

AML2410: Issues in American Literature and Culture

Asian American Identities

Section 3698, Class # 10319, Fall 2023

Instructor Name: [Sophia Pan](#)

Course meeting times & locations: T P4 (10:40AM-11:30AM) and R P4-5 (10:40AM-12:35PM) in [TURB310](#)

Office Location and Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:20AM-10:20AM in [TUR4307](#)

Course website: [Canvas E-Learning](#)

Instructor Email: sp101girl@ufl.edu

Course Description:

What does it mean to be an Asian American? Despite being painted as “enemy aliens” during WWII and “Kung-Flu” spreaders during the COVID-19 pandemic, Asian Americans are (and have been) anything but these. In this course, we will explore how 20th and 21st century Asian Americans have (re)claimed their narratives and dispelled harmful stereotypes through picture books, short stories, novels, memoirs, comics, and films. We will also read and discuss theoretical essays that relate the course’s primary works to their social, historical, and cultural contexts.

We will ask what it means to be an American, let alone an Asian American. We will examine how the works of Asian American artists and writers (re)conceptualize American identity. We will also discuss acculturation stress, intergenerational conflict, academic and career pressure, queer identity, mental health, and the Model Minority Myth.

Assignments for this course will include an introductory paper on each student’s reading experiences, open response posts, a 1000-word midterm paper, a 1500-word literature analysis, and in-class presentations. Please note that while this course focuses on Asian American identity, all students interested in exploring this issue and thinking critically about aspects of their own identity are welcome.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce

effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.

- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes: At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Texts: You may use any edition of the written texts (Kindle, paperback, hardcover, etc.). All other readings and/or supplementary materials will be provided either as PDFs via Canvas or as hyperlinks.

- *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott, and Harmony Becker (2019)
- *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003)
- *Ma and Me* by Putsata Reang
- *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (2008)
- *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang (2023)
- *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Nguyen (2020)
- *I Was Their American Dream* by Malaka Gharib (2019)
- You must have access to the following film: *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (2022, dir. by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinart)

Grade Distribution

Assignment	Min. Word Count	% of Grade
Introductory Paper	600 words	10%
Discussion Leader (1x during the semester)	None (more info on the requirements below)	10%
3 Open Response Posts	500 words for each post (1500 words total)	15%
Midterm text analysis	1000 words	15%
Final paper proposal	400 words	5%
Final paper	2000 words	25%
Self-evaluation paper	500 words	10%
Attendance + Participation	N/A	10%

Assignments

Introductory Paper (600 words)

- Reflect on your reading experiences from childhood to young adulthood. Did you/do you enjoy reading? What kinds of things have you read (books, comics, etc.)? Describe how your reading experiences have reflected and/or failed to reflect your own everyday life and identities. Lastly, what do you hope to gain from and/or learn more about in this class?
- Please write in full sentences/paragraphs – no bulleted points.
- MLA, Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced
- **Due Thursday, Sept. 7th by 11:59PM via Canvas**

Open Response Posts (3 x 500 words = 1500 words)

- Starting in the 2nd week of class, you will be writing an open response post on any three (3) assigned readings of your choosing. Your post must be at least 500 words long, but you can write on *any* part of the text(s) you find interesting. For example, what are your initial thoughts? What did you like about the text? Are there any important quotes/topics/themes you want to draw attention to? Do you feel any confusion about the text? Are there any questions you'd like to raise with the class?
- **You may not submit a response post on a text/section of a text after we discuss it.**
- MLA, Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced
- **Each post will be due by 11:59PM the day before we discuss a text via Canvas.**

Discussion Leader (1x during the semester)

- The sign-up sheet will be available during the 2nd week of class.
- Once during the semester, each student will lead a class discussion based on the week's designated readings. Before you lead a discussion, you will prepare a mini presentation in which you identify:
 - The Asian American themes that are presented in the text and/or any relevant background info about the text (author's intentions, historical/cultural context, interviews, articles, book reviews, etc.)
 - The quotes/moments that highlight those themes and/or concepts
 - At least 2 discussion questions you have for the class
- **You will post your work on Canvas by 11:59PM the day before the scheduled class session**

Midterm Text Analysis (1000 words)

