

ETHNIC STUDIES 122

Asian American Culture and Identity

MWF 2:00-2:50PM

SOLIS 109

Office Hours: Friday 1PM

Email: liho@mail.ucsd.edu

Office Location: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course examines how Asian/Asian Americans have forged their identities through the site of culture to disrupt hegemonic representations of the Asian/Asian American community. This course will analyze a multitude of cultural texts such as: literature, film, music, performance, and various forms of social media to articulate how Asian/Americans have responded to the ways in which they have been racialized, gendered, sexualized, classed, and deemed as always already “foreign.” The objective of this course is to provide you with the tools to theorize and articulate how these cultural forms allow us to conceptualize the processes of identity formation amongst Asian/Asian Americans. In particular, this course explores how these processes have been constituted by the turbulent legacies of exploitation, exclusion, and war. The goal of this course is to underscore how culture works to materialize these histories of violence and envision alternative identifications that are rooted in ethical recognition and more importantly, empowerment. Consequently, this course is concerned with how culture and politics intersect to critique how state violence operates through marginalized bodies. This course will provide you with the theoretical frameworks to understand these intersections but also the analytical practices to identify them to create meaningful connections with other marginalized communities of color.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Participation + Attendance (10%): Your attendance is required **but** you are given two excused absences—no questions asked. If you miss more than two sessions, you will receive a 0 for attendance. When you do attend class, I expect you have to the readings completed and to thoughtfully engage with the assigned materials through discussion with your fellow classmates and me. Please treat each other with respect, I will ask you to leave the class if you are found to be disruptive and disrespectful.

Short Written Assignments (10%): You are required to turn in three two-page written assignments that analyzes one of the assigned reading of the week you turn it in. For example, if you write about a reading from Week 3, you have the entire Week 3 to turn in the assignment. Your assignment can address following:

- 1) What is the main argument?

- 2) How does the reading connect to another piece of reading based on course themes?
- 3) What theoretical framework is the text corresponding to?

***These are merely suggestions, not requirements.**

Project Proposal (10%): During Week 5 (FRIDAY) you must turn in your project proposal. Your proposal must be approved before starting your actual project. If you are doing a group project, you can turn in one proposal for the entire group but you must work on it together! I highly suggest that you consult me about your final project before turning in a proposal. I will discuss the requirements for a project proposal during Week 3.

Final Project (50%): You are required to turn in a final creative project for this course. You can do your final project on your own or participate in a group with no more than three people. You are required to turn in a five-page paper (if you are in a group, each member must turn in their own write-up) describing how your final project addresses course themes and topics.

Extra Credit: I will assign extra credit depending if there are any relevant events on campus or in San Diego.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

NO laptops, tablets, and/or phones are allowed during the duration of the class. Unless, there is a legitimate reason as to why you need use an electronic device to take notes—please let me know as soon as possible.

THEORIZE THIS: THEORIZING ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL PRODUCTIONS

WEEK ONE

“Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique” from *Immigrant Acts on Asian American Cultural Politics* (Lisa Lowe, 1996) available via TED

“Introduction” from *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Kandice Chuh, 2003) available via TED

“Introduction” from *Alien Encounters: Popular Culture in Asian America* (Mimi Thi Nguyen and Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, 2007) available via Electronic Copy @ UCSD Library

GOOD ENOUGH TO WORK BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO STAY: HISTORICAL LEGACIES OF EXCLUSION AND LABOR EXPLOITATION

WEEK TWO

“Introduction” and “Chapter 3. Exclusion Acts: Race, Class, Gender, and Citizenship in the Enforcement of the Exclusion Laws” from *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Erika Lee, 2003) available via TED

Steer Toward Rock (Fae Myenne Ng, 2008) available for purchase via UCSD Bookstore

MOMENTS OF CRISIS: IDENTITIES FORGED THROUGH EMERGENCY

WEEK THREE

MONDAY: NO CLASS (MLK HOLIDAY)

Among the Bboys (Christopher Woon, 2011) available via class showing

“The ‘We-Win-Even-When-We-Lose’” Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the ‘Fall of Saigon’” from *American Quarterly* (Yen Le Espiritu, 2006) available via TED

WEEK FOUR

Kelly Loves Tony (Spencer Nakasako, 1994) available via course reserves

Who's Going to Pay for These Donuts Anyways? (Janice Tanaka, 1992) available via course reserves

“Cultural Citizenship” from *Missing: Youth, Citizenship, and Empire after 9/11* (Sunaina Marr Maira, 2009) electronically available via UCSD Library

“In the Middle”: The Miseducation of a Refugee from *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization* (Victor Bascara, 2011) electronically available via UCSD Library

MODELING FOR MINORITIES: DECONSTRUCTING THE MODEL MINORITY PARADIGM

WEEK FIVE

a.k.a Don Bonus (Spencer Nakasako, 1995) available via course reserves

Better Luck Tomorrow (Justin Lin, 2002) available via course reserves

“Asian Americans in the Age of Neoliberalism Human Capital and Bad Choices in *a.k.a Don Bonus* (1993) and *Better Luck Tomorrow* (2002)” from *Black Orientalism and Asian Uplift from Pre-Emancipation to Neoliberal America* (Helen Heran Jun, 2011) available via TED

“The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans” from *Politics and Society* (Claire Jean Kim, 1999) available via TED

PERFORMING ASIAN/AMERICA

WEEK SIX

MONDAY—NO CLASS (EXTENDED OFFICE HOURS)

M. Butterfly (David Henry Hwang, 1998) available via UCSD Bookstore

“Everything Sunny All the Time Always” (*30 Rock*, 2011) available via class screening

“The Heat is On *Miss Saigon* Coalition: Organizing Across Race and Sexuality” from *Q & A: Queer in Asian America* (Yoko Yoshikawa, 1998) available via TED

“Despite What She Says, Margaret Cho’s Golden Globes Joke Was an Empty Caricature” from *Vulture* (E. Alex Jung, 2015) available via TED

FINDING HOME IN ASIAN/AMERICA

WEEK SEVEN

Fresh Off the Boat: A Memoir (Eddie Huang, 2013) available via UCSD Bookstore

“Boy II Man” from *Fresh Off the Boat* (2015) available via class showing

“A Love Song to YouTube: Celebrating and Fandom Online” from *Soundtracks of Asian America: Navigating Race through Musical Performance* (Grace Wang, 2014) electronically available via UCSD Library

“How It Feels to Be Viral Me: Affective Labor and Asian American YouTube Performance” from *WSQ: Women’s Studies Quarterly* (Christine Bacareza Balance, 2012) available via TED

WEEK EIGHT

MONDAY: NO CLASS (PRESIDENT’S HOLIDAY)

American Son: A Novel (Brian Ascalon Roley, 2001) available via UCSD Bookstore

“Ansari And Yang Explore The First-Generation Experience in ‘Master of None’” from *NPR* (2015) available via TED

“Parents” (*Master of None*, 2015) available class screening

#BLACKLIVESMATTER: COALITIONAL POLITICS OF ASIAN AMERICA

WEEK NINE

Excerpts from *Another University is Possible* (2010) available via TED

#blacklivesmatter available via blacklivesmatter.com

“Why Ferguson Should Matter to Asian Americans” from *Time* (2014) available via TED

WEEK TEN

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a college general education requirement. Often students have taken many ETHN courses 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, public policy, 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
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