INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES
AAS 1100
SPRING 2009
TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 11:40 – 12:55

PROFESSOR: RYAN CANLAS
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ROCKEFELLER 427
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary course will examine the multifaceted experiences of people of Asian and Pacific Island descent in the United States. Some of the major themes we will explore are: 1) the historical and contemporary manifestations of the social and political category of the “Asian American;” 2) the inter-and cross-ethnic conflicts and solidarities that have marked the history of Asian American social and political struggle; 3) the role of cultural politics and representation in Asian Americans’ attempts to create an identity; and 4) the relationship between histories of Asian American racial formation and contemporary forms of racism, sexism, discrimination, and the activism and efforts of communities of Asian Americans to resist forms of social and political inequality and create spaces of social justice and peace.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance and participation (20%). Attendance is mandatory. Students are required to do the assigned readings and formulate two questions on the basis of the readings for each class. Students will be called upon at random to express their views or pose their questions on the assigned subjects for a particular week. Students may be asked to attend a lecture by a guest speaker in place of a class period. In these cases, attendance at the lecture is mandatory unless there is an unavoidable scheduling conflict. Missing more than 4 classes will result in the forfeiture of the 20% class credit for class participation.

Group project and presentation (25%). Each student will be part of a 6 – 8 person team (depending on class size) that will be responsible for choosing a topic pertaining to the course to research and present to the class at the end of the semester. Although some class time may be provided for group discussion, students are required to conduct meetings outside of class as well.

Prelim Examination (25%). An in-class exam on materials from the beginning of the semester until March 10.

Final essay (30%). A take-home final consisting of a 7 - 10 page essay that addresses issues raised in class discussion, readings, and lectures. Students will have a choice of questions to answer and will have one week to complete the assignment.

*All due dates are final. Late papers will not be graded, and students will receive a zero.

*Students are expected to abide by Cornell University’s Code of Academic Integrity. Violation of the Code will result in a failing grade. A copy of the code can be found at the following URL: http://cuiMo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html.
REQUIRED TEXTS*

— Jean Yu-wen Shen Wu and Min Song, eds. Asian American Studies: A Reader (Rutgers UP, 2000).

*All texts are available at the Campus Store and on reserve at Uris.

COURSE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22
Course Introduction

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27
—“Legal Chronology of Asian American History” from Wu and Song (xxv – xxviii).

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

*All handouts are also available in their original versions (either as anthologized essays or book chapters) at Uris.


TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3
— Paul Gilroy. “Introduction” (1 – 8); “Modernity and Infrahumanity” (54 – 96)
— Epifanio San Juan, Jr. “Ethnicity and the Political Economy of Difference” from Racism and Cultural Studies: Critiques of Multiculturalist Ideology and the Politics of Difference (handout; also available as a Networked Resource through the Cornell Library website).

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10**
—Masao Miyoshi. “A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State” from Wu and Song (209 – 232).
—Gary Okihiro. “Where and When I Enter” from Wu and Song (4 – 20).

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12**
—Robert Chang. “Why We Need a Critical Asian American Legal Studies” from Wu and Song (363 – 378).
—Paul Gilroy. “‘Race,’ Cosmopolitanism, and Catastrophe” (279 – 326).
**Optional: Leti Volpp. “(Mis)Identifying Culture: Asian Women and the ‘Cultural Defense’” from Wu and Song (391 – 496).**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17**
—Epifanio San Juan, Jr. “Questioning Contemporary Cultural Studies” from *Racism and Cultural Studies* (handout).

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19**
—in-class music: Jin (*The Rest is History*); Blue Scholars (*Blue Scholars, The Long March, Bayani*); Sons of Rebellion (*Freedom Reborn*); Native Guns (*Barrel Men*)
—Paul Gilroy. “‘All About the Benjamins’: Multicultural Blackness—Corporate, Commercial, and Oppositional” (241 – 278).
—Thien-bao Thuc Phi. “Yellow Lines: Asian Americans and Hip Hop” from *AfroAsia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans*, eds. Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen (handout; also available as a Networked Resource through the Cornell Library website).

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**
—in-class screening: *Better Luck Tomorrow*, cont’d.
—Min Zhou. “Coming of Age at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century: A Demographic Profile of Asian American Youth” from Zhou and Lee (33 – 50).
Tuesday, March 3

Thursday, March 5
—In-class screening: Mississippi Masala (dir. Mira Nair).

Tuesday, March 10
—In-class screening: Mississippi Masala, cont’d.

Thursday, March 12
**IN-CLASS PRELIM**

Spring Break 3/14 - 3/22

Tuesday, March 24

Thursday, March 26
—Susan Koshy. “The Fiction of Asian American Literature” from Wu and Song (467 – 496).
—Sunaina Maira. “Racial Profiling’ in the War on Terror: Cultural Citizenship and South Asian Muslim Youth in the United States” from Zhou and Gatewood (handout).

Tuesday, March 31

Thursday, April 2
—Sandhya Shukla. “Histories and Nations” from India Abroad: Diasporic Cultures of Postwar America and England (handout).

Tuesday, April 7

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 14**
—Paul Gilroy. “‘Third Stone from the Sun:’ Planetary Humanism and Strategic Universalism” from *Against Race* (327 – 356).

**THURSDAY, APRIL 16**
—Pheng Cheah. “Given Culture: Rethinking Cosmopolitical Freedom in Transnationalism” from *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (handout).

**TUESDAY, APRIL 21**
—Neferti Xina M. Tadiar. “Sexual Economies” from *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order* (handout).

**THURSDAY, APRIL 23**
Group Presentations

**TUESDAY, APRIL 28**
Group Presentations

**THURSDAY, APRIL 30**
Group Presentations / Semester Wrap-up

**FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE MAY 7 BY 4:30PM AT MY OFFICE (ROCKEFELLER 427)**