

**AMERICAN STUDIES & ETHNICITY 449 | ENGLISH 449
ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE**

Prof. Viet Nguyen | Class Time T & Th 12:30-1:50
Classroom VKC 252
Office Hours T 2-5:00 (drop in) at WPH 301
W and TH 2-5 (by appointment) at THH 404D

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is a selective examination of the major works, authors, and themes of Asian American literature, from the mid-20th century until the contemporary moment. The primary concern of the course is to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between Asian American literature and the histories of Asians in the United States, and the United States in Asia. In particular, the shifting function of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans in U.S. culture and economy will be a focus for the course as we examine how Asian American literary concerns and styles have evolved with that shifting function. Ultimately, the proposition this course puts forth is that the aesthetics of Asian American literature is inseparable from the politics of Asian American experiences; this intersection between aesthetics and politics is one important site where Asian American culture and identity are formed.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation	10%
Multimedia Participation	10%
Unannounced Quizzes (5 to 10)	20%
Midterm Paper	30%
Final Paper	30%

OR: Creative option in place of papers 60%

Attendance is mandatory. Only two unexcused absences are allowed; a third unexcused absence results in a 10% automatic deduction from your grade. Every unexcused absence results in a further deduction of 3%. Participation is both verbal and written; besides classroom participation, students are also expected to contribute to a multimedia Wikipedia project. Training will be provided for this and more details will follow. *Classroom and online participation is essential to the class, and will significantly impact your grade.*

Unannounced quizzes will cover only factual questions that are related to the reading. The reading will be paced proportionally by the number of allotted days. It is important that you keep up with the reading, as you will not be able to participate without having done so. The quizzes will have a significant impact on your final grade. They substitute for in-class midterm and final exams. *Quizzes cannot be made up, except in cases of documented illness and emergency.*

Midterm and final papers will be 5-7 page research papers. There will be a later handout with further information about topics. *Strict late penalties of 1/3 grade*

deduction per 24 hours of tardiness will apply, except in cases of documented illness and emergency.

The creative option is exactly that: a project that you define, whether it be a play, poems, short story, film, video, or multimedia work that addresses the themes and/or issues of the course. Since creativity is rather hard to grade, *the project will be assessed in terms of effort and revision.* Some students prefer to work by inspiration; that won't work for this class. The concession for doing a creative project is that you will draft and revise. Instead of turning in two papers, you will develop your project over the semester, in discussion with me, and turn in at least two and preferably three versions of the project over the course of the semester. You must choose the creative option by the end of the fourth week. Students who so wish can present their work to the class on the last day. *Projects must be accompanied by a brief (3-5 page) critical essay explaining the project's relevance to the course, and projects must adhere to length limits (e.g., 20 pages for written projects, or 10 minutes for visual projects); requirements are not negotiable.*

Plagiarism will be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed, including failure in the class and reporting to student conduct. Further information about plagiarism and standards of citing others' work will be available in paper handouts.

Disability Policy: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with the Disability Services Program (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

This course fulfills the Diversity Requirement by focusing on two different forms of difference: race, and to a lesser extent, class. Students will learn about race and racism in several ways, including how it has shaped Asian American experiences, histories, and cultures. Students will also learn about how living in a diverse society can function as a form of enrichment, and the role that Asian American cultural production has transformed American society.

Syllabus is subject to change at instructor's discretion.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Theresa Cha, *Dictée*
 Han Ong, *Fixer Chao*
 Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*
 Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*
 Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*
 John Okada, *No-No Boy*
 le thi diem thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*
 Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic and Reading
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<p>Wk 1 Aug 25 Tuesday</p> <p>Wk 1 Aug 27 Thursday</p>	<p>Claiming America</p> <p>Introduction: What is an Asian American?</p> <p>John Okada, <i>No-No Boy</i></p>
<p>Recommended texts</p>	<p>Sui Sin Far, <i>Mrs. Spring Fragrance</i> (stories)</p> <p>Carlos Bulosan, <i>America Is In the Heart</i> (autobiographical novel)</p> <p>Julie Otsuka, <i>When the Emperor Was Divine</i> (novel)</p>
<p>Wk 2 Sept 1 Tuesday</p> <p>Wk 2 Sept 3 Thursday</p>	<p>John Okada, <i>No-No Boy</i></p> <p>Multimedia training</p>
<p>Recommended texts</p>	<p>Elaine Kim, <i>Asian American Literature</i> (literary criticism)</p> <p>Yen Le Espiritu, <i>Asian American Panethnicity</i> (sociology)</p> <p>Ronald Takaki, <i>Strangers From a Different Shore</i> (history)</p>
<p>Wk 3 Sept 8 Tuesday</p> <p>Wk 3 Sept 10 Thursday</p>	<p>John Okada, <i>No-No Boy</i></p> <p>Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i></p>
<p>Recommended texts</p>	<p>Bharati Mukherjee, <i>Jasmine</i> (novel)</p> <p>Akhil Sharma, <i>An Obedient Father</i> (novel)</p> <p>Meena Nair, <i>Video</i> (stories)</p>
<p>Wk 4 Sept 15 Tuesday</p> <p>Wk 4 Sept 17 Thursday</p>	<p>Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i></p> <p>Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i></p> <p>Deadline to choose the creative option</p>
<p>Recommended texts</p>	<p>Amitava Kumar, <i>Bombay-London-New York</i> (literary criticism)</p> <p>Rajini Srikanth, <i>The World Next Door: South Asian American Literature and the Idea of America</i> (literary criticism)</p> <p>Lavina Dhingra Shankar and Rajini Srikanth, eds. <i>A Part, Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America</i> (multidisciplinary)</p>
<p>Wk 5 Sept 22 Tuesday</p> <p>Wk 5 Sept 24 Thursday</p>	<p>Gender, Sexual and National Borders</p> <p>Maxine Hong Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i></p> <p>Maxine Hong Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i></p>
<p>Recommended texts</p>	<p>Frank Chin, <i>The Chickencoop Chinaman and the Year of the Dragon</i> (drama)</p>

