

ETHN121: Contemporary Asian American History
 Spring 2010
Tuesdays/Thursdays @ 12:30-1:50pm in CSB 005

Instructor: Ma Vang Office: SSB 250
 Email: mvang@ucsd.edu Office Hours: Tues. @ 2:00-3:30pm
 Thur. @ 10:30-12:00pm or by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed to contextualize and complicate contemporary Asian American history in the post-1965 immigration period. In doing so, it employs a transnational/global perspective to interrogate what has been understood as a liberal legislation that enabled mass immigration from Asia and Latin America. The course aims to complicate notions about the linear narrative of Asian immigration and assimilation, a homogenous Asian American community, the model minority myth, and the refugee figure. Thus, the course will examine the concept of history to ask: what constitutes “Asian American history” and what remains an absent presence?

In order to excavate contemporary Asian American history, we will engage with a variety of scholarly, literary and visual texts to trace the influx of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos along with the economic impact of contemporary social movements on Asian Americans’ current economic, social, and political status. We will critically question the kinds of knowledge produced about Asian American communities to highlight how the structures of power operate to represent ideas about Asian Americans as the “model minority.” Together, we will explore questions of nation, citizenship, family, US imperialism, refugee, and queerness that have been shaped by various social, political, and cultural factors but also examine how Asian American communities shape their ways of belonging—how they live, hope, and dream in spite of the contradictions that shape their lives.

Required Texts:

Edward J.W. Park and John S.W. Park, *Probationary Americans: Contemporary Immigration Policies and the Shaping of Asian American Communities* (NY: Routledge, 2005).

Kao Kalia Yang, *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* (MN: Coffeehouse Press, 2008).

E-Reserve articles at roger.ucsd.edu

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation	20%
Group Creative Project/Presentation	20%
Paper	20%
Small Assignments	10%
Final	30%

Attendance and Participation: A large part of your learning in this class will come from your peers. Your regular attendance and active participation is crucial to your success in the course and will also enhance the quality of the course. Throughout the course, we will work through themes/concepts, readings, and other materials as a group, therefore, your attendance and participation is key to understanding the complexities of contemporary Asian American history.

Note: Although office hours are not a requirement, it is in your best interest to utilize my office hours if you have questions/thoughts/ideas about the course materials or what the materials evoke for you. Office hours are another way for you to participate in the course. Point breakdown: You will earn 1pt. per day for attendance and participation in class, but they do not replace missing a class. Missing multiple classes will result in a lowered grade.

Group Project & Paper: (Due Week 9) This project asks you to work collaboratively in groups of 3 people on a creative project on Asian American issues in relation to the course themes and concepts. Your group will identify an important issue concerning Asian Americans, conduct preliminary research on the topic, analyze this issue in relation to the course themes/concepts, and present it to the class in a creative form (art, media, poetry, song, etc.).

Paper: (Due week 5) This paper assignment asks you to engage with the first 4 weeks of the course to discuss the politics of Asian American history. You will be given a paper prompt week 4 and you have 1 week to complete the assignment.

Small Assignments: (Week 2 & 7) These will be any of the following: reading response papers, bringing to class outside materials that relate to the themes of the course, group work, quiz, etc.

Final: Take-home final due on Monday, June 7, 2010 at 1:30pm - 2:30pm.

Course Policies:

Late assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class and will be considered late once lecture/class has begun. Assignments will be deducted 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late.

Lectures: It is important to attend lectures regularly because they further your understanding of readings and themes introduced in the course. Lectures or classroom time will also serve as discussions for you to work through the materials with other students. It is your responsibility to attain lecture/class notes from your peers if you miss class.

Videos and films shown in class are part of the lecture and the course material. Some videos/films you will be able to access at the library but others you will not. It is advantageous to watch these videos/films in class with your classmates.

Readings: The readings are chosen to give you the breadth and depth of knowledge about the works about and by Asian Americans. They are an important foundation for our collective work in this class because we will rely on them for classroom discussions, writing assignments, and exams. The readings provide the guide for our exploration about contemporary Asian American history and we will read across the texts to juxtapose the different points they offer for each week's theme. Half of the week's readings should be completed before class on Tuesdays and ALL the readings should be completed before class on Thursdays.

Class Conduct: By the very nature of the course topic, there will likely be a wide range of opinions. A good classroom environment should stimulate you to think for yourself, challenge paradigms, and raise critical questions. However, please keep in mind that we must engage each other in a respectful and considerate debate in the classroom. These ground rules are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community to which we are all expected to adhere (<http://www-vcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>). Abusive and harsh language, intimidation, and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is a serious violation, whether intentional or inadvertent. All work submitted in this course must be your own and original. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. Plagiarism is when you use someone else's words without attribution; it includes using portions of a previously published work or website in a paper without citing the source, submitting a paper written for another course, submitting a paper written by someone else, and using the ideas of someone else without attribution. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please discuss them with your instructors or consult Charles Lipson's *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Students found guilty of plagiarism will be disciplined to the full extent of university policy and forwarded to the dean of their college. Students found cheating on an exam or quiz will receive a failing grade in the course and be reported to the dean of their college for disciplinary action. Each student is expected to be familiar with UCSD's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, available at <http://www.senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm#AP14>.

