

THE BUTLER CENTER

NEWSLETTER

JOEL SATI ON "WE ARE NOT DREAMERS"



The Butler Center, alongside the ADEI office, hosted Professor Joel Sati as a guest speaker for the Antiracism Book Club. Joel Sati is a professor of Law at the University of Oregon. Dr. Sati not only studies immigration academically but is an undocumented immigrant himself and an immigrant rights activist. His interest in researching immigration was sparked after observing that throughout the academic canon immigration was debated without the input of immigrants or undocumented people themselves. Sati first found out he was undocumented when applying for college. His journey from there was challenging, with him facing homelessness and considering dropping out of school. He did eventually graduate and his professional academic career began at the start of Trump's presidency. The immigration laws of that time also helped spark his career in immigration law and activism.



Dr. Sati joined members of the CC community to discuss his recent chapter in the book *We Are Not Dreamers*.

Sati's chapter, "'Other' Borders: The Illegal as Normative Metaphor," describes the dark cyclical relationship between how policies inform metaphor and metaphor then inform policy. For example, the term "alien" or "illegal alien"- as used to describe immigrants - actually predates the term being used in sci-fi. The metaphor of the fearsome foreign invader was developed with the intention of "othering" immigrants. Similarly, even metaphors that we typically think of as positive - like the term "dreamer" can have harmful impacts. In this case, the term "dreamer" only awards immigrants who have assimilated to American culture, learned unaccented English, and otherwise bought into the American Dream. It excludes older immigrants, lower-performing students, and anyone who doesn't fit the "good immigrant" narrative. The dreamer narrative allows policymakers to pick and choose which immigrants they deem worthy of humanity.

"Dr. Sati's speaker event was a wonderful opportunity to connect with someone who has also done work to uplift and empower the undocumented community. He challenged us to view the movement in different ways and think of how we could make it more inclusive. He also humanized the movement and the work he's done by sharing his personal story. Overall, he was an amazing person to speak to!"

-Etelin Tapia



After a summary of his work, Sati sat for a Q&A panel with Etelin Tapia, Education and Immigration Justice Fellow, and Rakim Johnson, Peer Educator and BSU co-chair. During this panel, Sati spoke largely on two themes: electoral politics and the limits thereof and interpersonal support and community.

Electoral politics can have extreme impacts on immigration. Sati specifically highlighted Title 42 which was enacted in 2020 and used COVID as justification for halting the right of individuals to seek asylum in the US. This policy was then reinforced by Biden in 2023. This policy played off the fear of the metaphor of immigrants as carriers of contagion - often depicted in popular media through scenes of Ellis Island health screenings. The impact of policies like this cannot be denied, but the positive impact of electoral politics is often limited or nonexistent. When it comes to immigration, it is hard for you to align yourself with the "right" side of electoral politics. One side is often only marginally better than the other. While the Right openly opposes immigration reform and villainizes immigrants, the Left often tokenizes immigrants who fit the "good immigrant" stereotype into "mascots" for their campaigns while actually supporting the same harmful immigration measures. Measures that would actually dramatically support immigrants - like irradiating borders - are unlikely to be supported by either party.

So is there hope? Sati says yes - meaningful work can be done by individuals and communities. This can look like organizing community action, supporting local immigrants and undocumented people, or calling out your representatives on their inadequate actions.

"Meeting Sati was really eye opening. On top of everything they had to say I think what was most eye opening is how funny, calm, and laid back he was. I think it's easy to see academics like him as above the rest of us or beyond what we would do in the day to day, but Sati humanized himself and other writers like him. I know it's a small detail but it's reassuring to me that as I dive deeper into my academic journey and readings I can find comfort in knowing that the writer behind the article could be as cool as Sati" - Oziel Cime



This brings us to Sati's next main point: the importance of community. Sati described the difficulties of navigating higher education as a black undocumented immigrant. He was part of the first cohort of DACA students to enter higher ed, and at that point, there were very few support systems in place. Not only did he feel unsupported by his peers and the professionals at his school, but he also sometimes felt isolated in activism circles as a black man.

Because of these experiences, Sati was sure to highlight the importance of community and interpersonal support. The constant uncertainty of legal status makes being undocumented a constant draining stressor. Undocumented people need emotional, mental, and financial support. When thinking about supporting immigration reform it's important to consider more than just electoral politics and to consider how we're showing up for the people in our own communities. Sati also warned our students that in their lives there may be many people who offer them hollow support so that they can use them as token markers of diversity. It, Sati says, is important for undocumented students to find individuals and communities who are willing to genuinely and proactively support their emotional, mental, and financial needs. Community and interpersonal support are some of the most powerful tools in advocating for the undocumented community.

After his talk, Dr. Sati attended a dinner with a number of CC students, including students from Advocates for Immigrant Justice. This venue gave students the opportunity to meet Joel on a more interpersonal level and to humanize the scholar behind the work.

Thank you to Joel Sati for your time, to the ADEI office for helping fund this event, and to everyone who showed up, submitted your questions, or otherwise participated in the lecture!

"I really enjoyed meeting Joal Sati. He was very down to earth, friendly, and it was incredibly valuable to have the opportunity speak with an academic in such a casual setting. He showed us picture of his cats and taught us how to eat clams while reminiscing about his time in Law school and giving us advice for our own professional journeys" - Brailey Harris

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Ren Coryell

They/Them

Art Studio Major, Education minor

What is your role at the TBC?

I am a peer mentor for the Queer and Trans Collective. I help plan and advertise events and support our queer and trans students however I can!

What are you studying and what do you want to do after CC?

