

LTEN 181 / ETHN 124

**SPECIAL TOPICS IN ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE: Love and War  
in the Asia-Pacific Rim**

TTH 2-3:20pm  
CSB 001

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**Course Description:** Laced between and through the fashioning of national identities and communities as well as the politics of cultural identity on the Asia-Pacific Rim are tales of loss, mourning, longing, and love. This course interrogates the intersection of love and politics in 20th and 21st century Asian and Asian-American literature and film. Set against the backdrop of the Cold War and the designation of the Pacific Rim as an arena of conflict between the so-called First and Second Worlds, our exploration examines the theme of national romance, the Orientalist imagination on Broadway, in Hollywood and their reception overseas, and the "homecoming" narratives of Asian-Americans to their parents' countries of origin, as motifs that illustrate the role of the aesthetic in promoting or critiquing visions of national and individual cultural identity. Course requirements include attendance, participation, short responses, two papers of increasing length, a final presentation, and final oral exam.

This course is cross-listed with ETHN 124. This course fulfills the Diversity Equity, and Inclusion requirement for undergraduate students (see <http://academicaffairs.ucsd.edu/ug-ed/diversity/>).

**REQUIREMENTS:**

***Attendance and participation (20%):*** Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in *all* discussions and workshops, including virtual / online group chats.

***Short responses / journal (5% each x 2 = 10%):*** At the end of weeks 3 and 7, students will be asked to submit a one-paragraph response to **one** point made during the lecture or discussion; and the larger stakes or implications of this point and the student / author's discussion of it.

***Papers (20% each x 2 = 40%):*** Students will be asked to propose an idea or point of view based on the analysis of literary and / or cultural texts included in the course readings, as well as the main ideas / themes we take up in class (5-7pp.). The goal is to produce an *original argument* about one or more of these ideas or themes, which you develop in and through your interpretation(s) of one or more of the texts. The second paper must include an outline, i.e., one week before the final paper. We will workshop these outlines in class.

Students are encouraged to consult the UCSD student handbook on policies regarding **fraud or plagiarism**, which is punishable by suspension or expulsion from the university.

**Final group presentation (20%):** At the beginning of the quarter, students will be arranged into discussion work groups that will meet throughout the quarter to discuss various assignments, readings, and to workshop written assignments. Beginning Week 8, groups will be asked to come up with a final presentation or project to present to the class during Week 10. Further details on this project will be addressed in a separate communiqué.

**Final exam (10%):** Oral exam evaluating student comprehension of class topics and themes.

## Texts

### Books (available at UCSD Bookstore):

John Okada, *No-No Boy* (London: Penguin Classics, 2019). ISBN: 978-014313401

Eileen Chang, *Lust, Caution* (NY: Anchor Books, 2007). ISBN: 978-0307387448

Bao Ninh, *The Sorrow of War* (Riverhead Books, 1996). ISBN: 978-1573225434

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (NY: Random House, 2008). ISBN: 978-0812979657

### Films

*The Home and the World* (dir. Satyajit Ray, 1984)

*Hiroshima Mon Amour* (dir. Alain Resnais, 1959)

*Lust, Caution* (dir. Ang Lee, 2007)

*Sayonara* (dir. Joshua Logan, 1957)

## Reading and Viewing Schedule (subject to minor changes)

### **Week 1 (October 1-3): Love and War with the (National Future) at Stake**

Keywords: empire, romance, (national) allegory, gendered roles, tradition, modernity, Philippine-American War, Philippine Commonwealth

**Required:** Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes* (selection); Paz Marquez Benitez, “Dead Stars”

**Recommended:** Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions* (excerpt: “Love and Country: An Allegorical Speculation”); Nick Joaquin, “The Filipino As Sajonista”

### **Week 2 (October 8-10): Modern Love - what future, what past?**

Keywords: Indian nationalism, nativism, *Swaraj* (self-rule), Chinese-Japanese War, communism

**Required:** *The Home and the World* (dir. Satyajit Ray, 2010 [1984]); Eileen Chang, “Love in a Fallen City”

**Recommended:** excerpts from “Chinese Tradition”

**Week 3 (October 15-17): Sleeping with the Enemy**

Keywords: “Stockholm Syndrome,” narcissism, Hiroshima, nuclear holocaust, sadism / masochism, Cold War

**Required:** Eileen Chang, *Lust, Caution*; *Hiroshima, mon amour* (dir. Alain Resnais, 1959)

**Recommended:** Julia Kristeva, “On Narcissism”

**Short response 1 due**

**Week 4 (October 22-24): Loving the American in Asia and the Asian in America**

Keywords: “White knight,” Cold War partitions, GI War Brides Act, paternalism, no-no boys, Japanese internment camps, Asian-American, multiculturalism

**Required:** *Sayonara* (dir. Joshua Logan, 1957); John Okada, *No-No Boy*

**Recommended:** Gina Marchetti *Romance and the “Yellow Peril”* (excerpt)

**Week 5 (October 29-31)**

**Required:** *No-No Boy* (cont’d)

**Paper 1 due (October 29); workshop 1**

**Week 6 (November 5-7): Individual Casualties of the National Romance**

Keywords: trauma, melancholia and mourning, PTSD, closure

**Required:** Bao Ninh, *Sorrow of War*

**Recommended:** Sigmund Freud, “On Mourning and Melancholia”

**Week 7 (November 12-14)**

**Required:** Ninh, *Sorrow of War* (cont’d)

**Recommended:** Robert Grossman, *On Killing*

**Short response 2 due**

**Week 8 (November 19-21): Love and / as the War Against War**

Keywords: *dalit* (Untouchable), partition of India, British Raj, Anglophilia, Naxalite Rebellion, postcolonialism / postcolonial state, cultural imperialism

**Required:** Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things*

**Recommended:** Ania Loomba, “Colonialism / Postcolonialism” (excerpt)

**Paper 2 due: workshop 2**

**Week 9 (November 26-28)**

**Required:** *God of Small Things* (cont'd)

**Workshop 3**

**Week 10 (December 3-6):**

**Final presentations**

**December 12 (3-5:59pm): FINAL EXAM (location TBA)**