Asian American Experience

This course provides a general introduction to major themes in Asian American studies. Analyzing and discussing a variety of cultural objects—literature, history, music, film, foodways, and popular culture—we will examine a set of interrelated topics that shape the diverse lives and experiences of Asian Americans. These topics include: identity and community; history and memory; migration and displacement; gender, sexuality, and desire; family, generation, and kinship; and citizenship and forms of belonging and non-belonging. We will conclude the semester by exploring texts that help us to reframe the category of Asian American as Asians in the Americas and the Diaspora.

Please note that some of the literary and visual texts in this course contain graphic descriptions.

Strategies for Reading and Preparing for Class

- **You must bring your books and readings to class.** With the exception of the two reports we are discussing on January 27, you must bring the physical, printed copy of the readings to class.
- **This is a discussion and close reading course.** Attendance and productive participation are important in our work during class meetings.
- **When preparing for class, follow the “K-WIC” method of reading by paying attention to keywords, key images, and key concepts, and by writing down the page numbers for these passages.** By following this method, you will be more inclined to see and establish connections between textual details and multiple larger contexts.
  - **Keywords:** What are the key phrases and words in the literary or scholarly work? How does the work explore each of these keywords?
  - **Key images:** What are the most evocative images that appear and/or are repeated in the work? How do these intersect with or complicate the main concepts and keywords?
  - **Key concepts:** What are the main concepts or central issues addressed in the work? How do these key concepts challenge our initial understanding of the text’s concerns?

Goals

- **To obtain knowledge of a diverse range of issues, cultural objects, and approaches in Asian American Studies**
- **To develop strategies of interpretation, including an ability to use critical and theoretical terms, concepts, and methods in relation to a variety of textual forms and other media**
- **To acquire the ability to engage with the work of writers, artists, and scholars during class discussions and in written assignments by using and citing such sources effectively**
- **To develop the ability to write persuasively and precisely in scholarly forms**
**Required books** (available at the Rutgers University Bookstore)


**Required readings** (marked with an asterisk [*] and accessible through SAKAI)

- **Critical secondary readings**
    - Arnold Pan, “The Year of the Tiger Mom”
    - erin Khüê Ninh, “Advice on How Not to Misread the Tiger Mother”
    - Grace Wang, “On Tiger Mothers and Music Moms”
    - OiYan A. Poon, “‘Ching Chongs and Tiger Moms: The ‘Asian Invasion’ in U.S. Higher Education”
    - Arnold Pan, “Asian American Studies After ‘Linsanity’”
    - Hua Hsu, “Everyone Else’s Jeremy Lin”
    - Konrad Ng, “#Linsanity”
    - Kathleen S. Yep, “Linsanity and Centering Sport in Asian American Studies and Pacific Islander Studies”
  - *Amy Chua, “Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior”
  - *Yen Le Espiritu, “Asian American Panethnicity: Challenges and Possibilities”
  - *Soo Ah Kwon, “The Politics and Institutionalization of Panethnic Identity”
  - *Erika Lee and Judy Yung, excerpts from* Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America
  - *LIFE* Magazine: “How to Tell the Japs from the Chinese”
  - *Anita Mannur, “Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora”
  - *Michael G. Peletz, “Transgenderism and Gender Pluralism in Southeast Asia since Early Modern Times”
  - *Natsu Taylor Saito, “Internments, Then and Now: Constitutional Accountability in Post-9/11 America”
  - *Lavina Dhingra Shankar, “The Limits of (South Asian) Names and Labels”
  - *Mike Shinoda/Fort Minor, Kenji (lyrics)*
  - *Ronald Takaki, “Confronting ‘Cultural Literacy’: The Redefining of America”

**Literature**

- **Autobiography**
  - *Maxine Hong Kingston, “No Name Woman”

- **Short fiction**
  - *Jhumpa Lahiri, “Sexy”
  - *Jhumpa Lahiri, “Mrs. Sen’s”
  - *Shani Mootoo, “Out on Main Street”
  - *Natasha Singh, “For All the Indian Girls I’ve Ever Loved”

- **Novel (excerpt)**
  - *Karen Tei Yamashita, excerpt from Brazil-Maru*
- **Reports**

**Films and documentaries**
- Jason DaSilva (dir.), *Lest We Forget* (2003)
- Richard Fung (dir.), *Dal Puri Diaspora* (2012)
- Danny Leiner (dir.), *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* (2004)
- Renée Tajima-Peña (dir.), *My America . . . or Honk if You Love Buddha* (1997)

**Other media** (marked with an asterisk [*] and accessible through SAKAI)
- VICE, *The Asian American Experience*
- *Mike Shinoda/Fort Minor, Kenji* (music video)
- *Mike Shinoda/Fort Minor, Kenji* (lyrics)
- *Anida Ali, Mistaken for Muslim* (music video)
- *Anida Ali, Mistaken for Muslim* (lyrics)
- Fung Brothers, *Asians Eat Weird Things* (music video)
- Anthony Bourdain, *No Reservations: Philippines*

**Requirements**
- **Attendance and participation.** Attendance is mandatory, as is active reading, listening, and participation. Please come to class having read and reflected on the readings and materials for the day. Our meetings will involve class discussion, and our goal will be to produce knowledge collaboratively in the classroom.

