

LTEN 181 / ETHN 124: ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Race, Gender, and Culture in Wartime

Winter 2005

MWF 10:00-10:50

CSB 005

Professor

3440 Literature Bldg, x43853

office hours: M 11:00-1:00, W 11:00-12:00

The internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II has figured as the paradigmatic example of Asian Americans in the twentieth century. In this course, we reassess the centrality of the internment as symbol and anomaly, by situating the event within wider international, national, and regional contexts before and after World War II. This includes the scope of U.S. interests in China, Japan, the Philippines, Korea and other Asian sites, the span of Asian immigration to and settlement in the western U.S., and the wartime relation of Japanese Americans to other Asian immigrants, and to other racial and ethnic groups working in west coast cities like Los Angeles. Our objective is to understand the different international, national, and regional landscapes as crucial contexts for the emergence of the many meanings surrounding “Asia” and “Asians” in the 20th century.

In this interdisciplinary course, we will read, interpret, and analyze a variety of materials, including literary fiction, plays, narrative histories, policy studies, newspapers, magazines, photographs, films, and other primary historical and social scientific materials.

Attendance of lectures is mandatory.

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the time of the lecture.

Students will write periodic response papers, with the topic distributed in class Friday and the 1- page response papers due the next Monday.

Course requirements:

Class attendance, response papers	20%
Midterm paper	40%
Final paper	40%

Required books for sale at Groundwork Books, and at SSSL Course Reserves:

John Okada, *No-no Boy* (U Washington)

Joy Kogawa, *Obasan* (Doubleday)

Hisaye Yamamoto, *Seventeen Syllables and Other Stories* (Rutgers UP)

Kim Ronyoung, *Clay Walls* (U Washington)

Chester Himes, *If He Hollers, Let Him Go* (Thunder's Mouth)

Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit* (Arte Publico)

Naomi Hirahara, *Summer of the Big Bachi* (Bantam Dell) (*not at SSSL*)

Required reader available at Cal Copy, 3251 Holiday Ct. #103, 452-9949, and on reserve at SSSL Course Reserves:

John Hersey and Ansel Adams, "A Mistake of Terrifically Horrible Proportions,"
from *Manzanar*
Ronald Takaki, from *Democracy and Race: Asian Americans and World War II*
W. W. Rostow, from *An American Policy in Asia*
Henry R. Luce, "The First Great American Century"
James Thomson, et al., from *Sentimental Imperialists: American Experience in East Asia*
T. Fujitani, "Go For Broke: Japanese American Soldiers in U.S. Military, National
and Racial Discourses," from *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*
Caroline Chung Simpson, "Introduction," Chapter 1, from *An Absent Presence:
Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture*
Lisa Yoneyama, "For Transformative Knowledge and Postnationalist Public Spheres:
The Smithsonian *Enola Gay* Controversy," from *Perilous Memories*
Grace Kyungwon Hong, "'Something Forgotten That Should Have Been Remembered':
Private Property and Cross-Racial Solidarity in Hisaye Yamamoto," *American
Literature* (June 1999)
Kelly Oliver and Benigno Trigo, "Introduction," *Noir Anxiety*
Anthony Macias, "Bringing Music to the People: Race, Urban Culture and Municipal
Politics in Postwar Los Angeles," *American Quarterly* (Sept 2004)
Chester Himes, "Zoot Riots Are Race Riots," from *Black on Black*
Luis Alvarez, "Of Pachucos, Hep Cats, and Social Horizons: Zoot Suits, Masculine
Bodies and the Politics of Dignity"
Robin D. G. Kelley, "Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics in
World War II," *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class*
Malcolm X, "Detroit Red," *Autobiography of Malcolm X*
Velina Hasu Houston, "Tea," *Unbroken Thread: Plays by Asian American Women*

Recommended books at Groundwork Books and at SSSL Course Reserves:

Caroline Chung Simpson, *An Absent Presence* (Duke UP)
Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals* (Oxford UP)
Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts* (Duke UP)
T. Fujitani, et al., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Duke UP)
Traise Yamamoto, *Masking Selves* (U California)
Kelly Oliver and Benigno Trigo, *Noir Anxiety* (U Minnesota)
"Los Angeles, the Future of Urban Cultures," *American Quarterly*, 56:3 (*not at SSSL)

Recommended films on reserve at the Film and Video Library, SSSL

"L.A. Confidential," Curtis Hanson
"Chinatown," Roman Polanski
"Devil in a Blue Dress," Carl Franklin
"Zoot Suit," Luis Valdez
"Malcolm X," Spike Lee

Schedule of Assignments and Lectures

Please make every effort to complete readings by assigned dates.

