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AML 3673; Sec 063G  
Fall '13

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### Asian-American & African-American Interactions

Course Description: Ever since the category Asian-American emerged as a politicized identity in the 1960s, the major pedagogical imperative has been to study the literature and culture of this group on its own in order to legitimize the field itself and to understand its common histories and tropes. African-American literature and culture, affected by legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights, has been thought to belong to a different trajectory. Yet from the very beginnings of major waves of Asian immigration, the two groups have been affected by and interacted with each other. This course seeks to understand the nature of these interactions through literary and filmic expressions. How do Asian-Americans see African-Americans and vice versa? What cultural characteristics and histories do they share? How have they been treated as minorities? What are their differences and how have they manifested themselves? What kinds of alliances have these groups created? How have both groups negotiated their Americanness? Ultimately, the course stresses the importance of interethnic studies.

Texts: (A few copies are available at BookIt and at the university bookstore. Order online).

Ed. Robert Gooding-Williams Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising  
(Please order/buy asap. If you can't get a cheap copy, see me)

Du Bois The Dark Princess. Banner Books

Nina Revoyr Southland

\*Frank Chin Chickencoop Chinaman and The Year of the Dragon. University of

Washington

Press

Anna Deveare Smith Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992. Dramatist's Play Service

Nora Okja Keller Fox Girl

Paul Beatty White Boy Shuffle

Toni Morrison Home

Mira Nair Mississippi Masala (on reserve in the library)

Berry Gordy The Last Dragon (on reserve in the library)

Coursepack available at BookIt

### Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:

Quizzes .....15%  
Oral Presentation and paper..... 10%  
Mid-Term Paper (7-8 pages) .....30%

Final Paper (8-9 pages) .....35%  
Class Participation.....10%

Attendance: Please remember that this is an intensive discussion class and that you are expected to attend every day. Attendance means being in class, with your books, and ready to take notes and participate in discussion. (There is a 10% grade for class participation so make sure you answer and ask questions). All cell phones must be turned off and put away before entering the classroom. If you like using laptops for taking notes, please sit in the front row. Coming to class without the reading materials or reading other materials in class constitutes an absence.

There is no way to simply "make up" work for missed classes. If you miss more than four hours of class, you will lose a third of a letter grade for each additional absence. The three-hour absence policy does not mean that I am encouraging these absences or that you should, indeed, miss three hours of class. The allowed absences are meant strictly to cover emergencies (if you "use up" your absences and then have an emergency, you're out of luck). Missing more than eight hours of class constitutes failing the course. If you are absent you are still responsible for knowing the material and turning in assignments, including responses. Work turned in late because you missed a class will be marked down for lateness.

Computer Use in Class: You may take notes on a laptop only if you have a documented disability you can show me. Please be sure to sit in the front row if you are using your laptop.

Quizzes: There will be quizzes on the readings for the day any time during class. Expect at least 12-13 quizzes during the course of the semester. I will not be able to give makeup quizzes if you are unable to attend class or if you miss a quiz because you came to class late. However, I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

Panels: Two or three students should get together to work on a panel. These panels are either intended to broaden, contextualize, or interrogate the topic being discussed in class. Many panels require you to take a position on a topic. Taking a position does not simply mean presenting an unverifiable opinion. A position must be supported by close readings of the text in question. Your best option is to direct the class to a specific page and offer specific analyses. All panelists should e-mail a 1-2 page statement to each of the panel participants as well as to me at least 24 hours before class. If I don't receive your panel statement 24 hours before class, I will consider it late. Make sure you are not repeating other panelists. If there is repetition, everyone's grades will suffer. In class, please hand me a hard copy of your panel statement.

During class, begin by telling the class the question you are addressing and the position you are taking. Then read your statement to the class slowly and loudly. After that, the panel will open to class discussion. Please practice and time yourself before you present in class. Panels will be graded on the information provided, clarity, and on the ability to elicit questions. A panel with three students should last no more than fifteen minutes; one with four students should not go over twenty minutes. Questions and answers can take an additional five to ten minutes.

Papers: I do not require any research for your papers other than the material in the packet. Please follow MLA guidelines for citation. Remember that any use of reference material, both in direct quote or paraphrase, must be meticulously footnoted. Plagiarism, while intentional or otherwise, will result in a failing grade. Make sure your paper has a thesis (ie something you need to prove), that there is only one thesis for the entire paper, and that your paper is not a plot summary. Before writing your papers please consult my "Guidelines for Papers" on sakai. I will be giving you specific instructions for both papers. If you are a senior English major and are planning to go to graduate school, you might want to do one long research paper instead

of the two shorter papers. In that case, in addition to meeting the requirements for the short papers, you'll have to research your topic on the MLA International Bibliography. This DEFINITELY NOT the easier option. If you want to follow this option, please see me by September 13. I will need to approve the topic.

I am available in my office to help you with your papers and am happy to read rough drafts ahead of time either in person or on e-mail. I will help you with organization, clarity, development and grammar, but will not proofread. Please allow enough time for me to get back to you.