- **Absence policy.** I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Students are expected to attend ALL classes. If you expect to miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. You are allowed 3 absences for any reason whatsoever; more than 3 absences for any reason will result in a drop in your final grade; more than 6 absences for any reason will result in an automatic failure for the course. Repeated excessive lateness (over 10 minutes) will count as absences. I reserve the right to assign a grade of D or F to students whose attendance and punctuality are deemed unsatisfactory.

- **Quizzes and in-class writing exercises.** Be prepared to encounter occasional short quizzes or brief writing assignments at the start of class periods. These are meant to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings, and will also be used to jumpstart class discussion. Because we go over the answers right away, *I do not allow make-up quizzes if you are absent or late.*

- **Papers.** You will complete four writing assignments: two response papers and two term papers. I will provide more specific guidelines about these assignments as the due dates approach. Papers are due at the beginning of the class period. Bring a printed copy of your paper to class and, in addition, upload the Word document to your individual Dropbox in the SAKAI
class page before class on the same day. Each day a paper is late will result in a 5-point drop in your grade (e.g., 80% to 75% or, in this scenario, C+ to C).

- **Assignments.** With the exception of the final exam, all assignments must be completed by the last day of class.

- **Undergraduate Symposium on Asians in the Americas and the Diaspora.** On April 15, 2014, the university will host its fourth annual undergraduate symposium in Asian American studies. You are eligible to submit the work you complete in this class for presentation at the Symposium.

- **Extra credit opportunities.** There will be several opportunities to earn extra credit by attending specific events during the semester. The extra points you earn will be tabulated into your final quiz grade.

- **Final exam.** You will be evaluated on your comprehensive comprehension of all the materials we read and discuss in class during the entirety of this semester. The 3-hour final exam will be held on **Wednesday, May 14 from 8:00 to 11:00 pm. Failure to complete the final exam at the scheduled time will result in an automatic failure for the course.**

- **Final grade.** You will be evaluated both for consistency and/or for improvement in your performance during the course of the entire semester.

**Grade distribution**

- Attendance 5%
- Participation 10%
- Quizzes 10%
- Response paper 1 due on M 2/10: Shinoda/Fort Minor OR Ali (2 pages) 5%
- Response paper 2 due on M 3/31: Leiner (2 pages) 5%
- Term paper 1 due on M 3/3: Kingston OR Phan (3 to 5 pages) 20%
- Term paper 2 due on M 4/21: Lahiri OR Tomine (5 to 7 pages) 25%
- Final exam on W 5/14 (8:00 – 11:00 pm) 20%
- TOTAL 100%

**Grade chart**

- Note the following chart for grades in this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>92-100</td>
<td>87-91</td>
<td>81-86</td>
<td>77-80</td>
<td>70-76</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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**Office hours**

- I will hold office hours every Tuesday from 1:00 to 2:30 pm in my office in the Tyler Clementi Center (Gateway Building, Room 415). As a courtesy, please email or speak to me in advance to confirm a meeting during office hours.
Accessibility
- The Office of Disability Services, located in the Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, on Livingston Campus (54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue), offers services for students with documented disabilities. Telephone: (848) 445-6800. Email: dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu. Website: https://ods.rutgers.edu/.
- All special accommodation requests must be brought to my attention in the first 2 weeks of the semester.

Academic misconduct and plagiarism
- Plagiarism is the representation of another’s works or ideas as your own. It includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. If the OSC determines that you have violated the University’s Code of Student Conduct, the sanctions for the violation could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. For more information about academic integrity, visit http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity.