- This assignment asks students to write a critical text analysis essay on one text we have read prior to *Yellowface*. In your text analysis, you will combine close reading skills with critical concepts and academic research introduced in class or from the students' own research. The goal is for students to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence. Your argument should center on the theme of the class, which is how Asian American artists and writers problematize and/or (re)conceptualize American identity
- In addition to using the primary text as evidence, you will be relying on at least one (1) scholarly, critical source to help support your argument. In other words, through this research essay you will participate in a conversation with scholars who have discussed the text and/or ideas relating to the text and theme of the class.
- At least one (1) scholarly, critical source is required
- MLA, Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced
- Works Cited page needed
- **Due Friday, Oct. 27th by 11:59PM via Canvas**

Final Paper proposal (400 words)

- A 400-word proposal that describes the text and themes you've chosen to discuss for your final paper. Include possible scholarly sources and explain why you've chosen these sources/how you intend to use them in your paper to support your ideas.
- **Due Friday, Nov. 17th by 11:59PM via Canvas**

Historical and Critical Research Paper (2000 words)

- This assignment acts as the final exam and is similar to the Midterm Text Analysis, but on a grander scale. You will be formulating an original argument about one text we've read this semester, though this time you will be incorporating historical context and more scholarly sources to strengthen your analysis. Like with the midterm, your

argument should center on the theme of the class, which is how Asian American artists and writers problematize and/or (re)conceptualize American identity

- You may elaborate more on an argument made from your Midterm Text Analysis assignment or come up with an entirely new argument for this paper
- At least three (3) scholarly sources are required
- MLA, Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced
- Works Cited page needed
- **Due Monday Dec. 11th by 11:59PM via Canvas**

Self-evaluation Paper (500 words)

- Write about your experiences in this class: what was your biggest challenge? What was your biggest triumph? What did you learn about literature, and how were your assumptions about literature and Asian American identity challenged or confirmed by this class? What, if anything, has changed about how you think about Asian American literature, or about yourself as a writer?
- **Due Tuesday, Dec. 12th by 11:59PM via Canvas**

Course Policies

1. **You must complete *all* assignments to receive credit for this course.**
2. **Email policy:** The best way to communicate with me is via email. Please be aware that I check my email frequently on Mondays-Fridays from 9AM to 7PM but *sparingly* on weekends. Therefore, you should not expect quick responses from me if you email after 7PM on a weekday or during the weekend.
3. **Communication:** Communication is key when it comes to any issues or challenges you may be having that prevent you from participating in class weekly, turning in an assignment on time, or impact your overall performance in class. Communicating with me as early as possible when confronted with an issue will ensure that I can work with you to maximize your success in the course.
4. **Attendance:** This is a lecture + discussion-based course -- therefore, attendance is mandatory.
 - You will automatically fail the course if you miss **two weeks** of class (failure *at* the **sixth** 50-minute absence.
 - You will earn a lowered course grade after **three** unexcused 50-minute absences.
 - Absences that are exempted will be due to university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, religious holidays, quarantine, illness, or serious family emergencies. For absences due to illness, I require a copy of a signed doctor's note.
 - Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies

that can be found

at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

- **Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class.**
 - i. No matter what -- send me an email before class, letting me know that you'll be missing class and stating why you'll be missing class.
 - ii. If you're ill, and you feel like you'll have to miss multiple classes, **please send me a doctor's note.**
- 5. **Tardiness:** I will excuse tardiness if a student is either a few minutes late or if they let me know in advance that they will be late (i.e. sending me an email).
- 6. **Participation:** You are responsible for actively attending and participating in class workshops and discussions, including offering insightful questions or commentary. Points may be lost if you are frequently inactive in class conversations.
- 7. **Classroom Behavior:** Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.
- 8. **UF's policy on Sexual Harassment:** The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community:
<https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>
- 9. **Mode of Paper Submissions:** Papers are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline. All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc, .docx) documents to Canvas. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.
- 10. **Late Papers/Assignments:** Unexcused late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse. Assignments that are submitted late will lose **10%** off their final grade for each day that they are late. **After three days, I will not accept late assignments.** Any assignments that require peer interaction (i.e. discussion post responses) may not be submitted late.
- 11. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
- 12. **Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. A student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
 - 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.
 - Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
 - 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.>
13. **Students with disabilities** who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
 14. **Students who are in distress** or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
 15. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
 16. **Grade Appeals.** In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
 17. **Course Evaluations.** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> .
 18. **Environmental sustainability.** Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

Schedule

This schedule is only a guide and is subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due the day they are listed on the syllabus, not the following day. Deadlines will be posted on Canvas. Late work will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.

