



**ETHN123- Asian American Politics**  
**UCSD Spring 2017**  
**Wednesdays, 5:00-7:50pm | CENTR 217A**

**Instructor:** Mark Redondo Villegas  
**Email:** m6villegas@ucsd.edu  
**Office:** SSB 243 | Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-4:30pm; by appointment

*In poems, plays, music, and debates over aesthetics, [Asian American artists] pondered issues such as Who is Asian American? Does Asian American identity inhere in culture or politics? What is the relationship between Asian Americans and Asia? What is the relationship between Asian Americans and other nonwhite people in the United States?*  
 -Daryl Maeda, *Chains of Babylon* (129)

*As a result of having been more diligent and frugal than any other ethnic group, we have established ourselves in a short period of time...Blacks are jealous of Koreans for leading a comfortable life and sending their children to good colleges...*  
 -Korea Times (1990, in *Bitter Fruit*, 170-171)

**Course Description**

What does it mean to *be* political? Do Asian Americans deserve the reputation of being hopelessly apathetic? If not, how *have* Asian Americans been involved in politics? This course attempts to address these questions by examining various “moments” in Asian American politics, including radicalism, power accommodation, coalition-building, and interracial conflicts. For our class, “politics” is defined as the social process of winning and losing power (both symbolic and material). Power, therefore, is a central (albeit abstract) concept we will spend time investigating, understanding, and explaining. For Asian Americans, resisting or obtaining power seems to be fraught and contested because of their ambiguous racial position in the U.S. By considering the ways in which Asian Americans have been both defined by their earlier radical/revolutionary politics and their more recent evacuation of anything “political,” we will study the multifaceted nature of Asian American politics and form conclusions as to how Asian American politics are relevant today.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Articulate the historical origin of “Asian America” and identify the various iterations of “Asian America” over recent decades.
2. Explain Asian American panethnicity and its role in the processes of coalition-building and identity formation.
3. Evaluate the intricacies of *power* and *privilege* in Asian American politics and these politics’ operation in a multiracial society.
4. As a research method, apply creative collaboration with peers with the intention of making your object available to the public.

**Required Books-** Available in Course Reserves at the library. All students are expected to purchase these texts:

1. Daryl J. Maeda, *Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009)
2. Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu (editors), *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment* (UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2001)
3. Linda Trinh Võ, *Mobilizing an Asian American Community* (Temple University Press, 2004)
4. Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City* (Yale University Press, 2000)

**Grading Criteria**

<b>7 pts.- Quizzes</b>
Worth 1 point each, I will randomly issue assignments, quizzes, and other exercises relevant to a given week’s assigned materials.
<b>30 pts.- Keywords</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due Wednesdays at 5:00pm on TritonEd uploaded in folder under “Content” tab.</b></li> <li>• Beginning on <b>April 19 (Wk 3)</b>, groups will submit a list of <b>10 keywords</b> to define/summarize/contextualize from the assigned reading for that particular week. Keep your explanations between 1-4 sentences long.</li> </ul>

- Keywords will reflect theoretical interventions by scholars, authors, and cultural producers. More grading weight will go toward keywords highlighting these interventions. Less score will be given to groups who rely on arbitrary events, people, places, etc. that mask as keywords. Essentially, you will be curators (mindful organizers) of knowledge.
- Oftentimes, authors will use words **you will not know**. This can be a keyword that you will **research** and use for your projects.
- **Justification:** At the end of each list, compose a one-paragraph **justification** explaining why you chose those words. For example, you can explain how five words relate in one way, and four another way, etc.
- It is the responsibility of your group to decide your **leader** of the group every week. This leader will collect all the keywords from the group and upload the assignment to TritonEd by the due date/time.
- Include your group name, group members' names, and the date at the top of a Microsoft Word doc.
- You will be graded based on the choice of keyword from **multiple sources** and the **coherency** of your list justification.
- **Parenthetical citations:** After the definition/summary of a keyword, place the author's name and the page numbers where you find the keyword. For example (**Maeda 23**). If there is no author, write a shortened version of the title. You can omit page numbers if they are not available or applicable.
  - Example of a keyword: **Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882- Preceded by the Anti-Coolie Law of 1862, the Page Act of 1875, and the Fifteen Passenger Act of 1979, this act brought to a halt Chinese immigration due to white hysteria, xenophobia, and labor competition... (Lee 137-138)**

