

AAS 212.01 ASIAN AMERICAN FILM AND MEDIA



Spring 2014

Stony Brook University

Department of Asian and Asian American Studies

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

AAS 212.01 - Asian American Film and Media

Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-5:20 pm Humanities 1023

This course satisfies the DEC category G

This course satisfies the SBC categories HUM, *USA and *HFA+

Course instructor: **Professor N. Balce**

Section: 01

Office hours: Mondays 12 - 2 p.m. Wednesdays 12-1p.m. And by appointment. Humanities 1115

Instructor information: marianerissa.balce-cortes@stonybrook.edu

Japanese American activist Yuri Kochiyama cradles the head of her dying friend, Malcolm X. Taken in Harlem, New York. Photo from *Life Magazine* circa February 21, 1965.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Using methodologies of the Humanities disciplines, such as literature, linguistics, classics, cultural studies, philosophy, religious studies, art history and criticism, this course provides an introductory overview of important topics in Asian and Asian American Studies.

Course topic:

The course examines race and representation in American popular culture as they relate to the experiences of Asian immigrants, Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans. The course is also a critical survey of more than four decades of Asian American documentaries, narrative films, and experimental shorts. By "Asian American film and media," we refer to films, videos, media art, essays and memoirs by and/or about Asian Americans including those who are LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer), Muslim American, mixed-race Asian, exiles, refugees or undocumented.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the history and the political issues behind popular media representations of Asian Americans in the United States.

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2. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of Asian American film and media by and through the work of some Asian American filmmakers, video artists, media activists, writers and actors.
3. Apply critical race concepts (race, class, gender) in American cultural studies by analyzing Asian American film and media texts.
4. Perform close readings of Asian American media texts via an individual presentation and submitting written media analysis (exam, in-class writing, and the final paper requirement).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (4):

Class Participation and Attendance 20%; Individual presentation 20%; Exam (late term) 30%; Media analysis (final paper) 30%

Class Participation and Attendance 20%

Student participation and attendance will be based on:

1. Active participation in class based on the student's critique or analysis of the assigned readings. Students are encouraged to ask questions that encourage debate and discussion based on the readings of the course.
2. Analytical skills (in class discussion and in writing exercises). For optimal participation points, students should quote from the assigned reading and offer analysis.
3. Active presence in class (listening and speaking). Students who sleep or show lack of focus will be asked to leave the class or will be marked accordingly in the final assessment.
4. Students who enter the class after 15 minutes will be marked with a half-absence. Students who incur more than 3 absences should expect that their final grade may be pulled down by a full letter grade.

Individual presentation 20% (15 minutes)

Each student will be assigned to lead the discussion of a chapter from a book or the assigned reading. Each student is required to explain TWO IMPORTANT CONCEPTS offered by the assigned author, or TWO OBSERVATIONS offered by a scholar regarding Asian American film and media, or discuss TWO PASSAGES OR QUOTES from the reading that relate to the topic of the week. Presentations should be written out and submitted to the instructor, 3-4 pages. Students will read from their presentation text.

(Late-term) Exam - 30%

The late term exam will have two components, part A will be identification of critical terms, and modified true or false; and part B will be essay questions. The late-term exam will be on May 5 MONDAY.

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Media analysis (final paper) - 30%

Students must write a 6-8 page critique the following topics. (Choose ONE paper topic only.)

1. (FILM/ MEDIA) An analysis of any of the films or media texts discussed in class.
2. (FOOD) An interview with an Asian American individual regarding 1) food history, 2) the preparation of a certain food and 3) the significance of the food (personal memories, the food's connection to a community, etc.)
3. (POPULAR CULTURE) An analysis of a fad or something popular (fashion, music, a celebrity, a place) in an Asian American community.

Description of Required Readings and/or Assignments

Readings

1. *Asian Americans and the Media*, an anthology by Kent Ono and Vincent Pham (Polity 2009)
2. *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader*, an anthology by Robert Ji-Song Ku et al. (NYU Press 2013)
3. *One Hundred Demons*, a graphic memoir by Lynda Barry (Sasquatch Books 2005)
4. *Hapa Girl: A Memoir*, by May-lee Chai (Temple U Press 2007)
5. Essay and blogs on our Blackboard course site

All books are available at the Stony Brook Campus Bookstore on the lower level of the Melville Library. Main line of bookstore: 631-632-6550.

