

University of California, San Diego

ETHN 89
Freshman Seminar

**From a Despised to a Model Minority:
Portrayals of Asian American Masculinity and Femininity**

Professor Lisa Sun-Hee Park, Ph.D.

Spring 2005

Office: SSB 220

Office hours: T 3:30-5pm & TH 2-3:30pm

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Course Description

This course critically assesses visual representations of Asian American women and men in popular films in different historical periods. We will analyze the politics of particular portrayals of masculinity and femininity as Asian immigrants and Asian Americans were transformed from a despised to a model minority. In doing this, we will explore the role of Orientalism in Hollywood fiction in constructing current Asian American identity.

Course Requirements

This is an interactive seminar that requires critical engagement with the course materials. Your full attendance and active participation is a necessity. In order to pass this seminar, you must attend each class (unless you have an excused absence).

Response papers (5x, 1 page)	50%
Group presentation	30%
In-class exercises & Participation	20%

- Short response papers (1 page) on the assigned film are due at each class meeting.
- You are required to have watched the assigned film (in the library film reserves) on your own (or in groups) prior to the class.
- Students with disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss options with me during the first two weeks of class.
- It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor *in advance* of any scheduling conflicts. Due dates are only negotiable for emergencies and/or multiple exam scheduling as stated by university policy.

- An interactive classroom environment is an important part of my teaching-learning philosophy. Mutual respect, cooperation, and participation form the basis of this environment. By the very nature of the course topic, there will likely be a wide range of opinions, many of which may be rooted in your personal experiences. That is fine. A good classroom environment is supposed to stimulate you to think for yourselves and 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.

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

Suggested Readings

Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex, and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction by Gina Marchetti

The Deathly Embrace: Orientalism and Asian American Identity by Sheng-Mei Ma

Course Outline

All films (except *Better Luck Tomorrow*) is available on reserve in the library.

April 5	Introduction Films: <i>Picturing Oriental Girls</i> <i>American Sons</i>
April 12	Film: <i>Broken Blossoms</i> (1919)
April 19	Film: <i>The World of Suzie Wong</i> (1960)
April 26	Film: <i>Enter the Dragon</i> (1973)
May 3	Film: <i>The Wedding Banquet</i> (1993)
May 10	Film: <i>Better Luck Tomorrow</i> (2003)