#### 8 pts.- Group Project Journal (1 pt. each)

- Beginning on **Thursday, April 20 of Week 3**, each group member is required to submit one paragraph summarizing the discussions, debates, negotiations, and knowledge-exchange regarding the group projects that occur during group meetings.
- Each member will also describe their own contributions to the group project for the week.
- Due at **5:00pm every Thursday from Week 3-10** on TritonEd's "Group Project Journal" tab.
- This exercise is graded based on demonstrated group activity, collaboration, and mutual respect. Feel free to attach documents and other evidence.

#### 20 pts.- Political Flier + Magazine Article

- This assignment will be posted on our course blog (more on this later) by **Tuesday, May 9 at 5:00pm (Wk 6)**.
- Using the aesthetics and communicative strategies from fliers from the 1960s and 70s as featured in *Asian Americans: The Movements and the Moment*, your group will design a political flier on a contemporary issue.
- To accompany the flier, design a fictional magazine article that covers the event/issue highlighted in the flier. Make it look like a real magazine article. You must include a photo, name of the article, author, column format, etc.
- In the blog, provide a **500 to 800-word critical explanation** of the flier and magazine article by incorporating **keywords** pulled from the Keywords assignment above. Parenthetical citations required.
- You will be graded based on thoughtfulness on your interpretation of required readings/viewings/listenings, staying faithful to the particular form of the craft, and a level of creativity.
- By **Friday, May 12 at 5:00pm**, each member must provide a **3-4 sentence** peer comment on another group's project, with minimal overlap of comments per group. The comment could suggest improvements to the project or raise critical questions. Minimal points will be given to students who simply give praise without any evidence of serious engagement with the material.
- I encourage you to create your own images. If you use online images, you must provide this disclaimer clearly at the bottom of your poster: **These images are used solely for academic purposes**. Then, cite the url where you can find each image.

#### 20 pts.- Movie Trailer and Presentation

- This assignment will be posted on our course blog on **Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm (Wk 10)**.
- Your group will take snippets from an assigned film and create a 1.5 to 2-minute movie trailer that summarizes one aspect of the film your group wants to present. Instructions on how to edit your trailer will be given.
- All assigned films are available online.
- In the blog, provide a **500 to 800-word critical explanation** of the trailer by incorporating **keywords** pulled from the Keywords assignment above. Parenthetical citations required.
- You will be graded based on thoughtfulness on your interpretation of required readings/viewings/listenings, staying faithful to the particular form of the craft, and a level of creativity.
- By **Friday, June 9 at 5:00pm**, each member must provide a **5-7 sentence** peer comment on another group's project, with minimal overlap. The comment could suggest improvements to the trailer or raise critical questions. Minimal points will be given to students who simply give praise without any evidence of serious engagement with the material.

#### 10 pts.- Participation

- Students will be graded based on their attendance of class. The missing of more than 3 meetings justifies the failure of the entire course.
- There is a total of ten meetings. Late arrivals count as 1/2 point.
- You must present proper and legitimate documentation during Week 1 if you plan to miss any meetings.
- Students must bring assigned hardcopy books to all meetings.
- Grading will greatly consider your active participation in contributing to class discussions. With that said, perfect attendance does not guarantee all points.

### 5 pts.- Group Commitment

- A Group Commitment survey will be distributed on Week 10. This survey requires you to grade the contributions and efforts of your group members as well as yourself.
- Expectations for this grade include reciprocated respect among members, creative and intellectual contributions to group projects, critical dialogue among members, and willingness to learn from each other.

### Alternative grading option:

- Students who do not want to participate in group work must justify their reason. If reason is warranted, they will be given the option to do an extended annotated bibliography on a topic related to the course. Student will still be responsible for non-group assignments.

