

# Jason Oliver Chang

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## Ph.D., UC Berkeley

**Associate Professor of History and Asian American Studies**  
**Faculty Affiliate, El Instituto, American Studies, and Maritime Studies**

## **Director, Asian and Asian American Studies Institute**

On Leave Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

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## **Areas of Specialty**

Asian American History, U.S. Immigration History, Mexico, Maritime History

## **Current Research Interests**

Indo-Pacific-American Maritime History

## **Biography**

After finishing my PhD from the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley in 2010, I lectured in Asian American and Latin American history at the University of Texas at Austin. I also hold a Masters of Public Policy and Administration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Combining Asian American Studies and Latin American Studies, I have worked with colleagues in these related fields to push to bring together Ethnic Studies and Area Studies that attends to both the transnational features of Asian diasporas in the Americas and the importance of local, regional, and national frames of analysis. My first book, *Chino: Anti-Chinese Racism in Mexico, 1880-1940* (University of Illinois Press, 2017), analyzes the regional histories of Chinese migration and integration in Mexican society to show how the racial image of the Chinese shifted over the course of the 1910 revolution and subsequent reconstruction. The shifts in this racial form demonstrate how Mexican anti-Chinese politics, or antichinismo, influenced the formation of mestizo national identity; the exercise of sovereign authority by the postrevolutionary state; and the cultural politics of how Indians became racialized subject/citizens of the Mexican state. I continue this work in a new article under review with the *Latin American Research Review* which compares the anti-Chinese campaigns of Mexico and El Salvador.

My second project expands my interests in transnational Asian American history in several ways. First, my research focuses on the maritime traditions of the Indo-Pacific and their relationship to different and competing merchant and naval fleets of imperial powers. My recent article in the *Pacific Historical Review*, "[Four Centuries of Imperial Succession in the Comprador Pacific](#)," which won the annual 2018 Koontz Prize from the journal for the most deserving contribution, traces the role of Chinese merchants across successive imperial regimes in the Pacific. The larger manuscript traces South Asian, Chinese, and Filipino seafarers in the economy, culture, and labor of inter-Asian and trans-Pacific oceanic passages. I'm particularly interested in the historical development of oceanic occupations for Asian and Pacific Islanders as an abject source of maritime labor tracing its origins in medieval and early modern maritime cultures, to the British commercial fleets and the U.S. Navy and merchant mariners. My approach positions these seamen in the context of ocean-going Asian, European, and U.S. imperialisms as well as their environmental and cultural ocean worlds. This project aims to highlight how the political contact zones of the sea are intensified by deforestation, fisheries, and climate change. I aim to build an understanding of the particular features of human maritime life as being environmentally structured and socially signified amidst a multi-ethnic/multi-racial contact zone.

## **Selected Publications**

### **Books**

*Chino: Racial Transformation of the Chinese in Mexico, 1880-1940.*

*Asian America: A Primary Source Reader.*

### **Personal Interests**



When I'm not working at UConn I'm usually spending time with my three kids and partner, Julie. In other moments I love gardening and carpentry.