

ETHN 101: Ethnic Images and the Construction of Racialized Spaces in Film
UCSD Summer Session I
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:00 – 7:50 pm, York 4050A

Instructor: Susan Chen

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00 – 5:00 pm at Mandeville Coffee Cart and by appointment

Course site: ted.ucsd.edu

Course Description

Films play a critical role in today's society. More than just entertainment, films constitute an important medium where social ideas are produced, disseminated, and shaped. This is true when it comes to their role in constructing racial representations. In this class, we will engage in critical analyses of contemporary films and readings from North America, in particular looking at how movies and documentaries inform the public about race, racism, and racial geographies. On one hand, this class explores the complicity of film in facilitating structural racism and constructing racial categories. On the other hand, films can also be used as a tool of resistance and agency in countering harmful stereotypes and in rupturing misconceptions and blind spots. Both of these themes will be examined in this course, and students are welcome to use this class as a space to engage in in-depth reflections and discussions about the impact of films on race.

Grading

Attendance and Participation: 20%

Weekly Reflection Papers (3-4 pages) due weeks 2, 3, and 4: 35%

Quizzes : 20%

Final (due week 5): 25%

Attendance and Participation: Attendance in class is mandatory. If you have more than one excused absence in this class, you will get a 10% deduction from your TOTAL course grade. It is also imperative that you arrive on time. (Note: If you get sick at some point during the course, you may give me a doctor's note for an excused absence.)

Please bring the texts we will be discussing to class. You may find all readings for this course on eReserves (reserves.ucsd.edu). Not bringing texts will impede with your ability to participate and make meaningful contributions to discussion. Failure to bring course materials will also reflect negatively on your participation grade.

The e-reserves password for this course is **sc101**

Verbal participation is required. You are also expected to complete ALL readings. I expect you to come to class well-prepared, having done all assigned readings from the previous meeting. **You will be required to participate in class discussions at least 3 times.** You are not expected to agree with the opinions of myself or your peers and your opinions will always be respected. At the same time, I also ask that you be considerate of the interpretations, beliefs, and opinions of those around you.

Weekly Reflection Papers: 3-4 page reflection papers (12-pt Times New Roman font, double spaced, 1" margins) are due on Tuesdays in class for weeks 2, 3, and 4. No late papers will be accepted.

Quizzes: I will assign quizzes on the days when no reflection papers are due. The quizzes will cover readings for that day. I do not give pop quizzes, but will always give prior notice.

Final: Your final will be a take-home final of 5-7 pages, due Friday, August 2. The prompt will be handed out in week 3. You are required to select one film (a list of suggested movies will be handed out in class), and analyze it according to a prompt.

Academic Integrity

Please consult the UCSD policy on academic integrity at <http://www.ucsd.edu/principles>. Actions falling short of academic integrity such as cheating on exams, engaging in plagiarism, or submitting a paper from another class will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action. To avoid plagiarism, you must cite ALL your sources and refrain from copying passages/passing off others' work as your own (i.e. from other student papers, the internet, books). I take plagiarism very seriously and will refer all cases to academic misconduct.

Email response policy

Please keep your e-mail questions brief. If you need substantial questions answered you need to come to office hours for consultation. If you miss a class, ask a peer what you missed instead of asking me to give a recap. I will make every effort to respond to emails within two days during the work-week; please give me sufficient time to respond before assignments are due. When emailing me, **please remember to sign your name**. Thank you.

Class One: Introduction

Film: Gran Torino

Tim Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, excerpts from chapters 2 and 3

Vera, Hernán and Andrew M. Gordon. *Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*. Chapter 3.

Chaisson, Reba L. *For Entertainment Purposes Only?: An Analysis of the Struggle to Control Filmic Representations*. Pages 1-8

Class Two: Whiteness, Racial Geographies, and Structural Racism

Film: Falling Down (tentative)

Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States*. Chapter 4

George Lipsitz. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*. Pages 1-47.

Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz*. Chapter 4.

Class Three: Black Cinema and The Ghetto

Film: *Boyz in the Hood* (watch on your own. Available through Amazon Instant Video and Netflix instant streaming)

Sides, Josh. "Straight into Compton: American Dreams, Urban Nightmares, and the Metamorphosis of a Black Suburb," *American Quarterly*, 56(3): 583-605.

Covington, Jeanette. *Crime and Racial Constructions: Cultural Misinformation about African Americans in Media and Academia*. Pages 96-128

Widener, Daniel. *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles*. (Selections)

Class Four: Resistance

Film: *Do the Right Thing*

Robyn D.G. Kelley. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. 1-34 and 183-227.

Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. Chapter 5.

Class Five: The Barrio

Film: *La Mission*

Benshoff, Harry M. and Sean Griffin. *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*. Pages 135-153.

Villa, Raul Homero. *Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*. Pages 66-110

Chappell, Ben. *Lowrider Space: Aesthetics and Politics of Mexican American Custom Cars*. "Cruising Spaces," chapter 1.

Optional Reading: Nyborg, Anne M. "Gentrified Barrio: Gentrification and the Latino Community in San Francisco's Mission District." (Selections)

Class Six: The Border and the Drugs War

Film: *Traffic*

Curtis Marez. *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics*. Pages 1-36 and 146-184.

Class Seven: The Border and the Drug War (continued)

Film: *Traffic* (continued)

Nevins, Joseph. *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the Illegal Alien and the Remaking of the U.S. Mexico Boundary*. (selections)

Class Eight: Asian American representation

Film: Better Luck Tomorrow

Benshoff, Harry M. and Sean Griffin. America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies. Pages 116-134.

Lee, Robert. Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture. Chapter 5.

Ruthann Lee. "Ambivalence, Desire, and the Re-Imagining of Asian American Masculinity in Better Luck Tomorrow." Pages 51-67.

Class Nine: Asian American representation (continued).

Film: Better Luck Tomorrow

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE FRIDAY, AUGUST 2ND AT 4:00 PM

(Please bring your papers to the Ethnic Studies Office at SSB 201)

Majoring or Minorin 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 visit www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu