

ETHN 129/ USP 135: Asian & Latina Immigrant Workers in the Global Economy

Class Time: MWF 10 – 10:50am @ SEQ 147
Instructor: Dr. Amanda Solomon
Email: alsolomon@ucsd.edu
Office Hours: MW 11 to 12pm @ SSB 245

Course Description

Each of us is here now because in one way or another we share a commitment to language and to the power of language, and to the reclaiming of that language which has been made to work against us. In the transformation of silence into language and action, it is vitally necessary for each one of us to establish or examine her function in that transformation and to recognize her role as vital within that transformation.

- Audre Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence into Language & Action”

To ask, “the Filipina woman: who and what is she?” in a radical way is to see her status, and the state of affairs in which she holds that status, as in a state of emergency – indeed, a state of war. It is to inquire into the ways that being a Filipina means living in a time of war.

- Neferti X. Tadiar, “Filipinas Living in a Time of War”

This course will explore the complex relationships between the flows of globalized capitalism, the workings of the U.S. nation-state, and the lives of Asian and Latina immigrant women. In particular, we will pay close attention to how formations of U.S. imperialism have affected the (im)migration of women from Asia and Latin America to the US. Such U.S. imperial formations include colonialism and neocolonialism, militarism and Cold War geopolitics, and labor recruitment and international investment in the global south. Furthermore, we will consider how processes of racialization, gendering, sexualization, and citizenship impact the status and conditions of these women as laborers and social subjects. While an understanding of these larger social and historical forces is necessary, we will also importantly recognize how Asian and Latina women have negotiated, resisted, and re-imagined their positions in the global economy. To this end, our class will engage and collaborate with community groups, non-profits, and labor organizations, both observing and contributing to their work to transform silence into language and action.

The topic and workload of this course is thus challenging in multiple ways. Clearly, it constitutes an academic challenge, as we will be engaging with a range of texts from the historical to the ethnographic to the theoretical. It will also be a challenge in that working with these local communities will force us all to reckon with the different positions of



privilege and power not just between students within the class but also between students and myself as your instructor, between our class and the community organizers who will be collaborating with us, and, of course, between our class and the immigrant women we will be interviewing. As such, as a class we will be establishing codes of conduct that we will all collaborate to produce and will all agree upon to follow. Acceptance of these codes of conduct is an absolute pre-requisite to participating in this course.

Course Requirements

NOTE: ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE MUST BE COMPLETED TO PASS AND VIOLATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY MAY RESULT IN AUTOMATIC FAIL.

❖ Attendance & Participation (10%)

This grade is determined partly by a student's consistent attendance and lack of tardiness as well as by participation in small and large group discussions and/or visits to office hours. Students may also be required to complete short in-class writing assignments and or/reading quizzes. Roll will be taken every class meeting. Please note that failure to attend 60% of class meetings will result in automatic fail

❖ Midterm Paper (25%)

In a 4 to 5 page paper, students will demonstrate their understanding of the theoretical framework of the course presented in the first three weeks of class. Papers will be due at start of week 4.

❖ Observation & Reflection Papers (2 @ 15% each for 30% total)

Students are required to attend two community events concerning immigration and labor – an organizer meeting, workshop, forum, march, rally, etc – that will be announced in class. Students will produce a 2 to 3 page paper reflecting on the event in light of the key themes, questions, and readings of our course.

❖ Interview Project (35%)

In lieu of a final exam, students will be placed into partners and will work together to conduct an interview with either (a) an immigrant Asian or Latina woman they have identified in their community as a potential subject *or* (b) a local domestic worker while under the supervision of the instructor and representatives from local community-based organizations. There will be multiple trainings and practice sessions to refine interview technique and design pertinent questions. Students will arrange to meet with their subject, perform, record and transcribe the interview. Each student will write a 5 to 6 page paper reflecting on the interview process and experience as well as analyzing the material gained from the interview in light of the course's required readings. Our entire course has been designed to prepare students to perform this interview. Not only will some of these interviews be used to importantly document the labor conditions of domestic workers as they attempt to organize and campaign for recognition before the law, but all interviews will be archived by the San Diego History Center as part of their endeavor to record the stories of marginalized members of the greater San Diego community.

Office for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should talk with me as soon as possible to make accommodations for the quarter. Please see the Office for Students with Disabilities website for more information.

