

Representation Matters: The 'Boat People' from Vietnam and Refugee Policy in the late 1970s

Presented by Dr. **Lisa Tran**



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Time: 3-5 PM, Oct. 5, Thursday

Location: Sierra Hall 264, CSUN

Abstract:

Although scholars have problematized the dichotomy between “migrant” as voluntary and economic, and “refugee” as forced and political, few case studies exist. Focusing on the “boat people” who left Vietnam in the late 1970s (most of whom were ethnic Chinese) and resettled in the United States, Canada and Australia, Lisa Tran argues that while international and state policy reified the legal distinction between migrant and refugee, the lived experiences of the people who left Vietnam blurred that distinction. Analyzing “refugee” as a discursive site rather than a fixed identity allows us to see how both ordinary people and national governments appropriated the category of “refugee” to pursue their specific goals.

Lisa Tran is Professor of Modern Chinese History at CSU Fullerton. She has published widely on women and the law in China. Her most recent publication is *Concubines in Court: Marriage and Monogamy in Twentieth-Century China* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015). The American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the Fulbright Association and the Association for Asian Studies have generously supported her research.

This lecture is sponsored by **China Institute, Department of Asian American Studies, and the College of Humanities** at CSUN. It is free and open to the public. Campus map is available at this link, www.csun.edu/csun-maps, and public parking is available on campus (www.csun.edu/parking/visitor-parking-information). Please contact Dr. Weimin Sun at weimin.sun@csun.edu (818-677-6461) for more information.