

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

UCSD Winter Quarter 2013

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 11:00 – 11:50 am, SEQUO 147

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Office hours: Wednesday noon – 2:00 pm, Friday noon – 1:00 pm at Peet's Coffee

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%

Class presentation assignment: 5%

Weekly Reflection Papers : 30%

Midterm (Monday, February 4): 20%

Final (due week 5): 25%

NOTE: You must complete all assignments, response papers and exams to pass this course. You are allowed a maximum of 3 absences 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 (wk 5)

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

The rest of your course readings will be available on E-Reserves at reserves.ucsd.edu. Password is ssc122

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Attendance in class is mandatory. If you have more than three 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. 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.

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 2-3 page reflection paper (12-pt Times New Roman font, double spaced, 1" margins) will be due on Fridays at the beginning of class. Each paper is worth 3% of your total grade. Late papers will receive a 1/3 grade deduction for each day they are late (weekend days count as one day each.)

MIDTERM: You will have an in-class midterm on Monday, February 4 (week 5)

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

Week 1: Introduction and Foundations—January 7 - 11

Monday: “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences” by Lisa Lowe, and “What Does It Mean to Be Asian American?” by Bill Ong Hing from *Major Problems in Asian American History: Documents and Essays*.

Wednesday: “The Centrality of Racism in Asian American History” by Ronald Takaki and “Rethinking the Centrality of Racism in Asian American History” by Sylvia Yanagisako from *Major Problems in Asian American History: Documents and Essays*.

Friday: “Birthright Citizenship and the Alien Citizen” by Mae Ngai

Week 2: Legacies of Racism and Cultural Representations – January 14 – 18

Orientalism by Robert Lee (selections: Preface, Introduction, Ch. 4, Ch. 5)

“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

Week 3: The Asian American Movement – January 21 - 25

Monday: No Class (Martin Luther King Day)

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)

Week 4: Model Minorities – January 28 – February 1

“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)

Week 5: MIDTERM, the Model Minority (continued) and Asian American Citizenship – February 4-8

Monday: MIDTERM

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.

Model minority film, TBD

Week 6: South Asians and Citizenship – February 11 - 15

The Karma of Brown Folk

Film: Ocean of Pearls

Week 7: Asian American Refugees—February 18 – 22

No Class Monday (President's Day)

"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)

Week 8: Asian American Transnationalism—February 11 -15

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

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

Week 9: Sexuality and Queer Identities – Week 7

Paur, J. - "Transnational Sexualities: South Asian (Trans)nation(alism)s and Queer Diasporas

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

Week 10: 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