

ETHN 121:

Contemporary Asian American History

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Solomon

MWF 10 – 10:50

Pepper Canyon 120

Email: alsolomon@ucsd.edu

Office Hours: MW 11:30 -1:30

Office: SSB 245

Course Description:

This course will begin with the 1965 Immigration Act that resulted in a fundamental shift in the demographics of Asian immigrant communities in the US. We will trace the major historical events, social movements and cultural



productions of these Asian American communities from the latter half of the 20th century to today. History, however, is more than just dates, facts and figures. To study history is necessarily to study power and the forces of representation. In this class, we will critically analyze how Asian Americans have been positioned and position themselves in contemporary U.S. history.

Important themes for our course are: History versus histories, model minority versus yellow peril, imperialism and militarization, labor and class, gender and sexuality, globalization and transnationalism. Ultimately, the objectives of this course are: (1) to provide an overview of the major contemporary waves of Asian immigration to the U.S.; (2) to analyze critically the diversity within Asian America due to ethnic, national, gendered, sexualized and classed differences; (3) to investigate the ways in which unity has both been imposed and embraced by Asian Americans despite such differences; (4) to consider how the group labeled Asian American has negotiated a space within American history, society and culture; and (5) to interrogate the silences in history and produce our own knowledge about Asian American communities.

*Note: As this is an upper-division ethnic studies course, I do expect students already to have an understanding of intersectional analysis as well as Omi and Winant's theory of racial formation. If you are not familiar with these concepts and still wish to stay in the course, please see me in office hours and/or read Omi and Winant's *Racial Formation in the United States*.

Course Requirements: (All requirements must be completed to pass)

❖ Attendance & Participation (10%):

This grade is determined by a student's consistent attendance and lack of tardiness as well as participation in small and large group discussions and/or visits to office hours. Pop quizzes and in-class reading assignments may also count toward this grade.

❖ Group Presentations (15%):

In small groups, each student will pose questions and analyses on the week's readings for the day's discussion. Further directions will be given in class.

❖ Midterm (35%):

In week 5, a take-home midterm will be due covering the lectures and readings of the first half of the class.

❖ Historical Narrative Final Presentation (5%) & Project (35%):

In lieu of a final exam, students will be asked to create and present their own historical narrative about an Asian American subject. Further directions will be given in class.

Required Texts:

Abelman, Nancy and John Lie. *Blue Dreams: Korean Americans and the Los Angeles Riots*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995.

Choy, Catherine. *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*. Durham: Duke UP, 2003.

Phan, Aimee. *We Should Never Meet*. New York: Picador, 2004.

Zhou, Min and JV Gatewood. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader* (2nd Edition). New York: NYU Press, 2007.

*Please note: All other readings will be posted on e-reserves. Password: as121

*For all announcements and handouts: <http://ethn121ucsfall12.wordpress.com>

Tentative Course Schedule:

Week 0

F 9/28: Introductions

Week 1: What is history/herstory/ourstory?

M 10/1:

- Takaki, Ronald. "From a Different Shore: Their History Bursts with Telling." *Strangers from a Different Shore*

W 10/3:

- Ronald Takaki, "Centrality of Racism in Asian American History"
- Sylvia Yanagisako, "Rethinking the Centrality of Racism in Asian American History"

F 10/5: Presentation Group #1

- Omi, Michael. "Teaching, Situating and Interrogating Asian American History"

Week 2: 1965 Immigration Act

M 10/8: Ngai, Mae. "The Liberal Critique and Reform of Immigration Policy." *Impossible Subjects*.

W 10/10: Lowe, Lisa. "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences." Zhou, 505-525.

F 10/12: Presentation Group #2

- Bill Ong Hing, "What does it mean to be Asian American?"
- Scheduled screening of *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*

Week 3: Yellow Power

M 10/15:

- Umemoto, Karen. "'On Strike!': San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-1969: The Role of Asian American Students." Zhou, 25-55.
- Omatsu, Glen. "'The Four Prisons' and the Movement of Liberation: Asian American Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s." Zhou, 56-88.

W 10/17: Zia, Helen. "Detroit Blues: 'Because of You Motherfuckers.'" *Asian American Dreams*.

F 10/19: Presentation Group #3

- Fan, Chris. "Jean Quan and the Death of Asian America." *Hyphen*

Weeks 4-5: "Waves of War"

M 10/22:

- Bankston and Hidalgo. "The Waves of War: Immigrants, Refugees, and New Americans." Zhou, 139-157.
- Espiritu, Yen Le. "The 'We-Win-Even-When-We-Lose' Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the 'Fall of Saigon'"

W 10/24: Guest Speaker, Representatives, Karen Organization of San Diego

F 10/26: Phan, Aimee. "Miss Lien" and "We Should Never Meet" (1-54)

M 10/29: Phan, "Visitors" (89-112) and "Emancipation" (145-171)

W 10/31: Presentation Group #4

- Phan, "Motherland" (213-243)

F 11/2: Guest Speaker, Prof. Pahole Sookkasikon

Week 6: Empire of Care

M 11/5: **Midterm Exam Due**

- Choy, Catherine Ceniza. Intro and Pt 1, Ch 1. *Empire of Care*

W 11/7: Guest Lecture, Prof. Jay Perez

- Choy. Pt 3, Ch 5. *Empire of Care*.

F 11/9: Presentation Group #5

- Choy. Pt 3, Ch 6. *Empire of Care*.
- Scheduled screening of *Sa I Gu*

Weeks 7-8: Sa I Gu

M 11/12: Veteran's Day – NO CLASS

W 11/14: Guest Lecture, Prof. Anthony Kim

- Abelman and Lie. Chs 1 & 3. *Blue Dreams*.

F 11/16: Guest Lecture, Prof. Joo Ok Kim

- Abelman and Lie. Ch 6. *Blue Dreams*.

M 11/19 - F 11/23: Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS

Week 9: 9/11

M 11/26:

- Lee, Stephen. "US Intervention in the Middle East, the 'War on Terror,' and Domestic Hate Crimes: An *Amerasia Journal* Chronology"
- Kang, Jerry. "Thinking Through Internment: 12/7 and 9/11"

W 11/28:

- Maira, Sunaina. "'Racial Profiling' in the War on Terror: Cultural Citizenship and South Asian Muslim Youth in the United States." Zhou, 431-448.

F 11/30: Presentation Group #6

- Bayoumi, Moustafa. "How Does it Feel to be a Problem?"

Week 10: queering home & decolonizing love

M 12/3: Trask, Haunani-Kay. "Feminism and Indigenous Hawaiian Nationalism"

W 12/5: Jasbir Puar, "Transnational Sexualities: South Asian (Trans)nation(alism)s and Queer Diasporas."

F 12/7: Eng, David. Introduction. *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*.

Final Project Presentations: 12/14, Noon to 3pm

Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes 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, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact:

Daisy Rodríguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor
858-534-3277 or d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu or www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu

Student Consent for Release of Student Information

I hereby authorize the UCSD Ethnic Studies Department/Program to return my graded final examination/research paper by placing the examination/research paper in a location accessible to all students in the course. I understand that the return of my examination/research paper as described above may result in the disclosure of personally identifiable information, that is not public information as defined in UCSD PPM 160-2, and I hereby consent to the disclosure of such information.

Quarter: _____

Course: _____

Instructor: _____

Student I.D.#: _____

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____