

Asian American Women's History
History 3470/AAS 3470/FGSS 3470/AMST 3510
Spring 2010
MW 2:55-4:10
White Hall 110

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Office Hrs: T 2:30-3:30 (454 McGraw) &
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This course examines the experiences and representations of Asian American women from the mid-19th century to the present. It explores the lives and contexts of immigrant women and of women born in the U.S. Questions of identity and power are at the heart of this course as we investigate the intertwined nature of race, gender, and nation. We will also pay particular attention to the practice of history, seeking a better understanding of how scholars recover the history of a population rendered invisible by traditional methods and inquiries. Course materials include numerous primary sources in addition to scholarship from a variety of disciplines (history, literature, sociology, anthropology).

Required Texts

(Available at the Cornell Bookstore)

- Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Doctor Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: The Life of a Wartime Celebrity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). ISBN: 0520241436.
- Ji-Yeon Yuh, Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America (New York: New York University Press, 2004). ISBN: 0814796990.
- Catherine Ceniza Choy, Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003). ISBN: 082233089X.
- Shirley Hune and Gail Nomura, eds. Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology (New York: New York University Press, 2003). ISBN: 0814736335.
- Judy Yung, Unbound Voices: A Documentary History of Chinese Women in San Francisco (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). ISBN: 0520218604.
- Yuri Kochiyama, Passing It On (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2004). ISBN: 0934052379.
- Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory (Boston: South End Press, 2001). ISBN: 0896086380.
- Monisha Das Gupta, Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). ISBN: 082233898X.

Reserved Readings

Reserved readings are available electronically on the course's Blackboard site. Access is restricted to registered students in the class. You can access Blackboard at <http://www.blackboard.cornell.edu/>

Assignments

- (1) In-class discussion: Participation is a crucial part of this course (and your grade). Come to class prepared to take part in discussion. Attendance is required. If you miss more than two classes, you will begin to lose credit. Please contact me beforehand, if at all possible, if you cannot attend class. (30%)
- (2) Readings for each week are due on Tuesday every week. You should be prepared to discuss each assignment on Tuesday. See above.
- (3) Questions for Class Discussion. Each student will be asked to submit at least three (3) discussion questions to a Blackboard discussion board by Sunday at 4:00 p.m. the day before the first class of the week. The questions should be broad and designed to encourage conversation and/or debate. Failure to submit more than 3 sets of questions will result in the forfeiture of the entire 15% credit for this requirement. (15%)
- (4) Reading Responses: Each student is required to write three (3) reading response papers on weekly reading assignments. The papers should be **no more than 3 pages** in length. These papers are your chance to reflect on the main arguments of each reading, to record your reaction, to raise questions that will be useful for discussion, and to link a weekly assignment to the larger themes of the course or to other assignments. **Papers are due on the Tuesday of the week during which the readings will be discussed.** (5% each = 15%)
- (5) Final paper or project. This assignment should examine the experiences of Asian American women. There are many possibilities for this assignment. This final project may be a paper (7-9) pages that allows you to do more in-depth research into a particular group or to compare two groups by focusing on a particular theme (sexuality, marriage, immigration). You might conduct oral history interviews and compare those to the broader themes of the course. You may choose to pull together primary documents, visual artifacts, etc., with commentary, for a presentation or collection or exhibit. Please consult me about your topic before beginning research. **Papers are due in class on May 5th.** (40%)

For all assignments, students are required to abide by Cornell University's Code of Academic Integrity. A copy of the code can be found at the following URL: <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity, especially plagiarism, may result in a failing grade in the course. Students are urged to read and complete the exercises on "Recognizing and Avoiding Plagiarism" at <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Asian American Women at the Center

1/25 Introduction to the Course: Why Asian American Women's History

1/27 Discussion: Centering Asian American Women

Week 2: Useful Concepts & Big Ideas

Read: Sucheta Mazumdar, "General Introduction: A Woman-Centered Perspective on Asian American History," in Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings By and About Asian American Women (1989) **RESERVE**

Joan M. Jensen, "Women on the Pacific Rim: Some Thoughts on Border Crossings," Pacific Historical Review 67:1 (Feb. 1998). <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0030-8684%28199802%2967%3A1%3C3%3AWOTPRS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "'Loveliest Daughter of Our Ancient Cathay!': Representations of Ethnic and Gender Identity in the Miss Chinatown U.S.A. Beauty Pageant," Journal of Social History 31:1 (September 1991).
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=2&sid=1&srchmode=3&vinst=PROD&fmt=6&startpage=-1&clientid=8424&vname=PQD&RQT=309&did=14482127&scaling=FULL&ts=1169051279&vtype=PQD&aid=1&rqt=309&TS=1169051286&clientId=8424>

2/1 Lecture/Discussion: Immigration & Trans-Pacific Lives

2/3 Lecture/Discussion: Orientalism

Week 3: From the Documents Up

Read: Judy Yung, Unbound Voices, Parts I & II

2/8 Discussion: From the Documents Up

2/10 In-Class Project: Reconstructing Lives

Week 4: Narratives & Histories I

Read: Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Doctor Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards, pp. 1-118

2/15 Lecture/Discussion: Finding Space

2/17 Lecture/Discussion: Identity Formation

Week 5: Narratives & Histories II

Read: Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Doctor Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards, pp. 119-196

2/22 Lecture/Discussion: Politics

2/24 Lecture/Discussion: Who Matters?

Week 6: Lives I

Read: Shirley Hune & Gail M. Nomura, Asian/Pacific Islander American Women, Parts II & IV

Yung, Unbound Voices, Part III

3/1 Lecture/Discussion: Boundaries & Constraints

3/3 Lecture/Discussion: Possibilities & Agency

Week 7: Lives II

Read: Yung, Unbound Voices, Parts IV & V

3/8 Lecture/Discussion: Separate Spheres?

3/10 Lecture/Discussion: The Personal & the Political

Week 8: At War

Read: Yung, Unbound Feet, Part VI

3/15 Lecture/Discussion: War & Progress?

3/17 **No Class:** Required Lecture by Thuy Tu on Thursday, March 18th, at 4:30, location to be determined

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Narratives & Histories III

Read: Ji-Yeon Yuh, Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America

3/29 Lecture/Discussion: War, Migration, Family

3/31 Film: First Person Plural

Week 10: Lives III

Read: Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, Sweatshop Warriors

4/5 Lecture/Discussion: Globalization, Labor, Migration

4/7 Lecture/Discussion: Activism & Gender

Week 11: Lives IV

Read: Catherine Ceniza Choy, Empire of Care

4/12 Lecture/Discussion: Colonialism & Transpacific Lives

4/14 **No Class:** Required Lecture by Lisa Hall, Thurs., April 15th, at 4:30, location to be determined

Week 12: Narratives & Histories IV

Read: Yuri Kochiyama, Passing It On

4/19 Lecture/Discussion: Colonialism & Indigenous Women

4/21 Lecture/Discussion: Activism & Gender, Redux

Week 13: Lives V

Read: Monisha Das Gupta, Unruly Immigrants

4/26 Lecture/Discussion: Class, Gender, and Activism

4/28 Lecture/Discussion: Community?

Week 14: Reconstructing the Past

Read: Hune & Nomura, Asian/Pacific Islander American Women, Introduction, Part I, & Chapter 8

Shirley Hune, "Doing Gender with a Feminist Gaze: Toward a Historical Reconstruction of Asian America," in Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader (2000)
RESERVE

5/3 Discussion: Reframing Asian American Women's History

5/5 Discussion: Reframing History