

**City and Regional Planning 3103 and 6103  
Asian American Studies 3901 and 6102  
American Studies 3102 and 6102**

**Asian American Politics and Public Policy Issues**

Spring 2010  
Tu and Th 1:25-2:40PM  
Sibley 115

Instructor: Professor Clement Lai

Office Hours: Tu and Th 10AM-12PM and W 11AM-12PM or by appointment in 317 Sibley

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United States political institutions, judicial rulings, and public policy have fundamentally shaped Asian American community formation and political expression. They have also influenced Asian American legal and citizenship rights, how Asia migrants and their descendants have been socially constructed as raced, and even issues as basic as everyday survival. This course examines past and present public policy and political issues that affect and/or involve Asian Americans from the perspectives of Ethnic Studies, Geography, Urban Studies, History, and social movements theory. The issues we will look at include case studies like immigration policy, social justice/grassroots movements, affirmative action, and multiracial/interracial coalitions. Such an examination will help us gain a deeper appreciation of the unique political issues facing Asian Americans of different ethnicities, class backgrounds, and genders across time. In addition, through our examination of Asian American political issues, we will gain an understanding of how the state operates and how political activity interacts with state institutions – sometimes accommodating different political issues/challenges and at other times ignoring them altogether. Such an examination is conducted within an overall context of changing racial politics in the United States since the Second World War and a changing political economy due to economic restructuring since the late 1960s. Additionally, our class will examine different forms of politics and political expression, including types of organization, mobilization strategies, and scales of action. These forms of political expression include radical grassroots activism, labor struggles in unions or through workers' centers, participation in electoral politics, cultural politics, or even smaller political acts such as theft. Ultimately, students will leave the course with a greater understanding of the role that race has played and continues to play in U.S. politics.

**Format**

This is a three-unit seminar with occasional lectures. The course will be primarily discussion-based and student-driven.

**Required Texts**

1. Angelo N. Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* (Rutgers University Press, 2006).

2. Mike Liu, Kim Geron, and Tracy Lai, *The Snake Dance of Asian American Activism: Community, Vision, and Power* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).
3. Angie Chung, *Legacies of Struggle: Conflict and Cooperation in Korean American Politics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).
4. Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
5. Linda Vō, *Mobilizing an Asian American Community* (Temple University Press, 2004).
6. Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City* (Yale University Press, 2000).
7. Sunaina Maira, *Missing: Youth, Citizenship, and Empire After 9/11* (Duke University Press, 2009).

### Optional Text

1. Bill Ong Hing, *Deporting Our Souls: Values, Morality, and Immigration Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

### Course requirements

**Participation:** Students are required to attend and participate in class. Participation is an important part of the course experience, providing the opportunity to critically evaluate course materials, debate, and share ideas. Participation includes the following:

- It is imperative that students attend class. After missing three class sessions your participation will be reduced for each additional absence.
- Students should pay attention to their peers and to the instructor.
  - Active and critical engagement is key.
  - Students should not be reading non-class related material, sleeping, surfing the web, instant messaging, or texting during class sessions.
    - Engaging in such activity will lead to an automatic reduction of your participation grade.
- Students should come to class having read the material and be ready to verbally discuss the readings and express their opinions.
- Student should attempt to contribute at least one comment every class session.
  - The more comments the merrier
- Although I will occasionally give short lectures to preface our discussions, each class session a group of two students will help lead discussion. You will be asked to volunteer and most likely you will have to lead discussion more than once during the semester.
  - Choose a week whose topic you find interesting.
  - The two discussion leaders will be responsible for leading discussion for both class sessions during a given week.
  - Use the comments and discussion questions posted to the Blackboard site to structure your presentations.
- Posting comments and discussion questions to Blackboard site
  - *Post two or three comments about the daily reading and one or two discussion questions on the course Blackboard site no later than 6PM the*

*night before class, which will allow sufficient time for the discussion leaders to create their presentations for the following day.*

- The comments and discussion questions will allow you to reflect critically on the arguments within the readings.

