

Comparative Studies 241

Introduction to Asian American Studies

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I. REQUIRED TEXTS

Strangers from a Different Shore, Ronald Takaki
The Contemporary Asian American Experience, 2nd ed. Timothy P. Fong
Yankee Dawg You Die, Philip K. Gotanda
Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston
Donald Duk, Frank Chin
Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle (film)
Additional readings (on e-reserve and closed reserve)

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course introduces you to the discipline of Asian American Studies, a field of inquiry that examines the history, experiences, and cultural productions of Americans whose ancestries come from such diverse areas as Japan, China, Korea, the Philippines, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. We will examine social, political, racial, and ethnic topics relevant to Asian American studies and engage in discussions covering such areas as representation/self-representation, visibility, identity, interracial relationships, and “authenticity.”

Our quarter will be divided into three sections: history, social/political issues, and media representation. For each area you will be required to ask searching questions and respond through critical inquiry and research. Above all, consider how “Asian” identity (whatever that is) overlaps with, melds with, and conflicts with “American” identity (whatever that is)—and vice versa; and how this identity impacts the ways in which Asian Americans gain and lose social mobility, access to resources, political power, and a sense of place, home, and acceptance amongst themselves and in the broader fabric of the United States.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS (TOTAL: 200 POINTS)

A. Short Written Assignments [SWA] (90 points total)

Five times in the quarter you will submit a Short Written Assignment (SWA) based on the reading for that week. Each SWA must be typed, single-spaced, and be between 700-800 words. The SWA must be a thoughtful response to an issue or cluster of related issues that arises in the reading. Although you may use the more informal “I” point of view, the SWA must maintain an academic tone and must contain an analysis or dissection of the issue at hand. I will grade you on insightfulness, thoroughness, clarity, and cohesion, as well as spelling and grammar. All SWA’s are worth 20 points except for SWA #1, which is worth 10 points. You must do SWA #1 and #6; you then have an option of choosing three of the remaining five SWA’s to write. See the Course Outline for due dates.

B. Discussion Leadership (2 discussions, 20 points each; 40 points total)

Twice during the quarter you will lead a small group discussion, the basis of which will be the reading for that day. Come to class prepared with a typed list of 5-8 discussion questions, leaving enough room for notes, as you will also need to keep a rough transcript of the answers and dialogue initiated by your questions. I will grade you on the quality of your questions, your ability to maintain a focused discussion, and your level of preparation. Small group discussions should last between 45-60 minutes.

C. Paper and Presentation (paper 40 points; presentation 15 points; 65 points total)

1. Write a 5-7 page paper which analyzes the cultural representation of Asian Americans in the media. You may draw on film, television, literature, advertisements, Internet, music, drama, or other visual arts or media. During week 6 I will cancel class and meet individually with students to go over their paper topics. At minimum come to this meeting with a list of three potential topics; at most come with a rough draft. We will discuss improvements, additional areas or inquiry, and presentation ideas. The final paper should conform to MLA standards (other criteria will be given later in the quarter). Like SWA's, your paper will be graded on insightfulness, thoroughness, clarity, and cohesion, as well as spelling and grammar.

2. At the end of the quarter you will present your paper to the class. You do not need to read your paper verbatim, but you should find a means of presentation that concisely summarizes your research with the help of visual aids. The presentation should last fifteen to twenty minutes. After each student has presented for that day, the floor will be opened up for questions, so be prepared to discuss your paper. Your presentation grade will be based on preparation, flow, professionalism of presentation, use of visual aids, and the manner in which you respond to questions about your paper.

D. Participation (20 points total)

Your active involvement in all discussions, large and small, is an important component of this course, and I want to encourage your voice, perspectives, and insights. You will begin with a baseline score of 20 points which then rises or lowers depending on your level of engagement. Remember to value other people's perspectives, keeping the dialogue vigorous but always respectful.

E. Attendance

Attendance impacts your final grade in this manner: I allow you 2 unexcused absences without penalty. Upon the third and fourth unexcused absence I will subtract 20 points from your final score each time (thus at the fourth unexcused absence 40 points will be deducted). Upon earning a fifth unexcused absence you will fail the course. You are responsible for keeping track of your absences. I also require you to be present for paper presentation days; 20 points will be deducted from your final score for each unexcused absence on a presentation day.

