

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES 210: ASIANS IN THE U.S.

Cross-listed with URBS 403.65/SOC 225.07

Mon & Thu from 1:10 – 2:25pm

Location: Thomas Hunter 408

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Office Hours: Mondays from 2:30 – 3:30 and by appointment

Check your Hunter email on a regular basis, because this syllabus is subject to change during the course of the semester.

Course Description & Objectives

Asian 210 is an introductory course in Asian American Studies, where we through active reading and discussion will learn about the historical and contemporary experiences of Asian Americans. We will read about and actively discuss the history of Asian immigration to the U.S.; the social construction and experience of race in the U.S.; and political, economic, and cultural contributions of Asian Americans. Throughout the semester, we will continuously look at how the social construction of Asian American identity also intersects with class, gender, sexuality, and language. Our class depends on ACTIVE participation, so I expect all of you to contribute through written assignments and – above all – class discussion!

By the end of the semester, students will have an understanding of the historical arc of Asian immigration to, and experiences in, the United States. Students will learn about the origins of the field of Asian American Studies; they will read about and discuss literature and visual art produced by Asian Americans; additionally, students will learn about contemporary issues facing Asian American individuals and communities in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Required Textbooks (available at Shakespeare & Co.)

Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers from a Different Shore*. (New York: Back Bay Books, Revised Second Edition, 1998)

Kim, Patti. *A Cab Called Reliable*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997)

Zia, Helen. *Asian American Dreams* (New York: FSG, 1998)

Additional readings will be posted on e-Reserves and Blackboard: please download and print readings as soon as possible, since you are responsible for bringing all readings to class on the day they are assigned.

Attendance (10%)

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. Frequently, we will also have quizzes at the very beginning of class: if you are late, you cannot do a make-up quiz. Students who are repeatedly absent or late will have their participation grade marked down one grade point. Students are permitted two excused absences: anything beyond that will reduce your attendance grade by one grade point, i.e. from a B to a B-. Attendance means that you show up and are here for the entire class, but it is **not** the same thing as participation. Students who use cell phones or any other hand-held devices in the classroom will be asked to leave and will not receive credit for that day. Use of laptops for note-taking purposes must be cleared with me beforehand.

Participation (30%)

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss **all** of that that day's assigned reading, and to have completed whatever response(s) may have been assigned. You are expected to contribute to class discussions by asking questions, sharing your observations with the class, and actively showing interest in the topic being discussed. If you do not understand all of the readings or what is being discussed, that's fine: we will all benefit if you have questions, and we can try to answer these questions as a group. Participation means ACTIVELY engaging in discussion, raising questions, listening and responding to others' comments, and helping the whole class work to understand a particular topic. Quizzes will count towards your participation grade.

Essays (60%)

There will be three essays in this class. In order to pass this class, you must submit all of the following:

- Essay #1: 6-page essay on self-determination (20%) due Monday 3/9
- Essay #2: 4-page activity essay (15%) due Monday 4/20
- Essay #3: 8-page final essay (25%) due Thursday 5/14

- Late essays will be marked down one grade point (from a B to a B-) for each class meeting that they are late.

- All essays must have an interesting title.

- *All essays must be stapled!*

- An essay that has not been proofread and which contains a large number of grammatical errors will automatically be marked down one grade point. *Read your essay aloud to yourself!*

- Essays that do not have a clear argument and conclusion will also be marked down one grade point.

- Plagiarized essays will result in an F in the course.

- I do **not** accept essays via e-mail!

If you know that writing is something you struggle with, please come see me so that I can help you do well on the written component of this class. The Reading & Writing Center (4th floor of Thomas Hunter) provides excellent services for students to help them become better writers, and I encourage you to seek them out: many of my former students have turned to the RWC for assistance, and their writing has always improved. For more information, please go to: <http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/>.

Academic Integrity

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedure.

What this means is that plagiarism equals **any** use of another source (someone else's thinking and/or writing) where you do not credit that source. If, for example, you are writing an essay on a film and you use an online review to describe a central theme of the film, you must cite the website in your essay – both in the text, and in end notes (a Works Cited page or Bibliography). Even if you paraphrase (change the wording of the passage you are using), you are still using another source and have to cite it; if you do not, you will be plagiarizing, and *you will fail this course*.

You may not use Wikipedia, dictionary.com, or other online reference sites as a source in your essay for this class!

