

**WOMENSST 392 / Fall 2019**  
***Asian American Feminisms***

Meeting Time and Place:	Mon 4-6:30pm / Elm 230 (in Honors College)
Instructor:	Miliann Kang
Office:	South College W469
Office Hours:	Mon 2:30-3:30 pm & by appointment
Email:	mkang@umass.edu

### **Course Description**

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How have the figures of the tiger mother, the Asian nerd, the rice king /queen, the trafficked woman, the geisha, the war bride, the Chinese bachelor, the hermaphrodite, and the orphan emerged to represent Asian Americans, and how have Asian American feminists responded to these problematic tropes? Is there a body of work that constitutes “Asian American feminism(s)” and what are its distinctive contributions to the fields of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (WGSS) and Ethnic Studies? How does this scholarship illuminate historical and contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race, class, nation, citizenship, migration, empire, war, neoliberalism and globalization? In exploring these questions, this course examines Asian American histories, bodies, identities, diasporic communities, representations, and politics through multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, including social science research, literature, popular representations, film, poetry and art.

The course is open to undergraduates (contact the professor if you have any questions about eligibility). The course will operate as a seminar based on in-depth reading and critique of texts, rigorous thinking, independent research and most importantly, informed discussion and active participation in building an intellectual community (in class and on-line). It fulfills the critical race feminisms or transnational feminisms requirement for WGSS undergraduate majors and minors. It also counts toward both the UMass Asian & Asian American Studies Certificate and the Five College APA Certificate (for the full list of courses see <http://www.umass.edu/asianasianamstudies/courses.html>).

### **Course Requirements**

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- Regular attendance and active, informed participation in the seminar is required. An attendance sheet will be circulated at the beginning of class.
- Reading assignments must be completed BEFORE the class period for which they are assigned.
- You will be asked to comment and give feedback to other students. Peer responses should be constructive and respectful. With this understanding of peer feedback, students should decide for themselves what topics they feel comfortable writing about and how they wish to explore these topics. It is the responsibility of everyone to foster as safe a space as possible for people to challenge themselves and take risks in their writing.

- We will follow all university policies on issues of Academic Honesty, Grading, Attendance, Examinations, and Absences due to Religious Observance.
- You are responsible for knowing when assignments are due and handing them in on time. Dates of major writing assignments are below.

## Summary of Assignments and Due Dates

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| • Attendance and Participation (Ongoing, in-class exercises)   | 20% |
| • Reflection Paper and Discussion of Readings (you sign up for two different weeks to respond (Post to Moodle by 6p on Sun the day before class) | 20% |
| • Peer Comments on Moodle  | 10% |
| • Community Engagement/Event Paper (attend approved event, analyze using course readings, discuss in class due one week after event)             | 10% |
| • Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography for Final Project (Due Nov 11 on Moodle):  | 10% |
| • Final Project: Analytical Paper OR Research Proposal (Due Dec 12)  | 20% |
| • and Class Presentation (Dec 2 or 9)  | 5%  |
| • Final Course Reflection (Due Dec 12)   | 5%  |

### ***Attendance, Class Participation and Moodle Posts*** **20%**

Attendance and participation in the seminar is required. You are expected to contribute to the discussion, and to support your colleagues in participating as well. You are also expected to participate actively on Moodle and respond with questions and comments to reflection papers (you must respond at least 5 times during the semester by noon Tues and you should save and turn in a hard copy of these posts in a single word document at the end of the semester). Because we only meet once a week, each class session is important and any unexcused absences will result in your grade being marked down. Three unexcused absences will result in an "F" in the course. For an excused absence you must: 1) provide documentation; 2) submit a 2-3 page additional reflection paper based on the readings and/or supplemental films/sources assigned for that week, due before class if you know in advance you will miss, or if not, due by the next class; and 3) complete any in-class exercises assigned for that class period, due at the beginning of the next class. If you know that for extenuating circumstances you will need to miss a class, please let me know in advance.

### ***Reflection Paper and Class Presentations*** **10% x 2 times** **20%**

You will sign up for two different dates to write a 2-3 double-spaced page reflection posted on Moodle by 6p Sun the day before class. Reflection papers should focus less on summary and more on interpretation and questions, but should be succinct and well-organized. Each paper should: 1) describe key concepts

and debates in that week's assigned readings (you do not have to discuss all the readings equally but should address themes that emerge across readings); 2) identify at least one argument or concept that you agree with/find compelling and at least one that you disagree with/find unconvincing; and 3) pose questions for further reflection and discussion. If you post a reflection paper after the deadline it will make it difficult for students to read and comment on before class, and you will be substantially marked down. Every week that you have posted a reflection, you should read responses to your paper before class and be prepared to dialogue with students who have commented. See below.

***Peer Comments***

***10%***

Whether or not you post a reflection paper that week, you should read all the reflection papers and come to class prepared to discuss them. In addition, you should post at least 5 comments over the course of the semester. Peer comments should be clear, respectful and constructive and refer specifically to points in the papers. It is fine to agree or disagree with others' arguments, but focus on intellectual debates and refrain from ad hominem attacks. Please keep a file of your comments over the semester and hand it in at the end of the semester.

