

ENGLISH 362: ASIAN AMERICAN WRITERS
Beyond the Canon

Winter 2015
MWF 2:00p – 2:50p
ALLEN 140

Professor Tara Fickle
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Office Hours: Wed 1–2 pm; Fri 12–2 pm

I. Course Description

What makes a writer or text “Asian American”? Is it the ethnicity of the author? The characters? The plot? (And what exactly would an “Asian American” plot look like?) In this course, we will go beyond the traditional line-up of “classic” Asian American texts and writers like Maxine Hong Kingston’s *Woman Warrior* and John Okada’s *No-No Boy* to consider how the Asian American canon has been defined through and against those texts and genres who defy, reject, or fail to “count” as what is conventionally understood as “Asian America.” The course satisfies English major requirements in “1789 to the present” and Folklore, Ethnic, and Women’s Literature, as well as the University’s Multicultural Requirement IP (“Identity, Pluralism & Tolerance”).

II. Learning Aims & Outcomes

In a local sense, this course will help you understand what Asian American literature is (or at least how and why it has been historically defined that way); where it came from; its relationship to other genres of minority American literature and experience; and why it is an important part of both Asian American experience and contemporary American literature. It will also allow you to practice your close-reading and analytical skills, mostly in relation to literature but also in other mediums, including film, comics, and rhetoric. But in the broadest sense, this course will allow you to engage with questions and ideas which are relevant to issues of race and literature as a whole: How and why are canons formed – why, that is, do students read what they read, consumers buy what they buy, and universities teach what they teach? What is the difference between “racist” and “racial”? What does it matter how or who we define as a “minority” or as an “author”?

Specific Learning Outcomes [and modes of evaluation]

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop and pose high-level, open-ended questions which stimulate critical debate [Discussion Questions, Reacting to the Past (RTTP)]
- Improve public speaking and rhetorical argument-development skills [Discussion Qs, RTTP, Blackboard Assignments]
- Analyze and “close read” Asian American texts as literary and historical objects by developing a precise vocabulary and critical methodology [BB Assignments, Discussion Qs, Quizzes]
- Understand the major historical and cultural texts, contexts, and trends that shaped Asian American Literature in the 20/21 century [Quizzes, RTTP]

III. Format

This class is discussion-based and student-centered, so most meetings will involve a brief introductory lecture followed by student-led discussion questions. Some meetings may also include film viewings, in-class activities or discussions with field experts or guest speakers.

IV. Office Hours and E-mail

My office hours are intended to facilitate discussion regarding any aspect of the course or its policies; I strongly encourage you to come at least once during the quarter, or to schedule an alternate time if you have a recurring schedule conflict.

I check my e-mail frequently, but not constantly — and rarely on the weekends — so please allow 24 hours for a response during the week (48 hours during weeks when papers or projects are due). Please maintain professional etiquette in your e-mail communication with me, and make sure to put the course title in the subject line. If you have a serious matter to discuss with me, arrange to meet me in my office.

If you miss a class, you should contact a classmate to get notes.

Classmate 1

Name:

Classmate 2

Name:

E-mail:

E-mail:

V. Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation. Class attendance and participation is mandatory. This does not simply mean you are physically present, but that you:

- Arrive on time (repeated tardiness will constitute absences)
- Have completed all of the required reading before class begins
- Bring your iClicker as well as the assigned text
- Listen attentively to whomever has the floor and respond to, develop, and/or question their ideas
- Are not on your phone, laptop, etc. engaged in non-class activities (if this becomes a recurring issue, you may be asked to refrain from using technology during class)

***Note: If you anticipate needing to miss any of the last five class meetings (RTTP), you may not wish to take this class.**

Please come speak to me early in the quarter if you anticipate having difficulties with participation or attendance, or need special accommodations. If you need to miss class for any reason, you must e-mail me at least 12 hours in advance. A doctor's note or other proof may be requested. More than one unexcused absence will automatically result in a lowered participation grade; more than five unexcused absences will result in automatic failure. *This is your only warning.*

Late Policy. No late Blackboard assignments, discussion questions, or final RTTP evaluations will be accepted, and no incompletes will be given except in documented emergencies.

2. Course readings

(a) Required books available at the Duck Store and through Amazon.com, etc. Make sure you choose the correct edition; Kindle/ebook OK.