Disabilities

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room EI 124, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

Meeting & Reading Schedule

Monday 1/26

Introduction to the course, overview of readings & assignments, interviews

Thursday 1/29

Reading: Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race" (*Asian American Studies: A Reader*, Eds. Wu & Song. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000) (e-Res)

Reading: Hua Hsu, "The End of White America?" (*The Atlantic*, Jan/Feb 2009. 46-55) (e-Res)

> According to Hsu, what has the American "mainstream" looked like until now? Why is the U.S. "approaching a profound tipping point?" What is whiteness, according to some of the individuals quotes in the article? What do you think Omi and Winant would say about Hsu's closing comment that "We know, more or less, that race is a fiction..."? What do you make of the idea proposed by Omi and Winant, that race is neither essence nor illusion – if it is neither of these, then what is it?

Monday 2/2

Elaine Kim, "Preface" (Jessica Hagedorn, Ed., *Charlie Chan Is Dead 2: At Home in the World*, New York: Penguin, 2004) **e-Res**

> What are the untold stories that Kim refers to in her essay? Why are they so important to her? What do you think these untold stories symbolize, not just on an individual level, but to the U.S. as a nation?

Screening: "Chan Is Missing" (Dir. Wayne Wang, 1982, 80 min.)

Thursday, 2/ 5

Reading: Karen Umemoto, "'On Strike!' San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-1969: The Role of Asian American Students" (Zhou, Min, and J.V. Gatewood. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*. New York: NYU Press, 2007) **e-Res**

> What is self-determination? What did all the different coalitions have in common? What connections can you make between Elaine Kim's essay and the goals of the striking students, faculty, and community members?

Screening: "Chan Is Missing" (Dir. Wayne Wang, 1982, 80 min.)

Monday 2/9

Reading: Helen Zia, "Surrogate Slaves to American Dreamers" (*Asian American Dreams*)

Reading: Vijay Prashad, "Of the Mysterious East" (*The Karma of Brown Folk*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) **e-Res**

> What were the values of "the east" as compared to those of "the west"? Why, according to Prashad, were "the east" and "the west" defined as being in opposition?

Tuesday 2/10 (Thursday schedule)

Reading: Robert G. Lee, "The Cold War Construction of the Model Minority Myth" (Zhou, Min, and J.V. Gatewood. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*. New York: NYU Press, 2007) **e-Res**

> What is "Americanization"? Why, during the Cold War, was it important for the U.S. to promote an image of egalitarianism? How, according to Lee, did the model minority myth help construct "a new national narrative"? What were the conclusions of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report? How were Chinese Americans the antithesis of African Americans? Describe Robert Park's Ethnic or Race Relations Cycle.

Thursday 2/12 • College closed for Lincoln's Birthday

Monday 2/16 • College closed for President's Day

Thursday 2/19

Reading: Ronald Takaki, pp. 79 – 112: "Searching for Gold Mountain" and "The Heathen Chinese" (*Strangers*)

Reading: Ronald Takaki, pp. 231 – 257: "Angel Island" and "Gilded Ghettos: Chinatowns in the Early Twentieth Century" (*Strangers*)

Screening: *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*

> What is nativism? How were Chinese immigrant workers used as a "wedge" against the white working class? What happened in North Adams? Why did Chinese immigrants enter into self-employment? How did Chinese immigrants enter into preexisting black-white race relations in the U.S.? Why did

the U.S. government start enacting anti-Chinese legislation? Why do you think Takaki advises us to closely examine the Chinese American experience? What "patterns" may he want us to notice?

Monday 2/23

Chin, Milman, Deo, Lee, Yuen, "Without a Trace: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Prime-Time Television" (Zhou, Min, and J.V. Gatewood. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*. New York: NYU Press, 2007) **e-Res**
Screening: *The Slanted Screen* (Dir. Jeff Adachi, 2006, 60 min.)

Thursday 2/26

Reading: Helen Zia, "Gangsters, Gooks, Geishas, and Geeks" (*Asian American Dreams*)
Screening: "The Motel" (Dir. Michael Kang, 2006. 76 min.)

Monday 3/2

Screening: "The Motel" (Dir. Michael Kang, 2006. 76 min.)

Thursday 3/7

Reading: Ronald Takaki, pp. 179 – 229: "Ethnic Solidarity: The Settling of Japanese America" (*Strangers*)
> How did the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act affect Japanese immigration to the U.S.? What type of work did Japanese immigrants initially do? Why did Japanese American communities develop up and down the west coast? What industrial advances helped the Japanese immigrants become so successful? What was the JMLA, and what were its objectives? What spurred anti-Japanese sentiment? How did the government respond to these popular pressures? What were Alien Land Laws? Who were the Nisei, and what was their dilemma?

Monday 3/9 • ESSAY #1 DUE!