Disabilities: If you have a documented disability needing accommodations in this course, please inform me and bring a notification letter outlining your approved accommodations. I will make all reasonable efforts to assist you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you must notify me in writing within one week of receipt of syllabus. You may also seek assistance or information from the Office for Students with Disabilities, 858-534-4382.

Reading and Lecture Schedule:

Week 1 (3/30 & 4/1): Introduction: Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies and Post-1965 Immigration

- Yen Le Espiritu, "Coming Together: The Asian American Movement," 19-52.

- Lisa Lowe, “Epistemological Shifts: National Ontology and the New Asian Immigrant Figure,” 268-276.
- Michael Omi & Howard Winant, “On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race,” 199-208.

Week 2 (4/6 & 4/8): Policies and Political Movements

- Daryl J. Maeda, “‘Are We Not Also Asians?’ Building Solidarity Through Opposition to the Viet Nam War,” 97-126.
- Edward J.W. Park and John S.W. Park, *Probationary Americans: Contemporary Immigration Policies and the Shaping of Asian American Communities* (2005): 1-41.

Thursday (4/8) class: CANCELLED

Small assignment: reading response paper on this week’s readings due on Tuesday 4/13

Week 3 (4/13 & 4/15): War, US Imperialism and Southeast Asian Americans

- Yen Le Espiritu, “The We-Win-Even-Though-We-Lose Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the ‘Fall of Saigon,’” 329-352.
- Linda Trinh Vo, “Managing Survival: Economic Realities for Vietnamese American Women,” 237-252.
- Kao Kalia Yang, *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* (2008): 1-128 (Parts I & II)

Week 4 (4/20 & 4/22): The Refugee Figure: “Toward a Critical Refugee Study”

- Yen Le Espiritu, “Toward a Critical Refugee Study: The Vietnamese Refugee Subject in U.S. Scholarship,” 410-433.
- Ka Vang, “How Ms. Pac Man Ruined My Gang Life,” 114-121.
- Kao Kalia Yang, *The Latehomecomer* (2008): 131-274 (Parts III, IV & Epilogue)

Week 5 (4/27 & 4/29): Policy and “Probationary Americans”

- Edward J.W. Park and John S.W. Park, *Probationary Americans: Contemporary Immigration Policies and the Shaping of Asian American Communities* (2005): 83-114.
- Lisa Park, “Continuing Significance of the Model Minority Myth: The Second Generation,” *Social Justice* (35)2: 2008.
- Pensri Ho, “Performing the ‘Oriental’: Professionals and the Asian Model Minority Myth,” 149-175.

ESSAY DUE

Week 6 (5/4 & 5/6): Family & Citizenship

- Edward J.W. Park and John S.W. Park, *Probationary Americans: Contemporary Immigration Policies and the Shaping of Asian American Communities* (2005): 45-79.
- Lynn Fujiwara, “On Not Making Ends Meet: Mothers Without Citizenship,” 128-153.

- Thuy Vo Dang, “The Cultural Work of Anticommunism in the San Diego Vietnamese American Community,” 65-85.

Week 7 (5/11 & 5/13): Queer Asian American Subjects

- Sylvia Shin Huey Chong, “‘Look, an Asian!’: The Politics of Racial Interpellation in the Wake of the Virginia Tech Shootings,” (February 2008): 27-60.
- Martin Manalansan, “Introduction: Points of Departure,” 18-37.
- Melinda I. de Jesus, “Rereading History, Rewriting Desire,” 91-111.

Week 8 (5/18 & 5/20): Asian America: What history/formation?

- Jody Kim, “‘I’m Not Here, If This Doesn’t Happen,’” 279-302.
- Catherine Ceniza Choy, “Asian American History: Reflections on Imperialism, Immigration, and ‘The Body,’” 81-98.
- Panivong Norindr, “On Photography, History and Affect: Re-Narrating the Political Life of a Laotian Subject,” 89-103.

Week 9 (5/25 & 5/27): “Memoryscapes”

- Karin Aguilar-San Juan, “Implications for Community and Place,” 123-156.
- Lisa Yoneyama, “Mnemonic Detours,” 112-147.

Week 10 (6/1 & 6/3): Desire & Hope: “To Play with the World”

- Monique Truong, “Kelly,” 41-48.
- K. Wayne Yang, “Organizing Myspace: Youth Walkouts, Pleasure, Politics, and New Media,” 9-28).
- R. Zamora Linmark, “A Portrait of the Poet, Smallkid Time,” 61-64.

Final Exam: Monday, June 7, 2010 at 11:30am - 2:30pm

Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of "interest" yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Yolanda Escamilla, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor, at 858-534-3277 or yescamilla@ucsd.edu.