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## Chris Datailes Oral History

February 19, 2024

Length of Interview: 28:16

Interviewee: Chris Datiles

Interviewer: Daniella Laher

Transcribed by: Daniella Laher, Samantha Pagdilao

[Generating and Reclaiming our Wisdoms \(GROW\):  
A Collection of AAPI Community Stories at UC San Diego](#)

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Time	Transcription
0:00	Daniella Laher: Alright, so let's get started now.
0:02	Chris Datiles: *laughs* Awesome.
0:04	Daniella Laher: All right, so hello, my name is Daniella Laher. Today is February 19, 2024. I'm interviewing Chris Datiles through Zoom for UC San Diego's Generating and Reclaiming Our Wisdoms (GROW) project. Do you agree to grant the university permission to archive and publish this interview for educational purposes?
0:22	Chris Datiles: Yes, I agree.
0:23	Daniella Laher: All right, cool. So let's just kind of get started with the interview. First off, just want to like- would you like to introduce yourself so like the name, pronouns, and any other identities that you feel are important to share?
0:34	Chris Datiles: Yeah, definitely. So yeah, I'm Chris Datiles pronouns he/him. I'm queer, Filipino American, grew up in the Bay Area. I'm now located in Northeast LA. And currently, I'm a grief and loss psychotherapist. Yeah.
0:53	Daniella Laher: That's really cool.
0:54	Chris Datiles: Mhm.
0:55	Daniella Laher: All right. Okay, so now I kind of want to talk about like, your time in UC San Diego. So like, kind of what did you major in, what were you involved with? So kinda that.
1:03	Chris Datiles: Yeah, definitely. When I started at UCSD, I actually entered as a Latin American Studies major. And I entered with that major because my senior year of high school I took a Chicano Studies class as my English course. But eventually after going to Summer Bridge, before my first year started, I switched to Ethnic Studies. So I was an Ethnic Studies major, I was heavily involved with the Cross Cultural Centers as an intern, and just as a community member, involved with the LGBT Resource Center as an intern. And throughout my time at UCSD, I also worked at OASIS [Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services] for all of my five years there in different capacities. And then I was also part of SPACES [Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service] in terms of getting the referendum passed, and then establishing SPACES. And was part of their second cycle of co-directors and then their fifth cycle, I was the KP STAR [Kaibigan Pilipin@ Students Teaching Academic Retention] Coordinator that year. Yeah.

Time	Transcription
2:10	Daniella Laher: Alright, so and so you were previously involved with like Kamalayan Kollektive and Kaibigan Pilipin@, correct? Like-
2:18	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Mhm. Yeah. Mhm.
2:19	Daniella Laher: -while you were in UC San Diego? Yeah, so what kind of like, initially made you want to get involved in these spaces? And kind of like, what made you like, stay in these spaces? So like, were there other like people or like, was it just like any, like specific experiences?
2:32	Chris Datiles: Yeah definitely. Yeah so my introduction to both spaces was actually through Summer Bridge. So at the time, it was a residential component, or a residential program, a four week program. And I was able to meet students who are involved in both KP and Kamalayan, either as they were tutors or facilitators, there was a student org fair, and got to connect with more folks there. So initially, that's what drew me to both spaces. I think what drew me to KP at the time was it was just a bigger community like a bigger organization, and wanting to feel connected to other Filipino students, other folks who were just involved and wanted to be around other people who wanted to connect with cultural aspects, or cultural exploration of identity. And then what drew me to Kamalayan was, I felt like it could be a political home for me in terms of just having a more dedicated space to talk about issues that were affecting people in the diaspora locally or globally, and taking steps or taking actions to organize to create changes as best as we could. What kept me in both I think were the connections. I mean, I had a group of friends, a community in both spaces. And I also think what helped me in both two because I mean, to be honest, there moments where in both organizations I had contemplated do I want to stay in this or not. Do I want to stay or leave? I think what ultimately kept me in the orgs were just both organization's commitment to their mission and wanting to ensure that I can be a part of creating a better campus environment for Filipino students at UCSD. Yeah. Hm
4:26	Daniella Laher: Yeah, that was really well said. So you mentioned that you were majoring in Ethnic Studies, so like were there any like-
4:31	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Mhm.
4:32	Daniella Laher: -specific coursework, not even just in Ethnic Studies or just like-
4:35	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Yeah.