Reading: Gary Okihiro, "An American Story" (*Impounded*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006) **e-Res**
Reading: Executive Order 9066 (<http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist9/evacorder.html>)
Screening: WRA Film (1941)

Thursday 3/12

Reading: Emily Leach, "The Ties That Bind: Muslim Americans Join Japanese Americans on Manzanar Pilgrimage" (*AsianWeek*, May 2, 2008)
Screening: "The Cats of Mirikitani" (Dir. Linda Hattendorf, 2006. 53 minutes)

Monday 3/16

Reading: Ronald Takaki, pp. 270 – 293: "Struggling Against Colonialism: Koreans in America" (*Strangers*)
> What is "ethnic antagonism"? What social and legal obstacles did Korean immigrants inherit from their Chinese and Japanese predecessors? How did Korean immigrants respond to this legacy of anti-Asian sentiment? Why was it difficult for first-generation Korean immigrants to see themselves as settlers in the U.S.? How were Korean immigrants affected by Japanese imperialism in Korea? What was the dilemma of second-generation Korean Americans?

Thursday 3/19

Reading: Elaine Kim, "Home is Where the *Han* Is" **e-Res**
Reading: Helen Zia, "Lost and Found in L.A." (*Asian American Dreams*)
Screening: *Sa-I-Gu* (Dir. Dai-Sil Kim and Christine Choy, 1993, 36 min.)

Monday 3/23

Reading: Patti Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable*

Thursday 3/26

Reading: Patti Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable*

Monday 3/30

Reading: Helen Zia, "Detroit Blues: Because of You, Motherfuckers" (*Asian American Dreams*)
Screening: "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" (Dir. Christine Choy, 1988. 82 min.)

Thursday 4/2

Reading: Helen Zia, "Detroit Blues: Because of You, Motherfuckers" (*Asian American Dreams*)
Screening: "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" (Dir. Christine Choy, 1988. 82 min.)

Monday 4/6

Reading: Ronald Takaki, pp. 294 – 314: "'The Tide of Turbans': Asian Indians in America" (*Strangers*)
Reading: Nazli Kibria, "Not Asian, Black, or White: Reflections on South Asian American Racial Identity" (Wu, Jean Yu Wen-Shen, and Min Song, Eds. *Asian American Studies: A Reader*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000) **e-Res**
> What is the legal significance of the 1923 Supreme Court case *U.S. vs. Bhagat Singh Thind*? How does this case present a new paradox in Asian American history and experience? Explain the title of Kibria's essay.

Thursday 4/9 • No class: Spring Recess

Monday 4/13 • No class: Spring Recess

Thursday 4/16 • No class: Spring Recess

Monday 4/20 • ESSAY #2 DUE!

Reading: Vijay Prashad, "Of India" (*The Karma of Brown Folk*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) **e-Res**

Reading: Helen Zia, "For Richer, for Poorer" (*Asian American Dreams*)

Thursday 4/23

Reading: Irum Shiekh, "Government Spy or a Terrorist? Dilemmas of a Post-9/11 Academic Researcher" (*Amerasia Journal*, 33:3, 2007, 26-40) **e-Res**

Screening: "11.09.01" (Dir. Mira Nair, 2006)

Monday 4/27

Reading: Ronald Takaki, pp. 315 – 343: "Mabuhay Manong: From the Fisheries of Alaska to the Fields of California," "The 'Little Brown Brother' in America," and "Bahala na: Men in McIntosh Suits" (*Strangers*)

> What is paternalism? Why were the Filipino immigrants considered "nationals"? What types of stereotyping did Filipino immigrant men encounter in the U.S.? What happened in Watsonville? What was the purpose behind the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie act?

Thursday 4/30

Reading: Carlos Bulosan, "I Would Remember" (Jessica Hagedorn, Ed., *Charlie Chan Is Dead: An Anthology of Contemporary Asian American Fiction*, New York: Penguin, 1993) **e-Res**

Screening: *The Fall of the I Hotel* (Dir. Curtis Choy, 1983. 58 min.)

Monday 5/4

Reading: Yen Le Espiritu, "Gender, Migration, and Work: Filipina Health Care Professionals in the United States" (Zhou, Min, and J.V. Gatewood. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*. New York: NYU Press, 2007) **e-Res**

Reading: Brian Ascalon Roley, excerpt from *American Son* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001) **e-Res**

> What is "female-first" migration? How do stereotypes regarding race, gender, and sexuality intersect in the "humane imperialism" that Espiritu refers to? Why were Filipina nurses recruited by the U.S.? How does female-first migration alter the gender dynamics in Filipino American families? How would you describe the gender dynamics in the excerpt from *American Son*?