Week 1

- Jan 3 introduction
Jan 5 Hersey and Adams, *Manzanar* (reader)
Jan 7 Okada, *No-no Boy*; Takaki, *Democracy* (reader)

Week 2

- Jan 10 Okada, *No-no Boy*; Rostow, *American Policy in Asia* (reader);
Luce, "American Century" (reader)
1st response paper due
Jan 12 Okada, *No-no Boy*; Thomson, et al. *Sentimental* (reader)
Jan 14 Fujitani, "Go For Broke: Japanese American Soldiers" (reader);
Suggested further reading: Yu, Ch. 5, 6, in *Thinking Orientals*

Week 3

- Jan 17 *Martin Luther King holiday, no class
Jan 19 Kogawa, *Obasan*; Simpson, "Introduction," *Absent Presence* (reader);
Jan 21 Kogawa, *Obasan*; Yoneyama, "Enola Gay Controversy" (reader)

Week 4

- Jan 24 Yamamoto, "Death Rides the Rails to Poston,"
"Fire in Fontana" in *Seventeen Syllables*; Hong, "Something" (reader)
2nd response paper due
Jan 26 Yamamoto, "Legend of Miss Sasagawara," "Seventeen Syllables";
"Wilshire Bus," "The Brown House"
Jan 28 Yamamoto, "Yoneko's," "Epithalamium," "Las Vegas Charley"
Midterm paper topics distributed

Week 5

- Jan 31 Kim, *Clay Walls*
Feb 2 Kim, *Clay Walls*
Feb 4 Kim, *Clay Walls*; Macias, "Bringing Music" (reader)
Suggested further reading: Lowe, "Imagining Los Angeles in the
Production of Multiculturalism," in *Immigrant Acts*

Week 6

- Feb 7 "L.A. Confidential" (FVL reserve); Oliver/Trigo, *Noir Anxiety* (reader)
Feb 9 "Chinatown" (FVL reserve)
Suggested further reading: Oliver/Trigo, Ch. 7, in *Noir Anxiety*
Feb 11 "Devil in a Blue Dress" (FVL reserve)
Suggested further reading: Oliver/Trigo, Ch. 8, in *Noir Anxiety*
Midterm papers due

Week 7

- Feb 14 Valdez, *Zoot Suit*; Alvarez, "Of Pachucos" (reader);
Simpson, Ch. 1, *Absent Presence* (reader)
- Feb 16 Valdez, *Zoot Suit*; Kelley, "Riddle of the Zoot" (reader)
- Feb 18 Malcolm X, "Detroit Red," *Autobiography* (reader)
Suggested viewing: "Malcolm X," Spike Lee (FVL reserve)
Suggested further reading: Lipsitz, "'Frantic to Join the Japanese Army,'" in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*

Week 8

- Feb 21 *President's Day holiday, no class
- Feb 23 Himes, *If He Hollers, Let Him Go*
Suggested further reading: Sanchez, "What's Good for Boyle Heights" in *American Quarterly* (Sept 2004)
3rd response paper due
- Feb 25 *class canceled

Week 9

- Feb 28 Himes, *If He Hollers, Let Him Go*
- Mar 2 Houston, "Tea" (reader)
Suggested further reading: Simpson, Ch. 5, *Absent Presence*
- Mar 4 *class canceled

Week 10

- Mar 7 Hirahara, *Summer of the Big Bachi*;
Final paper topics distributed
- Mar 9 Hirahara, *Summer of the Big Bachi*
- Mar 11 conclusion
- Mar 15 Final papers due 4:00 pm, Literature Office