**Response papers:** Students are required to submit **five** lengthier reflections on the readings as part of your course grade. These 1-2 page response papers (graduate students are expected to write more) are due at the end of class on the Thursday after we have discussed a particular week's readings. Although you can pick and choose which readings are more compelling for you to write on, I would not wait until the final weeks of the semester to turn them in. I guarantee you will be too swamped to be able to take the time to write a careful response. The response papers together make up a good portion of your final grade, so missing one paper will hurt your grade. Missing two or papers will reduce your grade at least by an entire grade.

These responses provide a venue to share your thoughts on the readings. There are different ways to approach the papers: you can pick a point or several points to comment on from the readings; you can link the current reading with ideas expressed in earlier readings; and/or you can share your discussion questions and attempt to answer them. You might also consider addressing issues raised on Blackboard or in-class about the readings. Always try to address two or more of the readings in your response papers. Comparative analysis helps you think through arguments and link ideas.

Turn in a hard copy.

**Group exercise and presentation:** Throughout the semester I will ask small groups of three to four students to engage in five exercises that identify Asian American political issues operating at different spatial scales. Students will have to do a modest amount of research on their issue – identifying different parties concerned with the issue, key positions, and possible solutions for their issue – and they will have to present their findings to their peers. The presentations will be brief but please do allow time for some follow up questions. The spatial scales I want the students to examine are Cornell University, the City of Ithaca, New York State, the US, and the international sphere. Simply put I want each group to consider what is an Asian American political or policy issue operating at each of the above scales and whether or not these issues are interconnected.

I emphasize spatial analysis in my course because I believe this is neglected within Asian American Studies, and I want my students to begin to think in terms of place, landscape, space, etc. Scale is a concept that geographers use to talk about space, particularly concerning spatial difference and spatial differentiation, and this is how I want us to think on this issue. It should be emphasized that a particular scale's boundary is not natural or given but rather connected to other scales. These boundaries, in turn, are politically contested and established through social relations. The group exercises that I am asking you to do are an opportunity for you to use some of the theories and case studies you will be exposed to in this class to identify and analyze some real life issues.

The format for the presentation is open and up to the group. You are free to use Powerpoint or have an interactive presentation. You can also show part of a video if you so choose. Every member of the group must contribute to the research for the exercise as well as the presentation itself.

**Paper:** A research paper (14-17 pages in length) that critically examines a specific political or public policy issue that involves or directly affects Asian Americans. The paper should 1) describe the issue and place it in a broader and/or historical context; 2) present and examine competing perspectives on the issue; and 3) advance your own position on the issue. The paper will be due **May 11th**. A prospectus on the paper topic will be due in class during **Week 5** and will count toward your paper's grade. I will provide more information about the prospectus requirements.

NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

### **Grading**

Points will be assigned as grades for each of the assignments. The final grade will be determined by weighing the assignments as follows:

- Participation and attendance                      25 percent
- Response papers    15 percent
- Group projects and presentations              30 percent
- Research Paper    30 percent

*Please note that incompletes (I grades) will not be given except in the case of dire emergencies.*

### **Course Rules and “Etiquette”**

I welcome you to this course and hope to make it an informative, productive, and engaging experience for all. There are a few classroom rules to abide by.

Please be prompt and attend class on time. It is very disruptive for students to walk into class late.

While I recognize that the use of cell phones and laptop computers with wireless access are an indispensable part of life on and off campus, we ask that you refrain from text messaging, using email, or surfing the Web while in class. Such activities do not facilitate an optimal learning environment for fellow students and can, in many instances, constitute rude behavior.

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity, see < <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>>. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For this course, collaboration is allowed for group presentations, but your written response papers and research paper must be your own work. If you paraphrase or quote from another source, then you must cite it properly. Any form of plagiarism on any of the assignments will result in a failing grade for the course.

In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made.

