

“It’s all Chinese to me”
Asian American Studies/English 2910
Spring 2017 T/R 11:40-12:55
156 Goldwin Smith Hall (4 credits)

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Office hours: F 12-2pm
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In her memoir *Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston identified a conundrum familiar to many US-born children of Chinese immigrants when she asked: “What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies?” What is “Chinese tradition”? Does it mean the same thing to people in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, or to Chinese diasporic communities in North America? Does “Chineseness” change across time and space? While there will be occasion to discuss what “Chineseness” means in different Asian contexts, this course will focus primarily on how ideas of “China” and “Chineseness” have been historically constructed by, for, and in the West—particularly in the US. Course materials include Chinese American literature, as well as films, photographs, and historical and sociological studies of East/West relations.

READINGS:

Required texts:

Frank Chin, *The Chickencoop Chinaman and The Year of the Dragon*
Celeste Ng, *Everything I Never Told You*
Marilyn Chin, *Revenge of the Mooncake Vixen*
Fae Myenne Ng, *Bone*
David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly*
Madeline Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*
Maxine Hong Kingston, *Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*
Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change* (excerpts on Blackboard)
Andrea Louie, *Chineseness across Borders: Renegotiating Chinese Identities in China and the United States* (excerpts) (Available as ebook through Cornell Library)

Recommended texts:

Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940, ed. Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, Judy Yung.
Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People* (excerpts)
Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader, ed. Shu-Mei Shih, Chien-hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards
Sinographies: Writing China, ed. Eric Hayot, Haun Saussy, and Steven G. Yao (Available as ebook through Cornell Library)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course will be conducted as a seminar in which collaborative intellectual engagement and sustained dialogue will be the order of the day.

- regular and punctual attendance and completion of assigned readings by the date we begin our discussion of a given text
- active participation in class discussion
- class presentations
- All of the above in-class work (20%)
- two 5-6 page essays (50%)
- one 6-8 page essay (30%)

Plagiarism:

All the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content, with contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with Cornell's Academic Integrity Code, distributed to students in the Policy Notebook and available on-line at <http://www.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. The code, together with a guide to Acknowledging the Work of Others, can be downloaded from <http://www.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/docs/main.html>. In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the code is an "F" for the term.

SYLLABUS (provisional)

Week 1 – January

26 TH – Introduction

Week 2 – January/February

31 TU – Gungwu Wang, "Chineseness: The Dilemmas of Place and Practice"; Andrea Louie, "When You Are Related to the 'Other': (Re)locating the Chinese Homeland in Asian American Politics through Cultural Tourism"

02 TH – Ien Ang, "On Not Speaking Chinese: diasporic identifications and postmodern ethnicity"

Week 3 – February

07 TU – R. Radhakrishnan, "Is the Ethnic 'Authentic' in the Diaspora?"; watch documentary "Miss Chinatown, USA"

09 TH – Ling-chi Wang, "Roots and Changing Identity of the Chinese in the United States"; continue with discussion of previous readings and screening

Week 4 – February

14 TU – Frank Chin, "The Year of the Dragon"

16 TH – Frank Chin, "The Year of the Dragon"