- iClicker 2. **You must obtain and bring your iClicker by the second class meeting. Earlier versions of iClicker are acceptable, as long as they are shown to be compatible during the first week.**
- Chan et al. *The Big Aiiieeeee!* (1991). Penguin USA.
- Wong, Jade Snow. *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1989). Hopkins.
- Nakamura, Hiroshi. *Treadmill: A Documentary Novel* (1996). Mosaic.
- Yang, Gene. *American Born Chinese* (2006). MacMillan.

(b) Required texts available on Blackboard as PDF files. Please print out/download and bring to class.

3. Blackboard (BB) Assignments (3). Five times during the quarter, you will be provided with a prompt via Blackboard, available no later than 72 hours before the due date. These may be close-reading prompts,

or may ask you to prepare for a specific in-class activity. **Two of these assignments (due 1/11 & 2/5) are mandatory.** Choose one other throughout the quarter and submit your response through Blackboard. Please do not submit more than one other assignment. *Exception: If you are unable to attend the Griffin lecture on 2/27, you must submit an additional BB assignment, for a total of 4.*

4. Discussion Questions (1). During the first week of class, each student will sign up to be “discussion leader” for 1 class session. They will be expected to prepare and pose 2-3 genuinely debatable questions to the class to stimulate critical discussion. **Discussion Questions are due on Blackboard by 11:59pm the day before you are scheduled to present them,** in order to allow Professor Fickle time to make copies for the class. *Late questions receive no credit.* We will discuss expectations and guidelines for these questions during the first week.

My Discussion Question Date: _____

5. In-Class Quizzes (10+). Many class sessions will begin with brief, informal quizzes administered via iClicker to gauge your comprehension of the assigned reading and the effectiveness of lecture material. Your four lowest (or non-existent) scores will be dropped. *You must bring your iClicker to be eligible to take these quizzes.*

6. Reacting to the Past (RTTP) Final Project. The last 5 class sessions will involve an in-class role-playing game called “Reacting to the Past” which will allow you to literally “bring to life” the characters and debates you’ve encountered during the quarter. Detailed instructions available through the Student Gamebook, which will be distributed Week 6.

V. Grading Procedures

1. Attendance and Participation (15%). Graded according to a check plus (100%: consistently engaged, frequently volunteers thoughtful comments and questions), check (75%: attentive, occasionally offers insights), check minus (50%: multiple absences and/or does not contribute) scale.
2. In-Class Quizzes (15%). Graded according to a numerical scale (# correct/# possible).
3. Discussion Questions (10%). Graded according to a check plus (100%: excellent), check (75%: acceptable), check minus (50%: unacceptable) scale.
4. Blackboard Assignments (15%, 5% each). Graded according to a check plus (100%: excellent), check (75%: acceptable), check minus (50%: unacceptable) scale.
5. RTTP Final Project (45%: 25% In-class performance, 20% Written work). Detailed rubrics available on BB.

VI. Academic Integrity

All work must adhere to standards of academic honesty outlined in the Student Conduct Code (<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>). Plagiarism will result in failure of the course and additional sanctions as determined by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

VII. Accessible Education

In compliance with UO policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first two weeks of the quarter, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with the Accessible Education Center to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

VIII. Recommended Study Habits and University Resources.

University accreditation standards require at least 2 hours of work outside of class for each credit earned.

This means that you are expected to dedicate 8 hours/week of *outside of class* work. This will usually mean reading the assigned texts, but will also include time spent completing assignments, writing papers, and working on RTTP projects. Numerous campus resources are available which you should avail yourself of if you desire assistance with academic or extra-academic issues. For a full list, please see the Blackboard document “University Resources.”

IX. Course Schedule (Reading listed is due that day)

Part 1. Questions of *Authenticity*: What “counts” as Asian American Literature?

Mon 1/5: Introduction

Wed 1/7: *Aiiiiiiiii!* Preface & Revised Preface (BB), iClicker Check

Fri 1/9: *Big Aiiiiiiiii!*: Introduction and Chin, “Come All Ye Asian American Writers” pp. 1-30 (read as much of the rest as you can); Discussion Question Sign-Up

* Blackboard Assignment #1 due (**required**): Sunday 1/11, 11:59pm

Mon 1/12: **Shawn Wong Guest Speaker**; Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*: Intro, Author’s Note, Ch 1-4 [pp. 1-36]

Wed 1/14: Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*: Ch 5-11 [pp. 37-96]

Fri 1/16: Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*: Ch 12-17 [pp. 97-154]

Mon 1/19: No Class; MLK Holiday

Wed 1/21: No Class; read Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*: Ch 18-22 [pp. 155-198]

Fri 1/23: Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*: Ch 23-28 [pp. 199-246]

* Blackboard Assignment #2 due: Sunday 1/25, 11:59pm

Part 2. Questions of *History*: Can (and should) we read Asian American Literature as Asian American History?

Mon 1/26: Nakamura, *Treadmill*: Intro, Ch 1-2

Wed 1/28: Nakamura, *Treadmill* Ch 3-6

Fri 1/30: Nakamura, *Treadmill* Ch 7-10

Mon 2/2: Nakamura, *Treadmill* Ch 11-14

Wed 2/4: Nakamura, *Treadmill* Ch 15-18

* Blackboard Assignment #3 due (**required**): Thurs 2/5, 11:59pm

Fri 2/6: Nakamura, *Treadmill* Ch 19-22; **Guest Speakers from Oregon Nikkei Endowment**

Part 3A. Questions of Form: What is an “Asian American” *character*?

Mon 2/9: David Wong Louie, “In a World Small Enough” (in *The Big Aiieeeee!*) [Read entire story]

Wed 2/11: David Wong Louie, “In a World Small Enough” (in *The Big Aiieeeee!*)

Part 3B. Questions of Form: What is the *genre* of Asian American literature?

Fri 2/13: Chiang, *The Lifecycle of Software Objects* (PDF distributed in class) Ch 1-5 [pp. 1-28]

Mon 2/16: Chiang, *The Lifecycle of Software Objects* Ch 6-8 [pp. 29-42]; RTTP Gamebook distributed

Wed 2/18: RTTP Pedagogical Introduction (BB) & Chiang, *The Lifecycle of Software Objects* Ch 9-end [pp. 43-end];

*Blackboard Assignment #4 due: Thurs 2/19, 11:59pm

Fri 2/20: All RTTP Grading Rubrics (BB) & Yang, *American Born Chinese* pp. 1-84

Mon 2/23: RTTP Gamebook pp. 1-12 & Yang, *American Born Chinese* pp. 85-160

*RTTP Roles Preference due on Blackboard: Mon 2/23, 11:59p

Wed 2/25: Yang, *American Born Chinese* pp. 161-End; RTTP Roles Assigned

Fri 2/27: No Class; Attend Griffin Lecture or Submit Additional Blackboard Assignment

*Blackboard Assignment #5 due: Sat 2/28, 11:59p

Mon 3/2: Stalling, *Yinglishi* (PDF) + Stalling TED TALK (BB)

*RTTP Role Sheet Research Assignment (BB) due: Tues 3/3, 11:59pm

Part 4. Putting Theory into Practice: Reacting to the Past (RTTP)

See Student Gamebook for detailed schedule and due dates

Wed 3/4: RTTP Role-Play Game Set-Up. Reading due: Student Gamebook (all) & Required Secondary Texts (General)

Fri 3/6: RTTP Role-Play Act 1: Committee Introductions & Author Roundtable. Reading Due: Required Secondary Texts (Your Role).

*Assignment Due: Minute Keeper only: 1-2pp. written account of session minutes by 11:59p Sat 3/7.

Mon 3/9: RTTP Act 1, continued. Reading Due: Minutes (BB)

*Assignment Due to BB by 11:59p Mon 3/9: For Authors, 3-5 pp. written version of speech. Minute Keeper only: 1-2pp. written account of session minutes.

Wed 3/11: RTTP Act 2: Expert Testimony. Reading Due: Minutes (BB)

*Assignment Due to BB by 11:59p Wed 3/11: For Experts, 3-5 pp. written version of speech. Minute Keeper only: 1-2pp. written account of session minutes.

Fri 3/13: RTTP Act 3: Committee Vote. Reading Due: Minutes (BB)

*Assignment Due to BB by 11:59p Fri 3/13: For Committee Members (except Chair and Minute Keeper), 2-4 pp. written version of speech. Minute Keeper only: 1-2pp. written account of session minutes.

*RTTP Self- and Peer-Evaluation due to Blackboard by **Sun 3/15, 11:59p.**