

AAS/Hist 3470
Asian American Women's History
Cornell University

Fall 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays: 2:55-4:10pm

Lincoln Hall B08

Course Instructor: Chrissy Lau

Email: cyl58@cornell.edu

Office: 427 Rockefeller Hall

Office Hours: MW 2-245pm, TR 1-2pm

Course Description:

Women are often situated as secondary characters in history, but this course centers Asian American women as the major stars of their eras. When Asian American women take center stage, history is illuminated in many new complex ways. This seminar examines the social and cultural experiences of Asian American women from the late 1870s to the post-1965 era. Key themes include immigration, family, generation, labor, gender, and sexuality. Topics span from prostitution, flapper youth culture, military brides, and women's organizing. Students will read major monographs, work with primary documents, facilitate discussions, and partake in a public history digital project.

Course Goals:

- Introduce the student to the diversity of historical experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander women, often from the voices and viewpoints of women themselves.
- Guide the student to understanding how women's lives are constituted through intersectional systems of power of gender, race, and class within the United States.
- Help the student to explore how Asian American women resist, negotiate, and comply with multiple systems of power.
- Challenge the student to read and listen analytically and to think and write critically about matters of substantial personal, social, cultural, and political importance.

Readings:

Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (online copy avail)

Valerie Matsumoto, *City Girls: Nisei Social World in Los Angeles*

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

Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration* (online copy available at library)

Other articles will be posted **On the Blackboard** <http://www.blackboard.cornell.edu/>

Course Breakdown:

15% Attendance and Participation

10% Facilitation

15% Weekly Reflections

20% Mid-Semester Paper

20% Student Digital Exhibition

20% Final Paper

Attendance and Participation 15%

Each student is required to attend class regularly. You may miss class only if it qualifies as an excused absence, which is an illness or a grievance. Please clear your absences with me beforehand. Moreover, each student must show up to class on time and if you are tardy, it will count against your attendance.

Attendance is the first step to achieving a good letter grade for section. The next step is participation: you are required to do the readings prior to class and actively participate in class activities and discussion. Please take down notes, jot down some questions, and bring your voice to class. Please silence your phones and absolutely no texting in class.

In class documentaries:

The Women Outside

Facilitation and Leading Discussion 10%

In this course, students will sign up to lead one discussion during the semester. Leading discussion is not the same as a presentation. A presentation is when you give a summary of the readings and speak the entire time. Leading discussion means asking questions, guiding and building the conversation, talking with your peers – an equity of talking across everyone in the room. The goal of leading discussion is to get everyone involved. You will be graded on preparation, which includes developing questions for discussion and/or bringing materials that will contribute to or enhance our understandings of the topics addressed that week. You will also be graded on facilitation, making sure that all discussion leaders facilitate and that you achieve your goal of stimulating activity and conversation. Past facilitation activities included role-playing, games (however, must be followed by discussion), debates, and questions. Please email me your preparatory questions/activities *at least a day* before discussion (Wednesday). I strongly encourage you to meet with me at least once before you lead discussion so that I can help you prepare and frame your questions.

Weekly One-Page Reflections 15%

Summarize the major arguments and respond. Due every Wednesday in class. Weekly reflections are put into place to help students keep up with the weekly readings, exercise one's thoughts before coming to class, serve as study guides for the take-home essays and set the foundation for exciting and rigorous discussions with peers.

Mid-Semester Paper 20%

Take-home paper due 10/07. Students will write a 5-7 page essay that surveys the readings and topics covered in the first half of the course.

Student Digital Exhibition of World War II 20%

In this class, we will create an online public exhibition for the Japanese American incarceration archives at the Kroch library. In a group of two students, each group will select one watercolor painting and pair it with a primary source from the archive. Each group will produce: one paragraph description of the watercolor painting, one paragraph description of the primary source, a five-page analysis, and a one-page encyclopedia entry. You will need to cite at least two different secondary texts, which will require you to conduct your own outside research. Proposal due 11/02, First drafts/Professor Meeting Week 13 and 14, Final Exhibition Piece due 11/30.

Final Paper 20%

Take home paper due 12/? (usually the last day of finals). Students will write a 5-7 page essay that surveys the readings and topics covered in the second half of the course.

A Precaution Against Plagiarism

MLA defines plagiarism as “the act of using another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source...to plagiarize is to give the impression you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else.” This means absolutely no referencing

of websites or outside sources as well as paraphrasing without full citations. If you are caught plagiarizing or party to plagiarizing, you will receive a FAIL in the course.

