Ethnic Studies 252: 
Introduction to Asian American Studies
Fall 2010, Mondays & Wednesdays 4:00-5:20pm, Esslinger 105

Instructor: Shuji Otsuka
Office: Esslinger 192C
Extra-help Hours: Mondays 2:00 – 3:50pm & by appointment
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This course introduces students to Asian American History and the new research emerging from the interdisciplinary field of Asian American Studies. Grounded in history, we will chronologically explore how the interplay of war and imperialism, family and labor, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, nationalism and citizenship shaped the experiences of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans over time. Reading primary documents of memoirs, films, and cartoons alongside secondary scholarship by historians, anthropologists, and Ethnic Studies scholars, students will learn to locate the experiences of this heterogeneous racial group within the global context of diaspora and migration and the domestic context of comparative racial politics, community mobilization, and inter-minority alliances. We will conclude with a contemporary examination of how South Asian American and African American youth formed an alliance to pursue social activism, especially through their artistic appropriation of hip hop music.

Required Texts

* Helen Zia, Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People (Far, Straus, and Giroux, 2000)
* Ji-Yeon Yuh, Beyond the Shadow of Camptown (New York University Press, 2002)
* Kenji Yoshino, Covering: the Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights (Random House, 2007)
* Nitasha Tamar Sharma, Hip Hop Desis: South Asian Americans, Blackness, and a Global Race Consciousness (Duke University Press, 2010)

Evaluation Method and Course Policies

A student’s course grade will consist of two components: 1) attendance and informed participation each week (30% of final grade) and 2) five analytical review essays (70%; see guidelines below). Please sign the attendance sheet as you enter the classroom each week. Late arrivals will be marked “late.” Please be sure to turn off all cell phones, pagers, and computer sounds. If you must use a laptop or palm reader, do so by sitting in the first row. To assist students with their weekly participation grade, I have required two students to serve as discussion leaders each week; each student must sign-up to be either a summarizer or a critiquer at least once in the course. Missing more than
one class session will significantly lower your overall participation grade. Required
texts are available for purchase at the campus Duck Store.

4-page Essay Guidelines (70% of course grade)

I will be grading you not only on your knowledge of relevant facts but also your
ability to think clearly and intelligently about the course themes, and to make a logical
and persuasive case for your position through the careful sifting and marshaling of
evidence from the assigned readings. In other words, a clear and focused argument is
essential to a strong essay. Advancing an argument means you must take a position
on a specific issue and develop some analysis and use evidence to explain and justify
your position. Your essay should also show the relationship(s) among the chapters in
the book. You may choose to focus on common themes, linkages, conflicts, a distinctive
critique, levels of analysis, historical actors, historical context (social, political, cultural,
and/or economic change), clusters of issues, theoretical or conceptual approaches, etc., as
you wish. I only ask that you not simply repeat the contents of each chapter in the “he
says, she says,” style. Rather, try to highlight the contributions (or limits) of the various
studies and provide a constructive, and perhaps critical, framework for thinking about the
book or books as a whole.

Essays that receive “A”s will: state a clear and focused argument; define their
terms; develop the argument with relevant evidence from the assigned texts; draw on the
full range of applicable course materials (books, lectures, & handouts); note possible
objections, counter-arguments or counter-examples and explain why they fail to rebut
your argument; and draw well-reasoned conclusions. They will be written in clear prose
and legible script (double spaced, 12-point font) while staying within the 4-page limit
(learn to pack a punch in a few words).

Please turn in one hard copy with your UO I.D. number at the top of the first
page. Since I will be grading your essays anonymously, please do not write your name
on them. No late papers will be accepted. You are welcome to show me drafts up to
three days prior to the essay due date.