### Electronic Devices Policy

Unless otherwise authorized, students are prohibited from using any electronic devices during class. If you need to use a device in an emergency, kindly step out of the class to address this.

### Email Policy

Students are expected to check their UCSD email account daily. They must respond to instructor or teaching assistants' electronic requests within 48 hours.

### Academic Dishonesty

All work is to be produced by the student. *Any* assignment, paper, presentation, etc. that is produced by anyone else other than the student being graded will result in an automatic F in the class and immediate disciplinary action. For more on academic dishonesty: <https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>.

### Special Accommodations and Needs

Students who require special accommodations and/or needs must notify me in person or via email so that I can best assist you. It is recommended you register with UCSD's Office for Students with Disabilities so that you can receive the appropriate assistance: <https://disabilities.ucsd.edu/students/registering.html>.

### Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a college general education requirement. Often students have taken many ETHN courses out of interest, yet do not realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, public policy, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact: Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor 858-534-3277 or [ethnicstudies@ucsd.edu](mailto:ethnicstudies@ucsd.edu) or visit [www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu](http://www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu).

## Tentative Schedule

### Week 1: 4/5

Panethnicity and coalition building | Defining politics | Defining "radical culture" | Vincent Chin, Joseph Ito, Srinivas Kuchibhotla (2017)- FANHS in photostream | Chinese American Museum, Los Angeles

### Due 4/12: Individual Keywords

### Week 2: 4/12- From a Grain of Sand to Yellow Pearls- A Culture of Radicalism

Thur (4/6): *The Movement and the Moment*: □ Steve Louie, "What We Wanted It Done..." (pages XV-XXV); □ Chris Iijima, "Pontifications on the Distinction..." (3-15)

Fri-Sun (4/7-4/9): *Chains of Babylon*: "From Heart Mountain to Hanoi" (1)

Mon (4/10): *Chains of Babylon*: "Performing Radical Culture..." (127-141)

Tue (4/11): □ *Chains of Babylon*: "Performing Radical Culture..." (142-153); *The Movement and the Moment*: □ Gordon Lee, "Parking the Wild Horse's Mane" (119-128); □ Corky Lee, "Untitled Photo Essay" (129-137)

Wed (4/12): In Content Folder>YouTube/Videos/Music, listen to Yellow Pearl, □ "We Are the Children"; □ "Free the Land"; □ "Yellow Pearl"

- Individual Keywords / My keywords / form groups
- Film (watch at home): Tad Nakamura, *A Song for Ourselves* (2009/35mins)
- **Online response due Thursday 4/13 by 3:00pm**

### Week 3: 4/19- Birth of "Asian America"

Thur: *The Movement and the Moment*: □ Warren Mar, "From the Pool Halls..." (33); □ C, "Drugs Are Killing Our People" (88); □ Genny Lim, "Kearny Street Workshop" (109); □ Bob Hsiang, "Growing Up in Turmoil" (111); □ Liz Del Sol "Finding Our Common Interests" (139); □ Harvey Dong, "Transforming Student Elites into Community Activists" (187)

Fri-Sun: *Chains of Babylon*: "Before Asian America" (19-29)

Mon: *Chains of Babylon*: □ "Before Asian America" (30-39); □ "Down with Hayakawa!" (40-52)

Tue: *Chains of Babylon*: □ "Down with Hayakawa!" (52-72)

Wed: *The Movement and the Moment*: Beverly Kordziel, "To Be a Part of the People" (241); **First Weekly Keywords due**

- Film (in-class): Tad Nakamura, *Pilgrimage* (2006/22mins)

### Week 4: 4/26- Sex, Gender, and Performing Asian American Radicalism

Thur: *The Movement and the Moment*: □Meryllyne Hamano Quon, “Individually We Contributed...” (207); □Daniel C. Tsang, “Slicing Silence...” (220); **First Group Project Journal due by 5pm**

Fri-Sun: *The Movement and the Moment*: □Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, “It’s Never Ever Boring!” (90)

Mon: *Chains of Babylon*: “Black Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen...” (73-89)

