

**Ethnic Studies 123**  
**ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICS**  
*Winter 2024 – MWF 5:00 – 5:50 PM*  
**(PODEM 1A22)**

Instructor: Ly Thi Hai Tran

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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What does it mean to be political? What are the contours of Asian American political consciousness and movement? This course is a critical investigation of how Asian Americans have politicized themselves and what conditions have led to this politicization. By examining the formation of Asian American identities and political organizations, their political strategies and cultural productions, the course clarifies the political developments that gave rise to the term “Asian America” in the 1960s, the complexities and pluralities of the contemporary Asian American experience, important “moments” in Asian American politics as well as Asian American political participation around contemporary issues such as immigration, multiracial coalitions, affirmative action, detention and deportation, environmental justice, and gentrification.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Readings and links will be available on Canvas.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance & Participation	15%
3 Response Papers	20%
Group Presentation & Facilitation	10%
Mid-term project	15%
Final Project Proposal	10%
Final Project	30%

## Attendance and Participation:

Throughout the course, we will work through themes/concepts, readings, and other materials as a group, therefore, your attendance and participation is key to understanding important issues in Asian American Politics. Participation will involve class discussions and other class activities.

It is recommended that you attend all class meetings, with the exception of four (4) excused absences. You will receive an “F” (Fail) grade in this class if you have more than 7 absences. However, if you have Covid symptoms or a positive Covid test, please contact me via email so that we can discuss how to deal with the situation. I expect every student to come to class with reading-task completed and questions in mind.

## Group Presentation & Class Facilitation:

After the first four weeks, students will work in pairs to be in charge of one class facilitation. The pairs will be assigned in Canvas. This assignment will allow you to *lead* the class to engage critically in the readings of that day. Each facilitation should not be longer than 30 minutes and will start at the beginning of the class. In your facilitation, you should briefly *summarize* the fundamental points, make critical *analyses*, ask questions, and *facilitate* the class discussion on the assigned reading/ screening materials of that day.

You will use PowerPoint or Prezi for your facilitation but feel free (and be creative) to use any other sources of material/visual aids, such as pictures, cultural objects, or a very short video (no more than 5 minutes), to illustrate your points. Facilitators will email me the link to your work via Google Slides or as an attachment 48 hours (2 days) before your facilitation begins. You can either submit to me a hard copy of your presentation that day (including the brief summary, the comments, and the questions) or send it to me via email. Your facilitation will be graded based on both your class performance and the quality of the materials.

## Critical Responses:

Critical responses are an important way for you to engage with the reading/ viewing material before coming to class. You will submit **THREE** reading responses (about 500 words) on Canvas **by midnight on Fridays**. You can choose any **3 weeks** among our 10 weeks to submit your critical responses. The response papers should not be a summary but rather a way for you to highlight the author’s main points and make connections across the readings in relation to the themes/concepts of the course. The response paper must account for at least two of the readings for that week.

Here are some recommended questions (not requirements) that you may take into consideration when writing the critical responses:

- 1) What are the main arguments made in the texts?
- 2) How do the texts connect to that week’s theme(s) and the course’s themes?
- 3) What theoretical framework(s) are the texts corresponding to?

### **Mid-term project:**

Students work individually or in pairs. You can choose your partner. Each group will design a political flier on a contemporary issue facing Asian Americans. To accompany the flier, design a fictional magazine article that covers the event/issue highlighted in the flier. Make it look like a real magazine article. You must include a photo, name of the article, author(s), column format, etc. The deadline for the Mid-term project is Sunday, Week 6 (2/18/2024). The flier can be used for your political campaign if your group chooses this option for your final project.

**Final Project Proposal:** Students will submit their final project proposal on Sunday, week 7 (2/25/2024). More information will be provided in week 5.

### **Final Project: Students can choose to do one of these two projects.**

1. **Political Campaign:** In groups of no more than three, you will create a plan for a campaign that promotes political engagement in the Asian American community. Your campaign will advocate some form of action, for instance, it may include: getting out the vote, establishing more an Asian American Studies major/minor programs at a universities, creating a political action committee, or developing a zine like *Gidra*. Each member of the groups will submit a paper (about 1500 words) describing the plan for the campaign. Students are required to bring into context at least three scholarly sources or readings that we have discussed in class. More information will be provided in week 5.
2. **Oral History Project:** During the course, students learn about how race, racialization, and the production of racial difference come to shape Asian American experiences and their relationships to American politics. For this project, students will work individually. Each student identifies 2 Asian American political leaders or community members to conduct oral history interviews with. After that, each student writes a paper (about 1500 words) discussing the following questions: (1) how can the narratives facilitate dialogue around issues of racial inequality and social change? (2) how can the narratives inform our thinking about the policies, practices, procedures, and systems that uphold racial difference? (3) What are specific ways in which these narratives can help Asian Americans build community power? Students are required to bring into context at least three scholarly sources or readings that we have discussed in class.
3. **Video Project:** In groups of no more than three, you will chooses an issue or topic depicted in the media that is being contested by Asian American communities. Then each group makes a short video/ film that involves interviewing members of Asian American communities in order to grasp and portray alternative perspectives on the topic at hand. Then each member of the group write a 1500-word reflection paper explaining the message conveyed through the video and what you learn about Asian American history/ culture/ politics after doing the project.
4. **Individual Research Project:** Write a research paper (about 1700-2000 words) on how Asian Americans are organized to solve a particular issue facing their communities. Discuss the issue, the political strategies that (an) Asian American/ immigrant