Class cancellation policy
- I will contact you via email in the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency. I will also contact you following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Cell phones
- All cell phones must be turned off during class.
**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1**

W 1/22  Introduction

**HISTORICAL CONTEXTS: WHERE IS ASIAN AMERICA? WHO IS ASIAN AMERICAN?**

**Week 2**

M 1/27  
  Overview (pp. 1-18); Portrait of Asian Americans (pp. 19-36)
*Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Report, “A Community of Contrasts: Asian Americans in the United States” (10 pages)
  Welcome (p. 1); Introduction (p. 2); Executive Summary (pp. 3-5); Population (p. 6); Population Growth (p. 7); Geographic Distribution (p. 8); Ethnic Groups (p. 9); Mixed Race Population (p. 10)
*Ronald Takaki, “Confronting ‘Cultural Literacy’: The Redefining of America” (5 pages)
  In-class screening and discussion: VICE, *The Asian American Experience*
  In-class screening: Renée Tajima-Peña, *My America . . . or Honk if You Love Buddha* (87 min)

**PANETHNICITY**

W 1/29  
*Yen Le Espiritu, “Asian American Panethnicity: Challenges and Possibilities” (18 pages)
*Soo Ah Kwon, “The Politics and Institutionalization of Panethnic Identity” (21 pages)
  In-class screening and discussion: Renée Tajima-Peña, *My America . . . or Honk if You Love Buddha*

**HISTORY AND (NON-) BELONGING I: CHINESE EXCLUSION**

**Week 3**

M 2/3  
*Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (52 pages)
  “One Hundred Kinds of Oppressive Laws’: Chinese Immigrants in the Shadow of Exclusion” (pp. 69-109); “Epilogue: The Legacy of Angel Island” (pp. 315-325)

**HISTORY AND (NON-) BELONGING II: WORLD WAR II AND THE “WAR ON TERROR”**

W 2/5  
*Natsu Taylor Saito, “Internments, Then and Now: Constitutional Accountability in Post-9/11 America” (32 pages)
*LIFE Magazine: “How to Tell the Japs from the Chinese*
**Extra-curricular Programming of Interest (credit N/A)**

**AACC Pan Asian Lunar New Year Celebration**  
Saturday, February 8 | Time and Location TBD

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**Week 4**  
**M 2/10**  
Response paper 1 due: Shinoda/Fort Minor, *Kenji* and/or Ali, *Mistaken for Muslim*  
*Mike Shinoda/Fort Minor, *Kenji* (music video)*  
*Mike Shinoda/Fort Minor, *Kenji* (lyrics)*  
*Anida Ali, *Mistaken for Muslim* (music video)*  
*Anida Ali, *Mistaken for Muslim* (lyrics)*  
ƿ In-class screening and discussion: Jason DaSilva, *Lest We Forget* (57 min)

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**Representations of Asian American Women in Literature and Popular Culture**

**W 2/12**  
*Maxine Hong Kingston, “No Name Woman” (14 pages)

**Week 5**  
**M 2/17**  
*Amy Chua, “Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior” (6 pages)*  
*Amerasia Journal* Forum: “The Year of the Tiger Mom” (30 pages)  
Arnold Pan, “The Year of the Tiger Mom”  
erin Khuê Ninh, “Advice on How Not to Misread the Tiger Mother”  
Grace Wang, “On Tiger Mothers and Music Moms”  
Mitchell James Chang, “Battle Hymn of the Model Minority Myth”  
OiYan A. Poon, “‘Ching Chongs and Tiger Moms: The ‘Asian Invasion’ in U.S. Higher Education”

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**Extra credit opportunity (1 credit for attending event)**

**Mapping Across the Borders of Asian and Asian American Studies**  
Book panel discussion with Professors Chie Ikeya, Suzy Kim, Catherine Lee, and Kathy López  
Tuesday, February 18 | 4:30 – 6:00 pm  
Alexander Library Teleconference Lecture Hall (169 College Avenue, 4th Floor)

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**Education and the Model Minority Myth**

**W 2/19**  
*Anthony C. Ocampo, “‘Am I Really Asian?’: Educational Experiences and Panethnic Identification among Second-Generation Filipino Americans” (30 pages)

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**History and (Non-) Belonging III: The Vietnam War and Operation Babylift**

**Week 6**  
**M 2/24**  
➤ **Note:** You are responsible for reading Phan’s short story collection in its entirety for the first class meeting.  
Aimee Phan, *We Should Never Meet*

**W 2/26**  
Aimee Phan, *We Should Never Meet*
Week 7
M 3/3  Term paper 1 due: Kingston/Phan
👩‍🏫 In-class screening and discussion: Tammy Nguyen Lee, *Operation Babylift: The Lost Children of Vietnam* (72 min)

**DESIRING AND DESIRABLE SUBJECTS I**

W 3/5  *Natasha Singh, “For All the Indian Girls I’ve Ever Loved” (2 pages)*
*Lavina Dhingra Shankar, “The Limits of (South Asian) Names and Labels” (10 pages)*

