Description/Objectives:
This course provides a detailed and critical examination of contemporary issues confronting Asian American communities against the backdrop of broad economic, social, and political changes in an increasingly multi-racial American society and globalized world. Central analytical concepts include issues of race, gender, and class; identity, representation and politics. In addition, we will also ask what “responsibility” means to Asian Americans who confront these daily struggles.

The class starts with exploring the meanings of the Asian American category and the purpose of Asian American studies: knowledge production grounded in community development and change. We will focus on the emergence of new post-1965 Asian Pacific communities in the U.S. and pay special attention to documenting and analyzing immigrant children, successive generations and their experiences. With these historical and structural foundations, we will situate and investigate the Asian American experience in relation to major categories of social identity and inequality: racial tension and coalition building. In addition, we will take a gendered look at the Asian American experience (and sexuality); and Asian immigrants/refugees (along with issues of race, class, labor, and violence). Finally, to scrutinize these theoretical and ethnographic studies, we will examine the visions of resistance, politics, and culture in forming and practicing Asian American communities. Throughout the class, critical ethnographic inquiries will be stressed.

Readings: The following texts are available at the University Bookstore.
• Maira Sunaina M., Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City. Temple Univ. P., 2002

The course reader will be available at Course Reader Material, 1141 Westwood Blvd. (310) 443-3303.

Requirements/Grading:
Your maximum accumulated score will be 200 points. The final grade will be a letter grade converted from your accumulated points, taking into account extra credit work (A—90% or higher; B—80% to 89%; C—70% to 79%...). The instructor and TA’s reserve the right to adjust the final grade upward in recognition of exceptional individual performance.
1. (Required) Participation in class and discussion section: 40 points
2. Midterm exam: 40 p; February 11 (Tuesday)
3. Final exam: 80 p; March 18 (Tuesday), 3-6 pm
4. Short paper on Assigned Project (5-6 pages per group of 3): 40 P; February 25 (Tuesday)

-Poor attendance will result in a Lower final grades.
-Extra credit assignment (each worth 1point; up to 5) will be given on any date in class. Your extra credits will be computed at the end of the quarter when your grade is on the borderline.
-Class disruptions (chatting sessions, verbal and physical—cell phone and beeper—noises, etc.) will not be tolerated.
-Cheating, of all things (including signing the roll for someone else) will not be tolerated.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Introduction and Asian American Movement
• Omatsu, G., 1. The ‘Four Prisons’ and the Movement of Liberation: Asian American Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s. In The State of Asian America, 19-70
Video, Ancestors in the Americas: “Coolies, Sailors, and Settlers: Voyage to the New World”

Optional

Week 2 & 3: Racial Tension and Coalition Building I & II

Video, Sa-I-Gu
- Saito, L., 1. Monterey Park and the San Gabriel Valley: Regional, National, and International Trends
  4. Asian American Political Issues
  5. On Common Ground: From Agricultural Struggles to Urban Politics among Latinos and Asian Americans
  6. The Case of Redistricting: The Growing Organizational Scale of Politics and Interracial Alliances

Optional
- Umemoto, K., From Vincent Chin to Joseph Ileto: Asian Pacific Americans and Hate Crime Policy. In Transforming Race Relations, 243-278

Week 4 & 5: Gender/Sexuality Challenges I & II
Video, Orientations
• Puar, J., Transnational Sexualities: South Asian (Trans)nation(alism)s and Queer Diasporas. In Q & A: Queer in Asian America, ed. by Eng, David L. and Alice Y. Hom, 405-422. Temple Univ. P., 1998
• Park, K., 6. Women’s Changing Viewpoints: The Pursuit of Human Dignity

Guest Speaker

Optional

Week 6 & 7: Immigrant/Refugee Acts I & II
Midterm exam (February 11)
• Park, K., 2. Korean Migration to America: Dependent Development and American Fever
  3. The Gravitation to Small Business
  5. The Rise of Sisters in Korean America: The Shift to Women-Centered Kin Organization
• Ignacio, E., Pilipino ka ba? Internet Discussions in the Filipino Community. In Contemporary Asian American Communities, 89-101

Video, A.K.A Don Bonus: A Video Diary of Sokly “Don Bonus”

Optional:
• Bonus, Rick, Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space. Temple Univ. P., 2000
• Kibria, N., Family Tightrope; The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans. Princeton Univ. P.
• Vo, L., The Vietnamese American Experience: From Dispersion to the Development of Post-Refugee Communities. In Asian American Communities: A Reader, ed. by Jean Wu and Min Song, 290-305. Rutgers, 2000

Week 8: Successive Generations

• Maira S., 1. Introduction
  2. To Be Young, Brown, and Hip: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Indian American Youth Culture
  5. Conclusion: Critical Nostalgia and Commodified Cool

Optional

• Park, K., “I Really Do Feel I’m 1.5!”: The Construction of Self and Community by Young Korean Americans. Amerasia Journal 25(1):139-64, 1999
• Lee, S., Unravel the “Model Minority” Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth. Teachers College Press, 1996
• Takahashi, J., Nisei/Sansei: Shifting Japanese American Identities and Politics. Temple Univ. P.
• Tuan, M., Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites?: The Asian Ethnic Experience Today

Week 9: Asian Americans and Globalization
• Parrenas, R., 1. The Dislocation of Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers
  5. Intergenerational and Gender Relations in Transnational Families
  6. Contradictory Class Mobility: The Politics of Domestic Work in Globalization
  7. The Dislocation of Nonbelonging: Domestic Workers in the Filipino Migrant Communities of Rome and Los Angeles

Video, Modern Heroes, Modern Slaves

Optional
• Linger, Daniel T., No One Home: Brazilian Selves Remade in Japan.
• Lin, J., Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic Enclave, Global Change.

Week 10: Prospects for the Future of Asian America

Optional:
Assignment

Be a participant observer of public or private events or activities involving 1.5 or 2nd generation Asian Americans at various locations in Asian American places (at least through a couple of visits); write an ethnography and comparative analysis (5-6 pages= 4 page field data, 1 page summary plus 1 page analysis)

- collect documents
- map/describe setting (e.g., churches, schools or other educational settings, workplaces, market places, community/ neighborhood events, places of leisure (karaoke/noraebang, coffeeshops, cafes, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, etc.), family gathering or rituals)
- identify audience: leaders, VIPs; ethnicity, age, gender, etc.

- course of events: those you observe, and fill in accounts before and after (documents, interviews)
- describe as fully as you can, so you can use this description later
- event (e.g., Korean Festival) as a series of events; main sequence on stage
- side events (demonstrations, food and other booths); informal events
- audience; families, picnics, role of organizers (& guests)
- watch people’s actions

- informal or casual interviews: talk to at least 3 persons there: identify yourself and your purpose
- UCLA student studying Los Angeles Asian American community questions: have you been here before; why have you come; what do you like most; do you know other people here; why do you think this is important to Asian Americans living in LA?
- observe how they interact with others

- think of points of comparison with another event; record what you think may be similar or different; form hypothesis as you go

Fieldnotes (double spaced; 12 points)