For a definition of what constitutes plagiarism, please refer to the following website:  
<<http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>>.

### **Schedule of Topics and Readings**

#### **Week 1 Introduction: Situating Asian American Politics (1/26 & 1/28)**

##### Assigned Text (due 1/28)

1. Angelo Ancheta, Introduction
2. Satoshi Nakano, "Filipino World War II Veterans Equity Movement and the Filipino American Community." Download from the following site:  
<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/stnakano/welcome/ole.html>.
3. Bill Ong Hing, "Making and Remaking Asian Pacific America: Immigration Policy" from Don Nakanishi and James Lai, ed. *Asian American Politics* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003). Available as PDF on Blackboard website.

##### Supplemental Reading

Don Nakanishi, "Asian American Politics: An Agenda for Research," in Don Nakanishi and James Lai, ed. *Asian American Politics* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003). Edward Chang, "America's First Multiethnic Riots," from Don Nakanishi and James Lai, ed. *Asian American Politics* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

#### **Week 2 Racial Theory, Racialization, and Asian Americans (2/2 and 2/4)**

##### Assigned Text (due 2/2)

1. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation." Available as PDF on Blackboard website.
2. Yen Le Espiritu and Michael Omi, "'Who Are You Calling Asian?': Shifting Identity Claims, Racial Classification, and the Census." Available as PDF on Blackboard website.
3. Michael Omi & Dana Takagi, "Situating Asian Americans in the Political Discourse on Affirmative Action," *Representations* 55, (Summer): 1996, 155-162. Available as PDF on Blackboard website.

FIRST GROUP PROJECT DUE 2/4

#### **Week 3 Asian Americans and the Law – Part I (2/9 and 2/11)**

Assigned Text (Due 2/9)

1. Angelo Ancheta, Chapters 1 through 3

Assigned Text (Due 2/11)

1. Angelo Ancheta, Chapters 4 through 6

**Week 4 Asian Americans and the Law – Part II and the Asian American Movement – Part I (2/16 and 2/18)**

Assigned Text (Due 2/16)

1. Angelo Ancheta, Chapters 7 through Conclusion
2. Liu, Geron, and Lai, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Assigned Text (Due 2/18)

1. Liu, Geron, and Lai, Chapters 3-4

Supplemental reading

Chester Hartman, “San Francisco’s International Hotel;” Harvey Dong, “Transforming Student Elites into Community Activists: A Legacy of Asian American Activism;” Beverly Kordziel, “To Be a Part of the People: The International Hotel Collective;” Shizue Seigel, “The Mega-Economics of Urban Planning;” Shizue Seigel, “Nihonmachi and Urban Renewal;” and CANE pamphlet, “We Shall Not Be Moved”

**Week 5 Asian American Movement – Part II (2/23-2/25)**

Assigned Text (Due 2/23)

1. Liu, Geron, and Lai, Chapters 5 and 6

SECOND GROUP PROJECT DUE 2/25

**Week 6 Asian American Movement – Part III and Asian Americans and the Politics of Space (3/2-3/4)**

Assigned Text (Due 3/2)

1. Liu, Geron, and Lai, Chapters 7 and 8
2. Harvey Dong, “Transforming Student Elites into Community Activists: A Legacy of Asian American Activism.” Available as a PDF download from course Blackboard site.
3. Shizue Seigel article. Available as a PDF download from course Blackboard site

View “Fall of the I-Hotel” in class (3/4)