Time	Transcription
4:36	Daniella Laher: -the classes overall, that just like really stood out to you and kind of just influenced like your own personal development and also like your career goals?
4:42	<p>Chris Datiles: Yeah, definitely. As a student, I actually didn't *laughs* I didn't think much about what would happen after college. I think my only intentions at the time were one, to organize with organizations as much as I could, implement whatever we envision for the campus, and then to graduate. But ultimately, I think some of the courses that really helped shape me, one, was EDS 116. So Education Studies 116 through OASIS was a space where I got to learn about peer counseling, develop basic counseling skills. And it was also an experiential course where we got to process our own histories, our own traumas, our own identities, and learning how to do that in community with others. At the time, I wanted to be an Academic Transition Counselor for OASIS and got to do that, but I never thought at that time that I would be a therapist, but I'm glad that helped shape me then.</p> <p>In terms of professors, I think that Professor Jody Blanco and then Provost K. Wayne Yang really helped shape just my connection and learning to Ethnic Studies, literature, different things. Professor Blanco was my thesis advisor for my Ethnic Studies honors thesis, which focused a lot on the politicization of Filipino American students on campus from the '80s to the 2010s. And I think from him, what I took away from him was really just... developing a commitment to something that was meaningful and that could be some sort of change in a way. With Provost Yang, I think, there were about two or three courses that I took with him, but I think what really influenced me was just like, taking the theory into practice, so having practice and really like centering our learning on how can we use this to influence, support whatever cause or effort, or change we wanted to see in our personal lives, but also on campus. Yeah, and then the only other piece that comes to mind is the LIHL, the Filipino for Filipino Speakers language course. I don't know if it's still around, but for me, I didn't grow up speaking or being spoken to in Tagalog, so it was just a way for me to feel more connected to myself and the community. Yeah.</p>
7:36	Daniella Laher: Yeah, of course, I feel like with a lot of like, experiential like-
7:39	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Mhm.
7:40	Dani: -courses and just like putting, like, what you learn in class in practice, it definitely really helps and just like makes you realize, like, what you are doing here in college like is ultimately- it is really worth it. You know, it is things that you could apply once you're outside UC San Diego.

Time	Transcription
7:54	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Yeah. Mhm.
7:55	Daniella Laher: So yeah. So like with being involved in like student orgs kind of like academics, and also, you know, like your own personal career pursuits it's just it can be very daunting to handle so like, did you ever feel overwhelmed? Were there any kind of just like specific moments or people here at UC San you have that kind of like, I guess sustained you and like, made you, want to keep going? Yeah.
8:19	<p>Chris Datiles: Yeah definitely. Yeah, when I saw that question, I was like, Oh, it really made me reflect on my time. It was really daunting, like just trying to manage everything and honestly over-committing myself to things. In my second year at UCSD, I actually considered dropping out and withdrawing from the university. I was dropping my classes, like fire, like I wasn't doing well. I was more focused on the work in the organizations, *laughs* which I am sure a lot of students could say they have the experience, too. But what got me through those moments, one I think ultimately was really wanting to be a part of and seeing through like the establishment of different things, at the time the establishment of spaces.</p> <p>The Cross Cultural Center was transitioning at the time from in between interim space to where it is now. And even just with KP and Kamalayan, their initiatives at the time like KP Star and KP Core [Community Outreach to Realize Empowerment] was only in its second year, I think. No, it was in its first year in my second year. And so wanting just to really see those develop. And then with Kamalayan I think the directed group studies courses, we were involved with campus partners and also folks off campus and wanted to see certain programs get implemented, but that's what kept me at the university.</p> <p>I think like my kuyas [older brothers] and ates [older sisters] kept be at the university, too. Just that support. And just also full time staff in the Cross Cultural Center, I remember different moments going into their offices just really dumping on them, like my emotional baggage— crying, venting, talking off the wall, yeah. So that and then also being a part of OASIS and Summer Bridge. I think because we were offering support services to other students, they really ensured that we had a space to be emotionally and mentally supported as well. And I think that the staff, there, my peers, honestly, we look out for each other in a way that if I didn't have that, I do feel like I would have dropped out *laughs* at some point. Yeah.</p>
10:43	Daniella Laher: No, I was gonna get [to] that, like, what is it, like dropping courses and just feeling so like involved or just wanting to just like, kind of focus on, the org stuff and like-