Films (To be shown as excerpts in class. But since these are on reserve at the library, or available via Netflix, you can watch the films in full and get participation points by writing a one-page critique)

1. Steven Okazaki's documentary, *Days of Waiting* (1990/2005). DVD 1289
2. Renee Tajima-Pena and Christine Choy's documentary, *Who Killed Vincent Chin* (1988/ 2004) DVD 2606
3. Henry Koster's musical film, *Flower Drum Song* (1959/ 2006) DVD 2893
4. Ang Lee's narrative film, *The Wedding Banquet* (1993/2004) DVD 455
5. Elaine H. Kim's documentary, *Slaying the Dragon Reloaded* (2011) DVD 2809
6. Alice Wu's narrative film, *Saving Face* (2004) DVD 3164
7. Vikram Gandhi's documentary, **Kumare* (2012) [*On Netflix]
8. Mira Nair's narrative film, *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) DVD 285
9. Gene Cajayon's narrative film, *The Debut* (2003) DVD 1289
10. Tze Chun's narrative film, *Children of Invention* (2010) DVD 2599

GRADING

A	=	94-100	B+	=	87-89	C+	=	77-79	D+	=	67-69
A-	=	90-93	B	=	84-86	C	=	74-76	D	=	64-66
			B-	=	80-83	C-	=	70-73	F	=	63 and below

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MEETING SCHEDULE

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

Jan 27 Mon. Syllabi and course requirements

Jan 29 Wed. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 1, pages 1-10 only
Media text: (1) Eliot Chang, “Things Asians Hate”; excerpt from Steven Okazaki’s documentary *Days of Waiting* (1990)

Week 2 Hate Discourse and Hate Crimes

FEB 3 Mon. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 2 on yellow peril discourse
Screening: Documentary, Renee Tajima-Pena and Christine Choy, *Who Killed Vincent Chin* (1988/ 2004) DVD 2606

5 Wed. Screening (continuation): Documentary, Renee Tajima-Pena and Christine Choy, *Who Killed Vincent Chin* (1988/ 2004) DVD 2606

Week 3 Racism and Representation

FEB 10 Mon. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 3 on yellow face

Media text: Student examples on yellow face

12 Wed. Film excerpts: 1) Henry Koster’s musical film, *Flower Drum Song* (1959/ 2006) DVD 2893; 2) Ang Lee’s *The Wedding Banquet* (1993/ 2004) DVD 455.

Week 4 Sexualities

FEB 17 Mon. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 4 on gender and sexuality

19 Wed. Excerpts: 1) Documentary, Elaine H. Kim’s *Slaying the Dragon Reloaded* (2011) DVD 2809; 2) Alice Wu’s narrative film, *Saving Face* (2004)

In-class writing exercise.

Week 5 Stereotypes and Protests

Feb 24 Mon. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 5 on the model minority stereotype

Media text: “The Tiger Mom” debates

Student presentations 1-3

26 Wed. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 6 on community protests

Media text: Video clips on hate crimes

Student presentations 4-6

Week 6 Asian American Media Independence

MAR. 3 Mon. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 7 and 8 on media independence

Student presentations 7-9

Excerpts: 1) Mira Nair’s narrative film, *Monsoon Wedding* (2001); 2) Gene Cajayon’s narrative film *The Debut* (2003)

5 Wed. **Asian Americans and the Media** Chapter 9 and 11

Student presentations 10-12

Excerpt: Tze Chun’s narrative film, *Children of Invention* (2010)

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Week 7	<u>Food Cultures 1</u>
MAR 10 Mon.	Eating Asian America: Chapter 3 by Heather Lee - on restaurant workers in New York Student presentations 13-15
12 Wed.	Eating Asian America: Chapter 7 by Dawn Mabalon - on adobo Student presentations 16-18
Week 8	SPRING BREAK
Week 9	<u>Food Cultures 2</u>
MAR 24 Mon.	Eating Asian America: Chapter 4 by Oliver Wang - on taco trucks in Los Angeles Student presenters 19-21
26 Wed.	Eating Asian America: Chapter 10 by Robert Ji-Song Ku - on soy sauce Student presenters 22-24
Week 10	<u>Food Cultures 3</u>
Mar. 31 Mon.	Eating Asian America: Chapter 1 by Erin Curtis - on Cambodian donut shops in Los Angeles Student presentations 25-27
APR 2 Wed.	Eating Asian America: Chapter 12 by Zohra Saed - on Uzbek food in Brooklyn Student presentations 28-30
Week 11	<u>Filipino American Culture: Lechon and the Graphic Memoir</u>
APR. 7 Mon.	Eating Asian America: Chapter 8 by Rene Alexander Orquiza - on lechon Student presentations 31-33
9 Wed.	Lynda Barry's One Hundred Demons pages 1-84 Student presentations 34-35
Week 12	<u>The Asian American Graphic Memoir: Lynda Barry's One Hundred Demons</u>
APR. 14 Mon.	Lynda Barry's One Hundred Demons pages 85-216.
16 Wed.	No class. - <i>I will be attending the Association for Asian American Studies conference. Students are required to go on-line to answer the Discussion Board questions on May-lee Chai's memoir, Hapa Girl.</i>
Week 13	<u>The Asian American Memoir: May-lee Chai's Hapa Girl</u>
APR. 21 Mon.	May-lee Chai's Hapa Girl
23 Wed.	ALTERNATIVE EVENT: Class will meet at the Wang Center. Students are required to attend the one-day event, MARVELS AND MONSTERS symposium on Asian representations in graphic narratives (novels and comics).
Week 14	<u>The Asian American Memoir: May-lee Chai's Hapa Girl</u>

