

## ASIAN 220: SURVEY OF ASIAN/AMERICAN LITERATURE

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"[P]eople of color have always theorized—but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic."  
—Barbara Christian

"That life is complicated is a theoretical statement that guides efforts to treat race, class, and gender dynamics and consciousness as more dense and delicate than those categorical terms often imply. It is a theoretical statement that invites us to see with portentous clarity into the heart and soul of American life and culture, to track events, stories, anonymous and history-making actions to their density..."  
—Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters* (1997)

### [COURSE DESCRIPTION]

Survey of Asian American Literature is an interdisciplinary course that focuses on reading and discussing literary texts by Asians in the United States and the western diaspora. The primary task of the course is to show students how Asian American literature is a formative site to investigate constructions of history, identity, citizenship, and belonging. In addition to the novels, poems, and short stories, students will also read scholarly articles and engage with visual materials from films to websites. Some of the core questions of this course include: How do we define "Asian American" in "Asian American literature"? How does Asian American literature imagine other kinds of belonging that are outside of citizenship and the nation? In addition, students will practice close reading and critical writing, explore Asian American literary practices, and learn how to engage in public discourse.

### [REQUIRED TEXTS]

All books are available at Shakespeare & Company.

Patti Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable*, New York NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997  
R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's*, New York NY: Kaya Press. 2006 [1995]  
Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*, Montreal, Quebec: Drawn & Quarterly, 2007  
Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*, New York NY: Mariner Books, 2003

Readings available on E-Reserves or Blackboard, all students must have a PRINTED copy of assigned reading the day of discussion.

### [CLASSROOM POLICIES]

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION.** Attendance and participation are essential to this course. During class, students are expected to arrive to class on time, take notes, and respect their peers. Calls and text messages must be made prior to class and following class NOT during class time. Students caught surfing the internet, texting, making phone calls, or anything related to such activities during class time will be subject to failing the course.

Since this is a discussion and workshop class, other students depend on your participation in the classroom and with assignments. Consequently, attendance is required for ALL class meetings. Participation in this course means asking questions and sharing ideas. It is expected that students will not comprehend and master each week's readings, thus it is important to acknowledge and share what you do not understand.

**LATE OR INCOMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS.** All assignments must be turned in on paper at the beginning of class on the due date. No emailed assignments will be accepted. Late assignments will be penalized 1/2 grade, and consequently for each day late. Students should account for any computer and commuting problems that may happen the day assignments are due.

**PLAGIARISM.** 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.

This course will follow Hunter's policies concerning academic honesty and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another

person's ideas or expressions without citing proper credit to the source. Turning in work written partially or wholly by someone else without proper citation—a friend, roommate, website, book, article, etc.—constitutes as plagiarism. Plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course and suspected students can face severe consequences.

**ACCESSIBILITY.** 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 E1124, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: 212.772.4857 or 212.650.3230.

### **[GRADING POLICY]**

Grades follow CUNY guidelines for letter grades. Please note in this course, a "C" is equivalent to the basic fulfillment of requirements; to achieve a grade higher than a "C" you will have to perform beyond the basic requirements. Please keep the following scale and criteria in mind:

<b>A</b>	4.00	<b>C+</b>	2.30
<b>A-</b>	3.70	<b>C</b>	2.00
<b>B+</b>	3.30	<b>D</b>	1.00
<b>B</b>	3.00	<b>F</b>	0.00
<b>B-</b>	2.70		

### **[TEACHING PHILOSOPHY]**

The philosophy of my classes is to pursue our lives as students and intellectuals. Asian American studies is an interdisciplinary field that asks us to investigate what might be obvious and expected ways we are told to live and be. I see Asian American studies not as a place to valorize identity, but as an interdisciplinary framework to understand life, culture, and politics as inherently complicated constructions.

Students are expected to participate in a scholarly and creative community that will process ideas and concepts together. In this class, critical thinking does not mean that you respond with the right answer, rather "thinking" also constitutes asking questions. Asking questions means having the courage to address what you do not understand, disagree, and further complicate ideas, and moreover, to be magical and creative in how you approach the texts and concepts we discuss in class. Students are expected to walk away at the end of the semester with reading and writing skills they can use to unpack historical and contemporary paradigms of identity and difference.

