

Professor Malini J. Schueller  
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AML 3673  
Spring '26  
T 7 (1:55-2:45)/R 7-8 (1:55-3:50)

e-mail: [malini@ufl.edu](mailto:malini@ufl.edu)  
Office Hours: T 3:00-4:30 (4113 Turlington)

R 4:30-5:30 via zoom

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/2447969731?pwd=amJBb25uZl15b0tKcXVBNXdPYjd2Zz09>

And by appointment

### **Refugees, Illegals, Immigrants and Other Impossible Subjects of Asian America**

What constitutes a refugee? How do we think of refugees? Who is an illegal alien? When do immigrants become citizens or “American”? What does it mean to think of the Asian adoptee as “saved?” Asian American literature insistently raises these questions. This course will focus on the ways in which histories of militarism, imperialism, and racial exclusion have informed the construction of these impossible subjects of Asian America. We will examine how Asian American literary and cultural production represents the refugee, the illegal alien, and the immigrant/non-citizen/citizen. This course will introduce you to a variety of Asian American novels, short stories, autobiographies, graphic novels, and film. Because Asian American studies is interdisciplinary, we will be drawing on fields such as history, sociology, anthropology, as well as cultural studies.

This is an intensive discussion course. Please come to class prepared to raise questions about the readings for the day. I am interested in your active responses to the materials you are reading. You are all encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether you agree with the readings or with your classmates or me during discussion. *No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular perception, viewpoint, or belief.*

#### **Required Texts**

Carlos Bulosan *America is in the Heart*

Kao Kalia Yang's *The Latehomecomer*

Loung Ung *Lucky Child*

Aimee Phan *We Should Never Meet*

Viet Thanh Nguyen *The Refugees*

le thi diem thuy *The Gangster We are all Looking For*

Moshin Hamid *Exit West*

Thi Bui *The Best We Could Do*

*Additional Readings on Canvas.* These are under “Files” and named after the date of the reading, followed by the last name of the author. In the event that you can’t find a syllabus reading on Canvas because I might have made an error, please email me and let me know so I can fix it.

### **Course Requirements and Grade Distribution**

Pop quizzes .....20%

Oral Presentation.....10%

Mid Term Exam .....25%

Analytical Essay 7-8 pages .....30% (Analytical reading of a literary text using a critical concept)

Class Participation.....15%

***Attendance:*** Please remember that this is a discussion class and that you are expected to attend every meeting day. Attendance means being present with your reading materials ready so that you can take notes and participate in discussion. If you cannot access any of your readings during class you will be marked absent. 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 absence policy does not mean that I am encouraging these absences or that you should, indeed, miss four hours (hours, not classes). The allowed absences are meant strictly to cover emergencies. Missing eight hours of class constitutes failing the course. If you miss 8 hours of class you will automatically receive an E in the course.

### ***Oral presentations:***

The purpose of these presentations is to make you engage intensively with the texts you are reading and focus on aesthetic and thematic strategies. You will need to get together with one or more people (depending on class size) and take a position on the question provided on the syllabus. 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. It is best to use a powerpoint to put up specific passages (with page numbers) being discussed so students can follow. By all means, direct the class to a specific page and offer specific analyses. If you would prefer a different question, please confer with fellow panelists and let me know at least

two weeks before the presentation. Your argument should be based on close textual analysis. It would be good to have a power point with the quotes you will be using.

Please email a one-page statement of both presentations to me by 10 am the day before class (ie if you are presenting on Thursday, you need to email me the statement by 10 am on Wednesday so I can make sure it's okay and get back with you).

Each person's presentation should take no more than 5-6 minutes, followed by 5-10 minutes of questions and answers. Panels comprising two people should take no more than 10 minutes. Please practice ahead so you don't go over the allotted time. Presentations and panels will be graded on the information provided, clarity, and on the ability to elicit questions.

Laptop/media policy: All cellphones **MUST** be turned off before the start of class. It is definitely better to have hard copies of all texts so you can take notes, underline, and follow class discussion. However, I have grudgingly accepted the fact that some students work with e books and like to work electronically instead of using paper. You may bring your laptops, I pads etc to class but please make sure that you are only looking at the reading being discussed. **Surfing the web is distracting to students sitting next to you or behind you.** If you feel you cannot resist the urge to be on social media, please print out the readings and bring them to class.