Class Schedule

*Schedule and readings are subject to change

Week 1: Introduction

8/26 Introduction to the Course

Week 2: Frameworks

8/31 How do we study Asian American Women's History?

Read: Hune, "Changing Perceptions of APIA Women in US History"
Uno, "Unlearning Orientalism"

9/2 The Chinese Prostitute

Read: Yung, *Unbound Feet* Chapter 1

Primary Document: Journalist Helen Grey Exposes the Activities of a Chinese Brothel Owner, 1899

Week 3: Chinese Prostitutes and Good Women

9/7 Labor Day: No Class

9/9 Ideals of Domesticity

Read: Yung, *Unbound Feet* Chapter 2

Primary Document: Writer Sui Sin Far Reveals Private Lives of Chinese Merchant Wives, 1897

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 4: Japanese Immigrant Women

9/14 Prostitutes and Picture Brides

Read: Oharazeki, "Listening to the Other Japanese Women in North America"

Nakamura, "Picture Brides" from Densho.org (Primary Document: 1910 Picture)

9/16 Midwives

Read: Susan Smith, *Japanese American Midwives* Chapter 3

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 5: Second Generation, Filial Piety, and the Jazz Age

9/21 Nisei Social World

Read: Primary Documents: Lily Satow and Teru Miyamoto
Matsumoto, *City Girls* Chapter 1

9/23 Nisei Social World

Read: Matsumoto, *City Girls* Chapter 2

Discussion Leader: _____

Week 6: Second Generation Women's Culture and The Great Depression

9/28 Chinese American Second Generation

Read: Yung, *Unbound Feet*, Chapter 3

Primary Document: Flora Belle Jan letters in Yano and Daly, *Unbound Spirit*, Chapter 6

9/30 Chinese American Second Generation
Read: Yung, *Unbound Feet*, Chapter 4
Discussion Leader: _____

Week 7: Mid-Semester Paper

10/05 Mid-Semester Paper Review

10/07 Mid-Semester Paper Due

Week 8: World War II

10/12 Fall Break: No Class

10/14 World War II

Read: Matsumoto, *City Girls*, Chapter 4
Yung, *Unbound Feet* Chapter 5

Week 9: Japanese American Incarceration and Resettlement

10/19 Field Trip: Visit the Japanese American Relocation Archives at Kroch Library
Read: Fujita-Rony, "Remaking the Home Front in World War II"
Gesensway and Roseman, "Gene Sogioka"

10/21 Field Trip: Visit the Japanese American Relocation Archives at Kroch Library
Read: Matsumoto, *City Girls*, Chapter 5

Week 10: Cold War and Military Brides

10/26 Colonialism and Military Camps
Read: Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown* Introduction and Chapter 1
Film: *The Women Outside* (Oral History as Primary Source)

10/28 Food and Intimate Spaces
Read: Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown* Chapter 4 and 5
Discussion Leader: _____

Week 11: Asian American Women's Movement 1960s/1970s

11/2 Asian American Women's Movement
Read: Fujino, *Heartbeat of a Struggle: Yuri Kochiyama* Chapter 8
Ordon, "Asian Lesbians in San Francisco"
Due: Japanese American Incarceration Proposal Due

11/4 Asian American Women's Movement
Read: Uyematsu, "Three Step Boogie"
Primary Document: "Thoughts on Remembrance of Clara"
Discussion Leader: _____

Week 12: Post 1965 Migration and Filipina Nurses

11/9 Women's Professional Migration
Read: Choy, *Empire of Care* Chapter 3 and 4

11/11 Caring
Read: Choy, *Empire of Care* Chapter 6
Discussion Leader: _____

Week 13: Post 1965 Immigration of South and Southeast Asians

11/16 Southeast Asian Refugees
Read: Espiritu, "Vietnamese Women in the U.S."
Linh Chuong, "Labor of Love: Nail Salon Work and Advocacy"

11/18 South Asian Women
Read: Das Gupta, *Unruly Immigrants*, Chapter 4
Bhuyan, "Navigating Gender, Immigration, Domestic Violence."
Discussion Leader: _____

Week 14: Thanksgiving

11/23 Group Project Meetings with Professor (see sign-up sheet)

11/25 Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 15: Final Presentations

11/30 Group Project Final Presentations
Due: Group Project

12/2 Final Review

Finals Week

12/? Final Papers Due