group(s) adopt, and the strengths & weaknesses/ limitations of their strategies. You may analyze their strategies by looking at the website(s) of (an) organization(s)/ (a) newspaper(s)/ (a) magazine(s)/ (a) reports/ TV news about the organization(s) and/ or interviewing the organization(s') leaders.

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

## **CLASS POLICY**

**Late assignments:** Assignments' deadlines are indicated on Canvas. Assignments will be deducted 1/2 of a letter grade for each day they are late.

**Technology:** NO laptops, tablets, and/or phones are allowed during the duration of the class. If 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.

**Class Conduct:** By the very nature of the course topic, there will likely be a wide range of opinions. A good classroom environment should stimulate you to think for yourself, 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. These ground rules are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community to which we are all expected to adhere (<http://www.vcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>). Abusive and harsh language, intimidation, and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism is a serious violation, whether intentional or inadvertent. All work submitted in this course must be your own and original. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. Plagiarism is when you use someone else's words without attribution; it includes using portions of a previously published work or website in a paper without citing the source, submitting a paper written for another course, submitting a paper written by someone else, and using the ideas of someone else without attribution. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please discuss them with your instructors or consult Charles Lipson's *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Students found guilty of plagiarism will be disciplined to the full extent of university policy and forwarded to the dean of their college. Students found cheating on an exam or quiz will receive a failing grade in the course and be reported to the dean of their college for disciplinary action. Each student is expected to be familiar with UCSD's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, available at <http://www.senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm#AP14>.

**Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability needing accommodations in this course, please inform me and bring a notification letter outlining your approved accommodations. I will make all reasonable efforts to assist you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or

terms of this syllabus, you must notify me in writing within one week of receipt of syllabus. You may also seek assistance or information from the Office for Students with Disabilities, 858-534-4382.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNED TEXTS

	Texts
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>DEFINING ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICS</b>
<b>M</b>	Introduction to the course
<b>W</b>	Keywords: “Politics” & “Identity” “Why Are Asian Americans Politically Invisible?” (Alex Wagner) <a href="https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/why-dont-asians-count/498893/">https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/09/why-dont-asians-count/498893/</a>
<b>F</b>	Who Studies the Asian American Movement?: A Historiographical Analysis (C. Fujino)
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>RACIALIZING ASIAN AMERICA</b>
<b>M</b>	Ronald Takaki (1989) <i>Strangers from a Different Shore</i> , “A Different Shore”
<b>W</b>	Omi and Winant (2015). <i>Racial Formation in the United States</i> , “The Theory of Racial Formation”
<b>F</b>	Claire Jean Kim (1999) “The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans,” in <i>Politics and Society</i>
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>BIRTH OF “ASIAN AMERICA”</b>
<b>M</b>	<i>Chains of Babylon: The Rise of Asian America</i> , “Black Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen: Constructing Asian American Identity through Performing Blackness”
<b>W</b>	<i>Chains of Babylon</i> : “Are We Not Also Asians?” Building Solidarity through Opposition to the Viet Nam War
<b>F</b>	Stella Habal (2016) <i>San Francisco’s International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement</i> “Manilatown, Manongs, and the Student Radicals”
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>RADICAL PASTS, RADICAL FUTURES?</b>
<b>M</b>	<i>Chains of Babylon</i> : “Performing Radical Culture...”

<b>W</b>	<p>“One Strike!” <i>San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-169: The Role of Asian American Students</i> (Karen Umemoto)</p>
<b>F</b>	<p>Lori Kido Lopez. <i>The Yellow Press: Asian American Radicalism and Conflict in Gidra</i></p> <p>Film (in-class): Tad Nakamura, <i>Yellow Brotherhood</i> (2003/17mins)</p>
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FACING ASIAN AMERICANS</b>
<b>M</b>	<p><i>Modeling for Minorities: The Racialization of Asian Americans in Higher Education</i></p> <p>“Students for Fair Admissions” Webpage at <a href="https://studentsforfairadmissions.org/">https://studentsforfairadmissions.org/</a></p> <p>“The ‘Whitening’ of Asian Americans” (Iris Kuo) at <a href="https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/08/the-whitening-of-asian-americans/563336/Links to an external site.">https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/08/the-whitening-of-asian-americans/563336/Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Michael Omi and Dana Takagi. "Situating Asian Americans in the Political Discourse on Affirmative Action"</p>
<b>W</b>	<p><i>The Highly In(visible): Undocumented and Deported in Asian America</i></p> <p>"Immigration, Incarceration, Deportation: Asian Americans in the Criminal Justice System" by Agnes Mung</p> <p>“Model (undocumented) minorities and ‘illegal’ immigrants: centering Asian Americans and US Carcerality in undocumented student discourse” (Tracy Lachia Buenavista)</p> <p><b>“41-year-old Adoptee Deported After 37 Years in the U.S. (HBO)”</b>  <b>at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORAGvfeGrqc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORAGvfeGrqc</a></b></p>
<b>F</b>	<p><i>Internment &amp; 9/11: The Political Power of Violence</i></p> <p>Victoria Bascara, “Cultural Politics of Redress: Reassessing the Meaning of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 After 9/11,” <i>Asian Law Journal</i> 10 (2003): 185-311</p> <p>Priya Rajalakshmi Chandrasekaran, “Unsettling ‘Indian American Hindus’ and Model Minority Projects in Trump-Era ‘America,’” <i>Berkeley Journal of Sociology</i> 61 (2017): 32-43</p>