I am an Art Studio major with a focus on printmaking and drawing, with a minor in education. Post CC, I plan on becoming a teacher, either elementary level or an art teacher k-12 while continuing my art practice independently.

What is one interest you have outside of CC?

Outside of school, I really enjoy aggressive inline skating! It's a fun way for me to get outside and engage with my body in a positive and fun way.

What does ADEI work mean to you or how did you get into this?

I started working as part of the Queer and Trans collective out of a desire to create a stronger queer community on campus while working with others who felt the same way. ADEI work doesn't feel like something I chose, but rather something that calls me to it. That's why I want to be a teacher. Education needs to be ADEI work.

What is one thing you like to see changed about the CC community?

I would love to see people on campus getting more involved in community action. I think sometimes it can be a little too easy to just repost or reshare something on our phones and move on, but I would like to see us coming together more in person to discuss how we can make a collective impact on our community, whether that be on campus, local, or wider.

What's one fact about you?

Fun fact? Not very fun, but I've broken 5 bones.

UPCOMING EVENTS



CALL FOR PERFORMERS

The Queer and Trans Collective is hosting their first drag show! We are looking for 5 students, staff, and/or faculty performers.

If you are interested in performing, please fill out the form below.

Compensation is provided for performers!



*Please complete the form no later than
5pm February 29th*

WEEKLY PAIRINGS - BOOK RECOMENDATIONS

Novels by Asian Authors for the Lunar New Year



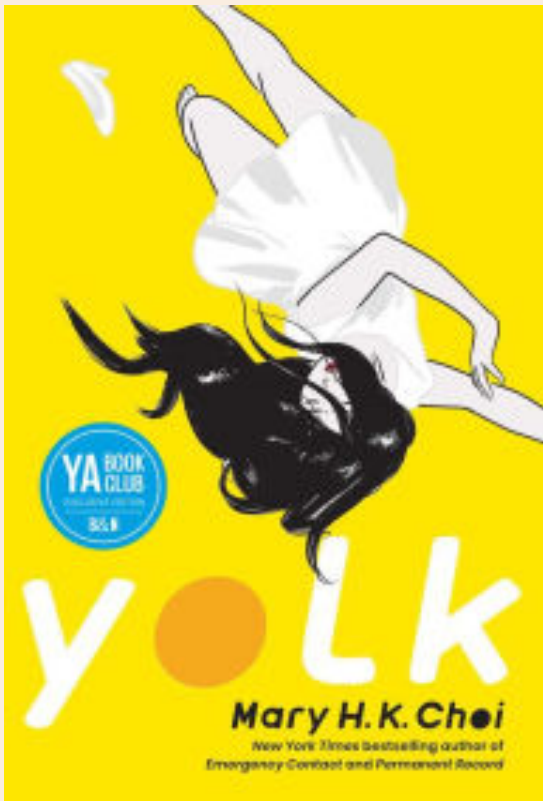
Murder Mystery meets rom-com in Jesse's Sutanto's ***Dial A for Aunties***. When Meddelin Chan accidentally kills her blind date, her aunties rally together to save the day. With the help of her aunties and their wedding planning business, Meddy will navigate a billionaire wedding, possible murder charges, heartbreak, family curses, and possibly win back her ex. Emily Henry (*Beach Read*), called ***Dial A for Aunties*** a "hilarious, heartfelt romp of a novel about," and Kirkus Review says "Readers will die for the delightfully absurd hijinks in this dark comedy." ***Dial A for Aunties*** playfully engages with stereotypes while soundly falling in the category of Own Voices and leaning on Sutanto's experiences as a Chinese-Indonesia person. Sutanto dubs this novel as a "love letter to my family."

The Vulture says, "Ghosts. Gods. Gangsters. ***Black Water Sisters*** has it all... A wildly entertaining coming-of-age story." In ***Black Water Sisters*** by Zen Cho, Jessamyn Teoh, a closeted young adult returns to her homeland of Malaysia, but soon starts hearing the mysterious voice of her estranged grandmother, Ah Ma. Ah Ma is determined to settle an old score with a business czar, and is willing to spill Jess's secrets and involve her in dangerous crimes to do so. Jess delves into the world of ghosts, secrets, and deities and must figure out how to regain control of her own body, mind, and destiny. Author Naomi Novik called this a "sharp and bittersweet story" and Buzzfeed called it "a twisty, feminist, and enthralling page-turner."



WEEKLY PAIRINGS - BOOK RECOMENDATIONS

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Yolk is a poignant and heartfelt novel by Mary H. K. Choi (Author of *Emergency Contact*). It follows the story of two sisters - Jayne and June who have nothing in common until they're flung together by unfortunate circumstances. June has her life together, works in finance, and is the classic perfect oldest child. Jayne is still figuring out her life - from school to dating to apartments to her own self-destructive tendencies. When June gets cancer the sisters will be thrust together for the first time since their childhood and be forced to address their strained relationships as well as their own flaws. Kirkus Reviews calls this book "Intense, raw, [and] textured." The book specifically highlights Jayne's own struggle with body image and sexuality and does contain descriptions of eating disorders and obsessive compulsive tendencies.

Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors is Sonali Dev's modern and multicultural take on the classic Austen novel. The Rajes family is descendent from Indian royalty and accepts only the highest standards. Dr. Trisha Raje, an acclaimed neurosurgeon, has never been able to fit that mold or standards, but she ends her period of estrangement with her family to help support her brother's gubernatorial campaign. Sparks fly when she meets chef DJ Caine - a man her family could never accept. The classic *Pride and Prejudice* tropes ensue as the two enemies-to-lovers fight to choose between family, obligation, and something far sweeter.