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APR. 28 Mon. May-lee Chai's *Hapa Girl*
30 Wed. 1) Conclusion of *Hapa Girl*; 2) In-class review for late-term exam.

Week 15 Students' Media Text
MAY 5 Mon. LATE-TERM EXAM
7 Wed. Student curated media analysis

MAY 12 MONDAY: Media portfolio due with two required submissions. (1) Submit a clear and clean copy by 5 pm at the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies office, 1046 Humanities Building. (2) Submit a Word or electronic copy (FORMAT your file as "Lastname.doc") via SafeAssign. Students who do not submit an electronic version on SafeAssign will risk their grade being docked by as much as 3 points. You must follow the style guide for the film and media portfolio that will be posted on Blackboard or risk another 3 point deduction. No late papers.

CLASS PROTOCOL

9 p.m. check-in for study guide, Sunday and Tuesday night. Read the assigned readings and be ready to answer the study guide questions posted on Blackboard at 9 pm, Sunday night and Tuesday night. You are expected to finish the assigned readings BEFORE we meet for class. You must be ready to discuss the assigned reading for class. You are required to bring either the book or a photocopy of the assigned reading. I would consider it rude and unprofessional if you come to class with no readings, or if you are not ready to discuss the assigned readings when you are called to analyze the text.

Socratic discussions: Our class meetings will begin with a discussion on historical issues and critical concepts. Our classes will be structured as Socratic discussions (questions and dialogue) of a critical concept or the assigned text. Students are expected to participate in the discussion by offering analysis or interpretation of a text. You will be evaluated for the quality of your contributions in class through questions or analysis that you offer. You are strongly encouraged to read the assigned text aloud and analyze or interpret the reading you have chosen.

No texting, no cell phones, no laptops. Students are encouraged to take notes with pen and paper. Period. Students who have the electronic version of the readings must stay in front of the class for the instructor to see your screen at all times.

On critical language: This is a class on Asian American film and media. If you do not agree with a particular author, you are encouraged to cite the quotation to support your argument. Since we are learning how to think and write critically, statements without TEXTUAL basis or evidence are not tenable.

On writing tutors: While I am committed to recognizing "literacies" or multiple linguistic backgrounds of all students, our film course requires your skill in analysis and writing. For students who might need writing support for your critical papers, please visit the Writing Center at <http://stonybrook.edu/writrhet/wcabout.shtml>.

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The Writing Center is a service of the Program in Writing & Rhetoric. They are located in 2009 Humanities Building, and their telephone number is (631) 632-7405.

On e-mails regarding class: I will only answer e-mails received during weekdays from Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am - 5 pm. Unless it is an emergency, I will answer e-mails within 48 hours. I will not answer rude, unprofessional emails. Such correspondence will be brought to the attention of student advisers.

Expectations: You are expected to listen actively or be asked to leave the room. All students are required to attend lectures, alternative classes at the Wang Center or other venues, to do the assigned readings, to master the material, and to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards of courtesy and etiquette that govern academic inquiry. Your preparedness in class is your commitment to your peers.

CAVEAT AND LAST WORD:

The syllabus is a working draft of our intellectual topics and texts during the semester. I reserve the right to change the syllabus given certain situations (i.e. weather, books or films not being available, etc.). The syllabus is a labor contract. By registering for this course, you have agreed to do intellectual work that requires your participation, your labor (reading) and your imagination (your analytical skills in speaking and writing).

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) STATEMENT

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.