## **Week 7 Panethnicity and community mobilization (3/9-3/11)**

### Assigned Text (Due 3/9)

1. Linda Vō, *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*. Selected Chapters TBD.

### Assigned Text (Due 3/11)

1. Linda Vō, *Mobilizing an Asian American Community*. Selected Chapters TBD.

## **Week 8 Voter beliefs, voting trends, and electoral office (3/16-3/18)**

### Assigned Text (Due 3/16)

1. Keith Aoki, "Asian Pacific American Electoral And Political Power: Panel 1: A Tale Of Three Cities: Thoughts On Asian American Electoral And Political Power After 2000," *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8, (Spring, 2002). Available as a PDF download from course Blackboard site or as a download from LEXIS-NEXIS.
2. Pei-te Lien, "Asian Pacific American Electoral And Political Power: Panel 1: The Participation of Asian Americans in US Elections: Comparing Elite and Mass Patterns in Hawaii and Mainland States," *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8, (Spring, 2002). Available as a PDF download from course Blackboard site or as a download from LEXIS-NEXIS.
3. Bill Ong Hing, "APA Grassroots Community Organizing: Panel 3: Nonelectoral Activism In Asian Pacific American Communities And The Implications For Community Lawyering," *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8, (Spring, 2002). Available as a PDF download from course Blackboard site or as a download from LEXIS-NEXIS.

## **THIRD GROUP PROJECT DUE 3/18**

### Supplemental reading

Judy Chu, "Elected/Appointed Officials And Political Access: Panel 2: Overcoming Racial Discord And Building Coalitions," *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8, (Spring, 2002); Satveer Chaudhary, "Elected/Appointed Officials And Political Access: Panel 2; How A Chaudhary Beat A Carlson," *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8, (Spring, 2002); Tong Lam, "Elected/Appointed Officials And Political Access: Panel 2: Breaking Down The Walls: My Journey From A Refugee Camp To The Westminster City Council," *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8, (Spring, 2002); and Carol Liu, "Elected/Appointed Officials And Political Access: Panel 2: Changing The Face Of The California State Assembly," *UCLA Asian Pacific American Law Journal* 8, (Spring, 2002). ALL available through download from LEXIS-NEXIS.

## **Week 9 SPRING BREAK (3/23-3/25)**

### **Week 10 The Politics of Place and Community (3/30-4/1)**

#### Assigned Text (Due 3/30)

1. Angie Chung, *Legacies of Struggle*. Selected Chapters TBD

#### Assigned Text (Due 4/1)

1. Angie Chung, *Legacies of Struggle*. Selected Chapters TBD

### **Week 11 Racial Power and Interracial Conflict (4/6-4/8)**

#### Assigned Text (Due 4/6)

1. Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit*. Selected Chapters TBD.

#### Assigned Text (Due 4/8)

1. Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit*. Selected Chapters TBD.

### **Week 12 Grassroots Mobilization (4/13-4/15)**

#### Assigned Text (4/13)

1. Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants*. Selected Chapters TBD.

#### Assigned Text (4/15)

1. Monisha Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants*. Selected Chapters TBD.

#### Supplemental Reading:

Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*; Biju Mathew, *Taxi! Cabs and Capitalism in New York City*

### **Week 13 Intersectional Politics of Race, Gender, and Class (4/20-4/22)**

#### Assigned Text (Due 4/20)

1. Selected readings by Cathy Ceniza Choy and Miriam Ching Young Louie. Available as a PDF download from course Blackboard site
2. Selected chapters from Laura Jo Foo, *Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy*. Available for download at Ford Foundation, <http://www.fordfound.org/elibrary/documents/5006/toc.cfm>.

FOURTH GROUP PROJECT DUE 4/22

### **Week 14 Deportations and Immigration Detention (4/27-4/29)**

Assigned Text (Due 4/27)

1. Bill Ong Hing, Article on deportations TBD. Available as a PDF download from course Blackboard site

Thursday (4/29)

In-class video, "Sentenced Home"

**Week 15 Muslim Youth in a Post 9/11 World (5/4-5/6)**

Assigned Text (Due 5/4)

1. Sunaina Maira, *Missing*. Selected Chapters TBD

Assigned Text (Due 5/6)

1. Sunaina Maira, *Missing*. Selected Chapters TBD

FIFTH GROUP PROJECT DUE

Supplemental reading

Tram Nguyen, *We Are All Suspects Now*