<b>Week 6</b>	<b>CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FACING ASIAN AMERICANS (Cont.)</b>
<b>M</b>	<p><i>Anti-Asian Violence</i></p> <p>Scott Kurashige, “Beyond Random Acts of Hatred: Analyzing Urban Patterns of Anti-Asian Violence,” <i>Amerasia Journal</i> 26 (2000)</p> <p>Simeon Man, “Anti-Asian Violence and U.S. imperialism,” <i>Race &amp; Class</i> 62 (2020): 24-33</p>
<b>W</b>	<p><i>Labor Exploitation and Disposable Immigrant Bodies</i></p> <p>“We Make the Spring Rolls, They Make Their Own Rules: Filipina Domestic Worker’s Fight For Labor Rights in the New York City and Los Angeles”-Rotramel, Ariella</p>
<b>F</b>	<p><i>Topic: Environment Justice &amp; Gentrification</i></p> <p>Kartik Naram, “No Place Like Home: Racial Capitalism, Gentrification, and the Identity of Chinatown,” <i>Asian American Policy Review</i></p> <p><a href="https://aapr.hkspublications.org/2017/06/29/gentrification/Links to an external site.">https://aapr.hkspublications.org/2017/06/29/gentrification/Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Julie Sze, “Asian American Activism for Environmental Justice,” <i>Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice</i> 16 (2004)</p>
<b>Week 7</b>	<b><i>REPRESENTING: Formal Political Engagement of Asian/Asian Americans</i></b>
<b>M</b>	<p>1) <i>The Making of Asian America through Political Participation</i>, Pei-te Lien  Selection: Chapter 1, “Charting a Hidden Terrain: Historical Struggles for Inclusion and Justice Prior to the Era of Civil Rights and Electoral Politics”</p>
<b>W</b>	<p>Thomas Kim. <i>The Racial Logic of Politics: Asian Americans and Party Competition</i>. Chapter 3 &amp; 5</p>

<b>F</b>	Tran, Ly Thi Hai. ““Outsiders No More?’ The Discourse of Political Incorporation of Vietnamese Refugees in the United States (1975-2020).” <i>Journal of Asian American Studies</i> , vol. 23, no. 2, 2020, pp. 229-264.
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL POLITICS.</b>
<b>M</b>	Lisa Lowe (1998) “Work, Immigration, Gender: New Subjects of Cultural Politics” in <i>Journal of Asian American Studies</i>
<b>W</b>	Loan Dao (2019) “Refugee Representations: Southeast Asian American Youth, Hip Hop, and Immigrant Rights,” in <i>Amerasia Journal</i>
<b>F</b>	Sing Yin Khor (2016) “Say It With Noodles: On Learning to Speak the Language of Food” on <i>Catapult</i>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>WEDGE POLITICS AND CROSS-RACIAL SOLIDARITIES</b>
<b>M</b>	Claire Jean Kim, <i>Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City</i> (Yale University Press, 2000)
<b>W</b>	Tiffany Diane Tso (2018) “ <a href="#">Nail Salon Brawls and Boycotts: Unpacking the Black Asian Conflict in America Links to an external site.</a> ” <a href="https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/08/207533/red-apple-nails-brawl-black-asian-conflict">https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/08/207533/red-apple-nails-brawl-black-asian-conflict</a>
<b>F</b>	“Grassroots Leadership and Afro-Asian Solidarities: Yuri Kochiyama’s Humanizing Radicalism (Diane C. Fujino) Diane Wong (2021) “The Future Is Ours To Build: Asian American Counterstories for Black Liberation,” in <i>Politics, Groups, and Identities</i>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Conclusion/ Final Project Presentations</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>What Does it Mean to be Asian American @ UCSD?</b> <a href="#">Grace Lee Boggs Links to an external site.</a> & Scott Kurashige, <i>The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century</i> (University of California Press, 2012). Chapter: “We Are the Leaders We’ve Been Looking For”
<b>W</b>	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>



<b>F</b>	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>
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