

ETHN 122: Asian-American Culture and Identity
Summer Session I 2014
Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:00pm-4:50pm in HSS 1106A

Instructor: Davorn Sisavath

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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm at CCC

Course Description:

This course examines Asian American cultural expressions in literature, film, art and other popular venues to understand the social experiences that helped forge Asian American culture and identity. We will explore how “Asian American” operates as a highly contested category of ethnic and national identity. While the course covers a diverse range of Asian immigrant histories, we will pay specific attention to the formation of Asian American subjectivities across axes of ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class. The cultural expressions we will study in this class map an ongoing movement in Asian American studies from domesticated narratives of immigrant assimilation towards increasingly transnational categories of nationhood and citizenship.

E-Reserve Access

Password: ds122

Required Texts:

le thi diem thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* (2003)

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation	25%
Reading Responses	25%
Cultural Text Assignment/Analytical Paper	25%
Final Exam	25%

Attendance and Participation: A large part of your learning in this class will come from your peers. Throughout the course, we will work through themes, concepts, readings and other materials as a group, therefore, your regular attendance and active participation is crucial to your success and will also enhance the quality of the course. Participation will involve class discussions and weekly student presentation about each week’s themes.

Reading Response (4): Reading responses are an important way for you to engage with the readings before coming to class. You will submit (4) weekly (1 page double-space) reading responses on TED prior to the class period. The response paper should not be a summary but rather a way for you to highlight the author’s main points and make connections across the readings in relation to the themes/concepts of the course.

Cultural Text/Analytical Paper: You will create a cultural text as an expression of your understanding of Asian American culture and identity. This cultural text can be in the form of a poem, short story, prose, art piece, short film/video, or any other popular mediums. The text can be a parallel/in response to one of the films, stories, etc. that are discussed in class. An analytical paper (4-5 pages) must accompany the cultural text and engage with 2-3 readings from class.

Due Tuesday, July 29, 2014.

Final – Saturday, August 2, 2014 3:00 pm 05:59pm

Course Policies

Late assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class and will be considered late once lecture/class has begun. Assignments will be deducted 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late.

Lectures: It is important to attend lectures regularly because they further your understanding of readings and themes introduced in the course. Lectures or classroom time will also serve as discussions for you to work through the materials with other students. It is your responsibility to attain lecture/class notes from your peers if you miss class.

Readings: ALL the readings should be completed before class. Please bring the texts we will be discussing to class.

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. However, please keep in mind that we must engage each other in a respectful and considerate debate in the classroom. 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.

Academic Dishonesty: 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 Charles Lipson's *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Students found guilty of plagiarism will be disciplined to the full extent of university policy and forwarded to the dean of their college. Students found cheating on an exam or quiz will receive a failing grade in the course and be reported to the dean of their college for disciplinary action. Each student is expected to be familiar with UCSD's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, available at <http://www.senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm#AP14>.

Disabilities: If you have a documented disability needing accommodations in this course, please inform me and bring a notification letter outlining your approved accommodations. I will make all reasonable efforts to assist you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you must notify me in writing within one week of receipt of syllabus. You may also seek assistance or information from the Office for Students with Disabilities, 858-534-4382.

Week 1: Introduction and Foundation - Asian American Culture & Identity

Tuesday, July 1

- Lisa Lowe, "Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique" in *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*, pgs. 1-36 (E-Reserve)

Thursday, July 3

- Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Asian American Differences" in *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*, pgs. 60-83 (E-Reserve)
- Screening: *Chan is Missing* (dir. Wayne Wang 1982)

Recommended Readings:

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation," in *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*, pgs. 53-76

Colleen Lye, "Introduction" in *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945*, pgs. 1-11

Week 2: Legacies of Racism and Cultural Representations - "Yellow Peril" and Model Minorities

Tuesday, July 8

- Robert Lee, "Introduction: Yellowface," in *Orientalisms* 1-14 (E-Reserve)
- Gary Okihiro, "Perils of the Body and Mind," in *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture*, pp 118-147
- Screening: *Better Luck Tomorrow* (dir. Justin Lin, 2003)

Thursday, July 10

- Margaret Hillenbrand, "Of Myths and Men: Better Luck Tomorrow and the Mainstreaming of Asian America Cinema," *Cinema Journal*, pgs. 50-75.
- Vijay Prashad, "Of the Origin of Desis and Some Principles of State Selection," and "of Antiracist Racism" in *The Karma of Brown Folk*, pgs. 69-82 and 157-184 (E-Reserve)

Recommended Readings:

Robert Lee, "The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority Myth," in *Orientalisms*

Victor Bascara, "Unburdening Empire: The Cultural Politics of Asian American Difference" in *Model Minority Imperialism*, pgs. 1-25.

Week 3: U.S. Imperialism in Southeast Asia – The Refugee Figure

Tuesday, July 15

- Yen Le Espiritu, "Towards a Critical Refugee Study" *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, vol. 1, no.1-2: 410-433.
- Aiwha Ong, "The Refugee as an Ethical Figure" in *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America*, pgs. 69-90 (E-Reserve)
- Screening: *The Betrayal* – Nerakhoon (dir. Thavisouk Phrasavath & Ellen Kuras 2008)

Thursday, July 17

- le thi diem thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* (2003)

Recommended Readings:

Ma Vang, "The Refugee Soldier: A Critique of Recognition and Citizenship in the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization" in *positions*, pgs. 685-712

Rosalind C. Morris "Giving Up Ghosts: Notes on Trauma and the Possibility of the Political from Southeast Asia" *Positions*, Vol. 16, No.1, (Spring, 2008): 229-258.

Film: A.K.A. Don Bonus: The life of a Cambodian refugee (dir. Spencer Nakasako 1995)

Week 4: Asian Americans in a Post-9/11 World

Tuesday, July 22

- Monisha Das Gupta, "Terms of Belonging" in *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States*, pgs. 27-55 (E-Reserve)
- Momo Chang, "Life After 9/11: Seven years after 9/11, Asian Americans reflect on how their lives and communities have changed" in *Hyphen Magazine* (E-Reserve)
- Clips from 11'9"01 September 11 - Mira Nair (Segment "India")(2002)

Thursday, July 24

- Sunaina Maira, "The Intimate and the Imperial: South Asian Muslim Immigrant Youth After 9/11" in *Youthscapes: The Popular, the National, the Global*, pgs. 64-81 (E-Reserve)
- Film: *Divided We Fall: Americans in the Aftermath* (dir. Sharat Raju, writer Valerie Kaur 2006)

Recommended Reading:

Leti Volpp, "The Citizen and the Terrorist" in *UCLA Law Review* 49 (2002).

Week 5: Diaspora, Gender and Sexuality

Tuesday, July 29

- David Eng "Out Here and Over There: Queerness and Diaspora in Asian American Studies" in *Social Text* pgs. 31-52
- Martin F. Manalansan, "'Out There': The Topography of Race and Desire in the Global City" in *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*, pgs. 62-88 (E-Reserve)
- Film: *The Wedding Banquet* (dir. Ang Lee 1993)

Thursday, July 31

- Cultural Text Presentations

Recommended Reading:

Richard Fung, "The Trouble with 'Asians,'"

<http://www.richardfung.ca/index.php/?/articles/the-trouble-with-asians-1995/>

Final – Saturday, August 2, 2014 3:00 pm 05:59pm

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 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 Daisy Rodriguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor, at 858-534-3277 or d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu