

English W4632

Asian American Literature and CultureMW 5:40 - 6:55 pm
603 Hamilton Hall

Prof. Wen Jin
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Office: Philosophy Hall 306
 Office Hours: W 4-5:30;
 Th 3-4 & 6:10-6:40;
 & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will examine important prose narratives, poetry, and plays written by Asians in America from the mid-nineteenth century onward, with a focus on two questions in particular: 1) How do these texts figure the relationship among U.S. racial formation, transpacific migration, and U.S.-Asian relations? 2) How do they contribute to and complicate familiar literary genres and modes of writing (autobiography, historical fiction, the short story, experimental poetry, etc.)?

TEXTS

The following texts are available at the Columbia University Bookstore (Broadway and 115th).

- Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men*, Vintage, 1989, ISBN: 0679721886
- Hisaye Yamamoto, *Seventeen Syllables*, Rutgers UP, 2001, ISBN: 0813529530
- Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*, U of California Press, 2001, ISBN: 0520231120
- Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*, Penguin, 1991, ISBN: 978-0140149043
- Monique Truong, *Book of Salt*, Mariner Books, 2004, ISBN: 0618446885
- Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land*, 1994, ISBN: 0679727833
- Ondaatje, Michael. *In the Skin of the Lion*, 1997, ISBN: 0679772669
- Ping Chong, *The East-West Quartet*, Theatre Communication Group, 2004, ISBN: 1559362294
- Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, Twayne Publishers, 1991, ISBN: 0805784373

The required course pack is available at the Village Copier (Amsterdam and 118th St.). Readings with an asterisk can be found in the course pack.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Wed 3 Sept	Introduction
Mon 8 Sept	Kingston, 3-74 Chan, 3-8, 25-35
Wed 10 Sept	Kingston, 83-224; Chan, 45-61
Mon 15 Sept	Kingston, 224-307 * David Eng (start from the section titled " <i>China Men</i> and Cultural Vision")
Wed 17 Sept	Yamamoto, "Seventeen Syllables," "Yoneko's Earthquake," "Epithalamium," "Death Rides the Rails to Poston," "Las Vegas Charlie" Chan, 9-12, 36-42, 103-118, 121-142
Mon 22 Sept	Yamamoto, "The High-Heeled Shoes, A Memoir," "Miss Sasagawara" * Lawson Inada, "Camp," from <i>Notes from the Camp</i>
Wed 24 Sept	Yamamoto, "Wilshire Bus," "The Brown House," "The Eskimo Connection," "My Father Can Beat Muhammad Ali," "A Fire in Fontana," "Florentine Gardens" Lawson Inada, "Jazz," from <i>Notes from the Camp</i>

Mon 29 Sept	<i>Hidden Internment: The Art Shibayama Story</i> (video) dir. Casey Peek and Irum Shiekh (in-class) *Karen Yamashita, excerpt from <i>Brazil-Maru</i>
Wed 1 Oct	Cha 1-89 Chan, 12-17
Mon 6 Oct	Cha 90-119 * Lisa Lowe, "Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of Dictée"
Wed 8 Oct	Cha 123-179
Mon 13 Oct	Hagedorn 1-66
Wed 15 Oct	Hagedorn 67-186
Mon 20 Oct	Hagedorn 187-251
Wed 22 Oct	Review
Mon 27 Oct	Midterm
Wed 29 Oct	*Nguyen
Mon 3 Nov	<i>No class</i>
Wed 5 Nov	Truong, 1-152
Mon 10 Nov	Truong, 153-261; Chan, 145-165
Wed 12 Nov	* Rushdie
Mon 17 Nov	Ghosh 1-240
Wed 19 Nov	Ghosh 241-400
Mon 24 Nov	Ondaatje 1-142
Wed 26 Nov	Ondaatje 143-244
Mon 1 Dec	Ping Chong, "Deshima," "Pojagi"
Wed 3 Dec	* Lowe, * Eng and Han
Mon 8 Dec	wrap-up: New Asian Americans
Mon 15 Dec	Final essays due in the English Office (602 Philosophy Hall)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Course grade breakdown:

- Midterm: 30%
- Final essay (8-12 pages): 50%
- Four online postings (1-2 pages each): 5% each

Online postings: The Discussion Forum on CourseWorks is intended to offer a participatory supplement (or alternative) to the in-class discussion. You are required to post to the discussion, at minimum, four times over the course of the semester, twice before the midterm and twice after the midterm. In your postings, you should feel free to raise questions, ideas, interpretations of the readings at hand, or to bring relevant information to our attention. You are also encouraged to post responses to the videos screened in class, but they will not count toward the four online postings requirement. The idea of the forum is to carry on a dialogue on the works we read in class outside of the limited confines of the discussion period, so you should contribute thoughtfully and you should read regularly the postings of your peers (at least once a week). I will grade your postings at the end of the semester based on their ideas and structure.

Midterm: The midterm is designed to ensure that you are reading with the proper degree of attention and to provide an opportunity for you to draw connections among the different readings. The mid-term exam will consist of brief passage analysis and essay questions. Make-up midterms are allowed only with the permission of your dean.

Final essay:

Format: The final essay must be typed, doubled-spaced, in 12 pt. font (preferably Times New Roman), and with 1-inch margin all around. Essays must be the length specified (8-12 pages). You will receive detailed instructions and grading standards in advance of the due date.

Late Papers: Late papers will not be accepted.

Office hours: You are welcome to take advantage of my office hours for any questions, concerns, or suggestions you have about any aspects of the course. I would also love to talk with you about your final paper ideas during the second half of the semester.

Academic dishonesty: Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable at any academic level. In a case of academic dishonesty, the student will be required to rewrite the essay or take a make-up exam, which will then be automatically downgraded by two full letter grades as a consequence.

Plagiarism involves copying or closely paraphrasing another text in part or in its entirety without citing it. If you have any questions about what is and what is not considered plagiarism, please contact me before handing in your assignments.

You can also go to <http://www.college.columbia.edu/bulletin/universitypolicies.php#plagiarism> to review the university policy on plagiarism.