Turning in Papers: Your papers are due in class on the days assigned. Please submit the papers as Word or PDF attachments on sakai and also bring hard copies to class. Please don't slip papers under my door. Always keep a xerox and/online copy of the paper you turn in. Late papers will be reduced one letter grade for each class period; after one week they earn an "E."

Rewrites: You may revise any one paper. For rewriting, please follow the long comments at the end of the paper because that is where I suggest an overall revision strategy. Do not simply revise according to side comments. Remember that a rewrite is a serious effort and not simply a correction of mechanical errors. When you rewrite a paper turn in the original graded paper along with the rewrite. In the new paper, highlight all the revisions you have made. If you do not highlight, I will not grade the revision. If you want to rewrite a paper, I recommend your doing so within two weeks of getting the graded paper back. Do not rewrite a paper with a grade higher than a 'B.' I will average both grades. All rewrites are due April 25<sup>th</sup>.

All papers and responses must be done in order to pass the course. Work not done will receive a grade of "0"

For purposes of calculation A=90, A-= 87, B+= 83 etc

Syllabus: This is a tentative syllabus which might be changed according to the needs of the class

Aug 21 Introduction

Aug 23 Yen Le Espiritu "Ethnicity and Panethnicity" and "Coming Together: the Asian American Movement" coursepack

Aug 26 Suchen Chang "Hostility and Conflict" coursepack  
Letter from Mary Tape to San Francisco School Board 1885  
(Handout)

### *Early Racial Interactions*

African-American Emancipation and the Coolie

Aug 28 Najia Aarim-Heriot, from Chinese Immigrants, African Americans and Racial Anxiety, pp. 1-14; 217, 226  
Nubia "Progress of the Colored People of San Francisco" Frederick Douglass' Paper  
Sept 22, 1854

Nubia "From Our San Francisco Correspondent" Frederick Douglass' Paper, April 13, 1855

#### African-American Soldiers in the Philippines

Aug 30 From Smoked Yankees and the Struggle for Empire 3-18; 27-33; 239-249; 251-255; 269-271; 292-293

Cartoons from The Forbidden Book on sakai

Victor Bascara from Model Minority Imperialism, pp. 74-91 in Packet

Panel # 1: Did African-American soldiers in the Philippines view themselves as Americans first or minorities sympathizing with Filipinos?

Sept 2 Labor Day

#### *Contemporary Alliances*

Sept 4 Vijay Prashad, "Kung Fusion: Organize the 'Hood Under I-Ching Banners" from Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting, pp. 126-149. in Packet

#### *Model Minorities*

Sept 6 Peterson "Success Story Japanese-American Style." New York Times, Jan 9, 1966  
Please print out and bring to class

Frank Chin "Racist Love" in Packet

Sept 9 Please watch the entire film Mississippi Masala (118 minutes) for this class. Copies of the film are on reserve in the library.

Panel # 2: Is Mississippi Masala a critique of the model minority concept?

Sept 11 Continue discussion of Mississippi Masala

Binita Mehra "Emigrants Twice Displaced..." From Screening Asian Americans in Packet

Vijay Prashad From The Karma of Brown Folk, pp. vii-9. in Packet

Begin reading *The Dark Princess*

#### *Afro-Asian Solidarity*

Sept 13 Du Bois The Dark Princess Till the end of "The Pullman Porter" (pp. ix-105)

Sept 16 *The Dark Princess*, "The Chicago Politician" ( pp. 109-214)

Bill Mullen "Du Bois, Dark Princess and the Afro-Asian International" Positions, 11 i (2003).

Sept 18 Du Bois The Dark Princess finish The Dark Princess

Panel # 3: Is The Dark Princess a work of Afro-Orientalism or Afro-Asian solidarity?

### ***Blackness as Resistance***

#### *Political Movements and Literary Representations*

Sept 20 Maeda, Daryl J. "Black Panthers, Red Guards, and Chinamen: Constructing Asian American Identity through Performing Blackness, 1969-1972" American Quarterly - Volume 57, Number 4, December 2005, pp. 1079-1103

Sept 23 Frank Chin Chickencoop Chinaman pp. 1-30 (Act one)

Sept 25 Frank Chin Chickencoop Chinaman pp. 31-66 (Act two)

Panel # 4: Does blackness help Chin formulate a resistant Asian-American identity or does it subsume that identity under African-American?

### *Hip Hop*

Sept 27 Joe Wood "The Yellow Negro" Transition 73 (1997), 40-67. Electronic Journal

<http://www.jstor.org.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/stable/2935443>

Thien-bao Thuc Phi "Yellow Lines: Asian Americans and Hip Hop" From Afro Asia

Ed. Fred Ho and Bill v. Mullen pp. 295-317

Paper # 1 Due

Sept 30 Screening Mark Villegas "Hip Hop Mestizae" [vimeo.com/6394176](https://vimeo.com/6394176)

Sunaina Maira "Identity Dub: The Paradoxes of an Indian American Youth Subculture (New York Mix)" Cultural Anthropology, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Feb., 1999), pp. 29-60

(If you want to see a good documentary about the history of Filipino hip hop go to: <http://vimeo.com/3722157-->)

Oct 2 Victor Viesca "Native Guns and Stray Bullets" Amerasia Journal 38 i (2012) 113-142.