## [CLASS SCHEDULE]

### WHAT IS "ASIAN AMERICAN" IN ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE?

#### WEEK ONE

**Mon, Jan 26:** Course Introduction

**Thu, Jan 29:** Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formations," *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, ed. Paula S. Rothenberg, New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 1997: 13-21.  
Elisa Paik, "Eye-dentity Crisis" in *Yello Kitty*, issue 1.  
Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?," <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.html>.  
Whitney McNally, "Gay or Asian?," *Details*, April 2004.

#### For further investigation:

"Get the Details," Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation website

**link:** [http://www.glaad.org/poc/api/get\\_details.php](http://www.glaad.org/poc/api/get_details.php)

"Color Chart," Museum of Modern Art website

**link:** <http://www.moma.org/exhibitions/2008/colorchart/>

Fred Wilson, "Road to Victory," Museum of Modern Art website

**link:** <http://moma.org/exhibitions/1999/wilson/index.html>

#### WEEK TWO

**Mon, Feb 2:**

Maxine Hong Kingston, "No Name Woman," *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*, New York: Vintage International, 1975 [1989]: 1-16.

Frank Chin et al., "Preface," *Aiiieeeee!: An Anthology of Asian American Writers*, eds. Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada & Shawn Wong, New York: Mentor, 1991: xi-xli.

Frank Chin et al., "Introduction," *The Big Aiiieeeee!: an Anthology of Chinese American and Japanese American Literature*, New York NY: Meridian, 1991: xi-xvi.

**Thu, Feb 5:**

Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Making Asian American Differences," Min Zhou & J.V. Gatewood eds, *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*, second ed. New York: New York University Press, 2007: 89-109.

Eric Liu, "The Accidental Asian: Variations on a Theme," *The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker*, New York: Vintage Books, 1999: 57-84.

Jeff Chang, "Up Identity Creek," *Colorlines*, iss 3, winter 1998, <http://www.colorlines.com/printerfriendly.php?ID=113>.

### HOW WE MAKE STORIES.

#### WEEK THREE

**Mon, Feb 9:**

Patti Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable*, New York NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997: 1-46.

**Thu, Feb 12:**

#### LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

#### CLASS WILL MEET ON TUES, FEB 10

Patti Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable*: 47-71.

#### WEEK FOUR

**Mon, Feb 16:**

#### PRESIDENT'S DAY.

**Thu, Feb 19:**

Patti Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable*: 71-109.

#### WEEK FIVE

**Mon, Feb 23:**

Patti Kim, *A Cab Called Reliable*: 110-156.

**Thu, Feb 26:**

#### CRITICAL PAPER #1 DUE.

#### IN-CLASS READINGS.

#### WEEK SIX

**Mon, Mar 2:**

R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's*, New York NY: Kaya Press. 2006 [1995]: 1-40.

**Thu, Mar 5**

R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's*: 41-78.

## WEEK SEVEN

- Mon, Mar 9: R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's*: 79–103.  
Thu, Mar 12: R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's*: 104–149.

## WHERE DO WE CALL HOME?

### WEEK EIGHT

- Mon, Mar 16: Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*, New York NY: Mariner Books, 2003: 1–40.  
Thu, Mar 19: Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*: 41–84.

### WEEK NINE

- Mon, Mar 23: Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*: 85–133.  
Thu, Mar 26: Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*: 134–175.

### WEEK TEN

- Mon, Mar 30: Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*: 176–215.  
Thu, Apr 2: Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*: 216–261.

## HOW DO WE REMEMBER?

### WEEK ELEVEN

Mon, Apr 6: **CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER #2 DUE.**

Peter X Feng, excerpt from "Articulating Silence: Sansei and Memories of the Camps" in *Identities in Motion: Asian American Film and Video*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2002: 89–98.

"History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige." 1992. Directed by Rea Tajiri. New York NY: Women Make Movies.

Thu, Apr 9: **SPRING BEAK.**

### WEEK TWELVE

Mon, Apr 13: **SPRING BEAK.**

Thu, Apr 16: **SPRING BEAK.**

### WEEK THIRTEEN

- Mon, Apr 20: "Executive Order 9066," *Asian American Studies: A Reader*, eds. Jean Yun-Wen Shen Wu & Min Song, New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000: 93–94.  
Hisaye Yamamoto, "The Legend of Miss Sasagawara," *Seventeen Syllables*, Kitchen Table Press, 1998: 20–33.  
Kimiko Hahn, "Blindsided" Making More Waves, ed. Asian Women United, Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1997: 83–88.