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<th>Class Outing to NYC</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Performance of David Henry Hwang’s play, Kung Fu</strong></td>
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<td>Signature Theatre Company (480 West 42nd Street, New York)</td>
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<td>Saturday, March 8</td>
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Week 8
M 3/10  *Jhumpa Lahiri, “Sexy” (28 pages)*

W 3/12  *Jhumpa Lahiri, “Mrs. Sen’s” (25 pages)*

M 3/17  Spring Break: No class

W 3/19  Spring Break: No class

Week 9
M 3/24  ➤ *Note: Our class will meet in Murray Hall 210 for a guest lecture by Professor Martin F. Manalansan IV (University of Illinois)*
*Michael G. Peletz, “Transgenderism and Gender Pluralism in Southeast Asia since Early Modern Times” (32 pages)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra credit opportunity (1 credit for attending event)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture by Professor Martin Manalansan,</td>
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<td>“Queer Words of Wisdom: Generating Futures and Transforming the Present”</td>
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<td>+ Transgender API Youth Panel Discussion</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 25</td>
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<th>Extra credit opportunity (1 credit for attending event)</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Future of LGBTQ Studies at CIC Institutions: A Roundtable Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 26</td>
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<td>Alexander Library Teleconference Lecture Hall (169 College Avenue, 4th Floor)</td>
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ASIAN AMERICAN MASCUINITIES

W 3/26  In-class screening: Danny Leiner, Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle (88 min)
➤ Note: Be prepared to stay an extra 10 minutes to finish the entire screening

Extra credit opportunity (1 credit for attending event)
Lecture by Professor Martin Manalansan,
“Transforming Transgender Beyond American Borders:
Cultures, Categories, Communities”
Thursday, March 27 | 4:30 – 6:00 pm
Alexander Library Teleconference Lecture Hall (169 College Avenue, 4th Floor)

Week 10
M 3/31  Response paper 2 due: Danny Leiner, Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle
  Arnold Pan, “Asian American Studies After ‘Linsanity’”
  Hua Hsu, “Everyone Else’s Jeremy Lin”
  Konrad Ng, “#Linsanity”
  Kathleen S. Yep, “Linsanity and Centering Sport in Asian American Studies and Pacific Islander Studies”

W 4/2  ➤ Note: Our class will meet at 7:30 pm at Livingston Hall in the Livingston
Student Center (84 Joyce Kilmer Avenue)
괜 Screenining: Linsanity (90 min)

Extra credit opportunity (1 credit for attending event)
Interview and Reading with Amitav Ghosh
Thursday, April 3 | Time and Location TBD

DESIRING AND DESIRABLE SUBJECTS II

Week 11
M 4/7  ➤ Note: You are responsible for reading Tomine’s graphic novel in its entirety
for the first class meeting.
Adrian Tomine, Shortcomings

W 4/9  Adrian Tomine, Shortcomings
EATING ASIAN AMERICA

➤ Note: Be prepared to spend your time wisely this week to write and revise your second term paper.

Week 12
M 4/14  📽️ In-class screening and discussion: Fung Brothers, Asians Eat Weird Things (music video)
        📽️ In-class screening and discussion: Anthony Bourdain, No Reservations: Philippines (40 min)

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<tr>
<td>Fourth Annual Asian American Studies Undergraduate Symposium</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 15</td>
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W 4/16 Writing session: No class

Week 13
M 4/21 Term paper 2 due: Lahiri, “Sexy” and/or “Mrs. Sen’s” OR Tomine, Shortcomings
       📽️ In-class screening: Richard Fung, Dal Puri Diaspora (81 min)

W 4/23 📽️ In-class screening and discussion: Richard Fung, Dal Puri Diaspora
       *Anita Mannur, “Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora” (23 pages)

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<tr>
<td>Tyler Clementi Center Showcase</td>
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<td>Including Reading featuring SAS Honors Senior Joy Stoffers, WHASIAN</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 24</td>
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<td>Alexander Library Teleconference Lecture Hall (169 College Avenue, 4th Floor)</td>
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REMAPPING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF ASIANS IN THE AMERICAS AND THE DIASPORA

Week 14
M 4/28 *Shani Mootoo, “Out on Main Street” (12 pages)

W 4/30 *Karen Tei Yamashita, from Brazil-Maru (40 pages)

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<th>Extra credit opportunity (1 credit for attending event)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Asian American Studies Learning Community Scholars Presentations</td>
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<td>Friday, May 2</td>
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<td>Asian American Cultural Center (49 Joyce Kilmer Avenue)</td>
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**Week 15**

**M 5/5** Review

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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, May 14</td>
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Bibliography