Tutoring and Writing Academic Support and Instructional Services

As this course is writing and communication intensive, students who are hesitant about their writing skills and/or students who are English language learners are required to consult with me before proceeding with this course as well as highly encouraged to visit the tutoring centers on campus. Please see the OASIS website for more information.

Required Texts (Available at UCSD Bookstore)

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierette. *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2001.

Rodriguez, Robyn M. *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

*All other readings available through ereserves (password: **as129**) or through course website <http://ethn129spring2013.wordpress.com>

Tentative Schedule of Readings

* Instructor reserves the right to re-schedule and edit readings as necessary.

Unit 1: Theoretical Frameworks

Week 1

M 4/1: Course Introduction

W 4/3:

- "Gender" (Halberstam), "Globalization" (Lowe), "Race" (Ferguson), in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, eds. Burgett and Hendler.
- Sassen, Saskia. "Global Cities and Survival Circuits." In *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2002), pp. 254-274.

F 4/5:

- Smith, Andrea. 2006. "Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy." *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology. Women of Color against Violence*. Cambridge: South End Press: 66-73.
- Mohanty, Chandra. "Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles," in *Feminism without Borders*, 221-251

Week 2

M 4/8:

- Alarcon, Norma. "Chicana Feminism: In the Tracks of 'The' Native Woman." *Between Woman and Nation*.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. "Towards a Planetary Civil Society." *MeXicana Encounters: The making of Social Identities on the Borderlands*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2003.

W 4/10: Lowe, Lisa. "Work, Immigration, Gender: Asian 'American' Women." From *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 154-173.

F 4/12: Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" and "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." *Sister Outsider*

Unit 2: Documenting Experience

Week 3

M 4/15: Chs 1 & 2, *Doméstica*

W 4/17: NO CLASS

- Film: *We Don't Play Golf Here*

F 4/19: NO CLASS

- Film: *Maquilapolis*

Week 4

M 4/22: NO CLASS

- Film: *Maid in America*

W 4/24: Midterm Paper Due

F 4/26: Chs 3 & 4, *Doméstica*

Week 5

M 4/29: Chs 5 & 6, *Doméstica*

W 5/1: Chs 7 & 8, *Doméstica*

- May Day Worker's March and Rally, 2pm Meet up @ Civic Center, 3:30 March, 5:00 Rally @ Chicano Park

F 5/3: Intro & Ch 1, *Immigrants for Export*

Week 6

M 5/6: Chs 2 & 3, *Immigrants for Export*

W 5/8: Chs 4 & 5, *Immigrants for Export*

F 5/10: Ch 6 & Conclusion, *Immigrants for Export*

Unit 3: Analysis & Action

Week 7

M 5/13: Reflection Paper #1 Due

- Interview Training with Eugene Gambol & Paul Valen, CARE SD

W 5/15: Presentation by Naomi Kawamura, San Diego History Center

F 5/17: Kang, Laura. "Disciplined Embodiments: Si(gh)ting Asian/American Women as Transnational Labor." *Compositional Subjects: Enfiguring Asian/American Women*

Week 8

M 5/20: Interview Training with Eugene Gambol & Paul Valen, CARE SD

W 5/22: Tadiar, Neferti. "Sexual Economies." *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences in the New World Order*.

F 5/24: Tadiar, Neferti. "Filipinas Living in a Time of War." *Pinay Power: Theorizing the Filipina/American Experience*.

Week 9

M 5/27: Memorial Day - NO CLASS

W 5/29: Espiritu, Yen Le. "Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Differential Inclusion and Homelessness." *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*.

F 5/31: Choy, Catherine Ceniza. Part III (Chs 5-6). *Empire of Care: Nursing and Immigration in Filipino American History*.

Week 10

M 6/3: Reflection Paper #2 Due

- Ahmed, Sara. "Feminist Killjoys." From *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham, NC: Duke U Press, 2010), pp. 50-87.

W 6/5: Lorde, Audre. "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism." In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984), pp. 124-133.

F 6/7: Sulit, Marie-Therese. "Through our Pinay Writings: Narrating Trauma, Embodying Recovery." *Pinay Power: Theorizing Filipina/American Experience*.

Interview Project Due Wed 6/12 @ Noon