

21h150j/ 21f043j.  
MIT  
HASS-D: Introduction to Asian American Studies:  
History, Literature & Culture

**Instructor: Anita Mannur**

**Course Description:**

**This is an interdisciplinary course that draws on literature, film, anthropology and cultural studies to examine the experiences of Asian Americans in US society. We will cover the first wave of Asian immigration in the 19th century, the rise of anti Asian movements, the experiences of Asian Americans during WW2, the emergence of the Asian American movement in the 1960's and the new wave of post-1965 Asian immigration. We will examine how these historical experiences have informed Asian American literature and culture. The course will address key societal issues such as racial stereotyping, media racism, affirmative action issues, the glass ceiling and the 'model minority' syndrome.**

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

**Cao, Lan. *Monkey Bridge***

**Chan, Sucheng. *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History***

**Espiritu, Yen Le. *Asian American Panethnicity***

**Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Interpreter of Maladies*.**

**Lee, Joann. *Asian Americans***

**Houston, Jeanne. *Farewell to Manzanar*.**

**Okada, John *No-no Boy***

**Srikanth, Rajini and Lavina Shankar. Eds. *A Part, Yet Apart*.**

**Zhou, Min and James Gatewood. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multi-Disciplinary Reader***

**Readings marked with (\*\*) will be provided to you.**

**GRADE:**

**Your grade is based on:**

**Paper 1: 10% (due Sept 28) 4-5 pages**

**Paper 2: 10% (due Oct 26) 5-6 pages**

**Paper 3: 25% (due Nov 30) 8-9 pages**

**Final Exam: 30% (3 hr, closed book)**

**Attendance and Participation: 25% Participating in classroom discussion is not optional. Just as it is important for you to develop good writing skills, it is also important to develop good oral communication skills. If you are shy or hesitant to talk in front of a large group, I strongly encourage you to talk to me and we can work on strategies to help you contribute more to class. Remember -- you can learn as much from each other as you can from your instructor. You will not be able to pass this part of the course if you never speak in class.**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1.**

Sept 7 (Th.) Introduction. Film in class -- *Ancestors in the Americas: Coolies, Sailors, Settlers*. Dir. Loni Ding.

### **WEEK 2.**

Sept 12 (Tu.) Asian American immigration history 1840's - 1930's (lecture)  
from Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans*. Ch 1 and Ch 2 (skim)

Sept 14 (Th.) Early Asian Americans.

Discussion of:

"From a Different Shore: Their History Bursts Forth with Telling"--Ron Takaki  
(Zhou and Gatewood)

"Where and When I Enter" -- Gary Okihiro (Zhou and Gatewood)

### **WEEK 3.**

Sept 19 (Tu.) "The Yellow Peril"

Discussion of stories by Bret Harte and Sui Sin Far. (\*\*)

Sept 21 (Th.): NO CLASS. Instructor at conference.

### **WEEK 4.**

Sept 26 (Tu.): Claiming Visibility: The Asian American Movement (lecture)

Discussion of:

"The Role of Asian American Students"--Karen Umemoto (Zhou and Gatewood)

"'The Four Prisons' and the Movement of Liberation: Asian American  
Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s"-- Glenn Omatsu (Zhou and Gatewood)

Sept 28 (Th.): Asian American Panethnicity (lecture)

Discussion of:

*Asian American Panethnicity* (Intro. only)

"Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences" -- Lisa Lowe (Zhou and Gatewood)

### **WEEK 5.**

Oct 3 (Tu.): Japanese American Internment. (Lecture)

Discussion of:

Film in class: *History and Memory*. Dir. Rea Tajiri

Oct 5 (Th.): Japanese Americans During World War Two.

Discussion of :

*Farewell to Manzanar*

*No No Boy* (1st chapter only)

### **WEEK 6.**

Oct 10 (Tu.): Holiday.

Oct 12 (Th.): No class. Instructor at conference.

### **WEEK 7.**

Oct 17 (Tu.): 1898 -- US imperialism in the Philippines. (Lecture)

Discussion of :

Film clip in class. *Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance*.

Oct 19 (Th.): "Post 1965" immigrants (lecture )

Discussion of :

"US Immigration Policies and Asian Migration"-- Paul Ong and John M. Liu (Zhou and Gatewood)

"Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian Americans"-- Rubén G. Rumbaut (Zhou and Gatewood)

### **WEEK 8.**

Oct 24 (Tu.): Southeast Asian Refugees in the US.

Discussion of :

*a.k.a. Don Bonus* (film in class)

Oct 26 (Th.): Between Generations: Vietnamese America Speaks.

Discussion of:

*Monkey Bridge*.

### **WEEK 9.**

Oct. 31 (Tu.): Between Generations: Vietnamese America Speaks.

Discussion of:

*Monkey Bridge*.

Nov 2 (Th.): South Asians in the Americas (lecture)

Discussion of :

Selected essays from *A Part, Yet Apart*.

### **WEEK 10.**

Nov 7 (Tu.): Indians in the South.

Discussion of films:

*Mississippi Masala*. Dir. Mira Nair

*Miss India Georgia*. Dir. S. Grimberg and D. Friedman

Nov 9 (Th.): South Asian American Experiences.

Discussion of :

*Interpreter of Maladies*.

### **WEEK 11.**

Nov 14 (Tu.): South Asian American Experiences

Discussion of:

*Interpreter of Maladies*.

Nov 16 (Th.): Youth Culture .

Discussion of :

"Identity Dub: The Paradoxes of an Indian American Subculture" -- Sunaina Maira (\*\*)

### **WEEK 12.**

Nov 21 (Tu.): Labor Issues for Asian American Communities.

Discussion of essays and film.

"Life and Work in the Inner-City" -- Paul Ong and Karen Umemoto (Zhou and Gatewood)

OR

"Work and Its Place in the Lives of Immigrant Women: Garment Workers in New York City's Chinatown" -- Min Zhou and Regina Nordquist (Zhou and Gatewood)

Film in class. *Taxi-Vala/ Auto-biography*. Dir. Vivek Renjen Bald.

Nov 23 (Th.): Holiday

### **WEEK 13.**

Nov 28 (Tu.): Korean American Small Businesses and Race Issues.

Discussion of essay and film:

"Striving for the American Dream: Struggle, Success, and Interethnic Conflict among Korean Immigrant Entrepreneurs" --Jennifer Lee (Zhou and Gatewood)

Film in class. *Sa-i-gu*. Dir. Dai Sil Kim-Gibson and Christine Choy.

Nov 30 (Th.): Hate Crimes and Anti-Asian Violence.

Discussion of essay and film:

"The Murder of Navroze Modey: Race, Violence, and the Search for Order" -- Deborah N. Misir(in Zhou and Gatewood )

Film: *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* Dir. Christine Choy.

### **WEEK 14.**

Dec. 5 (Tu.): The Model Minority Syndrome.

Discussion of :

"Asian Americans as the Model Minority: An Analysis of Popular Press Images in the 1960s and 1980s"  
-- Keith Osajima (in Zhou and Gatewood)

"The 'Model Minority' Deconstructed" -- Lucie Cheng and Philip Q. Yang (in Zhou and Gatewood)

Dec. 7 (Th.): Asian Americans and Multi-ethnic Identity.

Discussion of:

"What Must I Be? Asian Americans and the Question of Multiethnic Identity" -- Paul Spickard (in Zhou and Gatewood)

## **WEEK 15.**

Dec. 12: Brief Reports on final projects.

**PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU REQUIRE SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS.**