Cultures and Contexts: Asian/Pacific/American Cultures

M/W 9:30-10:45, 194 Mercer Street, Room 306

Professor: Thuy Linh Tu (thuylinhtu@nyu.edu)  Office Hours: Mon/Wed 1:45-2:45 (20 Cooper Square, Room 406)

TA: Sara Kozameh (kozameh@nyu.edu)  Office Hours: tk (location tk)

TA: Eva Hageman  (evahageman@gmail.com)  Office Hours: tk (location tk)

Course Description: This course surveys significant moments and ideas in the study of Asian/Pacific/American cultures. It explores how cultural, political, social, and economic forces, including migration, modernization, racial formation, and political mobilization, have shaped Asian Pacific American histories and communities. How have Asian/Pacific/ Americans been understood (and understood themselves) as a “race”? How have the movements of goods and peoples between and beyond “Asia” and “America” shaped these ideas? How do the histories of war and colonization in Asia and the recent economic developments in this region inform the ways we understand and talk about Asian/Pacific/ Americans?

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance: Attendance and participation is mandatory. Please come to class on time and please remember to sign the attendance sheet during each meeting. Repeated absences will lower your grade. Please note that attendance in recitation is also mandatory. (15%)

2. Short papers: In order to facilitate comprehension of key ideas and to prepare you for discussion, you are required to submit four (4) three to four page (3-4 page) précis of the readings for 1 week. The précis should cover: 1. the central arguments being made in the readings 2. how the author supports these arguments (through what sources and/or methodologies), and 3. the significance of these ideas to the week’s theme and to our ongoing discussions. You are free to write on the materials for any week, but two (2) of the papers must be handed in before the midterm. Please submit the papers at the beginning of the class period in which we are discussing the readings. You may be asked to share your précis in class. (30%)

3. Mid-term exam (25%)

4. Final exam (30%): The final exam will be cumulative.

Course Materials: Shelly Sang-Hee Lee, New History of Asian America (available online through Bobst Library). All other articles will be available through NYU Classes.

Course Schedule:

Please note that we will be visiting the Museum of Chinese in the Americas for a tour of its core collection on October 13 and 14. MoCA is located at 215 Center Street (below Grand), about a 15-minute walk from our classroom. The tour begins promptly at 10am. There is a $10 fee for the tour, which will be collected during class.

9/2  Introduction

Week 2  When does history begin?
9/7  No Class, Labor Day
9/9  Lee, Chapter 1: Gary Okhiro, “When and Where Do I Enter”

Week  Race, Labor, and Empire

9/14: Nerissa S. Balce, “Filipino Bodies: Lynching and the Language of Empire”

Week 4 Migrants and Cosmopolitans

9/21 Lee, Chapter 2; Nayan Shah, “Passions, Violence, and Asserting Honor” in Stranger Intimacy
9/23 Vivek Bald, “Out of the East and Into the South” in Bengali Harlem

Week 5 Excluded and Interned

9/28 Lee, Chapter 5; Sui Sin Far, “The Story of One White Woman..”
9/30 Lee, Chapter 8, and “Executive Order 9066”

Week 6 Integrated

10/5 Lee, Chapter 9
10/7 Lee, Chapter 12

Week 7 Representing History

10/13 (No class on Monday, Tuesday meeting): Tour of Museum of Chinese in the Americas (Group 1). Tour begins promptly at 10am. Please arrive no later than 9:50. Group 2 will come to class for midterm review.
10/14 Tour Museum of Chinese in the Americas (Group 2). Tour begins promptly at 10am. Please arrive no later than 9:50. Group 1 will come to class for midterm review.

Week 8: A Model Minority?

10/19 Lee, Chapter 10

Week 9 War and Protest

10/26 In-class midterm
10/28  Lee, Chapter 11

Week 10

11/2  Simeon Man, “Radicalizing Currents: The GI Movement in the Third World.”


Week 11  **Beauty Queens and Militant Muslims**


Week 12  **Tiger Moms, Sex Workers, and other figures of Transnational Capital**


Week 13

11/23  Miliann Kang, “What Does a Manicure Have to Do With Sex?: Racialised Sexualisation of Body Labor in Routine Beauty Services,” in *Body/Sex/Work: Intimate, Embodied and Sexualised Labour*

11/25  No class, Thanksgiving

Week 14  **Asian Chic**


Week 15:  **Fear of an Asian Planet**

12/7  Julie Sze and Yi Zhou, “Imagining a Chinese Eco-City”


12/14  Review and Wrap-up