

**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\*

- Paul Gilroy. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (4<sup>th</sup> ed. Harvard UP, 2001).
- Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou, eds. *Asian American Youth: Culture, Identity, Ethnicity* (Routledge, 2004).
- Jean Yu-wen Shen Wu and Min Song, eds. *Asian American Studies: A Reader* (Rutgers UP, 2000).
- Salman Rushdie. *Shalimar the Clown* (Random House, 2006).

\*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).
- Glenn Omatsu. “‘The Four Prisons’ and the Movements of Liberation: Asian American Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s” from *Asian American Studies: A Reader*, eds. Jean Yu-wen Shen Wu and Min Song (164 – 196).
- Michael Omi and Howard Winant. “On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race” from Wu and Song (199 – 208).

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

- Robert G. Lee. “The Cold War Construction of the Model Minority Myth” from Zhou and Gatewood (handout).
- Lisa Lowe. “Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique,” from *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (handout).
- Karen Umemoto. “‘On Strike!’: San Francisco State College Strike, 1968 – 1969: The Role of Asian American Students” from *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*, eds. Zhou and Gatewood (handout).\*

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

**\*\*Optional: Lisa Lowe. “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences” from Wu and Song (423 – 442).**

### 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

- Paul Gilroy. “Identity, Belonging, and the Critique of Pure Sameness” (97 – 133).
- Immanuel Wallerstein. “The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity” from *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (handout)

**\*\*Optional: Paul Gilroy. “The Crisis of ‘Race’ and Raciology” (11 – 53).**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10**

—Colleen Lye. “Meat Versus Rice: Frank Norris, Jack London, and the Critique of Monopoly Capitalism” from *America’s Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893 – 1945* (handout).

—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).

—Neil Gotanda. “Multiculturalism and Racial Stratification” from Wu and Song (379 – 390).

—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).

—Sabeen Sandhu. “Instant Karma: The Commercialization of Asian Indian Culture” from Zhou and Lee (131 – 142).

—Paul Gilroy. “Hitler Wore Khakis: Icons, Propaganda, and Aesthetic Politics” (137 – 176).

—Lisa Lowe. “Work, Immigration, Gender: New Subjects of Cultural Politics” from *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. By Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (handout; also available as a Networked Resource through the Cornell Library website).

**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).

—Lakandiwa M. de Leon. “Filipinotown and the DJ Scene: Cultural Expression and Identity Affirmation of Filipino American Youth in Los Angeles” from Zhou and Lee (191 – 206).

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

—In-class screening: *Better Luck Tomorrow* (dir. Justin Lin).

—Nancy Wang Yuen. “Performing Race, Negotiating Identity: Asian American Professional Actors in Hollywood,” from Zhou and Lee (251 – 268).

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

—In-class screening: *Better Luck Tomorrow*, cont’d.

—Min Zhou and Jennifer Lee. “Introduction: The Making of Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity among Asian American Youth” from *Asian American Youth: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity*, Min Zhou and Jennifer Lee, eds. (1 – 32).

—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**

—Victoria Namkung. “Reinventing the Wheel: Import Car Racing in Southern California” from Zhou and Lee (159 – 176).

—Shirley Jennifer Lim. “Hells’ a Poppin’: Asian American Women’s Youth Consumer Culture” from Zhou and Lee (101 – 112).

**THURSDAY, MARCH 5**

—In-class screening: *Mississippi Masala* (dir. Mira Nair).

—Prema Kurien. “To Be or Not To Be South Asian: “Contemporary Indian American Politics” from *Journal of Asian American Studies*, October 2003: 261 – 288 (handout).

**TUESDAY, MARCH 10**

—In-class screening: *Mississippi Masala*, cont’d.

—Kamala Vishweswaran and Ali Mir. “On the Politics of Community in South-Asian American Studies” from *Amerasia Journal* 25:3 (1999/2000): 97 – 108 (handout).

**THURSDAY, MARCH 12**

**\*\*IN-CLASS PRELIM**

**SPRING BREAK 3/14 - 3/22****TUESDAY, MARCH 24**

—Colleen Lye. “The End of Asian Exclusion? The Specter of ‘Cheap Farmers’ and Alien Land Law Fiction” and “A New Deal for Asians: John Steinbeck, Carey McWilliams, and the Liberalism of Japanese-American Internment” from *America’s Asia* (handout).

—Yen Le Espiritu. “Changing Lives: World War II and the Postwar Years” from Wu and Song (141 – 157).

**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).

—Jasbir Puar and Amit S. Rai. “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots,” in *Social Text* 72, October 2003 (261 – 288).

**TUESDAY, MARCH 31**

—Salman Rushdie. *Shalimar the Clown* (3 – 133).

**THURSDAY, APRIL 2**

—Salman Rushdie. *Shalimar the Clown* (137 – 213).

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

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7**

—Salman Rushdie. *Shalimar the Clown* (217 – 309).

—Inderpal Grewal. “Becoming American: The Novel and the Diaspora” from *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (handout; also available as a Networked Resource through the Cornell Library website).

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9**

—Salman Rushdie. *Shalimar the Clown* (311 – 398).

—Michael Carr. Selections from *The Infernal Machine: A History of Terrorism, From the Assassination of Tsar Alexander II to Al-Qaeda* (handout).

**TUESDAY, APRIL 14**

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

—Inderpal Grewal. “Transnational America: Race and Gender After 9/11” from *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (handout).

**THURSDAY, APRIL 16**

—Kwame Anthony Appiah. “Cosmopolitan Patriots” from *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (handout).

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

**TUESDAY, APRIL 21**

—Pheng Cheah. “Posit(ioning) Human Rights in the Current Global Conjuncture” from *Inhuman Conditions: Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights* (handout).

—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)**