

LTEN 181 / ETHN 124
Fall 2012

Special Topics in Asian-American Literature: Asian Decolonization and the US Civil Rights Movement

MWF 1-1:50 pm

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From its very inception, the category of “Asian-American” was anomalous: it lumped Asian populations of the most diverse origins and histories into one, whose status as a historically underrepresented US minority group was roughly comparable to that of African- and Latina/o-Americans. But of equal importance, the exclusive attention to the “American” experience of these historically underrepresented minorities neglected the fact that such Asian populations remained closely tied to the politics and cultures of the Asia-Pacific region; and that even blacks and Latina/os fighting for civil rights took both the experiences and lessons of decolonization in Asia as a point of departure for understanding their own struggles and histories in the US. This course addresses the inextricably intertwined histories of and reflections on Asian decolonization (in countries as diverse as Indonesia, India, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan) and the US Civil Rights movement. From Martin Luther King, Jr.’s study of Indian decolonization under Gandhi’s leadership, to Malcolm X’s understanding of the Vietnam War, civil rights leaders never ceased to weave together the historical destinies of subaltern classes in Asia and the racially segregated classes in the United States. Far from today’s understanding of a “black and Latina/o coalition,” the US Civil Rights movement was from the beginning a movement of solidarity and dialogue that cut across geopolitical boundaries and narrow understandings of racial categories, as we understand them to exist in the US today.

SCHEDULE

Friday, September 28 **Introduction**

Week 1: Race, Empire and Imperialism

- * Vijay Prashad, “The Strange Career of Xenophobia” [pdf]
 - * Hannah Arendt, “Political Emancipation of the Bourgeoisie” [pdf]
 - * John D. Blanco, “Race As Praxis” [pdf]
 - * W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Souls of White Folk”
- (http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15210/15210-h/15210-h.htm#Chapter_II)
“Savage Acts” (film, dir. Pennee Bender *et al.*, 1995)

Weeks 2-3: Between Pan-Asianism and Pan-Africanism

George Lipsitz, "Frantic to Join...the Japanese Army" [pdf]

W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dark Princess*

Gerald Horne, *Race War!*, chapters 2, 5, 9 [pdf]

Bill Mullen, "Du Bois, The Dark Princess, and the Afro-Asian International" [pdf]

Weeks 4-5: From Asian to Black Revolution

Richard Wright, *Color Curtain* [pdf]

_____, *White Man, Listen!*, chapters 1 and 3 [pdf]

Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj / Indian Home Rule* [pdf]

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," "The Rising Tide of Racial Consciousness," "Beyond Vietnam"

Mao Zedong, "Statement Supporting the Afro-American in Their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination By US Imperialism" [pdf]

Robin Kelley, "Black Like Mao: Red China and Black Revolution" [pdf]

November 2 Midterm Exam

Weeks 6-8: US Civil Rights Movement and the Rise of Asian Americanism

Karen Tei Yamashita, *I-Hotel*

Yuri Kochiyama, "Impact of Malcolm X on Asian American Politics and Activism" [pdf]

Diane Fujino, "Japanese American Activism" [pdf]

Vijay Prashad, "Bruce Lee and the Anti-Imperialism of Kung Fu" [pdf]

"Fall of the I-Hotel" (film, dir. Curtis Choy, 1983)

"Enter the Dragon" (dir. Robert Clouse, 1973)

"Brotherhood of Death" (dir. ?, 1982)

Weeks 9-10: Legacies of Racial Formation

Chang-rae Lee, *Native Speaker*

"Mississippi Masala" (dir. Mira Nair, 1991)

Daniel Widener, "Perhaps the Japanese Are To Be Thanked?" [pdf]

Final Exam TBA