***Event Paper***

***10%***

You will choose and attend an outside event related to the course material and write a short paper analyzing it by applying at last two assigned readings. On our Moodle site, events that are especially relevant to this class will be included in the calendar and the "Recommended Events for Events Paper Forum." You are free to post any relevant events or opportunities on the public forum after approving them with the professor.

***Prospectus for Final Project:***

***10%***

You will pick one of the two options for the Final Paper outlined below and you will provide an abstract, outline, bibliography and steps and schedule for completion. Your prospectus (3-4 double-spaced pages not including bibliography) should address the following questions: 1) What is your topic; 2) Why is it important for understanding Asian American feminist thought; and 3) How will you design and carry out your project? In addition, you will include an annotated bibliography (annotations explaining the importance of each text for your project).

***Final Project: 1) Analytical Paper OR 2) Research Proposal***

You will pick ONE of the following choices for the final project: (8-10 pages)

- 1) Analytical Paper - You will pick course readings (at least 5) and discuss key themes, connections, debates and disagreements.
- 2) Research Proposal – You will design a plan for researching an issue relevant to Asian American feminist thought. You will make the case for why this research project is important, how you would carry it out, and what original knowledge it would contribute.

***AND 2) Final Course Reflection*** Whichever option you pick, you will also write a final course reflection (2-3 double spaced pages) discussing at least three key learning moments in the course where the material or discussion most spoke to you, how they changed your thinking and how you plan to apply these insights.

## General Course Policies

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HARD COPIES of papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned deadlines. They should be printed in 12pt font, stapled, proofread and have proper citations and bibliography in APA format.

INCOMPLETES will not be given except in documented circumstances of health or family emergency.

LATE PAPER POLICY – late assignments will be marked down (10% for each day they are late). Deadlines for in-class or on-line exercises will be announced and assignments handed in more than 24 hours after the deadlines will not receive credit. Paper assignments will not be accepted after a week past the deadline.

RESPONDING TO EMAIL: I aim to respond to questions sent by email within 48 hours on weekdays. Please do not expect a response on the weekend. Please make use of office hours to ask questions in person. You can also use your colleagues and our TA Martha Balaguera as resources.

STUDENT COLLABORATION: I encourage you to exchange ideas and discuss course readings and assignments with each other. However, all written work must be your own and you must give appropriate credit to any relevant sources, properly cited using APA format.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Plagiarism will result in failing the class and will be referred to the Academic Honesty Board. Ignorance of academic honesty policies is not an excuse for violating them. Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University's official policy on academic honesty. Following is a summary (you can read it in full at: [http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/code\\_conduct/acad\\_honest.htm](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm))

*If an instructor finds that a student has violated the University's Academic Honesty Policy, the instructor has the right to lower the student's grade, or even to fail the student for the course. Students have the right to appeal such a grade penalty by an instructor. The University Academic Honesty Board, which must be notified by instructors of any grade penalty, reviews all student appeals. The Board may sustain or recommend modification of the penalty given by the faculty member, or may recommend sanctions exceeding those originally given, such as suspension or expulsion from the University. The Board may also recommend sanctions for offenders who have committed multiple violations of the Academic Honesty Policy but who have not appealed the faculty members' decisions. The Updated Student Academic Regulations can be read at: <http://www.umass.edu/registrar/media/academicregs.pdf>*

ACCOMMODATIONS: We are happy to work with you but please let me know as early as possible if you require accommodations due to illness or disability and make sure to coordinate with other university offices as necessary.

READINGS will be posted on Moodle. Please purchase the book *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics* (University of Washington Press, 2019). There is a link through Jstor but we will be using the book heavily so I recommend you order a copy if at all possible. <https://www-jstor-org.scolauthen.library.umass.edu/stable/j.ctvcwnmk1> It is also on reserve.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNED READINGS (as the course evolves, we will discuss and collectively make changes as appropriate. Updates will be emailed and posted on Moodle)