Time	Transcription
10:53	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Yeah.
10:54	Daniella Laher: -work stuff like, I'm getting nervous, like, I'm sort of going through the same thing, too.
10:57	Chris: [cross talk] Ah! Awe, yeah.
10:58	Daniella Laher: So it's, like, really nice to, you know, hear, with those experiences, oh you know, this is like, what really helped me, you know, during my time here. So like, thank you. *laughs*
11:07	Chris: [cross talk] Yeah! Yeah.
11:09	Daniella Laher: Yeah, of course, okay. And so now I kind of wanted to comment or not comment, like focus a little more on like-
11:14	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Mhm.
11:15	Daniella Laher: -the directed group study experiences that like Kamalayan and KP offered.
11:20	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Yeah.
11:21	Daniella Laher: And you were one of the students facilitators. So like, can you just-
11:23	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Mhm.
11:24	Daniella Laher: -like describe what like these courses entails and all that?
11:28	<p>Chris Datiles: Yeah, for sure. So, my first year at UCSD, Kamalayan decided there was a group of students, Carmela Kapinpin, Jenna Sapigao, Castillo at the time, and other folks like they were around when the first, or actually maybe they were, I think they had relationships or like, just their aces or like, their sisters were part of the original Pinmayism class, directed group studies class. And so they wanted to bring it back. And so my winter quarter of my first year was when the Pinayism directed group studies happened for a second time. They took the whole fall quarter to really develop it, take bits and pieces of the old syllabus and implement new topics or ideas that they wanted to explore.</p> <p>And then with the, what did we call it? For the other director group studies, class B, it was named Performing Filipina/Filipino American Identity and it was sponsored by the Literature Department and their Cultural Studies department. And through that course, you know, we were reached out to by some alumni who had an idea of</p>

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	<p>like, Hey, like, at UCSD with our PC and being called PCC [Pilipino Cultural Celebration], like already, taking a critical view about what it means to perform or about what the production means. I think that there was just a lot to explore further about what it means to perform identity, what it means to educate ourselves about different issues, and how do we use the PCC or the PCN [Pilipino Cultural Night] as a space to not only learn about culture, but to be critical of it, too, critical issues. I think both classes really offer the space, one, to learn from Filipino academics whether that was the books or articles or literature we were reading. They were also a space to really think about like, Okay, with this knowledge, what, how am I going to use it on campus? There are different topics in the syllabus that we went over, like colonization, imperialism, performance, etcetera, but yeah, I'll pause there. Just, yeah, I feel like I can just keep talking. *laughs* Yeah.</p>
14:08	<p>Daniella Laher: No! Feel free to go ahead and just keep talking just whatever you'd like to-</p>
14:10	<p>Chris Datiles: Yeah.</p>
14:11	<p>Daniella Laher: -share, feel comfortable to share, like go for it.</p>
14:13	<p>Chris Datiles: Ah huh. Yeah, I think like when I think about the Pinayism course, one of our main texts was Pinay Power. It's like an anthology, different articles included in there. We had a lot of guest speakers at the time, so we had an alum from the original Pinayism course come through. We met with... I forget if they were part of the official organization in San Diego, but we talked about Pinayism amongst Muslim women in the Philippines, or in the diaspora, and towards the end of an Pinayism, we all have sort of just developed our own relationship with feminism, critical thought, etcetera, exploring how that affects us or influences us in our personal life, but also in the actual work that we were all doing in KP or Kamalayan.</p> <p>And then with the directed group studies course for Performing Filipina/Filipino American Identity, it's interesting. A lot of us eventually were involved in PCC in different ways or had been involved prior, whether that was being the cultural coordinators or being script writers or directors. I think that that course influenced us to really use PCC as a vehicle to not only build community and learn and build this familial aspect, but to bring light to issues that were affecting folks on campus, but also more nationally, or more globally. Yeah.</p>
16:03	<p>Daniella Laher: ...Yeah, that was really interesting. It's like, what is it- I mean, it's gonna be questioned on later on.</p>

