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T/Th 3:55-5:15-HSB201  
Office: RAD 205D  
Office Hours: Thu 1:00-3:00pm

### Asian American Literature and its Discontents

01:050:300:02; 01:351:377:01

1.19.09

What is so Asian American about Asian American Literature? The course will survey themes in Asian American literature from its emergence as first anthologized in *Aiiieeee* (1974) fueled by the Yellow Power Movement to the various cultural and literary challenges since then posed in terms of gender, sexuality and colonialism. The class will give a brief overview of Asian American history in the 19th and 20th centuries to contextualize the two centuries of Asian American writing in the United States. The class will develop close reading skills to interrogate literary (traditional and experimental novels) and filmic texts (melodrama and musical) by and about Asian/Asian Americans to raise questions about form, aesthetics and the literary market as they relate to the larger project of Asian American Studies. These texts offer not only different ways of understanding sexuality, gender, migration and ethnicity but also challenge how we ask ethical questions of texts and how we read literature.

#### Texts:

Maxine Hong Kingston, *Woman Warrior*

R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the R's*

Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*

Lois Ann Yamanaka, *Blu's Hanging*

Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*

Brian Ascalon Roley, *American Son*

**Sakai Resources:** excerpts Chin et al., *Aiiieeee* (anthology)

Films: *My America...or Honk if you love Buddha*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Joy Luck Club*, *Harold and Kumar*

- This class is a lecture-discussion course. Attendance and participation are important in our work in the course. One-half point will be deducted for each absence and excessive lateness (>15 minutes). Three absences will result in a drop in the final grade.
- Missed office appointments will count as an absence.
- Grades will be based on 3 short inquiry papers and a final paper. Each day a paper is late will result in a third of grade drop (eg B+ to B). Papers more than 1 week late will not be accepted.
- All special accommodation requests must be brought to my attention the first two weeks.
- All cell phones must be turned off or put on vibrate.

| WEEK  | READINGS   |
|---|--|
| <b>FOUNDATIONS and MISRECOGNITION</b><br>Jan 20, 22 | 1. Introduction; Langworthy handout (Misrecognition in Asian American Literature)<br>2. Lecture: Ong. "The Making and Remaking of Asian America Through Immigration Policy."<br>Film Clips: <i>My America...or Honk if you love Buddha</i> |
| Jan 27, 29  | 1. Lecture: Asian American History<br>2. Begin Kingston, <i>Woman Warrior</i>  |

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|  | (In defense of Art; Where is Asian America?)   |
| Feb 3, 5<br>NATION and<br>ASSIMILATION                         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kingston. <i>Woman Warrior</i></li> <li>2. <i>Woman Warrior</i> and Diane Johnson, “Ghosts”; Chan, “The Mysterious West” and Johnson’s Reply; Kingston, “Cultural Misreadings by American Reviewers”; Chin, “Unmanly Warrior”</li> </ol> <p>(Where is Asian America?)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Begin Mukherjee. <i>Jasmine</i><br/>(Locating Assimilation and Death)</li> </ol> |
| Feb 10, 12   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mukherjee. <i>Jasmine</i><br/>(Locating Assimilation and Death)</li> </ol>   |
| Feb 17, 19   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Film: <i>Joy Luck Club</i> viewing</li> <li>2. <i>JLC</i>, Discussion; Wong, “Why the Joy Luck Club Sucks”</li> <li>3. Begin Yamanaka, <i>Blu’s Hanging</i></li> </ol>   |
| Feb 24, 26<br>OTHER ASIAN<br>AMERICAS                          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yamanaka, <i>Blu’s Hanging</i></li> <li>2. Controversy Notes ®; Notes on Hawai`i Creole English ®<br/>(Connections, Mothers, and Silence)</li> </ol>   |
| Mar 3, 5   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Linmark, <i>Rolling the R’s</i><br/>(Drag Queens and Charlie’s Angels)</li> <li>2. Begin Hagedorn. <i>Dogeaters</i></li> </ol>   |
| Mar 10, 12<br>No classes Mar 14-22                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hagedorn. <i>Dogeaters</i></li> </ol>  |
| Mar 24, 26   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Film: <i>Harold and Kumar</i></li> </ol>   |
| Mar 31, Apr 2<br>NEW LITERATURES                               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roley, <i>American Son</i></li> </ol>  |
| April 7, 9   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cha. <i>Dictee</i>;</li> <li>2. Spahr on <i>Dictee</i> ®</li> </ol>  |
| April 14, 16<br><b>GROUP 1-5 (T);</b><br><b>GROUP 6-9 (Th)</b> | <i>Dictee</i> (Group Mini-Presentations)   |
| No classes Apr 22-26<br>Apr 21: TBA<br>Apr 28, 30              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Film: <i>Flower Drum Song</i></b></li> <li>2. Ling, “Identity Crisis and Gender Politics”</li> <li>3. King-Kok Cheung, “Re-viewing Asian American Literary Studies” ®; and Prefaces to Chin, <i>Aieeeee</i> (1973, 1991)</li> </ol>   |

