

**01:098:262**  
**Spring 2013**

**Asian American Experience**

**MW 1:10 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**SC 106**

**Instructor: Dr. Gloria Shen**

**Office Hour: W 2:40-3:30 p.m. (TBA)**

**Scott Hall, Rm. 328**

**Course Description:**

The course focuses on the multicultural, intercultural and historical understanding of the social behavior and current experiences of Asian Americans and their communities in the United States. The format of the course consists of lectures, readings, discussions, and documentaries on various ethnic issues. The course will integrate readings on the historical background of ethnic groups, individuals' oral histories, fiction and films with historical, socio-political and literary analyses.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Students will have a solid understanding of key figures, events and chronologies, including immigration patterns, labor and community experience, political movements, and, meanings of discrimination against and within Asian American groups.
2. Students will address major themes in Asian American studies including: conflicts of values and loyalties, intergenerational change and continuity, struggles to stay separate or assimilate.
3. Students will develop a broadly comparative and integrative "Asia-Pacific" view of Asian American experiences in an interdependent global context. How have "Asian Americans" been pushed, pulled and shaped by colonial legacies, war, political decisions, or economic and demographic trends in North America, and in East, Southeast and South Asia, the Pacific islands, and the Americas?

**General Investigative Queries:**

Within the broad context outlined above, this course is organized around the general question, "What does it mean to be(come) an American?" for individuals and groups of Asian descent or ancestry, particularly first-generation immigrants (new Asian Americans).

What distinctive cultures and sensibilities define, constitute, and are appropriated as elements of Asian American identities"? How can we understand these against such formulations as "model minority," or "eternal foreigner"? We will draw on history, biography, autobiography, film and fiction to address these questions.

**Required Texts:** (Available at Rutgers University Bookstore)

Zhou, Min & Gatewood, Gatewood, James V. *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*. New York University Press, 2000.

Eoyang, Eugene. *Coat of of Many Colors. Reflections on Diversity by a Minority of One*. Beacon Press, 1995.

Zia, Helen. *Asian American Dreams*. Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 2000.

See, Lisa. *On Gold Mountain*. Vintage Books, 1995.

Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers from a Different Shore*, updated. Little, Brown & Co., 1998.

### **Course Requirements:**

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Bi-Weekly quizzes	40%
Group Written Project	40%

**Policies:** I take class attendance. If you miss class, you miss the material. Make a friend with whom you can share notes and realize that nobody beside yourself is responsible for your grade in this or any class. If you miss class more than three times the whole semester, you will get a letter grade lower than what you get with full attendance. If you miss class more than six times, you will get two letter grades lower. Cheating and plagiarizing are serious offenses at RU. Never let me suspect you are engaging in the favorite RU vice of grade grabbing. Work hard and you will enjoy the class.

### **Some films and articles for the course to be considered: (Subject to change)**

\*Eoyang, Eugene. Ch 3: "The Semiotics of 'We': First-Person Pluralities in 'Us'", pp. ?; Ch 7: "The Complexities of Complexion: The Myths of Skin Color;" pp. 114-125; Ch 8: "Blind to Color, Deaf to Accent: invisible and Inaudible Immigrants" in *Coat of Many Colors*, pp. 126-137;

#### Interviews: Vietnam

Interviews of seven Vietnamese young adults of their war experience. 55 min.

1. Remembering the Cambodian Genocide (New Title--to be checked where/how to locate it)
2. Cambodia

Cambodia and Laos ; Peace is at hand, 1968-1973 Bruce Palling and Martin Smith tells how the U.S. extension of the Vietnamese war into Cambodia and Laos to stop attacks and supplies from across those borders, hurt those countries more than it hurt the object of the attack2-579980  
120 min

3. Passion For Justice (Japanese Activist--Political with the mention of Malcom X) 57 min?
4. Spike Lee, "Do the Right Thing" 120 min.
5. Journey from the Fall (Boat People)
6. "Interactions"-Four high school students probing into the past to find out what it was like for teenagers to live in Japanese concentration camps during World War II.  
33 min.
7. Ellis Island-a silent drama
8. 1421 When China Discovered America?. 60 min
9. ("Better Luck Tomorrow"—cont'd 86/99 min)
10. The Color of Honor: the Japanese American Soldiers in WWII  
(Three stories) 90 min Call No: 2-7283

## **Course Schedule**

**--Subject to Change--**

(Spring, 2013)

### **Week One (Jan. 23) General Introduction**

#### **Week Two (Jan. 28 & 30)**

**M—Film** (“1421 When China Discovered America?”—Pt. I & part of Pt. II--80 min)

**W--** Read: *Multidisciplinary Reader* (MR), pp. 1-20.

#### **Week Three (Feb. 4 & 6)**

**M—Film** (“Rabbit in the Moon”: the Japanese American Internment in WWII—85 min)

**W--** Read: *MR*, “Transforming Asian American: Globalization and Cotemporary Immigration to the United States,” pp. 115-138.

