

ETHN 121 – Contemporary Asian American History

Summer 2012

MW 2-4:50 pm, HSS 2154

University of California, San Diego

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| Instructor: | Kit Myers |
| Office: | SSB 250 |
| Office hours: | Mon 5-6 pm and Wed 5-7 pm or by appointment |
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COURSE OVERVIEW:

History as a subject of study is not just about learning facts, examining the past, and knowledge retrieval. History is important because it is about how knowledge is made. It is imbued with power because people decide what is archived, what is excavated, how it will be told and shared and ultimately why it is significant. History does not just exist in the past but in fact is made in our everyday lives. The purpose of this class is to explore and deconstruct how Asian Americans (AA) have been situated in and a part of contemporary American history. After re-establishing some foundations important to AA Studies, we will use AA feminist, queer, and decolonial frameworks to examine contemporary immigration law, new migrations/demographics, and cultural representations. This includes gaining a deeper understanding of the social, political, and economic contexts as well as the ways race, gender, and sexuality play in forming Asian American identity, subjects, communities, history, representations, and resistance.

Key questions this course will address: How did the 1965 Immigration Act (and subsequent legislation) affect Asian Americans, families, and communities? What are some new issues (beyond labor and exclusion) for new Asian American subjects? What roles have neoliberalism and post-9/11 discourse and ideology played in maintaining racial and heteropatriarchal structures for AAs?

Readings:

Required: All other readings will be available as PDFs through UCSD library e-reserves at <http://reserves.ucsd.edu> OR TED at <http://ted.ucsd.edu/> You are *required to print and bring* the assigned readings to class.

Suggested: Please note that this is an upper division course. If you are not familiar with Asian American history, the fact that race is a social construction, or Foucault's notion of discourse, please read the texts provided on TED (also listed on page 3 of the syllabus). Students can also form reading groups to informally discuss the required texts.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed one absence (no questions asked). More than one absence will result in a zero score for participation. Missing 3 classes will result in a failing/no pass grade. Two late arrivals = 1 absence. Leaving early = 1 absence.

Your participation is crucial to your success in this class; it means more than being present. Everyone is expected to contribute to class and group discussions through an engagement with the readings/lectures (ask questions, seek clarification, offer interpretations and ideas). Some students may be uncomfortable with this, so there will be a variety of classroom activities that will give you multiple opportunities to participate.

*Note: office hours are not a requirement, but they are another way to participate.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Students will need to complete 2-4 response papers, quizzes, 1 essay (4-5 pages), and a creative final project. No midterm or final exams for this course.

Response Papers: Directions can be found on TED. Students will complete between 2-4 response papers worth 5 points each. You can only turn in one per week. No late work will be accepted.

Grade scale: ✓+ = 5 pts ✓ = 4 pts ✓- = 3 pts no credit/redo = 0 points/redo

of Response: 4 = A 3 = B 2 = C/pass 1 or 0 = no pass

Final Project: Creative Historical Narrative – Construct a life history/moment narrative (e.g. video documentary, painting/drawing series, poem, letter, experimental) using yourself or another individual (who is Asian American such as a friend, family member, or community activist) as the main character.

Final Presentations: Wednesday, Aug. 1: 3:30 – 5:00 pm.

Course Evaluation:

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| Participation | 10% |
| Response Papers | 20% |
| Group Presentation | 10% |
| Essay | 25% |
| 5 Quizzes | 15% |
| Final Project | 20% |

CLASS CONDUCT:

By the very nature of the course topic, there will likely be a wide range of opinions. A good classroom environment should stimulate you to think for yourself, challenge paradigms, and raise critical questions. Please keep in mind, however, that we must engage each other in a respectful and considerate manner. These ground rules are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community to which we are all expected to adhere (<http://www-vcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>). Abusive and harsh language, intimidation, and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Digital Etiquette: All personal electronics should be off or on “silent” mode. Texting, games and internet usage (Facebook, youtube, email, etc.) are not permitted.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is a serious violation, whether intentional or inadvertent. All work submitted in this course must be your own and original. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. Plagiarism is when you use someone else’s words without attribution; it includes using portions of a previously published work or website in a paper without citing the source, submitting a paper written for another course, submitting a paper written by someone else, and using the ideas of someone else without attribution. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please discuss them with your instructors or consult UCSD’s Center for Academic Integrity at: <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>.