Time	Transcription
16:10	Chris Datiles: Yeah yeah.
16:11	Daniella Laher: But, yeah, so you were a student facilitator of the directed group studies. What kind of like, prompted you into, like, wanting to take up this role?
16:21	Chris Datiles: When...So the Pinayism course happened in winter quarter of that year and we were approached by some alumni like, Hey, like, let's, let's do another directed group studies course,...What do you want to explore? What are issues that are happening right now? And I think as a group we had mentioned, like, Oh, like, just performance, identity, PCC, and so in terms of facilitating, I really think it was just the ask from Kamalayan terms of like, Who has capacity to facilitate or to take on the student facilitator role and as a first year, I was like, Oh I do and I facilitated, or co-facilitated alongside two of my peers, another first year, at the time, Gracelynn West. And then... one of my aates, Frida Alvear who was in her fourth year at the time, I believe. Yeah, she was in her fourth year. So we were the three student facilitators. And I think it was just yeah, we all had the capacity to do it in some senses. And generally too, I was just interested in taking on a leadership role in some senses of developing my own skills and facilitating and really guiding the group. Yeah.
17:40	Daniella Laher: Yeah and I just kinda want to ask, like, kind of how was that process of like, you know, coming up with the course content and like, kind of like the objectives for the course?
17:47	Chris Datiles: Mhm!
17:48	Daniella Laher: And also, like you mentioned, your ate, who's a fourth year, do you kind of feel like that sort of sense like mentorship?
17:55	Chris Datiles: Yeah, I feel like that really helped. I mean, her being on campus for four years, or coming into her fourth year at that time, I think she really helped me and Gracelynn learn how to facilitate, learn how to bring folks together, help people move through dialogue, discussion, questions, etc. In terms of developing the actual syllabus for the course, it was a true partnership with the alumni. So the two alumni that were most involved were Jason Macabo Perez, and then Lorelei Bingamon, and they both had graduated probably, actually don't know, probably like two or three years before. Probably four years, I'm not sure. But it was a true collaboration with them in the sense of us addressing like, Hey, here are issues that we want to talk about whether that is how we as a diaspora learn about ourselves, or colonization, or what it means to perform, for instance, like perform dances, different songs, different things that may be a part of specific ethnic groups in the Philippines that we ourselves may not have identities in or share



Time	Transcription
	<p>identities with. And they took those things that we wanted to explore and found, really the material that we could use to learn about it, whether that's books, articles, films, guest speakers. And I think because both of them had graduated, had experience with further education, whether that's a master's degree or other things, they really helped us outline how we can learn about it. At the time as a first year, I don't think I could have done that myself, in a way. Yeah.</p>
20:02	<p>Daiella Laher: And so was it because the directed group studies, you know, like they, what is it? It's been like oftentimes just like revivals of like this, course. And so recently, KP kind of revived, like the Filipino American culture course.</p>
20:18	<p>Chris Datiles: Mhm.</p>
20:19	<p>Daniella Laher: This quarter it's actually being taught right now.</p>
20:21	<p>Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Oh cool.</p>
20:22	<p>Daniella Laher: So like do you kinda have any words of wisdom for like future student facilitators, or just like, anyone who might be like, interested in taking this course?</p>
20:29	<p>Chris Datiles: Yeah, I think it's been facilitated right now? The director group studies course? Yeah? Is it winter quarter? Is it spring quarter? Right now?</p>
20:39	<p>Daniella Laher: It is winter quarter, week seven, actually.</p>
20:42	<p>Chris Datiles: Okay. Okay. So you're in the thick of it? Yeah, I think for anyone that's in that course. I mean, just to backtrack a little bit with the original, the first run of it, I think the intention was to really see how the course could help us develop PCCs in the future. And so that was sort of the intent for the course too. So whatever the intention is, for this course, this time around, whether it's that or really just exploring Filipino American culture, I think for the students that are in it, the facilitators that are doing it, yeah, my only advice or thoughts are to really reflect on like, Okay, with this information and with what they're learning. Like, what do you want to be able- Where do you want to be able to bring this, whether that is within your family, within a greater community or on campus? Opportunities for this knowledge, and this space don't come up often, so it's something really precious. So how, how can they utilize it in a way where it could reach beyond them? In essence?</p>
21:51	<p>Daniella Laher: Yeah, of course. And so now to kind of just like transition to this. What is it like, it's been almost maybe over a decade, that these courses have been being taught, but they're still not permanent on the course catalog, and</p>

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	they're also not really found on any like official like UC San Diego, like, websites or records. So I just want to ask like, Do you have any like thoughts or opinions to kind of comment on the situation? And like, do like have any like, wishes for the future of this course? Or like these courses? Yeah.
22:23	Chris Datiles: Yeah, I think like, the special thing about directed group studies courses is that they are..what's the right word for it? They're so unique, and that they really take the learning, the development, the process, the power of instruction into the students hands, with the faculty advisor, truly just advising, guiding, obviously signing off on the pass/no pass that the students will get at the end. But yeah, one of the things when I think about the directed group studies courses is how they're really like speaking to what is of interest of students at the time, what they care about, what they want to explore. So there's a part of me that's like, I would love for these to be institutionalized, and there's a part of me that feels like if they were, I'm, I'm not sure if they would mean the same thing. They might turn into something else, which is okay, too. I think that the interesting thing about directed group studies courses is that unless you know that they can exist, you don't know that they can exist. So I think that if I have any hopes for what could change it would be helping students know that they could actually take learning in their own hands in this way from the get go. I don't even know how the first Pinayism course became aware that they could do the directed group studies course. I think maybe, to some extent, there was another course that existed before that. Or maybe they saw someone else on a different campus that had done a course. But yeah, my hope would be for like, there to be more access to that knowledge, and if these courses were to be institutionalized, right, like seeing how they could still pay attention to or meet the asks or the needs of the current student community and how they want to use the knowledge or their learning experience? Yeah.
24:35	Daniella Laher: Yeah, of course, like I think like the accessibility to like these directed group study courses is definitely like-
24:41	Chris Datiles: Mhm.
24:43	Daniella Laher: -I guess issue is the way to say it's just like-
24:44	Chris Datiles: Mhm.
24:45	Daniella Laher: -it really is like, just by word of mouth. Like I only found out that-
24:47	Chris Datiles: Yeah.

