CULTURES AND CONTEXT:
ASIAN/PACIFIC/AMERICAN CULTURES

Professor S. Heijin Lee                         Fall 2018
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Using an interdisciplinary approach, this course will examine historical and
contemporary examples of Asian/Pacific/American political, social, and cultural
practices in the United States. Bringing together a diversity of texts related to and
within the field of Asian/Pacific/American studies, the course will explore what
constitutes Asian/Pacific/American identity and, indeed, what constitutes the
dynamic field of Asian/Pacific/American studies itself. Emerging from various forms
of student and community organizing in the late 1960s, the social movement based
and interdisciplinary questions of this field has expanded to offer different ways of
thinking about questions of race, gender, sexuality, nation, immigration, sexuality,
ecologies, and imperialism. As a class we will collectively examine Asian American
and Pacific Islander communities through a thematic approach that will allow us to
understand diverse communities in relation to each other. Such an approach creates
space to examine the specificities as well as the overlapping similarities of the
relations of power that constitute these different communities.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:
In addition to having read all the week’s readings by Monday’s lecture, students are
expected to be on time, stay the duration and not pack up before class is over. Laptops,
iPads, cell phones and iPods are not allowed during class time. Please make sure to silence or
turn off all phones—if your phone rings during class, I get to answer it.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

• Asian American Studies Now: A Critical Reader, Jean Yu-Wen Shen Wu, Thomas
  Chen, eds. (2010)

Reader is available at the NYU Bookstore. All other materials including book
chapters, articles, additional links, announcements and other added materials are
available through our NYU Classes site.
GRADING: PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE, PAPERS, AND EXAMS

Course Grade: Class evaluation will be based on participation and attendance in lecture and recitation (20%), four papers (40%), mid-term exam (15%) and final exam (25%).

Participation/Attendance: Attendance at all meetings of the lecture and recitation is expected and required. Absences will adversely affect the participation component of students’ overall course grade, and you are liable to an automatic failing grade in the course for more than three absences from lecture and/or recitation even if you have completed all other course requirements. Come to class on time and stay for the duration. (20%)

Papers: To help you think through and engage the topics/concepts covered in the course you are responsible for submitting four (4) papers. These papers give you space to develop your own argument and offer textual evidence related to topics covered in the course. The first paper should be two to three (2-3) pages double-spaced and is due at the beginning of your recitation in week 3. The first paper is worth 10%. The second paper should be three to four pages (3-4) and will be due in week 8 also at the beginning of your recitation and is worth 10%. After the midterm the remaining two (2) papers should be four to five pages (4-5). These papers are worth 10% each. The third paper is due in week 11 and the fourth paper is due in week 14.

Paper prompts for all four papers will be posted on NYU Classes under Assignments. Students are encouraged to visit the professor and/or Recitation Instructors during office hours to discuss their papers. (40%)

Exams: To gauge student comprehension of key concepts and ideas presented in lecture and readings, there will be two exams throughout the semester, one midterm (15%) and one final exam (25%). Exams will consist of key terms and an essay question that test your knowledge of the concepts and ideas of the course material. (40%)

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is submitting a piece of work or a portion of a work (for example, an essay, research paper or quotation) which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source. You are responsible for knowing the University’s policy on plagiarism, which can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html. The University’s policy will be strictly enforced to the fullest extent in cases of plagiarism.
Accommodations:
I am happy to provide accommodations for students with learning disabilities, and I will protect the confidentiality of students’ individual learning needs. Please contact me privately and we can work to accommodate your needs.

Changes to Syllabus:
The course syllabus is subject to change. Because this course is not only about scholarly work but also about other sources of information such as blogs, I will be adding (and possibly subtracting) current pieces to the syllabus as we go. Students will be notified at least one week prior to any changes and all new assignments, links to relevant posts and/or pieces will be posted to Classes.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1: (9.5) Introductions and Course Expectations
• Syllabus Speed Dating
• What is Asian Pacific American Cultures and Contexts?