**For further investigation:**

Exploring the Japanese American Internment through Film & the Internet," Center for Asian American Media

**link:** <http://www.asianamericanmedia.org/jainternment/>

"Internment of San Francisco Japanese," The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco

**link:** <http://sfmuseum.org/war/evactxt.html>

"Japanese-Americans Internment Camps During World War II," Special Collections Department, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, and Private Collections

**link:** <http://www.lib.utah.edu/spc/photo/9066/9066.htm>

"Ansel Adams's Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar," Library of Congress website

**link:** <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/collections/anseladams/>

- Thu, Apr 23: Kandice Chuh, "Discomforting Knowledge, Or, Korean 'comfort' women and Asia American critical practice," *Journal of Asian American Studies*, February 2003: 5–23.  
Nora Oka Keller, "Beccah" (excerpt from *Comfort Woman*), ed. Jessica Hagedorn, *Charlie Chan is Dead 2: At Home in the World*, New York NY: Penguin Books, 2004: 192–202.

## TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT

**Mon, Apr 27:** David Hoon Kim, "Sweetheart Sorrow," *The New Yorker*, June 11 & 18, 2007: 116-129.  
**Thu, Apr 30:** **GUEST LECTURE: PROFESSOR JENNIFER HAYASHIDA**  
Poetry workshop.

**WEEK FIFTEEN**

**Mon, May 4:** Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*, Montreal, Quebec: Drawn & Quarterly, 2007: 9-40.  
**Thu, May 7:** Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*: 43-74.

**WEEK SIXTEEN**

**Mon, May 11:** Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*: 77-108.  
**Thu, May 14:** **CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPER #3 DUE.**  
Jhumpa Lahiri, "Hell-Heaven," *Unaccustomed Earth*, New York NY: Knopf, 2008: 60-83.

## **[COURSE ASSIGNMENTS]**

All assignments must be typed, double-spaced with 1" margins, and size 11-12 font in Times New Roman or Garamond. I am stickler about proper citations, so be certain to do them for all assignments. Please make sure to also keep accessible electronic copies of each assignment and an extra hard copy for yourself. **ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY EMAIL.**

Assignments are turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized 1/2 grade after the first 5 minutes of class, and consequently for each day late. Students should account for any computer and commuting problems that may happen the day assignments are due.

### **10% ATTENDANCE**

Attendance and participation are essential to this course. Consequently, attendance is required of all class meetings. In order to do well in this course, you cannot be absent or be late for no more than TWO class meetings. More than TWO missed/late classes will lead to a deduction of half a grade of your final grade. For example, your grade will drop from a B to a B-

### **20% CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Participation is the most important part of this class, and it means more than showing up on time. Students are expected to actively engage with course materials, which means doing close readings of the assigned texts, processing and thinking of questions to address during discussion, and participating in classroom conversation and activities. It is imperative that students stay alert during the entire class session and contribute as much as possible to discussions. In this class contributing to discussions does not mean that you display how much you understood the materials, but also includes asking questions about the readings and lectures—this is the sign of critical thinking and comprehension. Participation also includes bringing the appropriate materials to class for the day's activities, being a responsible group member, and being respectful to your fellow colleagues and instructor. Students who are not active participants will not receive a grade higher than a B in this class.

### **20% READING RESPONSE PAPERS (2-3 PAGES)**

Students are expected to submit 12 reading response papers throughout the semester. Reading response paper assignments will change throughout the semester, and will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

### **20% GROUP PRESENTATION**

Students are responsible for preparing a presentation on course materials twice during the semester. Presentors must strive to facilitate a useful and engaging discussion. Students are required to meet with me regarding their presentation, and must prepare and submit a list of discussion questions and lesson plan prior to class.

### **30% CRITICAL ANALYSIS PAPERS (5-6 PAGES)**

You will hand in three critical response papers related to course readings, lectures, and activities. I will assign paper topics two weeks before each paper is due. Please include proper citations in your papers. I strongly encourage students meet me about their paper topics. Students will have the opportunity to re-write papers, and are required to meet with me before all rewrites.