Time	Transcription
24:48	Daniella Laher: -KP brought these direct group study courses, like because they posted on-
24:51	Chris Datiles: Mhm.
24:52	Daniella Laher: -their Instagram at some point. Even with GROW it is a directed group studies course, and once again-
24:57	Chris Datiles: Ahh.
24:58	Daniella Laher: I only heard that from word of mouth-
24:59	Chris Datiles: *laughs*
25:00	Daniella Laher: -from Windi. And so it's-
25:01	Chris Datiles: Yeah.
25:02	Daniella Laher: -definitely one of those things of like, I know that there are dozens of people like on campus that would love to be involved in like these sort of like, academic courses but it's like-
25:09	Chris Datiles: Yeah.
25:10	Daniella Laher: -but it's like-
25:11	Chris Datiles: Yeah.
25:12	Daniella Laher: -they're not aware of it. And so it's I think it's really important that like, you know, that we record like these stories and document them like what-
25:18	Chris Datiles: Mhm.
25:19	Daniella Laher: -these courses are. And that's what I really want to do with GROW because like-
25:21	Chris Datiles: Mhm.
25:22	Daniella Laher: -I can hardly find anything about what Kamalayan did.
25:26	Chris Datiles: Yeah.
25:28	Daniella Laher: -for these courses other than like a WordPress and even then-
25:30	Chris Datiles: Ahuh. *laughs*

Time	Transcription
25:31	Daniella Laher: -like, only like, just a small summary. And that's it. And so I just-
25:35	Chris Datiles: Yeah
25:36	Daniella Laher: You know, it's just really important that we like record this and that, you know, it's important that you can also continue to like, publicize it and just make it accessible because it's definitely something that I know that a lot of people would really enjoy and learn a lot.
25:47	Chris Datiles: Yeah.
25:48	Daniella Laher: Yeah. So before I conclude, I just want to ask, are there any like stories or memories at UC San Diego or even in these directed group study experiences-
25:57	Chris Datiles: Mmm.
25:58	Daniella Laher: -that you really want to share? Like you know, for the folks listening to this interview. *laughs*
26:03	Chris Datiles: Yeah. Yeah, with both of the courses so they happen one right after the other. Pinayism was winter quarter. And then the, Performing Identity one was in spring quarter. They both happened in the original Cross Cultural Center, which was the old campus mailing services building. It doesn't exist anymore. It's torn down. I think that's where the amphitheater is now. Yeah, across from sixth college, or the old sixth college. Yeah, both courses happened in that space. And so I think that it was a partnership with the Cross Cultural Center at the time, to be able to use that space for learning in that way. There used to be a second floor in that Cross Cultural Center, so the performing identity course happened on the second floor. Both courses offered some component at the end to create something that we would share out, basically a synthesis of what we were learning. Yeah, that's the only memory that comes to mind. But those courses are, I mean there are of course other memories with UCSD but not in this context. Yeah.
27:21	Daniella Laher: Well actually KP's directed group study course is actually being taught in the new CCC-
27:27	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Ahuh.
27:28	Daniella Laher: -in the art space, I think that's really cool that this still-
27:30	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Ah!

Time	Transcription
27:31	Daniella Laher: -it continues like that. Like, yes-
27:32	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Yeah.
27:33	Daniella Laher: -you see and know, and like that partnership.
27:36	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Mhm.
27:37	Daniella Laher: And so that is kind of all that I have for you today.
27:41	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Yeah.
27:42	Daniella Laher: Thank you so much for sharing your story and allowing me to document this and what is it- And share this like with the GROW project.
27:49	Chris Datiles: [cross talk] Yeah.
27:50	Daniella Laher: Yeah! Thank you so much!
27:51	Chris Datiles: Yeah, of course. Definitely.