#### **Week Four (Feb. 11 & 13)**

**M—Film** (“The Color of Honor”—three stories of Japanese American Soldiers in WWII—80/90 min)

**W--** Read *Strangers*, Ch 1: “From A Different Shore”, pp.3-18; and Ch 5: “Ethnic Solidarity. The Settling of Japanese America”, pp. 179-229.

#### **Quiz One (Wks. 2-3)**

#### **Week Five (Feb. 18 & 20)**

**M—Films** (“The Untold Stories: Coolies, Settlers and Sailors, 1600-1900,” Part I-64 min)  
 (“Ancestors in America: Chinese in the Front West”--Part II—15/60 min)

**W—** Read Ch. 2: “Surrogate Slaves to American Dreamers” in *Asian American Dreams*, pp. 21-52; *On Gold Mountain*, pp. 47-58.

#### **Week Six (Feb. 25 & 27)**

**M—Films** (“Ancestors in America: Chinese in the Front West”--Part II—45/60 min)  
 (“Roots in the Sand”—the lives of the Sikh, Moslem and Hindu immigrants of the early 20th century who farmed California's desert regions—30/57 min)

**W—**Read Ch. 1: “From Nothing, a consciousness” in *Asian American Dreams*, pp.1-20; *On Gold Mountain*, pp. 61-75, 76-86.

#### **Quiz Two (Wks. 4-5)**

#### **Week Seven (March 4 & 6)**

**M—Films** (“Roots in the Sand”—cont’d—27/57 min)  
 (“Carved in Silence”—Angel Island—45 min)

**W—**Read *Strangers*, Ch. 8, “The Tide of Turbans”, pp. 294-314; Ch 6: “Indians in North Carolina: Race, Class, and Culture in the Making of Immigrant Identity” in *MR*, pp. 158-174.

#### **Week Eight (March 11 & 13)**

**M—Films** (“The Fall of the I Hotel”: the Filipino Manongs in the San Francisco Manilatown—58 min)

(“In No One’s Shadow”--Filipinos in America—22/28 min)

**W—** Read *Strangers*, Ch 9: “Dollar A Day, Dime A Dance: The Forgotten Filipinos”, pp.

315-354. **Quiz Three (Wks. 6-7)**

**Week Nine** (March 18 & 20)

Spring Break!

**Week Ten** (March 25 & 27)

**M—Film** (“Cambodia/Laos;” “Vietnam”—60+20/120 min)

**W—** Read Ch. 8: “New Household Forms, Old Family Values: The Formation and Reproduction of the Filipino Transnational Family in L.A.” in *MR*, pp. 206-221.

**Week Eleven** (April 1 & 3)

**M—Films** (“Vietnam”—cont’d 40/120 min)

(“Journey from the Fall” on Vietnamese Boat People—40/135 min)

**W—** Read Ch. 5: “The Waves of War: Immigrants, Refugees, and New Americans from Southeast Asia” in *MR*, pp. 139-157. **Quiz Four (Wks. 8, 10)**

**Week Twelve** (April 8 & 10)

**M—Film** (“Journey from the Fall” on Vietnamese Boat People—cont’d 80/135 min)

**W—** Read Ch. 10: “Striving for the American Dreams: Struggle, Success, and Intergroup Conflict among Korean Immigrant Entrepreneurs” in *MR*, pp. 243-258.

**Week Thirteen** (April 15 & 17)

**M—Films** (“Journey from the Fall” on Vietnamese Boat People—cont’d 15/135 min)

(“Sa-I-Gu”—Korean Shops at L.A. after Rodney King’s case—42 min)

(“Asianization”—26 min)

**W—** Read Chapter 3: “Detroit Blues” in *Asian American Dreams*, pp. 55-81.

**Quiz Five (Wks. 11-12)**

**Week Fourteen** (April 22 & 24)

**M—Film** “Who killed Vincent Chin?”—82 min)

**W—** Read Ch. 24: “The Cold War Construction of the Model Minority Myth” in *MR*, pp. 469-484; Ch. 21: “A Letter to My Sister” in *MR*, pp. 425-430.

**Week Fifteen** (April 29 & May 1)

**M—Films** (“Passion for Justice”, 57 min)

(“Better Luck Tomorrow,” 23/99 min)

**W--** Read Ch. 19: “What Must I Be? Asian Americans and the Question of Multiethnic Identity” in *MR*, pp. 393-407; Ch. 2: “The Four Prisons” and the Movements of Liberation: Asian American Activism from 1960s to 1990s” in *MR*, pp. 56-88.

**Quiz Six (Wks. 13-14-15)**

**Week Sixteen** (May 6)

**M—Film** (“Better Luck Tomorrow,” cont’d--76/99 min)

**Group Project Due.**

Have a nice summer!