Essay Due Dates (also noted on course schedule)

10/6 Zia (pp. 3-52) and Kiyama (pp. 7-133, 148-150)

10/20 Yuh (pp. 1-221)

11/3 Zia (pp. 55-319)

11/17 Yoshino (Preface & pp. 3-201) and Sharma (Preface & pp. 1-87)

12/1 Sharma (pp. 88-299)
Weekly Participation (30% of course grade)

Based on the truism that writing is thinking, your job is to take ample reading notes and bring with you a set of your own key questions about each article and book. You may refer to your written notes during our discussions when we will analyze the readings in detail. The purpose of oral participation (including in-class presentations) is to show me that you have read all of the assigned texts by asking questions about them and thinking critically out loud. Each summarizer will present for approximately five to ten minutes the main argument of the chapters assigned for that week while the critiquer will raise a series of questions about the readings.

Extra-Help Hours

All students are strongly urged to take advantage of my extra-help hours. Please bring whatever problems or concerns you may have, including routine academic issues such as help with writing response essays, reading difficulties, extending our weekly seminar conversation outside the classroom, and the like. If you wish to receive detailed feedback on your essay, please bring a hard copy so that I can go over it with you.

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.

Week 1: What is Asian American Studies?
Readings: Zia, Asian American Dreams pp. 3-52
9/27: Course overview
9/29: Student Presentations

Summarizer 1)_____________________________
2)_____________________________

Critiquer 3)_____________________________
4)_____________________________

Week 2: Between Two Empires
Readings: Kiyama, The Four Immigrant manga pp. 7-133, 148-150
Due at the beginning of Wednesday’s class:
Essay on Zia (pp. 3-52) and Kiyama (pp. 7-133, 148-150)
10/4: Asian Students in the United States
10/6: Student Presentations

Summarizer 1)_____________________________
2)_____________________________

Critiquer 3)_____________________________
Week 3: U.S. Expansion into Asia
Readings: Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown* pp. 1-125
10/11: “America’s Comfort Women”
10/13: Student Presentations
Summarizer
1)____________________________________
2)____________________________________
Critiquer
3)____________________________________
4)____________________________________

Week 4: Building Community
Readings: Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown* pp. 126-221
Due at the beginning of Wednesday’s class: Essay on Yuh (pp. 1-221)
10/18: Self-Definition and Agency
10/20: Student Presentations
Summarizer
1)____________________________________
2)____________________________________
Critiquer
3)____________________________________
4)____________________________________

Week 5: The Specter of Japanese American Internment
10/25: Vincent Chin
10/27: Student Presentations
Summarizer
1)____________________________________
2)____________________________________
Critiquer
3)____________________________________
4)____________________________________

Week 6: The Politics of Difference
Readings: Zia, *Asian American Dreams* pp. 227-319
Due at the beginning of Wednesday’s class: Essay on Zia (pp. 55-319)
11/1: Asian Gay and Lesbian Communities
11/3: Student Presentations
Summarizer
1)____________________________________
2)____________________________________
Critiquer
3)____________________________________
4)____________________________________
Week 7: A Post-Civil Rights Era?
Readings: Yoshino, Covering Preface & pp. 3-164
11/8: How “Covering” Works
11/10: Student Presentations

Summarizer
1) ______________________________
2) ______________________________

Critiquer
3) ______________________________
4) ______________________________

Week 8: Crafting an Expansive Politics
Readings: Yoshino, Covering pp. 167-201
Sharma, Hip Hop Desis Preface & pp. 1-87
Due at the beginning of Wednesday’s class: Essay on Yoshino (Preface & pp. 3-201) and Sharma (Preface & pp. 1-87)
11/15: South Asians in the United States
11/17: Student Presentations

Summarizer
1) ______________________________
2) ______________________________

Critiquer
3) ______________________________
4) ______________________________

Week 9: South Asian and Black Relations
Readings: Sharma, Hip Hop Desis Preface & pp. 88-233
11/22: Global Race Consciousness
11/24: Student Presentations

Summarizer
1) ______________________________
2) ______________________________

Critiquer
3) ______________________________
4) ______________________________
Week 10: Cultural Production and Civil Rights
Readings: Sharma, *Hip Hop Desis* pp. 234-299
11/29: Making the Music
12/1: Student Presentations
Due at the beginning of Wednesday’s class: Essay on Sharma (pp. 88-299)

Summarizer
1)_____________________________
2)_____________________________

Critiquer
3)_____________________________
4)_____________________________