Ethnic Studies 252 (CRN: 26532):
Introduction to Asian American Studies
MW 2-3:20pm
Lokey Education Building 176

Instructor: Rupa Pillai
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Office Hours MTh 12-1p or by appointment
Office Phone: 346-1768

Course Description:
The 2010 US midterm election brought a number of firsts for the Asian American community: the 1st Asian American State Attorney General, the 1st Asian American State Supreme Court Chief Justice, the 1st Asian American woman mayor, the 1st Sikh American governor, and the 1st Bangladeshi American in Congress. The record success of Asian Americans in this election suggests the community has finally arrived in America, but have they really? To answer this question, this course introduces students to the diverse history and experiences of the Asian American community in the US. Over the following 10 weeks we will read about and actively discuss the history of Asian immigration to the U.S., the social construction and experience of race in the U.S., and the political, economic, and cultural contributions of Asian Americans. We will also examine how Asian Americans negotiate/deploy their culture and ethnicity to achieve recognition in multicultural America and how the construction of Asian American identity intersects with class, gender, and sexuality.

The class will explore the following questions:
• What/who is Asian American? How does it relate to nationalism and citizenship?
• Why have Asian American Studies?
• What is the model minority myth?
• How are Asian American communities formed?
• Are polycultural/panethnic alliances possible and productive?
• What Asian American histories are silenced and why?
• How do class, ethnicity and gender complicate Asian American identity?

Required Texts:
• Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader, Ed. Min Zhou and J.V. Gatewood
• Taxi: Cabs and Capitalism in New York City, Biju Mathew
Selected articles are also required and are available on our course Blackboard site.
**Course Requirements:**

Class attendance and participation (10 points)

Regular attendance and active participation is a major part of the success of our class and your academic/professional development. You are expected to attend all lectures. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to get notes from classmates and know the material. You can also come to see me during office hours to discuss material you have missed. Furthermore, you will be responsible for material from in-class videos and lectures on the exams and quizzes. I will have surprise reading quizzes throughout the term. Missing a quiz without a legitimate excuse will affect your participation points. There will be **NO** makeup quizzes.

In addition to reading quizzes, students are required to post weekly reading responses to Blackboard by 10:00 a.m. each **Wednesday**. These responses will be used to facilitate class discussion and you are all encouraged to read them before coming to class. These postings factor into your participation grade. Responses will not be required weeks when writing assignments are due.

Writing Assignments (30 points)

You will be assigned two essays, each worth 15 points. Details for these assignments will be provided well before their due dates.

Midterm Exam (25 points)

You will be taking an **in-class** midterm exam during Week 5. This exam will include true-false, matching, short answer and short essays.

Final Exam and Paper (35 points)

You will be taking an **in-class** final exam on the **last day of class**. This exam will include true-false, matching, and short answers. In addition to this exam, I will pass out an essay question a week before the exam. The student is expected to write a 3-5 page essay to turn in on the day of the final. No late papers will be accepted.

**Course Due Dates:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reading responses</td>
<td>Each Wednesday @ 10:00a (except Wks 4 &amp; 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #1</td>
<td>Jan 30th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>Feb 6th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #2</td>
<td>Feb 27th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam and Paper</td>
<td>Mar 14th</td>
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**ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES**
Course Policies
Cultivating a Safe Learning Environment
Two standards of expectations regulate student responsibility in ES 252—these standards are non-negotiable. 1) **Respect yourself and others:** a diversity of views should be expected and protected. The topics covered in this course are often emotionally charged and are not always comfortable to discuss openly. You are expected to engage the issues in a mature, reasonable, and respectful manner, and to show respect for other students and the instructor at all times. I reserve the right to ask you to leave the room if you have disrupted classroom dynamics or disrespected your instructor and/or classmates. I must ensure that the classroom is a safe space for all. 2) **Bring your brains:** Ethnic Studies is an academic discipline. This course is an intellectual, not an experiential, endeavor. Therefore an informed discussion of the problems and issues addressed in this course is required.

See campus policy on these matters at [http://aaeo.uoregon.edu](http://aaeo.uoregon.edu)

Students with Disabilities:
The University of Oregon seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services @ [http://ds.uoregon.edu/](http://ds.uoregon.edu/). The Center will work with you and I will gladly make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

E-mail Etiquette:
Your relationships with me is a professional relationship. When corresponding by e-mail, always include a salutation (e.g. “Dear Rupa”) and a closing that identifies who you are (“Sincerely, María Rodríguez”). Also, please include a subject line that includes ES 252. If I have not replied to e-mail, within a day or two, do not hesitate to follow up in person or with a second e-mail.

Electronic Devices:
Wireless and handheld devices and cell phones must be turned off prior to class. Please do not text in class.

Academic honesty and plagiarism:
All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and
documented. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. Please review the University’s policies at: http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/judicial/conduct/sai.htm

For campus regulations regarding academic dishonesty, classroom disruption, alcohol and drug violations, theft, physical assault, and sexual misconduct, see the Office of Student Judicial Affairs website: http://studentlife.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/index.htm.

Course Schedule:
*Please note that I reserve the right to change this schedule to accommodate guest speakers, films, and other educational needs. You are responsible for knowing these changes announced ahead of time in class and through Blackboard.

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**Week 1: Course Introduction and the Creation of Asian American Studies**

Introducing ourselves to each other, going over syllabus, course expectations, etc. What is Asian American? Who is included? What images and stereotypes does the label conjure? Why create Asian American Studies?

Jan 9th: Course Introduction

Jan 11th: The Creation of Asian American Studies

Readings:
- “When and Where I Enter” from Gary Okihiro’s *Margins and Mainstreams*

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**Week 2: Suspecting History and Asians in the New World**

Can we accept history or should we question it? How is history a political process and crucial to forming identity and community? What is Asian history in the US? What are the waves of Asian immigration?