Special Accommodations: Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations should make an appointment with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of class. Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students can seek assistance or information at ODS, located at University Center 202 or call: (858) 534-4382.

MAJORING OR MINORING 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 have no information about the major or minor and don’t 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, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact the Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor at 858-534-3277.

SCHEDULE:

Note: I reserve the right to revise the contents of this syllabus at any given time (with due notice).

Suggested Background Readings

Timothy Fong, “The History of Asians in America.”
 Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race” 199-208.
 Stuart Hall, “Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse” 72-81.

Unit 1 – Beginnings of the Movement, New Migrations, and Law

Week 1

7/2 AA Movement and Diversity (History)

Glenn Omatsu, “The ‘Four Prisons’ and the Movements of Liberation: Asian American Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s” 164-196.

Lisa Lowe, “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Asian American Differences” 60-83.

7/4 NO CLASS – AA Settler Colonialism and Home Making (Theory)

Yen Espiritu, “Home Making” 1-22.

Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter* 41-109.

Week 2

7/9 Migration, Law, and Immigration Policy (History)

Mae Ngai, “The Liberal Critique and Reform of Immigration Policy” 225-264.

Park and Park, “Governing Admission to the United States: Basic Themes” and “Exclusion, Deportation, and Refugee Admissions” 9-44.

7/11 Feminist and Queer Framework (Theory)

Jasbir Puar, “Transnational Sexualities: South Asian (Trans)nation(alism)s and Queer Diasporas” 405-422.

Martin Manalansan, “Introduction: Points of Departure” and “The Borders Between Bakla and Gay” 1-44.

Unit 2 – Neoliberalism and the American Dream

Week 3

7/16 Model Minority Myth

US News Report, “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.” in *A Reader: Asian American Studies* Ed Jean Yu-Wen, Shen Wu, and Min Song 158-163.

"The Rise of Asian Americans" *Pew Research Poll* and "In a Shift, Biggest Wave of Migrants Is Now Asian" *The New York Times* (Available on TED)

Park and Park, "Engineering the Model Minority" 97-107 (Available on TED)

Fujiwara, "Welfare Reform and the Politics of Citizenship" 22-50.

Park and Park, "Efficiency and Cost: Detention and Deportation under the Acts of 1996" 45-79.

7/18 Sweatshop workers and Anti-Asian Violence

Miriam Ching Louie, "Holding Up Half the Sky: Chinese Immigrant Women Workers" 19-63.

Espiritu, "Reactive Solidarity: Anti-Asian Violence" 134-160.

ESSAY 2 DUE

Unit 3 – New Immigrants: War, Adoption, post 9/11

Week 4

7/23 The Refugee Figure and SE Asian Americans

Kao Kalia Yang, *The Latecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* 1-77.

Linda Trinh Vo, "The Vietnamese American Experience: from Dispersion to the Development of Post-Refugee Communities" 290-306.

7/25 The Orphan Figure and Transnational Adoption

Bert Ballard, "The Narrative of International Adoption" *Conducive Magazine*

Christina Yang, "Redefining and Reclaiming Korean Adoptee Identity: Grassroots Internet Communities and the The Hague Convention" 131-172.

Week 5

7/30 "Terrorist Threat": Arab Americans

Amaney Jamal, "Civil Liberties and the Otherization of Arab and Muslim Americans" 114-130.

Sawsan Abdulrahim, "'Whiteness' and the Arab Immigrant Experience" in 131-146.

Nadine Naber, "'Look, Mohammed the Terrorist Is Coming!': Cultural Racism, Nation-based Racism, and the Intersectionality of Oppressions after 9/11" 276-304.

Unit 4: Asian American Futures

8/1 Home Making and Feminist Solidarities

Yen Espiritu, "Homes, Borders, and Possibilities" 205-222.

Haunani-Kay Trask, "Feminism and Indigenous Hawaiian Nationalism" 906-916.

Ignatius Bau, "Queer Asian American Immigrants: Opening Borders and Closets" 57-64.

Recommended: Miriam Ching Louie, "'Just-in-Time' Guerrilla Warriors" 215-246.

FINAL PROJECT DUE