

**Asian American Culture and Identity: Representation and the Media, Popular Culture, and Identity
Politics**

UCSD Summer Session II 2013

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 am – 1:50 pm, HSS 1128A

Instructor: Su-Shuan Chen

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Office hours: Tuesday 2:00 – 3:00 pm, Thursday 2:00 – 3:00 pm (after class) and by appointment

Course site: ted.ucsd.edu

In today's racial and political landscape, "Asian American" is a term that needs little explanation or definition; most of us understand "Asian American" as a racial identifier pertaining to U.S. residents of Asian descent. This concept, however, did not enter popular lexicon until the 1960s and was in fact a product of the Civil Rights and ethnic solidarity movements. One of the major themes of this course will be to study the emergence and trajectory of Asian America as a racial, political, and cultural category over the last fifty years. In the process, we will explore many of the complexities associated with Asian American identity, politics, and cultural representations. On one hand, cultural images of Asian Americans have been forged through cultural stereotypes and racist legacies. On the other hand, Asian American communities have responded through complex processes of conformity, protest, internal tensions, and ground-breaking collaboration. Taking all these historic, cultural, and political dynamics into consideration, this course will examine key themes and questions that have been central to the contemporary Asian American experience—model minority stereotypes, identity and diversity among Asian Americans, questions of Asian American citizenship, Asian American sexuality, interethnic communities, and Asian American popular culture.

GRADING

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Weekly Reflection Papers (weeks 1, 2, 3, 4): 30%

Quizzes: 20%

Class presentation on readings: 10%

Class presentation on a cultural text: 5%

Final (due week 5): 20%

NOTE: You must complete all assignments, response papers and exams to pass this course. You are allowed a maximum of 1 absence in this course. Any additional absences will result in an automatic 10% deduction from your TOTAL course grade.

COURSE READINGS

Please purchase or borrow the following two books:

Consuming Citizenship: Children of Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs by Lisa Park (class 5)

Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries by Yen Espiritu (class 8)

The rest of your course readings will be available on e-reserves at reserves.ucsd.edu. Password is **sc122**

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Attendance in class is mandatory. If you have more than one unexcused absence in this class, you will get a 10% deduction from your TOTAL course grade. It is also imperative that you arrive on time. (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. Unless otherwise stated, you may find the readings for this course on e-reserves (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.

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: a 3-page reflection paper (12-pt Times New Roman font, double spaced, 1" margins) will be due on Thursdays at the beginning of class. Late papers will receive a 1/3 grade deduction for each day they are late (weekend days count as one day each.)

QUIZZES: I will assign quizzes on the days (usually Tuesdays) 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, either in class or via email.

CLASS READING PRESENTATION: You will be asked to give one 5-10 minute presentation that 1) summarizes the main arguments of the day's readings 2) articulates any common themes tying together the day's readings and 2) posing 1-2 questions on the readings for the class to discuss.

CULTURAL TEXT PRESENTATION: For your presentation on a cultural text, please select a video clip (i.e. from YouTube), an article, a musical work, poem, photograph, or cultural product related to Asian American culture or identity. You will then give a 5-minute presentation analyzing the cultural text based on themes we have discussed in class. When starting your presentation, please make sure to provide brief background information on your cultural text.

FINAL: For your final project, you will be asked to write a 6-7 page analysis of a cultural text related to any of the course themes. (For cultural text, you may pick a film, work of literature, musical piece, play, photographic collection, or museum exhibition to analyze.) You must incorporate references/discussions of at least 5 secondary sources which may be drawn from class readings.

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.

COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULE

Class 1, 8/6: Introduction and Foundations. Workings of Race and Power.

(Complete this reading for first class: Omi and Winant, Chapter Four)

Impossible Subjects (Part IV) by Mae Ngai. Pages 227-264

George Lipsitz. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*. Introduction. Pages 1-25.

Racial Hierarchies, Tomas Almaguer, Introduction. Pages 1-12

Class 2, 8/8: Legacies of Racism and Cultural Representations

Orientalism by Edward Said (Preface, Introduction, Ch. 5 pages 145-161)

"Asian Americans" from *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies* by Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin.

"Art, Activism, Asia, and Asian Americans" by Dorinne Kondo from *Contemporary Asian America Reader*

Wednesday: Screening of (short) Mr. Yunioshi documentary

Class 3, 8/13: The Asian American Movement

Asian American Panethnicity by Yen Le Espiritu (Chapter 2)

"'On Strike!': San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-1969: The Role of Asian American Students" by Karen Umemoto. *Contemporary Asian America Reader*

Black, Brown, Yellow, Left: Radical Activism in Southern California by Laura Pulido. (selections)

Class 4, 8/15: Model Minorities

"Success Story Japanese American Style" by William Petersen

"The Continuing Significance of the Model Minority Myth" by Lisa Park

"The 'Model Minority' Deconstructed" by Lucie Cheng and Philip Q. Yang

Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown by Nayan Shah. (selections)

Class 5, 8/20: the Model Minority (continued) and Asian American Citizenship

Consuming Citizenship: Children of Asian American Entrepreneurs by Lisa Park

"A Quota on Excellence?: The Asian American Admissions Debate" by Don Nakanishi from Contemporary Asian America Reader.

Film: Ocean of Pearls

Class 6, 8/22: South Asians and Citizenship

A Part, Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America, edited by Lavina Dhingra Shankar and Rajini Srikanth (selections)

Stranger Intimacy by Nayan Shah (selections)

Class 7, 8/27: Asian American Refugees

"Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian Americans" by Ruben Rumbaut in Contemporary Asian America Reader.

"The Vietnamese American Experience: From Dispersion to the Development of Post-Refugee Communities" by L.T. Vo in Asian American Studies: A Reader

Ong, Aihwa. *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, and the New America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. (selections)

Orientalism by Robert Lee (Chapter 6)

Class 8, 8/29: Asian American Transnationalism

Asian American History in Transnational Perspective. Pacific Historical Review. Vol. 76, no. 4 (Nov 2007)

"Introduction: Nation and Migration," by David G. Gutierrez and Pierrett Hondagneu-Sotelo. *American Quarterly*. Vol. 60 no. 3. **Read pages 503-512**. (not whole article)

Home Bound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries by Yen Espiritu

Class 9, 9/3: Sexuality and Queer Identities

"The Hypersexuality of Asian/American Women: Toward a Politically Productive Perversity on Screen and Scene" by Celine Shimizu. Pages 1-30.

Bau, I. - "Queer Asian American Immigrants: Opening Borders and Closets" in *Queer in Asian America*

Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America by David Eng (selections)

Film TBD

Class 10, 9/5: Asian American Interethnicity

Bitter Fruit by Claire Jean Kim (selections)

Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of Asian South America by Vivek Bald (selections)

Film: Color of Fear

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 visit www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu

Student Consent for Release of Student Information

I hereby authorize the UCSD Ethnic Studies Department 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: _____