Asian/Pacific/American Cultures
V55.0539

Professor Minh-Ha T. Pham
Email: mhp5@nyu.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays 2-4pm and by appointment

Course Information

Asian Pacific America encompasses a complex, diverse, and rapidly changing population of people. This interdisciplinary course introduces students to major issues in the historical and contemporary experiences of Asian Pacific Americans, including migration, modernization, racial formation, community-building, political mobilization, among others. In this course we will pay particular attention to Asian Americans’ use of cultural productions—films, literature, art, media, and popular culture—as an expression/reflection of their historical conditions, political efforts, and cultural identities.

Requirements/Assignments

* Attendance/Participation (20%)
Attendance and participation are mandatory. In addition, students will be required to attend 3 Asian Pacific American Institute-sponsored events.

* 4 Short Essays (15%/each)
Students must turn in 4 short essays throughout the course of the semester. These papers should be 4-5 pages (typed, double-spaced) in length and should present a narrowly-focused argument based on the readings assigned prior to the paper deadline. More guidelines to follow.

* Midterm (20%)
Students will be asked to apply theories and ideas discussed in the course to particular historical and cultural “problems.”

Required Text


3. Course Reader (at Advanced Copy Center, 552 La Guardia Place, between W. 3rd and Bleecker)
Class Schedule

Introduction
January 23
Film: *My America or Honk if You Love Buddha*, dir. Renee Tajima (1997; 85 min.)

January 28
Introductions
Discuss *My America*

Migration, Contact, Orientalism
January 30
Edward Said, “Introduction” in *Orientalism*
Henry Yu, “The Locations of History”

February 4
Henry Yu, “Orientalism and the Mapping of Race” in *Thinking Orientals*

Exclusion: Rationales and Responses
February 6
Ronald Takaki, “The ‘Heathen Chinee’ and American Technology” in *Iron Cages*
K. Scott Wong, “Cultural Defenders and Brokers: Chinese Response to the Anti-Chinese Movement” in *Claiming America*

Race, War, and Democracy
February 11
Ronald Takaki, “Democracy and Race,” in *Strangers from a Different Shore*
John Dower, “Patterns of a Race War” and “Yellow, Red, and Black Men” in *War Without Mercy*

February 13
Film: *Looking Like the Enemy*, dirs. Karen Ishizuka and Robert Nakamura (1997; 52 min.)
**Paper 1 due.**

February 18
No class.

Racial Formations: The Asian American Movement
February 20
Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “Racial Formation” in *Racial Formations*
Yen Le Espiritu, “Ethnicity and Panethnicity” in *Asian American Panethnicity*

February 25
Post-1965 Immigration: Challenges to Pan-Asianism
Vijay Prashad, “Crafting Solidarities” in *A Part Yet Apart*
Nazli Kibria, “Power, Patriarchy, and Gender Conflict in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community” in *Contemporary Asian America*

February 27
Film: *a.k.a Don Bonus*, dir. Spencer Nakasaki (1995; 55 min.)
**Paper 2 due.**

Gender and Sexuality in Asian America
March 3
Dana Y. Takagi, “Maiden Voyage: Excursions into Sexuality and Identity” in *Making More Waves*
David Eng & Alice Hom, “Introduction” in *Q&A*

March 5
Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai, “Monster, Terrorist, Fag”

Multiracial America
March 10
Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “The Los Angeles ‘Race’ Riots Contemporary U.S. Politics” in *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising*
March 12  
**Representing the Oriental**
Helen Zia, “Gangsters, Gooks, Geishas, and Geeks,” in *Asian American Dreams*
Robert Lee, “Where Are You From?” and “Yellowface” in *Orientals*

March 17-19  
No class.

March 24  
Film: *Slaying the Dragon*, dir. Deborah Gee (1987, 60 min.)

March 26  
Film: *Slanted Screen*, dir. Jeff Adachi (2006, 61 min.)

March 31  
**Take Home Midterm (due April 2 at the beginning of class)**

April 2  
**Understanding Asian American Cultural Productions**
Lisa Lowe, “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Asian American Differences”
Doreen Kondo, “The Politics of Pleasure “ in *About Face*

April 7  
**Music and Community Formation**
Oliver Wang, “Between the Notes: Finding Asian America in Popular Music”
Adelaida Reyes, “Vietnamese Americans in Orange County: The Musical Life” in *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free*

April 9  
Oliver Wang, “Rapping and Repping Asian: Race, Authenticity, and the Asian American MC”
Kevin Fellezs, “Silenced but Not Silent: Asian Americans and Jazz”

April 14  

**Paper 3 due**

April 16  
**Urban Culture/Youth Culture**
Mimi Nguyen and Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, “Introduction” in *Alien Encounters*
Sunaina Maira, “Indo-Chic: Late Capitalism and Imperial Culture”

April 21  
**Technoculture**
Jerry Kang, “Cyber-Race”

April 23  
Mimi Nguyen, “Queer Cyborgs and New Mutants: Race, Sexuality, and Prosthetic Sociality in Digital Space”
Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, “Good Politics, Great Porn: Untangling Race, Sex, and Technology in Asian American Cultural Productions”

April 28  
Film: *Robot Stories*

April 30  
**Globalization**
Arif Dirlik, “Asians on the Rim: Transnational Capital and Local Community in the Making of Contemporary Asian America” in *Across the Pacific: Asian Americans and Globalization*

May 5  
**Paper 4 due.**