For the lives of many Filipinos living in the U.S., the Philippines plays a significant role: it is “home.” But what does it mean for many of these Filipinos to call a country in which many of them have never lived, especially those who are second and third generation, the “homeland”? What kind of identification takes place when this form of ethnic and cultural belonging is invoked as the basis for what is essentially a diasporic claim to, for lack of a better term, a sense of authentic or essential sense of community? This question becomes even more problematic when the issue of ethnic and cultural identity begins to articulate a political subjectivity as its inevitable and inescapable counterpart.

This course will investigate the interplay between ethnicity, race, nation, and diaspora as they are expressed, critiqued, reevaluated, and endorsed by a number of cultural workers and intellectuals who identify as Filipino and/or Filipino American. One particular problem we will concern ourselves with is this: the subjective and ontological foundations that unite the Filipino diaspora to the Philippines, that anchor the former to the latter. What are the fundamental characteristics and criteria through which Filipinos can be said to globally self-identify as Filipino, those ethnic, cultural, and even political attributes that Filipinos employ so as to define themselves as such, regardless of where they happen to live? This may at first seem like a simple enough issue, but if one considers that the Philippines is comprised of hundreds of ethnolinguistic groups, many of whom do not understand each other (not to mention the century-long attempts by the Moro populations in the predominantly Muslim regions of the south to establish their own autonomous state) the notion of a singular nation through which the Filipino diaspora acquires its identity becomes very complicated. What kinds of assumptions does one make when even invoking “the Philippines” as a stable, unified basis for one’s identity? What does it mean to “be” Filipino? What does it mean to “be” Filipino in the U.S.?

Through a number of writings (and to a limited extent photographs, drawings, paintings, and films), we will ask these questions and attempt to grapple with the social, cultural, and political ramifications of the kinds of diasporic subjectivities expressed in these texts and cultural productions. Do they present new versions of the Filipino diaspora? Do they express counterintuitive ways of seeing ethnic and cultural belonging, and in so doing posit different iterations of political affiliation as well? Finally, what kinds of belonging and identification come into play during the act of reading itself? Does engaging with creative and intellectual work that advances a claim to identity in itself create a dynamic through which the reader creates and fashions his or her own identity in the process?

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Attendance and participation: 15%
- 10-minute presentation: 15%
- Mid-semester paper (7 – 10 pages): 30%
- Final paper (10 – 15 pages): 40%
REQUIRED TEXTS

—Carlos Bulosan. *All the Conspirators* (Plain View, 2002).
—Wilfrido Nolledo. *But for the Lovers* (Dalkey, 1994).
—Han Ong. *The Disinherited* (Picador, 2005).

*All texts are available at the Campus Store and are on reserve in Olin 301.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

**THURSDAY 1/22: INTRODUCTION**

**TUESDAY 1/27**
—Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr. “Reflections on the Trajectory of Filipino/a American Studies: Interview with Rick Bonus” from *Positively No Filipinos Allowed* (handout).

**THURSDAY 1/29**
—E. San Juan, Jr. “In Search of Filipino Writing: Reclaiming Whose ‘America’?” from *Asian American Studies: A Reader*, Jean Yu-Wen Shen Wu and Min Song, eds. (handout; also available at Uris Reserve, listed under AAS 1100).

**TUESDAY 2/3**
—Rick Bonus. “Introduction: Marking Locations” (1 – 14) and “Cartographies of Ethnicity” (15 – 30) from *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space*.
—Giorgio Agamben. “Whatever” (1 – 2); “Example” (9 – 11); “Principium indiviationis” (17 – 20) from *The Coming Community*.

**THURSDAY 2/5**
—Rick Bonus. “Homeland Memories and the Media: Filipino Images and Imaginations in America” (128 – 163) and “Conclusion: Re-Marking Locations” (164 – 182) from *Locating Filipino Americans*.

**TUESDAY 2/10**

**THURSDAY 2/12**
—Carlos Bulosan. “Be American” (66 – 72); “Life and Death of a Filipino in America” (85 – 89); “Homecoming” (90 – 96); “My Education” (124 – 134); “Portraits With Cities Falling” (157 – 158); “If You Want to Know What We Are” (166 – 168) from *On Becoming Filipino*.

**TUESDAY 2/17**

**THURSDAY 2/19**
—Brian Ascalon Roley. *American Son*

**TUESDAY 2/24**
—*American Son*
—Guillermo Gomez Peña. “Notes From the Other Cartography” from *Vestiges of War* (312 – 317).

**THURSDAY 2/26**
—*American Son*
—Han Ong. *The Disinherited* (3 – 49).

**TUESDAY 3/3**
—*The Disinherited* (50 – 135).
—S. Lily Mendoza. “A Different Breed of Filipino Balikbayans: The Ambiguities of (Re-)turning” from *Positively No Filipinos Allowed* (handout).

**THURSDAY 3/5**
—*The Disinherited* (139 – 230).

**TUESDAY 3/10**
—*The Disinherited* (231 – 369).

**THURSDAY 3/12**
—Yong Soon Min. “Kindred Distance” from *Vestiges of War* (290 – 301).

**TUESDAY 3/17**
**IN-CLASS PAPER WORKSHOP**

**THURSDAY 3/19**
—Jessica Hagedorn. *Dream Jungle*.
**Spring Break 3/14 - 3/22**

**Tuesday 3/24**
*Papers due*
—Dream Jungle

**Thursday 3/26**
—Dream Jungle

**Tuesday 3/31**
—Dream Jungle
—Apocalypse Now Redux

**Thursday 4/2**

**Tuesday 4/7**
—*But for the Lovers* (59 – 119).

**Thursday 4/9**
—*But for the Lovers* (120 – 181).

**Tuesday 4/14**
—*But for the Lovers* (182 – 254).

**Thursday 4/16**
—*But for the Lovers* (255 – 301).

**Tuesday 4/21**
—*But for the Lovers* (302 – 316).
—Giorgio Agamben. “Pseudonym” (59 – 62); “Without Classes” (63 – 66); “Outside” (67 – 70); “Homonyms” (71 – 78); “Shekinah” (79 – 84); “Tiananmen” (85 – 87) from *The Coming Community*.

**Thursday 4/23**
—Dylan Rodriguez. “‘A Million Deaths?’ Genocide and the ‘Filipino American’ Condition of Possibility” from *Positively No Filipinos Allowed* (handout).

**Tuesday 4/28 – Thursday 4/30**
**One-on-One Meetings**