santa Cruz (May 2018)

South Asian Student Union at UC Irvine

Co-founder & Director of Media and Communications — April 2017 - June 2018

- Created original logo, videos, marketing materials and strategies
- Organized and moderated 17 different social justice forums and events
- Awarded UCI's Most Outstanding Multicultural Organization (2018)
- Awarded UCI Cross-Cultural Center's Praxis Award (2018)

UTeach

Undergraduate Seminar Instructor — June 2017 - June 2018

- Worked directly with UC Irvine faculty to design my own for-unit course "[Bollywood and Post-Colonial South Asia](#)"
- Taught ten, 1-hour seminars to students during Spring Quarter 2018
- Created original syllabi, course plans, and additional teaching materials

PRESENTATIONS & GUEST LECTURES

- 2021: **Presenter**, White Rose South Asian Conference
- 2021: **Presenter**, South Asian Studies Association Conference
- 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020: **Presenter** (6 occasions), "Preserving our Communities Through Storytelling" and my documentary film "[Serendipitous](#)" - (UCI, South Asian American Experiences)
- 2018: **Workshop Facilitator & Panel Moderator**, "Anti-blackness in South Asia" - (UCI, South Asian Student Union and African American Studies Department)
- 2018: **Presenter and Panelist**, "Politics of Padmavati: A Survey of the Patriarchal Hold on 'Feminine' Power" - (UCI, Undergraduate Critical Theory Conference)
- 2019: **Panelist**, "Navigating Grad School as a Queer Person of Color" - (UCI, Womxn's Hub Graduate Student Panel)
- 2019: **Presenter**, "Colonialism & Memory" (UCI, Students for Justice in Palestine)
- 2019: **Presenter**, "Bend it Like Beckham Coming of Age in Asian America" (UCI)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Visual and cultural studies
- Performance studies
- Postcolonial studies
- Gender and sexuality studies
- Community archives
- Memory and nostalgia
- Diaspora studies
- South Asian-American studies

SKILLS

- Community organizing
- Documentary filmmaking
- Political organizing
- Non-profit creation
- Event / program organization
- Teaching / public speaking
- Critical writing
- Creative problem solving
- Team management
- Photography / videography
- Graphic design

AWARDS & HONORS

John Liu Asian American Studies Fellowship (2018)

Received \$1,000 scholarship for my M.A. degree

Franco Tonelli Memorial Prize for Television and Digital Media Theory & Criticism (2017)

for "The Intersectionalities of Gender and Race through Hip-Hop Culture and Music"

Dean's Honor List (UCI):

Spring 2016; Fall 2016; Winter 2017; Fall 2017

Group Pulitzer Prize (2014):

National Youth Leadership Conference: Digital Media, Broadcast & Journalism in Fordham, New York

LANGUAGES

- English (*Fluent*)
- Sinhala (*Fluent*)
- French (*Conversational*)

CERTIFICATIONS

American Heart

Association — *First Aid and CPR Certified* | March 2012 - Present

Tae Kwon Do — First Degree Black Belt

| August 2012
License No. 09277545
California Taekwondo Center, Lake Forest, CA.