Presentation # 1: An analysis of one or two albums of Kiwi and/Bambu.

*Malcolm X*

Oct 4 Yuri Kochiyama "The Impact of Malcolm X on Asian-American Activism"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDeChQiuLBQ&feature=Playlist&p=56780EA949E57D99&index=0>

Youtube. Yuri Kochiyama anniversary of Malcolm X

*Focus L.A. Riots*

Oct 7 Michael Omi and Howard Winant "The Los Angeles 'Race Riot' and Contemporary U.S. Politics" from Reading Rodney King, 97-116

Elaine Kim "Home is Where the Han Is..." from Reading Rodney King, pp. 215-236

Oct 9 Screening Sa-I-Gu

PLEASE BEGIN READING SOUTHLAND

Oct 11 Sumi K. Cho "Korean Americans vs. African Americans: Conflict and Construction"

from Reading Rodney King, pp. 196-207

Panel # 6: In what ways does Sa-I-Gu help rethink Korean-American and African-American relations?

Oct 14 Nina Revoyr Southland, pp. 1-122

Oct 16 Nina Revoyr, Southland, pp. 123-251

Oct 18 Nina Revoyr, Southland, pp. 251-end

Oct 21 Anna Deveare Smith Twilight Los Angeles, 1992

Oct 23 Anna Deveare Smith Twilight, Los Angeles, 1992

Jerry G. Watts "Reflections on the Rodney King Verdict and the Paradoxes of the Black Response" from Reading Rodney King, pp. 236-249

*African-Americans and Kung Fu*

Oct 25 Amy Ongiri, # Ongiri, Amy Abugo. "He wanted to be just like Bruce Lee": African Americans, Kung Fu Theater and Cultural Exchange at the Margins" Journal of Asian American Studies 5 i (2002), 31-40. Electronic Journal

Please watch The Last Dragon for this class. The DVD is on reserve in the library

Discussion The Last Dragon

- Oct 28 Discussion The Last Dragon  
Panel # 7: Does The Last Dragon perpetuate stereotypes of Asian-Americans?

***Racial-Sexual Politics of the Base***

- Oct 30 From Katharine Moon, "Partners in Prostitution" From Sex Among Allies, 1-47  
Nora Okja Keller Fox Girl pp. 1-88 (chs 1-5)
- Nov 1 Fox Girl, pp. 89-185 (chs 6-11)
- Nov 4 Fox Girl, pp. 186-end
- Nov 6 John G. Russell "The other other: The black presence in the Japanese experience"  
from Michael Weiner, Japan's Minorities, pp. 84-114. In Packet
- Nov 8 Homecoming
- Nov 11 Veterans Day
- Nov 13 Toni Morrison Home pp. 1-66 (chs 1-4)
- Nov 15 Toni Morrison Home pp. 67-end

***Orientalism and Femininity***

- Nov 18 From The Asian Mystique  
Chang and Anida Esguerra "Not Your Fetish"
- Nov 20 Paul Beatty White Boy Shuffle
- Nov 22 No class. Continue reading Paul Beatty White Boy Shuffle  
I am giving a talk at the American Studies Association Conference in Washington, DC
- Nov 25 Paul Beatty White Boy Shuffle  
Panel # 9: What is the function of the "oriental" woman in White Boy Shuffle?
- Nov 27 Thanksgiving
- Nov 29 Thanksgiving

***Controversies about Parody***

- Dec 2 Lois Leveen "Only When I Laugh: The Dynamics of Ethnic Humor" MELUS 21 iv

(1996): 29-55. Electronic Journal

Tokyo Breakfast <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgjjwjaBJ5Do>

Dec 4      Work on Papers

Dec 6      Papers due at noon



Reserve Items

Note: Some of these items had to be special ordered and might not be on reserve during the first week of class.

Meena Alexander Manhattan Music

Victor Bascara from Model Minority Imperialism

Paul Beatty White Boy Shuffle

Suchen Chang Asian Americans: An Interpretive History

Frank Chin Chickencoop Chinaman and The Year of the Dragon

Christine Choy, Elaine Kim et. als Sa-I-Gu

W.E.B. Du Bois The Dark Princess

Marlon Fuentes Bontoc Eulogy

Willard B. Gatewood Smoked Yankees and the Struggle for Empire

Robert Gooding-Williams Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising

Jessica Hagedorn Ed. Charlie Chan is Dead

Fred ho and Bill V Mullen Afro Asia 2008

Najia Aarim-Heriot, from Chinese Immigrants, African Americans and Racial Anxiety

Mira Nair Mississippi Masala

Anna Deveare Smith Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992. Dramatist's Play Service

Yen Le Espiritu Asian American Panethnicity

Vijay Prashad The Karma of Brown Folk

Sheridan Prasso The Asian Mystique

Michael Schultz The Last Dragon

Anna Deveare Smith Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992.