Week 1 (8/23-8/25):

- **Thurs. 8/24**
 - Introduction to the course/introduction to y'all!
 - In-class discussion: What does it mean to be an "American"?

Week 2 (8/28-9/1):

- **Tues. 8/29**
 - Read "My Footprints" by Bao Phi ([Available on Canvas](#))
 - **Sign-up for in-class discussion leader slots**
- **Thurs. 8/31**
 - Read "[Mother Tongue](#)" by Amy Tan

Week 3 (9/4-9/8)

- **Tues. 9/5**
 - Read "How to Read a Comic" ([Available on Canvas](#))
 - Read *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei (1st half – pgs. 1-100)
 - Read "Civil Rights and the Identity Struggle in George Takei's *They Called Us Enemy*" ([Available on Canvas](#))
- **Thurs. 9/7**
 - Read *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei (2nd half – pgs. 101-204)
 - Watch George Takei's TED talk "[Why I love a country that once betrayed me](#)"
 - **Introductory paper due by 11:59PM**

Week 4 (9/11-9/15)

- **Tues. 9/12**
 - Watch "[The Model Minority Trope, Explained](#)"
- **Thurs. 9/14**
 - Read *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (Ch. 1-3)

Week 5 (9/18-9/22)

- **Tues. 9/19:**
 - Read *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (Ch. 4-6)
- **Wed. 9/18**
 - **Open Response Post #1 due by 11:59PM**
- **Thurs. 9/21**
 - Read *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (Ch. 7-9)

Week 6 (9/25-9/29)

- **Tues. 9/26**
 - Read *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (Ch. 10-12)
 - Read "Being (and Feeling) Gogol: Reading and Recognition in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Namesake'" by Tamara Bhalla ([Available on Canvas](#))
- **Thurs. 9/28**
 - No readings
 - In class together: Introduce Midterm Text Analysis assignment and practice writing thesis statements

Week 7 (10/2-10/6)

- **Tues. 10/3**
 - Read *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Nguyen (1st half – pgs. TBD)
- **Thurs. 10/5**
 - Read *The Magic Fish* by Trung Le Nguyen (2nd half – pgs. TBD)
 - Read "'And Now This Story Is Ours': Fairy Tale and Collage in Trung Le Nguyen's *The Magic Fish*" by Barbara Tannert-Smith ([Available on Canvas](#))
 - In class together: Researching/finding secondary academic sources

Week 8 (10/9-10/13)

- **Tues. 10/10**
 - Read *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui (1st half – Ch. 1-5)
 -
- **Thurs. 10/12**
 - Read *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui (1st half – Ch. 6-10)
 - Read "Birthing a Graphic Archive of Memory: Re-viewing the Refugee Experience in Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do*" by Stella Oh ([Available on Canvas](#))

Week 9 (10/16-10/20)

- **Tues. 10/17**
 - Read "[Crying in Hmart](#)" by Michelle Zauner
- **Wed. 10/16**
 - **Open Response Post #2 due by 11:59PM**
- **Thurs. 10/19**
 - Read *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (1st half -- pgs. 1-107)

Week 10 (10/23-10/24)

- **Tues. 10/24**
 - Read *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (2nd half -- pgs. 108-235)
 - Read "The Monkey and the Colonoscopy Machine: On the Destruction of Racism and Stereotype in Gene Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese* and *Level Up*" by Tomo Hattori ([Available on Canvas](#))
- **Thurs. 10/26**
 - No readings
 - In class together: Watch first episode of Disney+ adaptation of *American Born Chinese*
- **Fri. 10/27**
 - **Midterm Text Analysis due by 11:59PM**

Week 11 (10/30-11/3)

- **Tues. 10/31**
 - Read *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang (Ch. 1-5)
 - Watch "[Yellowface is a bad look, Hollywood](#)"
- **Thurs. 11/2**
 - Read *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang (Ch. 6-12)
 - Read NPR interview "[Author R.F. Kuang on unlikable narrators and cultural appropriation in 'Yellowface'](#)"