Jan 16th: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

NO CLASS

Jan 18th: Suspecting History and Asians in the New World

Reading
- “The Power in the Story” from Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past*
- “Their History Bursts with Telling” from Ronald T. Takkai’s *Strangers from a different shore: a history of Asian Americans*
Assignment #1 distributed and explained (due Jan 30th)

Week 3: Whiteness and the Model Minority
Before we can explore the diversity of experiences of Asian Americans, we must understand how American is defined and how this definition creates the model minority.

Jan 23rd: Who is American?: Assimilation and the Creation of Whiteness in the US
Readings:
• “Ozawa and Third” and “The Legal Construction of Race” from Haney Lopez’s White by Law
• Min Zhou’s “Are Asian Americans Becoming White?” in Contemporary Asian America
• “The Strange Career of Xenophobia” in Vijay Prashad’s Kung Fu Fighting

Jan 25th: Model Minority and Media Representations
Film: No Hop Sing, No Bruce Lee: What Do You Do When None of Your Heroes Look Like You?
Readings:
• Lucie Cheng and Philip Q. Yang “The ‘Model Minority’ Deconstructed” in Ethnic Los Angeles
• Christina Chin et al’s “Without a Trace: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Prime-Time Television” in Contemporary Asian America

Week 4: Making Communities
How are communities formed? How are tradition and culture created/used to make community?

Jan 30th: Film: Ancestors in the Americas: Coolies, Sailors, and Settlers
Assignment #1 due

Feb 1st: Midterm Review &
Imagined Communities, Creating Traditions, and Notions of Authentic Culture
Readings
• Excerpts from Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities
• Excerpts Hobsbawn and Ranger’s Invented Traditions
• “The Habit of Exnomination” from Annanaya Bhattacharjee’s A Patchwork Shawl
Week 5: The Other Asians: Refugees and Citizenship
How have refugees changed Asian American identity and discourse? How does citizenship affect refugee experience?

Feb 6th: In-Class Midterm

Feb 8th: Refugees and Citizenship
Reading:
- Sharmila Rudrappa’s *Ethnic Routes to Becoming American*, pgs. 7-17
- Lynn Fujiwara’s “Mothers without Citizenship” in *Contemporary Asian America*

Week 6: The Enemy Within: Internment and Post 9/11
How have Asians been constructed as the enemy? What actions have the American public and government taken against Asians in times of war? How has America legitimized these actions?

Feb 13th: The Internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans During World War II
**Guest Speaker: Gordon Hideaki Nagai**
Readings

Feb 15th: Post 9/11
Film: 9066 to 9/11: America’s concentration camps then…and now?
Reading:
- Sunaina Maira’s "Racial Profiling" in the War on Terror: Cultural Citizenship and South Asian Muslim Youth in the U.S.” in *Contemporary Asian America*

Assignment #2 distributed and explained (due Feb 27th)

Week 7: Working Class Woes
How does the working class challenge the model minority myth? How are the working class disenfranchised?

Feb 20th: Complicating Asian American and Cabbies
Reading:
- Yen Le Espiritu et al’s "Class constraints on racial solidarity among Asian Americans,” in *The New Asian Immigration and Global Restructuring*
- Mathew’s *Taxi* (Prologue-Ch. 3)
Feb 22nd:  Cabbies and Nannies
Film: Taxi-vala/Auto-biography
Reading:
• Mathew’s Taxi (Ch. 4-7)
• Linta Varghese’s “Constructing a Worker Identity”
• “A Boon for Nannies, If They Only Knew,” NYT 04/14/11

Week 8: Gender and Sexuality
Are Asian gender norms negotiated/challenged in America? How have the LGBTQ community become visible within the Asian American community?

Feb 27th:  Gender Negotiating
Reading:
• Tuyet-Lan Pho and Anne Mulvey’s “Southeast Asian Women in Lowell: Family Relations, Gender Roles, and Community Concerns” in Contemporary Asian America
• Yen Le Espiritu’s “Gender, Migration, and Work: Filipina Health Care Professionals to the United States” in Contemporary Asian America

Assignment #2 due

Feb 29th:  Queer Asian Americans
Reading:
• David L. Eng’s “Out here and over there : queerness and diaspora in Asian American studies” in A companion to Asian American studies
• Martin F. Manalansan’s “Searching for Community: Filipino Gay Men in New York City” in Contemporary Asian America

Week 9: Political Aspirations, Activism, and Alliances
From activism to public office, what are the different techniques employed by Asian Americans with political aspirations? Are polycultural/panethnic alliances possible and productive?

Mar 5th:  Political Aspirations and Activism in Asian America
Reading:
• Glenn Omatsu, “The ‘Four Prisons’ and the Movement of Liberation: Asian American Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s.” in Contemporary Asian America
• Excerpts from SAALT 2010 report “From Macacas to Turban Toppers Report” Available at:
http://saalt.org/attachments/1/From%20Macacas%20to%20Turban%20Topers%20Report.small.pdf

Mar 7th: Alliances
Film: Vincent Who?
Reading:
• Vijay Prashad’s “Crafting solidarities” in Asian American studies now
• Claire Jean Kim and Taeku Lee’s “Interracial Politics” in Contemporary Asian America

Final essay question distributed and explained (due Mar 14th)

Week 10: The Future of Asian American Studies
What is the future of Asian American Studies?

Mar 12th: Asian American Future(s) and Final Review
Reading:
• Kent Ono’s “Asian American Studies in Its Second Phase” in Asian American Studies After Critical Mass
• Glenn Omatsu’s “Freedom schooling: reconceptualizing Asian American studies for our communities” in Asian American studies now

Mar 14th: Final (in class)