Week 2: (9.10, 9.12) Setting the Stakes
  Film: The Grace Lee Project (2005, dir. Grace Lee)
• Sucheng Chan, “Asian American Struggles for Civil, Political, Economic, and Social Rights” in Asian American Studies Now!
• Vicente M. Diaz, “To ‘P’ or Not to ‘P’?: Marking the Territory Between Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies” in Journal of Asian American Studies

Week 3: (9.17, 9.19) ‘The Chinese Question’
  Paper #1 (2 - 3 pages) Due in Recitation
• Nayan Shah, “Public Health and the Mapping of Chinatown” in Asian American Studies Now!
• Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, and Judy Yung, “Introduction” and Poems 12-33 from Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940
• Mae Ngai, “Why Trump is Making Muslims the New Chinese,” cnn.com
Week 4: (9.24, 9.26) Historical Amnesia and the Philippine-American War
- Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden”
- Mae Ngai, “From Colonial Subject to Undesirable Alien: Filipino Migration in the Invisible Empire” in *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*
- Yen Le Espiritu, “Homes, Borders, and Possibilities” in *Asian American Studies Now!*

Week 5: (10.1, 10.3) Native Hawaiians and American Imperialism
10.3: Guest Speaker: Dean Saranillio, NYU
- Noelani Goodyear-Ka'opua, “The Emergence of Hawaiian Charter Schools” in *The Seeds We Planted*
- U.S. Apology for the 1893 Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom (1993)

Week 6: (10.8, 10.10) First Wave of Asian Immigration
No Class 10.8: Fall Recess
- Ronald Takaki, “Overblown with Hope: The First Wave of Asian Immigration” in *Strangers from a Different Shore*, pp. 19-75
- Moon Ho Jung, Chapter One “Outlawing Coolies” in *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*, pp. 11-38.

Week 7: (10.15, 10.17) Midterm
10.15: Midterm Review
10.17: Midterm Exam

Week 8: (10.22, 10.24) Internment and its Aftermaths
Paper #2 (3 - 4 pages ) Due in Recitation
- “Executive Order 9066”
• Life Magazine’s 1941 Article, “How to tell Japs from the Chinese”
• Gordon H. Chang, “Superman is about to visit the relocation centers’ & the Limits of Wartime Liberalism” in Amerasia Journal pgs. 37 - 59.

Week 9: (10.29, 10.31) Post-’65 Immigration and the Model Minority Myth
Today
• Lisa Sun-Hee Park, “The Continuing Significance of the Model Minority Myth”
• Lisa S. Park, “A Letter to My Sister”
• Michael Omi and Dana Takagi, “Situating Asian Americans in the Political Discourse on Affirmative Action” in Asian American Studies Now
• Oiyan Poon, “A Real Talk Primer on Affirmative Action, Fisher, College Admissions, and Race”

Week 10 (11.5, 11.7): Third World Liberation Front
11.5: A Song for Ourselves (2010, dir. Tadashi Nakamura)
• Glenn Omatsu, “The Four Prisons and the Movements of Liberation: Asian American Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s” in Asian American Studies Now
• Karen Ishizuka, “Yellow Power” in Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long 60s
• Vijay Prashad, “Crafting Solidarities” in Asian American Studies Now
• Mari Matsuda, “We Will Not Be Used: Are Asian Americans The Racial Bourgeoisie?” in Asian American Studies Now

Week 11 (11.12, 11.14): Organizing Behind the Lens
Paper #3 (4 - 5 pages) Due in Recitation
• Yen Le Espiritu, “Reactive Solidarity: Anti-Asian Violence” in *Asian American Panethnicities: Bridging Institutions and Identities*

**Week 12: (11.19, 11.21) Thanksgiving - No Classes**

**Week 13: (11.26, 11.28) Queering Asian America**
Guest Speaker: Glenn Magpantay, Executive Director NQAPIA
• Laura Kina and Jan Bernabe, “For the Love of Unicorns: Queering Contemporary Asian American Art” in *Queering Contemporary Asian American Art*, Laura Kina and Jan Bernabe, eds.

**Week 14: (12.3, 12.5) Asian Americans and 9/11**
Paper #4 (4 - 5 pages) Due in Recitation
  12.3: *Divided We Fall: Americans in the Aftermath* (2008, dir. Valarie Kaur)
• Jerry Kang, “Thinking Through Internment: 12/7 and 9/11”
• Muneer Ahmad, “Homeland Insecurities: Racial Violence the Day after September 11”
• Sunaina Maira, “Youth Culture, Citizenship, and Globalization: South Asian Muslim Youth in the United States After September 11th” in *Asian American Studies Now!*

**Week 15: (12.10, 12.12) Asian American Pop Culture + Final Exam Prep**
  12:12: Final Exam Review
• Christine Balance, “How It Feels to Be Viral Me: Affective Labor and Asian American YouTube Performance” in *Women’s Studies Quarterly*

**Final Exam Date:**