Email: It is understood that you will check your UF email daily during the week. Any changes to office hours will be sent on email as will changes to the syllabus (which I will also make on Canvas). **If you need to contact me outside of office hours, please do so at [malini@ufl.edu](mailto:malini@ufl.edu) and not on Canvas.**

**General Decorum** Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course. Chronic lateness in attending class will be reflected in evaluation of your participation. You are expected to treat each other with decorum and enable a welcoming space for dissenting opinions. Ask questions and disagree respectfully with fellow students, me, or the readings. Devices are strongly discouraged. It is required that you turn off any notices and digital communications during class

**Help From Me and About me**: I am available during office hours 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 indicate some grammatical errors but will not proofread. Please allow enough time for me to get back to you. For quick questions, use my e-mail. If you are not free during my office hours and need help, please don't hesitate to email me or wait after class to set up an appointment.

I am a Professor of English. I was born and raised in India, hold a PhD in English from Purdue University, and since 1986 I have been at UF teaching courses on American literature, US empire studies, postcolonial theory, and Asian American studies. You can learn more about me and my interests by checking my website: <https://wordpress.com/view/malinischueller.wordpress.com> (this needs updating) or the English department website <https://english.ufl.edu/malini-johar-schueller/>.

**Exam:** This will be a blue book exam based on the assigned reading materials as well as class discussion. I will give you 4 exam questions a week ahead so you can start preparing. When you come for the exam you'll choose one of two questions to answer. You may bring hard copies of books but you may not use a computer or cellphone.

**Papers :** I do not require any research for your paper other than the material on Canvas. You are already reading enough critical and theoretical works in the course itself. Please follow MLA guidelines for citation. Remember that any use of reference material, whether in direct quote or paraphrase, must be meticulously footnoted. Plagiarism, while intentional or otherwise, will result in a failing grade in the course. 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. I will be giving you specific instructions for the paper. I am happy to read rough drafts or parts of your papers ahead of time.

Papers will be graded holistically on the following criteria, in general order of emphasis:

- Argumentation: clear thesis, logical sequence of argument, logical conclusions
- Use of appropriate evidence from the texts
- Demonstrated understanding of contextual issues in relation to works discussed (accurate explication of critical concepts and arguments; accurate use of terminology and historical information; accurate application to texts)
- Mechanics: punctuation, spelling, word choice and usage, sentence construction, paragraphing
- Proofreading and citations

### **Academic Honesty and use of Generative AI**

According to the Student Conduct Code [Links to an external site.](#), "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the faculty to whom it is submitted.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the student did not author."

Plagiarism on any assignment will lead to a failing grade in the course as a whole

Do not use Generative AI (LLMs such as Chat GPT, etc.) for your writing, research, or other work for this class. LLM outputs, simulations of training data found on the internet, are inaccurate and often biased. Using LLMs makes your work bland, vague, and wrong, and impedes the development of skills. Building skills as a thinker, reader, and writer equips you for success as a professional, for participation as a citizen, and for fulfillment as a human. That development only happens with effort, practice, errors, time, and revision. Your work in this course should be entirely made by you, and work not made by you will be considered an academic integrity violation and evaluated accordingly. Similarly, all assignments, feedback, and grades will be made by me without Generative AI. Ideas are social, so let's make them together

### **Course and University Policies**

This course complies with all UF academic policies. Those policies--including Class Attendance, Accommodations for Disabilities, Grading, Course Evaluation, Academic Honesty, and In-Class Recording--as well as Academic and Campus Health and Wellness Resources for students are available here: Academic Policies and Resources Links to an external site.(<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>)

### **Schedule of Readings and Discussions:**

This represents my current plans for readings and discussions. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change based on the interests and needs of the class as a whole. I will communicate all changes early, in class, via Canvas and email. Students are responsible for staying informed about any changes in the class schedule by regularly consulting the Canvas course page and checking email.

Jan 13: Introduction

Jan 15: Screening Dir David Grabias and Nicole Newnham Sentenced Home (2006)

### **(In) Security and Terror**

Jan 20: From Eric Tang *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the NYC Hyperghetto*, pp. 52-76.

Jan 22: James Hathaway, "The Meaning of Repatriation" *International Journal of Refugee Law* 9 iv (1997), 551-558.

Panel #1: What kinds of ideas of the nation-state or citizenship are challenged in *Sentenced Home* and how?