IV. GRADING BREAKDOWN

A..... 200-188 pts	B..... 173-166pts	C..... 153-146pts	D 127-120 pts
A- 187-180pts	B-..... 165-160pts	C 145-140pts	E..... 119-0pts
B+ 179-174pts	C+..... 159-154pts	D+ 139-128pts	

V. CLASS POLICIES

A. University-Excused Absences

You will only be allowed to make up missed assignments or exams if your absence (or lateness) was due to a university-related excuse. A university-related excuse includes:

1. Illness (you must provide a doctor's note)
2. A university-related activity (you must provide an excuse letter on university letterhead)
3. Civic duties (such as National Guard; provide documentation)

Documents must be presented upon your return to qualify your absence or lateness as university-excused.

Events that do not meet the qualifications for an excused absences include (but are not limited to): computer problems, parking problems, traffic and other transportation-related anomalies, power outages, relationship breakups, alarm clock issues, inclement weather (unless OSU shuts down), court appearances (unless you have been subpoenaed or are testifying before Congress), arrest, jail time, or wardrobe malfunctions.

You are responsible for all information delivered on the date of your absence.

B. Lateness

Unless otherwise indicated, turn in assignments at the beginning of class. Assignments that arrive after they have been collected in class will have their scores penalized (unless the lateness was university-excused, see above). I permit late assignments after the due date only if you have a university-related excuse for absences or lateness.

C. Disability

If you have a disability or medical condition that will adversely affect your performance in the class, contact the Office of Disability Services (292-3307) immediately. Also, inform us as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate adjustments for you. All communications with us are confidential.

D. Academic Misconduct

The assignments you submit must be the product of your own efforts. I do not look kindly upon those who misrepresent someone else's work as their own or who receive unauthorized assistance on exams. Any student committing acts of academic misconduct, as defined by the Student Handbook, will be referred to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. All cases of suspected misconduct will be reported. Avoid even the appearance of academic misconduct.

A simple rule to remember: if you can find it on the Internet, we can find it on the Internet.

E. Syllabus Changes

If any changes need to be made to the syllabus (adjusted deadlines, etc.) you will receive advanced notice.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 0

Wed., Sept. 21

Intro to the Course; The Myth of the Model Minority

WEEK 1

Mon., Sept. 26

Wed., Sept. 28

HISTORY, PART ONE

Strangers from a Different Shore, 3-176

Strangers from a Different Shore, 177-269; **SWA #1 DUE REQUIRED**

WEEK 2

Mon., Oct. 3

Wed., Oct. 5

HISTORY, PART TWO

Strangers from a Different Shore, 270-354

Strangers from a Different Shore, 355-509; **SWA #2 DUE**

WEEK 3

Mon., Oct. 10

Wed., Oct. 12

FAMILY, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY

“Emerging Communities, Changing Realities” (Fong, 39-73); “More than Family Values’: Asian American Families and Identities” (Fong 221-264)

“Searching for Home: Voices of Gay Asian Youth in West Hollywood” (AAY); “A Fight For Gay Rights” (AAEP); “Stories from the Home Front: Perspectives of Asian American Parents with Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons” (AAEP); **SWA #3 DUE**

WEEK 4

Mon., Oct. 17

Wed., Oct. 19

VIOLENCE, POLITICS, POWER

“The Right to Excel: Asian Americans and Educational Opportunity” (Fong 77-112); “Workplace Issues: Beyond Glass Ceilings” (Fong 117-147)

“Anti-Asian Violence” (Fong 151-182) “The Final Frontier: Asian American Political Empowerment” (Fong 269-301); **SWA #4 DUE**

WEEK 5

Mon., Oct. 24

Wed., Oct. 26

MEDIA IMAGES

“Charlie Chan No More: Asian Americans and Media Images” (Fong, 188-217); “Performing Race, Negotiating Identity” (AAY); “Asian Pacific Americans in Prime Time: Lights, Camera and Little Action” (NAPALC, www.napalc.org/files/NAPALC_report_final.pdf)

Yankee Dawg You Die!; **SWA #5 DUE**

WEEK 6

Mon., Oct. 31

Wed., Nov. 2

Paper Conferences, day 1

Paper Conferences, day 2

WEEK 7

Mon., Nov. 7

Wed., Nov. 9

LITERARY AND CINEMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

Woman Warrior and *Donald Duk*, day 1

Woman Warrior and *Donald Duk*, day 2; **SWA #6 DUE REQUIRED**

WEEK 8

Mon., Nov. 14

Wed., Nov. 16

Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle (watch in class)

Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle (discussion); **SWA #7 DUE**

WEEK 9

Mon., Nov. 21

Wed., Nov. 23

Paper Presentations, Day 1

Paper Presentations, Day 2

WEEK 10

Mon., Nov. 28

Wed., Nov. 30

Paper Presentations, Day 3

Paper Presentations, Day 4