

**English 587 Studies in Asian American Literature and Culture:  
“From Immigrant Culture to Pop Culture”**

Professor Martin Joseph Ponce  
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**Objectives:** This course is designed to introduce students to the diversity, complexity, and historical range of Asian American literature. We will be particularly concerned with considering the ways that “Asian American”—a term which comes into widespread use in the wake of the social movements of the 1960s and 70s—is a site of both reclamation and contention, commonality and difference. Spanning the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the selected readings will move across national origins, historical moments, and literary genres, and will be used to present some of the predominant thematic concerns and formal techniques of Asian American literature.

**Required Texts**

Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart* (1946)  
M. Evelina Galang, *Her Wild American Self* (1996)  
Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters* (1990)  
Henry David Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (1988)  
Lawson Fusao Inada, *Legends from Camp* (1996)  
Maxine Hong Kingston, *Woman Warrior* (1976)  
John Okada, *No-No Boy* (1957)  
José Garcia Villa, from *Footnote to Youth: Tales of the Philippines and Others* (1933)  
A packet of essays and stories (available at Cop-ez)

**Week 1**

- King-Kok Cheung, “Re-Viewing Asian American Literary Studies,” in *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature* (1997) (Cop-ez packet)
- Sui Sin Far, “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian” (1913) (Cop-ez packet), Ronald Takaki, “From a Different Shore: Their History Bursts with Telling” and “Overblown with Hope: the First Wave of Asian Immigration” (1998) (Cop-ez packet)

IMAGINING “AMERICA” TRANSNATIONALLY

**Week 2**

- José Garcia Villa, “Wings and Blue Flame: A Trilogy,” “Song I Did Not Hear,” “Young Writer in New Country,” in *Footnote to Youth: Tales of the Philippines and Others* (1933)

**Week 3**

- Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart* (1946)

**Week 4**

- John Okada, *No-No Boy* (1957)

- PAPER #1 DUE

## GENDER AND GENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION

### Week 5

- Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (1976)

### Week 6

- M. Evelina Galang, *Her Wild American Self* (1996)

## IMPERIALISM AND SEXUALITY

### Week 7

- Henry David Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (1988)

### Week 8

- Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters* (1990)
- PAPER # 2 DUE

## CROSS-CULTURAL POETICS: POETRY AND MUSIC

### Week 9

- Lawson Fusao Inada, *Legends from Camp* (1996)

## WHERE ARE WE TODAY?: ASIAN AMERICANS AND POPULAR CULTURE

### Week 10

- Film: *Better Luck Tomorrow* (dir., Justin Lin, 2002)
- Ronald Takaki, "One-Tenth of the Nation: Asian Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (Cop-ez)
- Course Evaluations

### Exam day: Final project due

### Assignments and Grade Distribution

1. Quizzes and in-class writing (15%)
2. 2 five-page essays (25% each)
3. Final project (25%)
4. Participation (10%)

**Quizzes and in-class writing:** At least once a week, I will begin class with either a quiz or a writing prompt (on which you will write for 10 minutes) regarding material we have recently read or viewed. The purpose of these assignments is to make sure you're keeping up with the reading, reading carefully, and thinking about how the theoretical material might be applied to the texts we're discussing. I will grade the quizzes and assignments on a scale of 0-100.

**Essays:** You will write two 5-page (double-spaced, not including endnotes and works cited) essays for this class. These will be critical/analytical essays in which you interpret one of the literary texts we've been studying up to that point in the class. The topics for these essays are open (you choose), although I'll give you some ideas about a week or so before the paper is due. Papers must be turned in at the beginning of class. Papers turned in after that time will lose one letter grade per day (each day of the weekend counts, too!), i.e., from A to B, B- to C-. Papers turned in after I collect them but before class ends will lose one third of their final grade, i.e., from A to A-, B+ to B.

**Final project/paper:** The final project/paper (**due on exam day**) will consist of your response to one of several questions/assignments that I'll pose near the end of the quarter. It will encourage you to be creative (using different writing forms, different media, etc.) but will also allow for a more traditional response, if you prefer. You can expect to write approximately five double-spaced pages or the equivalent. Projects turned in late will lose one letter grade per day (A to B).

**Participation and attendance:** I view the classroom as a place where knowledge is jointly developed, not simply dispensed, so you must be present in order to participate in this process. To participate fully, you must attend daily; more than 3 unexcused absences will be cause to lower your final grade by ½ a grade (e.g., from B+ to B-). You must also contribute regularly to class discussion. The quality of your comments is just as important as the quantity. Students who miss a class are responsible for finding out what they missed and should not expect me to repeat a lecture during my office hours. If you are absent (unexcused), late, or unprepared on the day of a quiz or in-class writing assignment, you will receive a 0 for that assignment.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the representation of another person's work or ideas as one's own. It includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another individual's work as well as the inappropriate unacknowledged use of someone's ideas. In accordance with university rules, I will report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. Being held accountable for plagiarism can entail not only failure of the assignment you plagiarized but also failure of the course.

**Accessibility:** I am committed to making the classroom accessible for all enrolled students. The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 292-3307.