Week 12 (11/6-11/10)

- **Tues. 11/7**
 - Read *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang (Ch. 13-19)
- **Thurs. 11/9**
 - Read *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang (Ch. 20-24)

Week 13 (11/13-11/17)

- **Tues. 11/14**
 - Watch short film [Americanized](#) (dir. by Erica Eng)
- **Thurs. 11/16**
 - Watch *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (dir. by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinart)
 - Read "Everything Everywhere All At Once and the Intimate Public of Asian American Cinema" by Jason Coe ([Available on Canvas](#))
- **Fri. 11/17**
 - **Final Research Paper Proposal due by 11:59PM**

Week 14 (11/21-11/25)

- **Tues. 11/21**
 - No class
- **Wed. 11/22-11/26**
 - **No Classes -- Thanksgiving Break**

Week 15 (11/27-12/1)

- **Tues. 11/28**
 - Read *I Was Their American Dream* (1/2 – pgs. 1-78)
- **Wed. 11/29**
 - **Open Response Post #3 due by 11:59PM**
- **Thurs. 11/30**
 - Read *I Was Their American Dream* (1/2 – pgs. 79-156)

Week 16 (12/4-12/6)

- **Tues. 12/5**
 - Course wrap up – the final day of class!

-Final paper due Mon. 12/11 by 11:59PM

-Self-Evaluation due Tues. 12/12 by 11:59PM

Grading Rubric

A	100-93	C(S)	76-73
A-	92-90	C-(U)	72-70
B+	89-87	D+	69-67
B	86-83	D	66-63
B-	82-80	D-	62-60
C+	79-77	E	59-0

Score	Key Traits/ Qualities
“A-level” Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantially goes beyond analyses and ideas already discussed in class• The thesis (or argument) is creative, clearly articulated, original, and well-supported. Does not rely on summary; offers a nuanced interpretation, not a statement of fact, and is beyond the obvious• Subsequent paragraphs build on and support the paper’s central thesis or argument

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examples and evidence from the texts back up (but do not overtake) your own critical analysis ● Each body paragraph follows the claim, evidence, analysis model; every paragraph has a clear function; transitions between paragraphs are smooth and build the argument effectively; the papers reads as a cohesive argument – not a collection of thoughts or bullet-points. ● The paper is free of most grammatical and spelling errors. ● MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout. ● Should have a distinct and strong conclusion that does not simply rehash the paper’s original thesis ● Uses appropriate and effective organization ● Tone is academic, not moralistic or evaluative
<p>“B-level” Paper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follows and meets most of the requirements in the assignment guidelines ● Has a good thesis, but the wording might be less clear and/or fluid or weaker in its argumentation ● Relies heavily on ideas introduced in class without significant expansion ● Does not analyze textual evidence as critically or as in depth as the “A” paper ● Puts forth a solid argument but may have unclear language, spelling, or grammatical errors and superficial or vague analysis in a few places ● MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout ● Organization of sentences/paragraphs might be a bit weak ● Conclusion might be a bit unclear and/or weak with repetition of the intro’s wording ● Tone is academic, not moralistic or evaluative
<p>“C-level” Paper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follows and meets some of the requirements in the assignment guidelines ● Does not clearly articulate or fully develop thesis; offers only broad intro ● Does not offer new insight into a text, just repeats ideas from class discussion or other sources ● Does not wholly engage with or defend the paper’s key argument throughout ● The writing is largely incoherent and disorganized but may have instances of proper analysis and clear argumentation ● Does not incorporate sufficient textual evidence to support the main argument and claims ● MLA formatting is not uniformly (nor correctly) followed throughout ● Lacks a clear conclusion ● Tone might not be academic; more moralistic or evaluative

**“D-level”
Paper and
below**

- Does not address the text or does not follow assignment guidelines
- Expresses no critical thought about a text, providing only summary and/or contextual information
- Lacks a clearly articulated and well-developed thesis
- Does not engage with or defend the paper’s key argument throughout
- Does not successfully incorporate any textual evidence to support the main argument and claims
- Shows blatant disregard of proper grammar and punctuation
- The writing is vague and has several errors in analysis and argumentation
- Does not follow MLA formatting guidelines
- May have serious organizational problems
- Tone is definitely not academic