

**AAS 2130**  
**Introduction to Asian American History**  
Fall 2013  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:10-11:25am  
Stimson Hall 206

**Course Instructor:** Chrissy Lau  
**Email:** [chrissylau@cornell.edu](mailto:chrissylau@cornell.edu)

**Office:** 427 Rockefeller Hall  
**Office Hours:** Tues/Thurs 1-3pm

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to the histories of Asian Americans from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Major themes of Asian American History will include immigration and labor, race and gender relations, community formation and social movements. This class will cover topics such as Orientalism, anti-immigrant movements, immigration and exclusion, Japanese American internment, the Asian American Movement, the model minority, Vincent Chin, queer API, environmental racism and the Oriental Monk. Students will work with primary documents, including the political cartoons of exclusion era, the oral histories of internment camp and refugee experience, autobiographies of immigrants, and writings from social movement movers and shakers.

**Course Goals:**

- Introduce the student to an analytical understanding of racial, ethnic and gendered processes as they have operated around the experiences of Asian Americans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> until the 20<sup>th</sup> century United States, from the disciplinary perspectives of History, Ethnic Studies, and Feminist Studies.
- Introduce to the student the basics of analyzing a primary source and conducting oral history.
- Challenge the student to read and listen analytically and to think and write critically about matters of substantial personal, social, cultural, and political importance.

**Required Texts:**

Akemi Kikumura, *Through Harsh Winters: Life of an Immigrant Japanese Woman*

Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart*

Paul Howard Takemoto, *Nisei Memories: My Parents Talk About the War Years*

Daryl Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement*

Sucheng Chan, *Vietnamese American 1.5 Generation*

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

**Course Breakdown:**

10% Attendance and Participation

15% In-Class Pop Quizzes (3)

10% Primary Document Analysis

20% Midterm

20% Oral History

25% Final

**Attendance and Participation (10%)**

Each student is required to attend class regularly. You may miss class only if it qualifies as an excused absence, which is a written note from your doctor concerning an illness or from counseling/social services about 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. 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.

### **Pop Quizzes (15%)**

There will be three pop quizzes given during the quarter to test preparation and reading for class. You must have finished the readings due that day prior to class. They will be given during lecture. There will be *no makeups* given, unless by approval of the professor. Please purchase three scantrons and bring them with you to each lecture.

### **Primary Document Analysis (10%)**

Each student will write a three page analysis of the primary document. You must use the readings of this course to support your arguments. This assignment will be evaluated on the following criteria: clarity of expression and presentation; ability to provide a close, thoughtful, and critical reading of the document's contents; success in locating the document in its proper historical context; and effective linking of document and issues to broader themes and questions in Asian American history. Due September 24, 2013.

### **Midterm Exam (20%)**

An in-class midterm will take place on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013. You will be responsible for the readings up until that date.

### **Oral History Project (20%)**

In this class, we will create a public oral history archive. Each student will conduct an oral history with an Asian American who is above 40 years old. You must record your interview through video or digital sound. Each interview will be posted to the class online archive for public research.

### **Final Exam (25%)**

The in-class final exam will cover the readings from 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.

### **Course Schedule**

\*Schedule and readings are subject to change

#### **Week 1: Introduction**

8/29 Introduction to the Course: What is race?  
Activity: The Race Card Project

#### **Week 2: Contact, Immigration, and Exclusion**

9/3 Orientalism (Watch Film Excerpt: *Pirates of the Caribbean*)  
Read: Said, *Orientalism*

Prashad, "Of the Mysterious East"

9/5 The Question of Chinese Immigration

Read: Tchen, "The Alarm"

Tchen, Chapter 11 "Descent to Darkness"

Primary Document: Davis Phillips Discusses the Chinese Question

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/riseind/chinimms/phillips.html>

### **Week 3: Communities and Food in Early Chinese America**

9/10 Chinese Immigration Under Exclusion

Read: Yung, Chapter 2 "Unbound Feet"

9/12 Sweet and Sour Project

Read: Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example"

Check Out: <http://blog.americanhistory.si.edu/osaycanyousee/sweet-sour/>

### **Week 4: Empire and the Middle Class in Japanese America**

9/17 Japanese Immigration and Differential Classes

Read: Azuma, Chapter 1 and 2

9/19 Japanese American Women

Read: Kikumura, *Through Harsh Winters*

Film: *Picture Bride*

### **Week 5: Labor and Resistance**

9/24 Filipino Emigration (Film: *A Dollar a Day, Ten Cents a Dance*)

