

**AA320 / AMS 322 / WGS 340:
GENDER & SEXUALITY IN
ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE**

**INSTRUCTOR: CHRISTINE HO
TIME: 11-12:30
LOCATION: PARLIN 101
OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAYS, 2-5PM (BURDINE 482)
CHRISTINE.Y.HO@GMAIL.COM**

DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will examine how representations of gender and sexuality are instrumental to our understanding of Asian American literature from nineteenth to the twenty-first century. In our discussion of these readings, questions of identity and power will be central to understanding of the intertwined nature of race, gender, and the nation-state. We will read Asian American literature by both male and female writers in order to understand how gender and sexuality are central to understanding Asian American experiences. We will focus on questions of identity formation in relation to legal histories, racial ideology, global migrations, generational divides, class status, sexuality, and military conflict.

We will also investigate the role of gender in literary debates surrounding representations of Asian Americans. For example, we will consider Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, which is the most widely read Asian American literary text in relation to Frank Chin's attack on Kingston that she misrepresents and reinforces stereotypes that threaten Asian American masculinity. In examining these tensions between these Asian American writers, we will uncover some of the complex intersections between race and gender, revealing how profoundly they have shaped Asian American writers and literature. In order to develop a firmer grasp of the debates and significance of gender dynamics, we will read both literature by both early immigrant writers and contemporary Asian American writers and secondary critical analysis.

GRADING POLICY

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (20%): Participation is defined as active, substantial, and significant participation through either active listening or speaking. Your opinions, analysis, and willingness to engage productively with your classmates are crucial to the success of the course. Attendance is mandatory and only 2 unexcused absences are allowed. (If you have an excused absence, you are required to bring proper documentation of your absence, such as a doctor's note.)

RESPONSE PAPERS (30%): You are required to write a 1-page (single-spaced, 1 inch margins) response every week due on Tuesday. Responses can be drawn from a scene or passage in a reading that you found particularly interesting, an argument in a critical essay that you agreed or disagreed with, or a way for you to further elaborate on a debate that emerged during class discussion. You should demonstrate your ability to critically engage with the readings

and/or respond thoughtfully to course ideas/discussions. If you do not understand the readings, I encourage you to write about what you do not understand and bring your questions to class and we will try to answer them as a group. Please do not skip the readings and expect the rest of us to fill you in. Make sure to PRINT and BRING them to class every week. The response paper is due at the beginning of every class on Tuesdays. You are allowed to miss 2 response papers throughout the semester without a penalty, which means you must turn in 14 out of 16 responses throughout this semester.

MID-TERM SHORT ESSAY (10%): For your short essay, you will be required to write a 3 page (double-spaced, one-inch margins) paper on your close reading of a literary text in the course. This will be due earlier in the semester and is intended to help you prepare for your final essay. You must attach a bibliography in MLA format. For more information about close reading, please see: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts/close-reading/> **Due 3/20**

FINAL ESSAY (40%): For your final essay, you will be required to write a 10-15 page (double-spaced, one-inch margins) paper on the topic of your choice that is related to readings the course. Your essay may draw from your weekly responses, class discussions, or address an issue concerning Asian American studies that interests you. The essay must reference either: (1) at least 2 literary texts that we have discussed in class (2) a literary text from the syllabus and at least two critical essay (from either class or your own research). You must attach a bibliography in MLA format. **Due 5/12**

I reserve the right to change the syllabus during the semester.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Weekly 1-page reading responses: 30%

Mid-Term Short Essay: 10%

10-12 page Final Essay: 40%

Attendance and Active, Substantial, and Significant Participation: 20%

PRIMARY TEXTS (PURCHASE)

Patricia Powell, *The Pagoda*

Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée*

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*

Books can be purchased on amazon.com (New or Used)

ADDITIONAL READINGS ON BLACKBOARD

The additional readings can be found on Blackboard; I highly recommend that you take notes when you are reading in order to participate in class. You must bring printed versions of the readings and/or your computer/tablet to class. If you use the device for anything that

does not pertain to class such as checking your email, Facebook, etc., it will be counted as an **automatic absence** for the class. **I reserve the right to ban any and all electronic devices at any point in the semester if this is an issue so please be respectful of your classmates in order to reduce cost of printing.**

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES FLAG OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

This course is intended to increase your understanding of the history and literary traditions of Asian American writers and literature in the United States. It also discusses the intersections between the categories of gender, sexuality, race, and class in order to understand how they impact society and institutions in the United States. It will explore how Asian Americans have been marginalized using legal, historical, and literary texts that address issues of immigration, assimilation, and resistance. Moreover, it also examines the contributions of Asian American women and men in the diverse landscape of American culture.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will likely result in failure of the course. **You are responsible for knowing the definitions and penalties for Academic Dishonesty**, which include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, academic interference, etc. The University of Texas functions under an honor code and has strict standards for academic integrity (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php). According to these standards, using material from an un-cited source as if it were your own is an academic violation and not to be tolerated. (It is tantamount to a theft of ideas.) *Ignorance about the code will not serve as an excuse for infractions.* Plagiarizers are treated as violators of the code of academic integrity; their work is sent to the Dean's Office where it is kept on record, and repeat offenders are usually suspended or even asked to leave the university. For precise details about what "plagiarism" means and how it is dealt with, please consult the following web address: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/academicintegrity2.html>

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student who may feel that she or he needs an accommodation based on the impact of a disability needs to provide an accommodation request letter from the Services for Students with Disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>. Please note that letters from DRES offer suggestions for accommodation that may or may not fit with the structure of this class. In order to best accommodate specific needs, please meet with me as early as possible to develop an accommodation plan.