Thursday 5/7

Reading: Bankston and Hidalgo, "The Waves of War: Immigrants, Refugees, and New Americans from Southeast Asia" (Zhou, Min, and J.V. Gatewood. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*. New York: NYU Press, 2007) **e-Res**

Reading: Barbara Tran, "Fairy Tale" (Walter, K. Lew, Ed., *Premonitions: The Kaya Anthology of New Asian North American Poetry*, New York: Kaya Press, 1995) **e-Res**

> Using Bankston and Hidalgo's article, make a timeline that, on the top, charts: 1) U.S. military interventions in Southeast Asia, and 2) military conflicts between different Southeast Asian countries. On the bottom, chart different "waves" of refugees from different Southeast Asian countries. On your timeline, also note what some of the socioeconomic challenges are for each group.

Monday 5/11

Reading: Ka Vang, "Ms. Pac-Man Ruined My Gang Life" (Jessica Hagedorn, Ed., *Charlie Chan Is Dead 2: At Home in the World*, New York: Penguin, 2004) **e-Res**

Screening: "Sentenced Home" (Dir. Nicole Newnham and David Grabias, 2005. 76 min.)

Thursday 5/14 • ESSAY #3 DUE!

Vijay Prashad, "Kung Fusion: Organize the 'Hood under I-Ching Banners" (*Everybody Was Kung-Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001) **e-Res**

ASIAN 210 ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

RUBRIC

- A: Outstanding: clear and compelling (not obvious or redundant) argument presented in the introduction and in each body paragraph; clear evidence that supports argument in each body paragraph; no summary; no long block (indented) quotes; all sources are cited with Works Cited page; conclusion does not just summarize essay, but presents ideas which extend out of what you have discussed. Essay is well-organized with no spelling/grammatical errors, and shows a real understanding of all readings as well as a rigorous engagement with the topic.
- B: Very good: clear argument presented in the introduction; clear evidence that supports argument in each body paragraph; no summary; no long block (indented) quotes; all sources are cited with Works Cited page; conclusion does not just summarize essay, but presents ideas which extend out of what you have discussed in your essay. Essay is well-organized with few spelling/grammatical errors; demonstrates an understanding of most of the readings; conclusion shows an attempt to get to the heart of some kind of argument.
- C: Satisfactory: introduction contains some kind of central idea or argument; each body paragraph is somehow related to the introduction, block quotes are used; sources are cited, but not properly or consistently; no Works Cited page; cursory understanding of the readings; essay is disorganized and contains spelling/grammatical errors; conclusion simply summarizes essay.
- D: Essay meets minimum page requirement; introduction has no focus; body paragraphs meander aimlessly from idea to idea; essay contains summary and block quotes; some sources are cited, but not properly; no Works Cited page; conclusion is non-existent or abrupt.
- F: Essay does not meet minimum page requirement; introduction has no focus; body paragraphs meander aimlessly from idea to idea; essay contains summary and block quotes; no Works Cited page; conclusion is non-existent or abrupt. Essay contains uncited passages and/or ideas, i.e. plagiarism.

ESSAY TOPICS

ESSAY #1 due Monday 3/9

Drawing on at least **four** readings from the first five weeks of the semester (up until 3/7), how do you see Asian Americans striving to realize the goal of self-determination first expressed by activists during the '68-'69 student strikes at San Francisco College? Why is this goal so difficult to achieve, i.e. what are some of the obstacles to this goal, on both an individual and a collective level? In your conclusion, please make some recommendations for how you think Asian Americans can achieve an even greater level of self-determination in the 21st century, and what obstacles you think they might face. *One of your four sources may be a film screened in class, but the remaining three must be from assigned readings.*

ESSAY #2 due Monday 4/20

Explore the landscape of Asian America in New York City: find one Asian American (not Asian) activity to attend in the NYC area – it can be cultural, political, or educational – and write a four-page reflection on the activity, making connections between the topic(s) addressed at the activity and at least **two** ideas/concepts we have discussed in class.

Suggestions for Asian American organizations that host relevant events:

The Asian American Writers' Workshop: www.aaww.org

The Coalition for Asian Children and Families: www.cacf.org

The Asian American/Asian Research Institute: www.aaari.info

The Asia Society: www.asiasociety.org (Make sure you look on their New York calendar, since they have events in other cities, as well!)

Good source for listings of organizations, and current events: Asians in America Magazine: http://www.asiansinamerica.org/directory/dir_s_ny.html

ESSAY #3 due Thursday 5/14

Instructions for Essay #3 will be distributed on 4/6!