ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES 200B  
CRITICAL ISSUES IN ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

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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 the question of what “responsibility” means to Asian Americans in 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'll 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 and the successive generations as well as their experiences. With these historical and structural foundations, we'll situate and investigate the Asian American experience in relation to major categories of social identity and inequality: racial tension and coalition building; 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 inquiry will be stressed.

Requirements/Grading:  
Class Participation and Oral Presentation(s) 30%  
Two Papers 70%  
(Paper in lieu of final exam)

Reading/Writing Assignments:  
1) Oral Presentation  
2) First Paper (5-6 pages; due, February 10) on Assigned Project  
3) Second Paper (15 pages; due, March 10) on Term Project: topics may concern contemporary issues in the Asian American communities, and
approved by the instructor. This paper combines research and theoretical analysis.

Readings: The following texts are available at the University Bookstore.


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

**Schedule of Classes**

**Week 1: Introduction and Writing Asian America**


Optional:

• Russell, B., 7. Participant Observation
  • 8. Taking and Managing Field Notes.

**Week 2: Racial Tension and Coalition Building**
• Lee, J., Civility in the City
  Video, Twilight: Los Angeles

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


**Week 3 & 4: Gender/Sexuality Challenges I & II**
• Eng, David L. and Alice Y. Hom (eds.), Queer in Asian America.
  Video, Orientations
  • Louie, M., Sweatshop Warriors

Optional:
• Kim, E., L. Villanueva, and Asian Women United of California (ed.), 
  Making More Waves: New Writing by Asian American Women
• Shinagawa, L. H., & G. Y. Pang, Asian American Panethnicity and 
• Espiritu, Y. L. Asian American Women and Men
• Abraham, Margaret, Speaking the Unspeakable: Marital Violence among 
  South Asian Immigrants in the United States.

Week 5 & 6: Immigrant/Refugee Acts I & II
• Yuh, J., Beyond the Shadow of Camptown
• 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
Video, The Killing Fields (or AKA Don Bonus)
• Lin, J., Reconstructing Chinatown
• Ignacio, E., Pilipino ka ba? Internet Discussions in the Filipino Community. 
  In Contemporary Asian American Communities, 89-101

Optional:
• Kwong, P., Forbidden Workers: Illegal Chinese Immigrants and American 
• Park, K., The Korean American Dream; Immigrants and Small Business 
• Bonus, Rick, Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural 
  Politics of Space.  Temple Univ. P., 2000
• Fadiman, Anne, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong 
  Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures.  Farrar, 
  Straus and Giroux, 1997

Week 7: Successive Generations
• Maira Sunaina M., Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in 
  New York City.  Temple Univ. P., 2002
• 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
• Alsaybar, B., Deconstructing Deviance: Filipino American Youth Gangs, 
  25(1): 116-38

Optional:
• 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


Lee, S., Unravel the “Model Minority” Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth. Teachers College Press, 1996


**Week 8: Asian Americans and Globalization**


**Video, Modern Heroes, Modern Slaves**


**Optional**


**Week 9: Prospects for the Future of Asian America**

**Video, My America...or Honk, if You Love Buddha**


• Su, J. & C. Martorell, Exploitation and Abuse in the Garment Industry. In Asian and Latino Immigrants in a Restructuring Economy, 21-45
• 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

Optional:

Week 10: Student Presentations
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) due immediately after 5th week, Monday class