

# **Asian American Politics**

## **ETHNIC STUDIES 123**

Warren Lecture Hall 2206

MWF 2:00-2:50PM

Dr. Lisa Ho

[liho@mail.ucsd.edu](mailto:liho@mail.ucsd.edu)

**Office Hours:** M 3:30-4:30 & By Appointment

**Office:** Cubicle #4 in the East Commons of Geisel Library (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)



### **Course Description**

This course is a critical investigation of how Asian Americans have politicized themselves and what conditions have led to this politicization. The course operates from the basic understanding that the field of Asian American Studies emerged from demands of equality, equity, and liberation. This course honors the origins of Asian American Studies by focusing on how power is generated from politicization and civic engagement. As such, we will be analyzing how the past has shaped the stakes of our turbulent present in which violence and fear has become commonplace amongst marginalized communities. We will also be examining how the dualistic racialization of Asian Americans as the “model minority” and “yellow peril” has influenced their political positioning on numerous subjects such as: higher education, immigration, and hate crimes. We will work through how this positioning has determined access to resources needed for a sustainable livelihood. The objective of this course is to illuminate how the stakes of our present can forward us to a more radical future that embraces love and liberation.

### **Learning Goals**

1. Students should be able to articulate the complex operation of power (in its different manifestations) and how power is determined by categorical understandings of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship.
2. Students are expected to be able to critically analyze assigned readings in a thoughtful manner that includes the following: making connections across texts, identifying course themes, and

constructing unique arguments of their own based on lectures, discussions, and other related readings.

3. Students will be encouraged to collaborate with their peers in productive and constructive ways.

## **Required Readings**

All readings will be posted on the TED course page.

## **Assignments**

**Attendance & Participation: 10 Points**

**Weekly Assignments: 30 Points**

**Midterm: 20 Points**

**Final Project: 40 Points**

**Attendance & Participation:** Your attendance is required. You are allowed miss two days of class with no explanation or an excuse. If you miss more than two classes, your grade for attendance and participation will be lowered by one point (or a 1/3 of grade) each time. If you are experiencing extenuating circumstances, please speak with me privately to discuss alternative ways you can make up your missing time.

**Weekly Assignments:** Each week you will be required to post on TED. You have three options for a weekly post: a discussion question, a comment, or a current event connection. Each post must be at least 100 words. Here are the following instructions for each option:

1. Discussion Question: Your question needs to be detailed and should not be open-ended. For example: *What was the purpose behind the radicalism of Gidra? How can we use that radicalism to deconstruct anti-blackness that exists in the Asian American community now?* To help with the specificity of your question, you are required to provide a passage directly from the reading. Use the quoted passage to demonstrate the reasoning for your question. Your question should encourage discussion amongst your classmates.
2. Comment: Like the question option, you need to provide context to your comment via a specific reading passage. A comment can include making connections across readings, larger course themes, and/or terms. You may also analyze the passage to build your comment.
3. Current Event Connection: For this option, you must provide a hyperlink to a text that features your current event connection. Explain how your current event applies to the reading by providing a specific reading passage. Lastly, using that reading passage and hyperlink, explain what the exact connection is and the significance.

**HOWEVER**, for **Weeks 2, 5, 7**, you'll have a specific prompt indicated on the syllabus. These posts are worth the same amount of points. Please keep track of your assignments via the syllabus.

**Weekly Assignments are due EVERY THURSDAY BY NOON on TED unless stated otherwise by the instructor. Please post your assignment accordingly under each corresponding week. Assignments are graded based on completion. THERE ARE NO MAKE-UPS FOR WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS.**

## **Midterm**

The midterm will be conducted in-class during week five. The midterm will be an essay that is based on one of the key themes of course.

## **Final Project**

In groups of no more than three, you will create a campaign that promotes political engagement in the Asian American community. Your campaign will advocate some form of action, for instance, it may

include: getting out the vote, establishing an Asian American Studies major/minor at UCSD, creating a political action committee, or developing a zine like *Gidra*. More details to follow during week three.

## **No Technology Policy**

Laptops, tablets, and/or cell phones cannot be used during class session unless indicated by the instructor. As such, please print and bring your readings to class.

## **Class Etiquette**

"Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always."