Read: Bulosan 1- 151

Kipling poem: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kipling.asp>

Due: Primary Source Analysis

9/26 Bulosan

Read: Bulosan 152-325

Check Out: [http://www.bulosan.org/html/bulosan\\_biography.html](http://www.bulosan.org/html/bulosan_biography.html)

### **Week 6: Imperialism Abroad, Exclusion at Home**

10/1 Hawaii, Religion and Plantation Labor

Read: Lee, "Introduction"

Yoo, "Paradise Bound"

Check Out: <http://www.koreanamericanstory.org/arirang/flash/main/index.htm>

10/3 South Asian Immigration

Read: Leonard, "Contexts: California and the Punjab"

Primary Document: Inder Singh

### **Week 7: Midterm**

10/08 Growing Up Second Generation /Midterm Review

Primary Documents: Survey of Race Relations

10/10 In Class Midterm

**Week 8: Oral Histories**

10/15 No class: Fall Break

10/17 Class Field Trip: Meet at the Olin and Kroch Library for the Japanese Internment Exhibition Tour with Curator Daniel McKee

Read: Takemoto, *Nisei Memories* 1- 111

Check Out: Oral History Project at Cal State Fullerton [http://coph.fullerton.edu/JAHC\\_A-G.asp](http://coph.fullerton.edu/JAHC_A-G.asp)

**Week 9: World War II and the Cold War**

10/22 Conducting Oral Histories

Read: Takemoto, *Nisei Memories* 112-229

Check Out: Discover Nikkei <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/interviews/profiles/?page=1>

10/24 Cold War Orientalism

Read: Klein, Chapter 6 “Asians in America”

Cheng, “Out of Chinatown and Into the Suburbs”

Film: *Flower Drum Song* (1957)

**Week 10: New Immigration and Class Issues**

10/29 1965 Immigration Act

Read: Chan, Chapter 6, 7, 9, 10

Zhao, *New Chinese America* Chapter 2

10/31 Southeast Asian Refugees

Read: Chan, Chapter 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Ong, “Guns, Gangs and Doughnut Kings”

Check Out: Vietnamese Oral History Project at UC Irvine <http://sites.uci.edu/vaohp/>

Film: *Eating Welfare*

**Week 11: The Movement and the Model Minority**

11/5 Asian American Movement

Read: Maeda, Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2

Check Out: Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project:

<http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/Asian%20Americans.htm>

Film: *Yellow Brotherhood* and *San Francisco State On Strike!*

11/7 Model Minority

Read: Primary Document: “Success of One Minority Group”

Maeda, Chapter 3 and 4

[http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Model\\_minority/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Model_minority/)

**Week 12: Race, Conflict, and Violence**

11/12 Vincent Chin

Read: Darden and Thomas, “The Declining Auto Industry”

Wu, “Why Vincent Chin Matters”

Film: *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*

- 11/14 Asian Americans and Black America  
Read: Park, "The Los Angeles Civil Unrest"  
Park, "Use and Abuse of Race and Culture"  
Film: *SA-I-GU*

### **Week 13: New Movements**

- 11/19 Queer API  
Read: Ordonez, "Asian Lesbians in San Francisco"  
Vaid, "Inclusion, Exclusion, and Occlusion"  
Magpantay, "Ambivalence of Queer APA Towards Same Sex Marriage"
- 11/21 Environmental Racism  
Read: Park and Pellow, Chapter 4 and 7  
Nakaso, "Asian Workers Now Dominate Silicon Valley Tech Jobs"  
Film: *A Village Called Versailles*

### **Week 14: Global Chain of Care**

- 11/25 Immigrant Asian Workers  
Read: Parrenas, "Mothering From a Distance"  
Miliann Kang, "The Managed Hand: The Commercialization of Bodies and Emotions in Korean Immigrant-Owned Nail Salons."  
Linh Chuong, "Labor of Love: Nail Salon Work and Advocacy"  
<http://hendrixmurphy.org/treatment/labor-of-love-nail-salon-work-and-advocacy/>
- 11/27 Thanksgiving Break

### **Week 15: Asian Americans in a Multicultural Society**

- 12/3 Virtual Orientalism and Cultural Appropriation  
Read: Iwamura, "Oriental Monk"  
Due: Upload Oral Histories  
Film: *Yellow Apparel*
- 12/5 Model Minority and Suicides  
Read: Lisa Park, "Letter to My Sister"  
Hyphen Magazine: "Ask a Model Minority Suicide"  
<http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2010/12/72-hour-hold-part-1>  
Check Out: Pew Report's "Rise of Asian Americans"  
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>

### **Finals Week**

- 12/11 In-Class Final (7-9:30pm)