Tue: □*Chains of Babylon*: “Black Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen...” (89-96); □*The Movement and the Moment*: Nick Nagatani, “Action Talks and Bullshit Walks” (149)

Wed: Meet with your group

- Film (in-class): Tad Nakamura, *Yellow Brotherhood* (2003/17mins)

### Week 5: 5/3- From Fighting Power to Gaining It: Cultivating Asian American Civic Life in San Diego

Thur: *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*: □“Introduction: Paths of Resistance and Accommodation...” (1); □“Asian Immigration and Settlement in San Diego” (15-24)

Fri-Sun: *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*: “Asian Immigration and Settlement in San Diego” (25-33)

Mon: *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*: “Where Do We Stand?” (129-148)

Tue: *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*: “Where Do We Stand?” (148-165)

Wed: Meet with your group

- Asian Pacific Islander American Spoken Word and Poetry Summit | isangmahal arts kollektive

### Week 6: 5/10- Post-Radicalism: Mobilizing Panethnicity across Generations

Thur: *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*: “Mapping Asian America” (166-181)

Fri-Sun: *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*: “Mapping Asian America” (181-196)

Mon: Helen Zia, “Detroit Blues: ‘Because of You Motherfuckers,’” *Asian American Dreams* (reserves)

Tue: Monisha Das Gupta, “Contests over Culture,” *Unruly Immigrants* (TritonEd Web Links/Chapters folder); post **Political Flier and Magazine by 5pm**

Wed: □Karan Mahajan, “The Two Asian Americas,” *The New Yorker*; □Curtis Valentine, “Rethinking the achievement gap: lessons from the African diaspora,” *The Washington Post* (both in TritonEd Web Links/Chapters folder)

- **Political Flier and Magazine Presentations**

- Film (in-class or at home): Christine Choy, Renee Tajima, *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* (1987/1hr 20 mins)

### Week 7: 5/17- Post-Radicalism continued / Korean-Black Relations: Racial Triangulation

Thur: *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*: “Conclusion: Milestones and Crossroads for Asian Americans” (229)

Fri-Sun: *Bitter Fruit*: □“Exposing Racial Power” (1); □“Timeline” (225-226)

Mon: *Bitter Fruit*: “Racial Ordering” (14-34)

Tue: *Bitter Fruit*: “Racial Ordering” (34-52)

Wed: Meet with your groups

- Vincent Chin continued; Muslim Americans, Japanese Americans, and current Asian American civic belonging
- Historicizing Korean American merchant-customer relationships, from today to 1980s

### Week 8: 5/24- Contextualizing Racial Consciousness

Thur: *Bitter Fruit*: “Black Power Resurgent” (53-66)

Fri-Sun: *Bitter Fruit*: “Black Power Resurgent” (66-81)

Mon: *Bitter Fruit*: “Black Power Resurgent” (81-108)

Tue: *Bitter Fruit*: “The Red Apple Boycott” (109-126)

Wed: □James Walsh, “The Perils of Success”; □Toni Morrison, “On the Backs of Blacks” (both in TritonEd Web Links/Chapters folder)

- Brief history on riots
- Hip hop and Black Power in the late 1980s, early 1990s (Gang culture, Public Enemy, KRS-One, Islam, Queen Latifah, The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air)
- Film (in-class): excerpts from Spike Lee, *Do the Right Thing* (1989/2hrs)

### Week 9: 5/31- Navigating Asian American Politics within Interracial Power

Thur: *Bitter Fruit*: “The Red Apple Boycott” (126-138)

Fri-Sun: *Bitter Fruit*: “The Red Apple Boycott” (138-155)

Mon: *Bitter Fruit*: “The Korean American Response” (156-173)

Tue: □*Bitter Fruit*: “The Korean American Response” (173-187); □*Bitter Fruit*: “Conclusion”

Wed: Meet with your groups

### Week 10: 6/7- Conclusions / Group Presentations

- Post Movie Trailer on blog by **Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm**
- Peer comments on Movie Trailer due **Friday, June 9 at 5:00pm**