## **WEEK ONE: October 1, 3, 5**

*What are we working with? Who are we working with? What are working towards?*

"Politics" (Janelle Wong)

"Identity" (Jennifer Ho)

"Why Are Asian Americans Politically Invisible?" (Alex Wagner)

### **Weekly Assignment**

Standard TED Post: Question, Comment or Current Event

## **WEEK TWO: October 8, 10, 12**

*Radical Pasts, Radical Futures?*

"One Strike!" San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-1969: The Role of Asian American Students (Karen Umemoto)

\*Gidra Collection @ The Densho Digital Repository

### **Weekly Assignment**

Pick one issue of *Gidra* to analyze and write a 200-word response.

## **WEEK THREE: October 15, 17, 19**

*Radical Pasts, Radical Futures? Continued*

"The Yellow Press: Asian American Radicalism and Conflict in *Gidra*" (Lori Kido Lopez)

"Black Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen: Constructing Asian American Identity through Performing Blackness, 1969-1972" (Daryl J. Maeda)

### **Weekly Assignment**

Standard TED Post: Question, Comment or Current Event

## **WEEK FOUR: October 22, 24, 26**

*Asian Americans & #BlackLivesMatter*

"The Whitewashing of Naomi Osaka" (Zeba Blay)

"Awoken' By N.Y. Cop Shooting, Asian-American Activists Chart Way Forward" (Hansi Lo Wang)

"How Should Asian-Americans Feel About the Peter Liang Protests?" (Jay Caspian Kang)

"The trial of Peter Liang and confronting the reality of Asian American privilege" (Claire Jean Kim)

### **Weekly Assignment**

Standard TED Post: Question, Comment or Current Event

## **WEEK FIVE: October, 29, 31 & November 2**

*Modeling for Minorities: The Racialization of Asian Americans in Higher Education*

"Complicating the Image of Model Minority Success: A Review of Southeast Asian American Education" (Bic Ngo & Stacey J. Lee)

"Students for Fair Admissions" Webpage

"The 'Whitening' of Asian Americans" (Iris Kuo)

### **Written Assignment**

In 200 words, analyze "Students for Fair Admissions" webpage.

## **WEEK SIX: November 5, 7, 9**

*The Highly In(visible): Undocumented and Deported in Asian America*

"Model (undocumented) minorities and 'illegal' immigrants: centering Asian Americans and US Carcerality in undocumented student discourse" (Tracy Lachia Buenavista)

"'You feel invisible': How America's fastest-growing immigrant group is being left out of the DACA conversation" (Vanessa Williams)

"41-year-old Adoptee Deported After 37 Years in the U.S. (HBO)" [YouTube Link]

### **Weekly Assignment**

Standard TED Post: Question, Comment or Current Event

## **WEEK SEVEN: November 14, 16**

**\*NO CLASS ON MONDAY (Veterans Day)**

*Gender & Political Leadership*

"Grassroots Leadership and Afro-Asian Solidarities: Yuri Kochiyama's Humanizing Radicalism (Diane C. Fujino)

"The Passion of Dan Choi" (Gabriel Arana)

### **Weekly Assignment**

Standard TED Post: Question, Comment or Current Event

## **WEEK EIGHT: NO CLASSES THIS WEEK**

### **Written Assignment**

Write a 200 response to the Andrew Yang article (hyperlink posted on TED)

## **WEEK NINE: November 26, 28, 30**

*Internment & 9/11: The Political Power of Violence*

"Cultural Politics of Redress: Reassessing the Meaning of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 After 9/11" (Victoria Bascara)

"Unsettling 'Indian American Hindus' and Model Minority Projects in Trump-Era 'America'" (Priya Rajalakshmi Chandrasekaran)

**Weekly Assignment**

Standard TED Post: Question, Comment or Current Event

**WEEK TEN: December 3, 5, 7**

*What Does it Mean to be Asian American @ UCSD?*

"Voices of Asian American and Pacific Islander Students and the Politics of Diversity Policy" (Angela Kong)

**Weekly Assignment**

Standard TED Post: Question, Comment or Current Event

If you get to this point of the syllabus, I congratulate you! If you know one of the three Real Housewives franchise I started watching this summer, email me, and you will receive some of that good old extra credit 😊 I'll reveal this horrifying fact about myself before the end of week one.