	Winnifred Eaton, <i>Me</i> (autobiographical novel) Fae Myenne Ng, <i>Bone</i> (novel)
WK 6 Sept 29 Tuesday WK 6 Oct 1 Thursday	Maxine Hong Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i> Maxine Hong Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i>
Recommended texts	Sau-ling C. Wong, <i>Reading Asian American Literature</i> Rachel Lee, <i>The Americas of Asian American Literature</i> Patricia Chu, <i>Assimilating Asians: Gendered Strategies of Authorship in Asian America</i> (all literary criticism)
WK 7 Oct 6 Tuesday WK 7 Oct 8 Thursday WK 7 Oct 9 Friday	Theresa Cha, <i>Dictee</i> Theresa Cha, <i>Dictee</i> Midterm Paper Due via email, 8 PM
Recommended texts	Suji Kwock Kim, <i>Notes from the Divided Country</i> (poems) Karen Tei Yamashita, <i>Tropic of Orange</i> (novel) Trinh T. Minh-ha, <i>Woman Native Other</i> (essays)
WK 8 Oct 13 Tuesday WK 8 Oct 15 Thursday	Theresa Cha, <i>Dictee</i> Theresa Cha, <i>Dictee</i>
Recommended texts	Elaine Kim and Norma Alarcón, eds. <i>Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictee</i> Constance M. Lewallen et al, <i>The Dream of the Audience: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (1951-1982)</i> Lisa Lowe, <i>Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics</i> (all literary and cultural criticism)
WK 9 Oct 20 Tuesday WK 9 Oct 22 Thursday	Theresa Cha, <i>Dictee</i> America's Empire Han Ong, <i>Fixer Chao</i>
Recommended texts	Chang-Rae Lee, <i>Native Speaker</i> (novel) Don Lee, <i>Yellow</i> (stories) Susan Choi, <i>American Woman</i> (novel)
WK 10 Oct 27 Tuesday WK 10 Oct 29 Thursday	Han Ong, <i>Fixer Chao</i> Han Ong, <i>Fixer Chao</i>

Recommended texts	<p>David Henry Hwang, <i>M. Butterfly</i></p> <p>Carlos Bulosan, <i>On Becoming Filipino: Selected Writings</i> (essays and journalism)</p> <p>Luis Francia, ed. <i>Brown River, White Ocean: An Anthology of 20th Century Philippine Literature in English</i></p>
<p>WK 11 Nov 3 Tuesday</p> <p>WK 11 Nov 5 Thursday</p>	<p>Jessica Hagedorn, <i>Dog eaters</i></p> <p>Jessica Hagedorn, <i>Dog eaters</i></p>
Recommended texts	<p>E. San Juan, Jr. <i>Racial Formations/Critical Transformations: Articulations of Power in Racial and Ethnic Studies in the U.S.</i> (cultural criticism)</p> <p>Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis Francia, eds. <i>Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream 1899-1999</i> (multidisciplinary)</p> <p>David Eng, <i>Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America</i> (literary criticism)</p>
<p>WK 12 Nov 10 Tuesday</p> <p>WK 12 Nov 12 Thursday</p>	<p>Jessica Hagedorn, <i>Dog eaters</i></p> <p>Jessica Hagedorn, <i>Dog eaters</i></p>
Recommended texts	<p>R. Zamora Linmark, <i>Rolling the R's</i> (stories)</p> <p>Lois-Ann Yamanaka, <i>Blu's Hanging</i></p> <p>Peter Bacho, <i>Entrys</i> (novel)</p>
<p>WK 13 Nov 17 Tuesday</p> <p>WK 13 Nov 19 Thursday</p>	<p>le thi diem thuy, <i>The Gangster We Are All Looking For</i></p> <p>le thi diem thuy, <i>The Gangster We Are All Looking For</i></p>
Recommended texts	<p>Renny Christopher, <i>The Viet Nam War/The American War: Images and Representations in Euro-American and Vietnamese Exile Narratives</i> (literary criticism)</p> <p>Marita Sturken, <i>Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering</i> (cultural criticism)</p> <p>Trinh T. Minh-ha, <i>When the Moon Waxes Red</i> (essays)</p>
<p>WK 14 Nov 24 Tuesday</p> <p>WK 14 Nov 26 Thursday</p>	<p>le thi diem thuy, <i>The Gangster We Are All Looking For</i></p> <p>Thanksgiving</p>
Recommended texts	<p>Le Ly Hayslip, <i>When Heaven and Earth Changed Places</i> (autobiography)</p> <p>Andrew X. Pham, <i>Catfish and Mandala</i> (autobiography); <i>The Eaves of Heaven</i> (biography/memoir)</p> <p>Monique Truong, <i>The Book of Salt</i> (novel)</p>

<p>WK 15 Dec 1 Tuesday WK 15 Dec 3 Thursday</p>	<p>Post-racial Asian America? Adrian Tomine, <i>Shortcomings</i> Adrian Tomine, <i>Shortcomings</i></p>
<p>Recommended texts</p>	<p>Scott McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> (cultural criticism) Robert G. Lee, <i>Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture</i> (cultural criticism) Shilpa Dave et al, eds. <i>East Main Street: Asian American Popular Culture</i> (multidisciplinary)</p>
<p>WK 16 Dec 10 Thursday</p>	<p>Final Paper Due Online, 10 am</p>