

English 2620 (cross-listed with Asian American Studies and American Studies)  
Fall 2016  
TR 2:55-4:10 - 350 Goldwin Smith Hall  
Instructor: Shelley Wong  
Office: 282 Goldwin Smith Hall – 255-9310 ([ssw6@cornell.edu](mailto:ssw6@cornell.edu))  
Office Hours: M - 2:00-4:00pm (or by appointment)

### Introduction to Asian American Literature

This course will introduce both a variety of writings by Asian American authors and some critical issues concerning the production and the reception of Asian American literary texts. We'll be asking questions about the historical formation of Asian American identities and about the aesthetic forms of representation explored by Asian American writers and artists. While we'll devote most of our time to literary texts, we'll also direct some of our critical attention to the role of popular culture in the ongoing construction of Asian and Asian American identities.

#### Required Readings:

Carlos Bulosan, *America Is In the Heart*  
Marilyn Chin, *Revenge of the Mooncake Vixen*  
Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*  
Chang-Rae Lee, *Native Speaker*  
Celeste Ng, *Everything I Never Told You*  
Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Sympathizer*  
John Okada, *No No Boy*  
Frank Chin, "The Year of the Dragon"  
Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*

Additional short readings and films (both documentaries and feature films) will be available on Blackboard.

#### Course Requirements:

- Regular attendance and **completion** of assigned readings **by the date we begin** our discussion of a given text as noted in the syllabus. More than two **unexcused** absences will affect your final grade
- Regular contributions to class discussions (attendance and participation: 20%)
- Three 2-page informal writing assignments that will take the form of a close reading of some part of a given literary text. These are not meant to be synopses or broad generalizations about a given text. These responses may function as points of departure for your essays. (15%)
- Formal writing assignments: one 6-page mid-term essay (25%); one 8-10-page final essay (40%)

#### Plagiarism:

All the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content, with contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with Cornell's Academic Integrity Code, distributed to students in the Policy Notebook and available on-line at <http://www.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. The code, together with a guide to Acknowledging the Work of Others, can be downloaded from <http://www.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/docs/main.html>. In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the code is an "F" for the term.

## Syllabus (subject to change)

### Week 1

#### **T – August 23** – Introduction

- Screening “Miss Chinatown USA”
- Representing Asian Americans

#### **R – August 25**

- R. Radhakrishnan, “Is the Ethnic ‘Authentic’ in the Diaspora?” *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*, Ed. Karin Aguilar-San Juan, Boston: South End Press, 1994. (Blackboard)

*Recommended reading and viewing:*

- 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”
- “Slaying the Dragon” – *this video documentary is available on Blackboard.*

### Week 2

#### **T – August 30**

- selections from *Yellow Peril: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*: “Where is the West? Where is the East?” [54-60]; “Race and the Asiatic Mode of Production” [148-152]; “The Yellow Peril” [176-177]; “Perilous Frontiers” [195-199]; “Hither and Farther Asia” [143-148]; “John Stuart Mill’s Asian Parable” [153-156]

#### **R – September 1**

- Frank Chin, “The Year of the Dragon” (read the play in its entirety)

### Week 3

#### **T – September 6**

- Frank Chin, “The Year of the Dragon”

#### **R – September 8**

- Richard Slotkin, “The Significance of the Myth of the Frontier” (Blackboard); Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine* (chapters 1-2)

### Week 4

#### **T – September 13**

- Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine* (chapters 3-17)

#### **R – September 15**

- Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine* (chapters 18-end)
- **First 2-page assignment due today in class**

### Week 5

#### **T – September 20**

- Carlos Bulosan, *America Is In the Heart* (chapters 1-19)

#### **R – September 22**

- Carlos Bulosan, *America Is In the Heart* (chapters 20-end)

## Week 6

### **T – September 27**

- Carlos Bulosan, *America Is In the Heart*
- **Second 2-page assignment due today in class**

### **R – September 29**

- Grace Lee Boggs – video “American Revolutionary” and chapter one “East Is East—Or Is It?” of *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (Both the reading and the video documentary are on Blackboard)

## Week 7

### **T – October 4**

- John Okada, *No No Boy* (chapters 1-5)

### **R – October 6**

- John Okada, *No No Boy* (chapters 6-end)

## Week 8

### **T – October 11 – fall break**

### **R – October 13**

- Chang-Rae Lee, *Native Speaker* (pp.1-171)

## Week 9

### **T – October 18**

- Chang-Rae Lee, *Native Speaker* (172-end)

### **R – October 20**

- Reading TBA
- **Essay #1 (6-page) due today**

## Week 10

### **T – October 25**

- Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Sympathizer* (read the entire novel)

### **R – October 27**

- Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Sympathizer*

## Week 11

### **T – November 1**

- Celeste Ng, *Everything I Never Told You* (read the entire novel)
- **Third 2-page assignment due today**

### **R – November 3**

- Celeste Ng, *Everything I Never Told You*

## **Week 12**

### ***T – November 8***

- Marilyn Chin, *Revenge of the Mooncake Vixen* (read the entire book)

### ***R – November 10***

- Marilyn Chin, *Revenge of the Mooncake Vixen*

## **Week 13**

### ***T – November 15***

- Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies* (read the following stories: “A Temporary Matter,” “Mrs. Sen’s,” and “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine”)

### ***R – November 17***

- Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies* (read the following stories: “Interpreter of Maladies” and “This Blessed House”)

## **Week 14**

### ***T – November 22***

- Li-Young Lee, selected poems (Blackboard)

***R – November 24 – Thanksgiving recess***

## **Week 15**

### ***T – November 29***

- TBA

### ***R – December 1***

- TBA

- ***final 8-10-page essay due today in class***