Carlos Bulosan *America is in the Heart*, pp. 1-71 (chs 1-IX)

### **Aliens and Impossible Subjects**

Jan 27: Carlos Bulosan *America is in the Heart*, pp. 72-180 (chs VII-XXIII)

Jan 29 : Carlos Bulosan *America is in the Heart*, pp. 181-end.

Mae M. Ngai from *Impossible Subjects* pp. 1-14; 96-126

Panel #2: Is Carlos created as an “impossible subject?”  
Or Is *America is in the Heart* an anticolonial text?

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### **War, Militarization, and Humanitarianism**

Feb 3: Andrew Shacknove, “Who is a Refugee?”

Lisa H. Malkki “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization”

Feb 5 Timothy Linh Bui *Green Dragon* (2001) Please watch on your own

Panel #3: Are refugees depicted as speechless emissaries in *Green Dragon*?

### **Autoethnography**

Feb 10 Christian Moser “Autoethnography”

Kao Kalia Yang’s *The Latehomecomer* chs 1-7

Feb 12: Jeannie Chiu, "I salute the spirit of my communities": Autoethnographic Innovations in Hmong American Literature *College Literature*. Summer 2004, Vol. 31 Issue 3, pp. 43-69 (you are required to read only the highlighted sections but feel free to read all if you want)

Kao Kalia Yang *The Latehomecomer* chs 8-end

Panel 4: Is *The Latehomecomer* about nostalgia and loss or about diverse Hmong communities?

Feb 17 Cathy Schlund-Vials from *War, Genocide, Justice: Cambodian American Memory Work*, pp. 1-25.

Michael Schudson “Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory” from *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains and Societies Reconstruct the Past*, pp. 346-364.

Loung Ung *Lucky Child*, pp. 1-41 (chs 1-4)

Feb 19 Loung Ung *Lucky Child* pp. 42-162 (chs 5-17)

Feb 24 Loung Ung *Lucky Child* pp. 163-end.

William Peterson “Success Story Japanese American Style”

Panel #5 Is *Lucky Child* a work of collective memory or a model minority narrative?

Feb 26 Mid-Term Exam

## **Adoption/Saving Babies**

March 3: Aimee Phan *We Should Never Meet*  
("Miss Lien," "We Should Never Meet" "The Delta")

March 5: Yen Le Espiritu from *Body Counts*, ch 4  
Aimee Phan *We Should Never Meet* ("Visitors" "Gates of Saigon" "Bound"  
"Emancipation" and "Motherland")  
Panel # 6: Does Aimee Phan challenge or support the idea of "saving babies"?

March 10: Screening *Daughter from Danang*

March 12: Continue Screening *Daughter from Danang*

Mimi Thi Nguyen from *The Gift of Freedom*, pp. 1-32  
Panel # How does *Daughter from Danang* complicate the idea of the Gift OR Does  
*Daughter from Danang* support the narrative of saving babies?

## **The Continuity of Trauma**

March 17 Spring Break

March 19 Spring Break

March 24 Viet Thanh Nguyen *The Refugees*  
Viet Thanh Nguyen from *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*, pp. 1-19.  
"War Years"  
"The Transplant"  
"The Other Man"

March 26 Viet Thanh Nguyen *The Refugees*  
"Black-Eyed Women"  
"Fatherland"  
"The Other Man"

Avery Gordon from *Ghostly Matters* 7-8  
Panel 7: What is the function of the ghost in "Black-Eyed Woman" or are "Black-Eyed Women" and "Fatherland" fictions of just memory?

March 31 le thi diem thuy *The Gangster We are all Looking For* pp. 3-77 ("suh-top" and  
"palm")

April 2 le thi diem thuy *The Gangster We are all Looking for* pp. 78-end

Panel # 8: How does the very ending of the novel (157-158) reiterate the main themes

## **Refugees, Magical Realism, Speculative Fiction**

April 7 Moshin Hamid *Exit West* pp. 1-118 (chs1-6)

April 9 *Exit West* pp. 119-end

### **Refugeetude**

April 14 Anthony Veasna So “Three Women of Chuck’s Donuts”

April 17 Anthony Veasna So “We Would’ve Been Princes!” and “Somaly Serey, Serey Somaly”

Nguyen “Refugeetude: When Does a Refugee Stop Being a Refugee?”pp. 109-114

Panel # 9 Are So’s stories about “refugeetude?”

April 21 Work on Papers

April 23: Papers Due 10:00 am.