HONOR CODE

The core values of UT Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect towards peers and community

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN RACE, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND CLASS

TUES. 1/14 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 245-7 – Defining “Matrix of domination”

THURS. 1/16 Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “On the Theoretical Status of Race” p. 199-206

Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, 1-18

WEEK 2: ASIAN “COOLIE” LABORERS IN THE AMERICAS

TUES. 1/21 Patricia Powell, *The Pagoda*, p. 1-113

THURS. 1/23 Patricia Powell, *The Pagoda*, p. 113-245

Lisa Lowe, “The Intimacies of Four Continents,” *Haunted by Empire*, p. 191-208

WEEK 3: EARLY CHINESE AMERICAN MALE MIGRANTS

TUES. 1/28 Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men*, “On Discovery,” “On Fathers,” “The Father from China,” “The Great Grandfather of the Sandalwood Mountain,” p. 1-122

THURS. 1/30 Kingston, *China Men*, “The Grandfather of the Sierra Mountain,” “The Laws,” p. 123-53, p. 123-59

Helen Zia, “Surrogate Slaves to American Dreamers,” *Asian American Dreams*, p. 21-52

WEEK 4: CHINESE FAMILIES DURING THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ERA

TUES. 2/4 Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance and Other Stories* (Short stories: “Mrs. Spring Fragrance,” “The Wisdom of the New,” “Mental Leaves from the Portfolio”)

Ye Le Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, 18-48

THURS. 2/6 *The Page Act* (Blackboard)

The Chinese Exclusion Act

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/seven/chinxact.htm#act>

Erika Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example," p. 36-56

WEEK 5: FILIPINO MASCULINITY AND U.S. IMPERIALISM

TUES. 2/11 Carlos Bulosan, *America is in the Heart*, "Introduction" and "Part Two" p. 97-189

THURS. 2/13 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, "The Man of Color and the White Woman," p. 63-82

Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, p. 48-60

WEEK 6: JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT AND DISPLACED DOMESTICITY

TUES. 2/18 Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*, p. 1-105

THURS. 2/20 Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*, p. 106-144

Making Waves, "Nisei Women and Resettlement during World War II," 115-126

WEEK 7: SILENCE AND CHINESE AMERICAN HEROINES

TUES. 2/25 Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, "The No Name Woman," "White Tigers," p. 1-53

THURS. 2/27 Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, "Shaman," "At the Western Palace," p. 55-161

WEEK 8: CHINATOWN COWBOYS AND WOMEN WARRIORS

TUES. 3/4 Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe," p. 161-209

Robert G. Lee, "The Woman Warrior as Intervention in Asian American Historiography," p. 52-63

THURS. 3/6 Frank Chin, "Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake," *The Big Aiiiiiiiiiii!*, p. 1-30

WEEK 9:
3/10-15

SPRING BREAK ☺

WEEK 10:

CHINESE AMERICAN MASCULINITY AND GENERATIONAL DIVIDES

TUES. 3/18

Frank Chin, *Chinamen & The Pacific* (Short stories: “A Chinese Lady Dies,” “Yes, Young Daddy,” “The Eat and Run Midnight People,” “Afterword”)

THURS. 3/20

King-Kok Cheung, “The Woman Warrior versus the Chinaman Pacific,” *Conflicts in Feminism*, p. 234-246

CLOSE READING MID-TERM SHORT ESSAY DUE 3/20 via email

WEEK 11:

QUEERING ORIENTALISM ON STAGE

TUES. 3/25

Henry David Hwang, *M. Butterfly*

THURS. 3/27

Edward Said, “Introduction,” *Orientalism*, p. 1-28

WEEK 12:

VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND GENDERED ASSIMILATION

TUES. 4/1

Lan Cao, *Monkey Bridge*, p. 1-44, 118-132

THURS. 4/3

Lan Cao, *Monkey Bridge* p. 227-260

Lisa Long, “Contemporary Women’s Roles through Hmong, Vietnamese, and American Eyes,” p. 1-17

WEEK 13:

POSTMODERN FEMINISM AND KOREAN AMERICAN WOMEN

TUES. 4/8

Theresa Cha, *Dictée*

THURS. 4/10

Laura Hyun Yi Kang, “Compositional Struggles: Re-memorizing Korean/American Women,” *Compositional Subjects*, p. 219-70

WEEK 14: POST-9/11 MUSLIM AMERICAN IDENTITY

TUES. 4/15 Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?*, (Short stories: "Preface," "Rasha," "Yasmin," "Omar")

THURS. 4/17 Sunaina Maira, "Flexible Citizenship/Flexible Empire: South Asian Muslim Youth in Post-9/11 America," *American Quarterly*, p. 697-720

WEEK 15: ANGRY ASIAN MEN

TUES. 4/22 Don Lee, *Yellow*, "Yellow," p. 197-255

THURS. 4/24 Listen to "Phil Yu: Angry Asian Man Not So Angry" by National Public Radio
(<http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2013/09/09/219725276/angry-asian-man-not-so-angry>)

WEEK 16: INDIAN MOTHERHOOD AND THE SOUTH ASIAN CULTURAL DIVIDE

TUES. 4/29 Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 1-188

THURS. 5/1 Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*, p. 189-291

Screen: Mira Nair, *The Namesake* (selections)

FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 12 by 5 pm via email

(Please include your first and last name in the file name)