



## WOST 295b: Asian American Women: The Body and Citizenship

Fall 2005

Instructor: Juliette Lee

Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2:30, Thursday 12-1 or by appointment.

Bartlett Hall 7B

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(h) 413-586-1346 (not after 10pm)

The Asian American woman's body, identity, and consciousness is a nexus where the forces of the nation, culture, ethnic Other, gender, and citizenship meet. From immigration narratives to stand up comedy routines, we will see how Asian American Women negotiate the contentious spaces between self and nation, history and the present, representation and creation.

### Goals:

1. To introduce you to Asian American Women writers, artists, researchers, and historical figures
2. To gain an introduction to the history and cultural forces that shape Asian American women
3. To learn and apply feminist critique by being able to identify gendered processes and pose critical questions
4. To gain a deeper understanding of yourself and your relationship with Asian American women in your own life
5. To develop written and verbal skills for developing ideas, exchanging them with others, and presenting them effectively to a broader audience

### Grading:

#### Class Responses (30%):

Over the course of the class, you will be asked to hand in *three 3-5 page class responses*. These should be considered *extended reflections* concerning the material of the class and how your ideas about Asian American Women have been affected. Some possibilities for these responses are to write them as letters or journal entries.

#### Group Presentation (20%):

This is an opportunity for your group (2-3 people) to present a problem in the construction of Asian American women to the class. Your group will choose either a figure from history, the news, entertainment, or literature to present with a corresponding analysis, or your group may

choose to present a larger trend that you see in the construction of Asian American Women. The presentation is an opportunity for you to synthesize the ideas from class and apply them. You may choose to bring in photos, movie clips, links to Websites, recordings of interviews, or whatever supplementary materials you feel are needed. You should hand in a list of sources along with an outline of your presentation.

### **Creative Project or Critical Paper (35%):**

I will provide many writing prompts and leads for more research over the course of the semester that you may use towards either a creative project or critical paper. If you embark on a creative project, expect to hand in approximately 15-20 pages of work. If you elect to do a critical paper, expect to hand in approximately 10 pages of work with a bibliography including at least 5 sources.

### **WebCT and Participation (15%):**

WebCT is an online discussion board and an opportunity for the class to continue exploring ideas beyond the realm of the classroom. Your participation and presence on WebCT is just as vital as your classroom presence. I will provide links to other resources and sites of interest that parallel the course. Likewise, many class discussions will be predicated on your having completed the readings and or participated in short writing prompts outside of class.

### **Academic Honesty**

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.

<<http://www.umass.edu/umhome/policies/honesty.html>>:

### *A Small Note on Late Papers and Absences:*

Please abide by the due dates listed. Contact me before hand if you have extenuating circumstances. You are allowed two "free" absences, but further absences will result in a penalty of half a letter grade per absence.

### **Required Texts:**

Kogawa, Joy *Obasan* (novel)

Le, Diem Thi Thuy *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* (novel)

Lee, Mary Paik *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (memoir)

Chai, May-Lee *Glamorous Asians*

<p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Several articles and readings are available as pdf's online at <a href="http://ereserves.library.umass.edu">ereserves.library.umass.edu</a> <b>The password for the course is wost295b.</b></p>
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## Class Schedule

### **1: Figuring Asian American Women: An Introduction**

Wed 9/7

### **2: Opening Asia / Excluding Asians**

A quick look at the history of AAW immigration into the United States and some of the images/stereotypes that emerged.

Mon 9/12 Read Yen Le Espiritu's article "Stretching Gender" on ereserves.

Wed 9/14

### **3: These New Shores: Immigration Narratives**

Discuss *Quiet Odyssey* by Mary Paik Lee

Mon 9/19

Wed 9/21

### **4: Anna May Wong and Asians in Hollywood**

Mon 9/26 John Yau's poem "Nobody Tries to Kiss Anna May Wong" and film clips

Wed 9/28 Watch "Flower Drum Song"

### **5: The New Asian American ala Hollywood**

Mon 10/3 Discuss "Flower Drum Song" and Anne Cheng's article "Beauty and Ideal Citizenship" on ereserves.

Wed 10/5

### **6: Hollywood Scripting the Japanese Internment**

*Obasan* by Joy Kogawa

Mon 10/10 HOLIDAY NO CLASS

Wed 10/12 MONDAY SCHEDULE Class Response 1 Due

### **7: Asian Americans Scripting the Japanese Internment**

Mon 10/17 Watch clips from "Snow Falling on Cedars" and "Come See the Paradise"

Wed 10/19

### **8: Creating/Creative Identity**

Mon 10/24 Summi Kaipa's *The Epics*

Wed 10/26 Read the Russell Ferguson's introduction to Nikki S. Lee's *Projects* on ereserves. Clips of Margaret Cho *I'm the One that I Want* reclaiming the self

**Thu 10/27 *Birth of a Nasian* performed by Kate Rigg at New World Theater  
Attendance is Mandatory**

### **9: Creating/Creative Identity 2**

Mon 10/31 Guest Speaker: Kate Rigg

Wed 11/2 Class responses discussion

**10: These New Shores: Immigration Narratives 2**

*The Gangster We're All Looking For* by Le Diem Thi Thuy

Mon 11/7 Class Response 2 Due

Wed 11/9

**11: These New Shores: Immigration Narratives 2**

Mon 11/14 FRIDAY SCHEDULE NO CLASS

Wed 11/16 Guest Speaker Thuy Le

**12: These New Shores: Immigration Narratives and the Individual Experience**

Mon 11/21 Poetry by Wang Ping and Myung Mi Kim

Wed 11/23 Excerpts from *The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers* by Bhanu Kapil  
Rider on reserves.

**13: The Family 2**

Mon 11/28 *The Interpreter of Maladies* Jhumpa Lahiri

Wed 11/30

**14: The Family 2**

May-Lee Chai's *Glamouros Asians*

Mon 12/5

Wed 12/7

**15: Project Presentations**

Mon 12/12

Wed 12/14

**MONDAY 12/19<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Papers and Class Response 3 Due by 5pm**

**Women's Studies Office**

**208 Bartlett Hall**

Please leave an 8x11 envelope with your address so I can return these projects to you.