### Course Schedule

<i>Week &amp; Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>
Week 1 / Sept. 9	Course Overview and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics</i> (“AAF”) Introduction (Pp. 3-24)</li> <li>• Lynn Fujiwara And Shireen Roshanravan</li> <li>• Asian American Feminist Collective: Building an Asian American Feminist Movement <a href="https://www.asianamfeminism.org/resources">https://www.asianamfeminism.org/resources</a></li> </ul>
Week 2 / Sept. 16	Asian American Feminist Frameworks and Pedagogies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 1 Intersectionality and Incommensurability: Third World Feminism and Asian Decolonization (pp. 27-42) by Grace Kyungwon Hong</li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 2 Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Feminisms: Radicalism, Liberalism, and Invisibility (pp. 43-66) by Judy Tzu-Chun Wu</li> <li>• National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum <a href="https://www.napawf.org/our-work/content/organizingforproductivejusticeinnyc">https://www.napawf.org/our-work/content/organizingforproductivejusticeinnyc</a></li> </ul>
Week 3 / Sept. 23	Gendering and Sexualizing Asian American Immigration Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowe, L. “Work, Immigration, Gender”</li> <li>• Wu, J. “Was Mom Chung ‘A Sister Lesbian’? Asian American Gender Experimentation and Interracial Homoeroticism”</li> <li>• Parrenas, R and Winnie Tam. “The Derivative Status of Asian American Women” in Force of Domesticity</li> <li>• Yamada, M. “Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster”</li> </ul>
Week 4 / Sept. 30	Legacies of Wars, Colonialism and Imperialism in Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imada, A. Intro, <i>Aloha America</i></li> <li>• Cho, G. Chap 1, <i>Haunting the Korean Diaspora</i></li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 5 Decolonizing API: Centering Indigenous Pacific Islander Feminism (pp. 107-137) by Stephanie Nohelani Teves and Maile Arvin</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 7 Navigating Colonial Pitfalls: Race, Citizenship, and the Politics of “South Asian Canadian” Feminism (pp. 155-176) by Sunera Thobani</li> </ul>
Week 5 / Oct. 7	Orientalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Said, E. Excerpts, <i>Orientalism</i></li> <li>• Cheng, Anne. <i>Ornamentalisms</i>, Introduction</li> <li>• Uno, K. “Unlearning Orientalism: Locating Asian and Asian American Women in Family History”</li> <li>• “The Legacies of Orientalism and the Exoticizing of Women” <a href="http://hampshirefeministcollective.co.uk/2013/08/03/thelegacies-of-orientalism-and-the-exoticizing-of-women/">http://hampshirefeministcollective.co.uk/2013/08/03/thelegacies-of-orientalism-and-the-exoticizing-of-women/</a></li> </ul>
Week 6 / Oct. 15 (Tues)	Families, Intergenerational Relations and Identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pyke and Johnson, “Asian American Women and Racialized Femininities”</li> <li>• Eng, D. and Han, Shinhee. <i>Racial Melancholia, Racial Dissociation</i> Excerpts</li> <li>• Ninh, e. <i>Ingratitude: The Debt Bound Daughter in Asian American Literature</i> excerpts</li> </ul>
Week 7 / Oct. 21	Reproductive Politics in Asia and Asian America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fujiwara, L. Intro, <i>Mothers Without Citizenship</i></li> <li>• Kang, M. <i>Mother Other: Race and Reproductive Politics in Asian America</i></li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 10 Race, Reproductive Justice, and the Criminalization of Purvi Patel (pp. 218-238) by Priya Kandaswamy</li> </ul>
Week 8 / Oct. 28	Sexual Violence and Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cho, S. “Asian Pacific American Women and Racialized Sexual Harassment”</li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 3 Without Enhancements: Sexual Violence in the Everyday Lives of Asian American Women (pp. 69-81) by Erin Khuê Ninh</li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 4 Feminist and Queer Affiliation in Literature as a Blueprint For Filipinx Decolonization and Liberation (pp. 82-104) by Thomas Xavier Sarmiento</li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 9 Negotiating Legacies: The “Traffic in Women” and the Politics of Filipina/o American Feminist Solidarity (pp. 198-217) by Gina Velasco</li> </ul>

Week 9 / Nov. 4	Transnational Asian and Asian American Feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noh, E. “Problematics of Transnational Feminism for Asian American Women”</li> <li>• Manalansan, M. <i>Global Divas</i> excerpts</li> <li>• Kim, Hosu. 2015. “The Biopolitics of Transnational Adoption in South Korea Preemption and the Governance of Single Birthmothers.” <i>Body and Society</i> 21:1:58-89.</li> </ul>
Week 10 / Nov. 13 (Wed.)	Asian American Body Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kaw, E. “Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery.”</li> <li>• Lieu, N. “Remembering ‘the Nation’ through Pageantry”</li> <li>• Curington and Kang, “Contrasting Scientific Discourses of Skin Lightening in Domestic and Global Contexts”</li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 8 The Language Of Care: Hmong Refugee Activism and a Feminist Refugee Epistemology by (pp. 179-197) Ma Vang</li> </ul>
Week 11 / Nov. 18	Organizing Asian Americans Feminist Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 6 Becoming Restive: Orientations in Asian American Feminist Theory and Praxis (pp. 138-154) by Tamsin Kimoto</li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 11 Multiplicity, Women of Color Politics, and an Asian American Feminist Praxis (pp. 241-260) by Lynn Fujiwara</li> <li>• (AAF): Chapter 12 Weaponizing Our (In)Visibility: Asian American Feminist Ruptures of the Model-Minority Optic (pp. 261-282) by Shireen Roshanravan</li> </ul>
Week 12 / Dec. 2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Presentations</li> </ul>
Week 13 / Dec. 9	Final class meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Presentations</li> </ul>
Dec. 12	Final Papers due on Moodle	