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AML 3673
Spring '23
T 7-8; R 8.
MAT 0113

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Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-3:30
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. We will also spend two weeks on Ethiopian-American and Dominican-American refugee narratives as points of comparison. 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.

Texts

Carlos Bulosan *America is in the Heart* (1946)
*Timothy Linh Bui *Green Dragon* (2001) (Available on Amazon Prime)
Loung Ung *Lucky Child* (2005)
Viet Thanh Nguyen *The Refugees* (2017)
Aimee Phan *We Should Never Meet* (2004)
Kao Kalia Yang's *The Latecomer* (2005)
Dinaw Mengestu *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2007)
Junot Diaz *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)
Moshin Hamid *Exit West* (2017)

Electronic readings on Canvas

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:

Pop Quizzes15%

Oral Presentation.....	8%
Essay # 1.....	30%
Essay # 2.....	35%
Class Participation.....	12%

Panels: Two 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. Try 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 get the statement 24 hours ahead, I will consider it late. I like to check the statements and might ask you to make some revisions. After you have made final revisions please upload your statement on canvas before the class meeting. Make sure you are not repeating other panelists.

During class, begin by telling the class the question you are addressing and the position you are taking. Then either read your statement or explain it to class via powerpoint. In the powerpoint it is best to put up the specific sentences/passages you are discussing so the class can follow. 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. Questions and answers can take an additional five to ten minutes. Please do not pose questions to the class because this usually inhibits discussion

Attendance: Please remember that this is a discussion class and that you are expected to attend every day. Attendance means bringing all reading material to class and being prepared to discuss the readings. If you come to class without the assigned readings, you may be considered absent.

There is no way to simply "make up" work for missed classes. If you miss more than three 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 four 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 eight or more 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.

Because this is an intensive discussion course the learning will take place by building upon our conversations. Class participation means contributing to the flow and interrogation of ideas or asking questions when you have difficulty. Simply sitting in class is not enough.

Discussion Questions: You are required to write discussion questions for the readings/films watched for every class on the discussion set up on Canvas. These need not be more than four or

five sentences (you may write more if you wish) **for each reading**. I'm looking for what you found most interesting/complex/problematic in the readings/viewings for the day and would like to discuss in class. These questions are best when you have read thoroughly so don't write till you've done all the readings. I will not grade each question but will keep track of them and give a grade at the end of the semester. Questions will be graded on the engagement they evidence with the readings. Please stick to the texts themselves rather than asking questions based on personal experience or views. **You may miss up to three discussion questions but after that you will lose four points for each missed discussion question. The questions will be due by 11:30 am on Tuesday and Thursday.**

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 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. Before writing your papers, please consult my "Guidelines for Papers" on Canvas. 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 Feb 14. You may not make this decision any later. 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.

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 I see anyone looking at social media at any point in the semester, I will deduct two points from your overall grade for each time this happens.** I will keep a record of these points but will not inform you each time I make a note. 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 updates to the syllabus or changes to office hours will be sent on email. If you need to contact me outside of office hours, please do so at malini@ufl.edu and **not on Canvas**.

Turning in Papers: Your papers are due in class on the days assigned. Please submit the papers as Word or PDF attachments on Canvas. Late papers will be reduced a third of a letter grade for each day. After one week they will earn an "E."

Rewrites: You may revise any one paper. For rewriting, please follow the long comments at the end of the paper. Remember that a rewrite is a serious effort and not simply a correction of mechanical errors. When you rewrite a paper highlight all the revisions you have made. 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.' All rewrites are due April 26.

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

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

Recording Policy

According to state law, students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited.

Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

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, postcolonial theory, and Asian American studies. You can learn more about me and my interests by checking my UFL page <https://english.ufl.edu/malini-johar-schueller/> and my website <https://wordpress.com/view/malinischueller.wordpress.com>

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office in Peabody 202. That office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. If you haven't registered with the DRC but think you may be eligible for accommodation, please come talk to me in office hours and I can help advise you.

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

Jan 10: Introduction

Jan 12: Andrew Shacknove, "Who is a Refugee?"

(In) Security and Terror

Jan 17: From Eric Tang *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the NYC Hyperghetto*, pp. 52-76.
Giorgio Agamben "We Refugees"

Screening Dir David Grabias and Nicole Newnham *Sentenced Home* (2006)

Jan 19: 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. 1-48 (chs 1-VII)

Aliens and Impossible Subjects

Jan 24: Mimi Thi Nguyen from *The Gift of Freedom*, pp. 1-32
Carlos Bulosan *America is in the Heart*, pp. 49-189 (chs VII-XXV ie end of Part II)

Jan 26 : Carlos Bulosan *America is in the Heart*, pp. 193-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?

War, Militarization, and Refugees

Jan 31: Lisa H. Malkki “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization”
Timothy Linh Bui *Green Dragon* (2001) Please watch on your own
Panel #3: Are refugees depicted as speechless emissaries in *Green Dragon*?

Feb 2: Yen Le Espiritu from *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)*, pp. 1-23.
Frank Chin and Jeffrey “Racist Love”

Feb 7: 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* (2005)

Feb 9: William Peterson “Success Story Japanese American Style”
Loung Ung *Lucky Child*
Panel #4: Is *Lucky Child* a model minority narrative?

Adoption/Saving Babies

Feb 14: Yen Le Espiritu from *Body Counts*, ch 4
Aimee Phan *We Should Never Meet*
 (“Miss Lien,” “We Should Never Meet” “Visitors” “Gates of Saigon”

Feb 16: Aimee Phan *We Should Never Meet* (“Emancipation,” “Bound,” “Motherland”)
Panel # 5: Do Phan’s refugees challenge imperialist recuperations of Vietnam?

Feb 21: Screening *Daughter from Danang*

Feb 23: Panel # 6: Is *Daughter from Danang* a film about refugees and adoption? Why/Why not?

Feb 24: Paper # 1 due 10:00 am

Trauma and Recovery

Feb 28: 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”

Mar 2: Viet Thanh Nguyen *The Refugees*

“Black-Eyed Women”

“Fatherland”

Avery Gordon from *Ghostly Matters* 3-28.

Panel 7: What is the function of the ghost in “Black-Eyed Woman” or are “Black-Eyed Women” and “Fatherland” fictions of just memory?

Autoethnography

Mar 7: Christian Moser “Autoethnography”

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

Mar 9: Jeannie Chiu, "I salute the spirit of my communities": Autoethnographic Innovations in Hmong American Literature *College Literature*. Summer2004, 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 8: Is *The Latehomecomer* about nostalgia and loss or about diverse Hmong communities?

March 14: Spring Break

March 16: Spring Break

March 21: Moshin Hamid *Exit West* pp. 1-140 (chs 1-7)

Timothy K. August from *The Refugee Aesthetic*, pp. 1-24

Peter Nyers “Abject Cosmopolitanism: the politics of protection in the anti-deportation movement” *Third World Quarterly* 24 no. 6 (2003), 1069-1093.

March 23: *Exit West* pp. 140-end

Peter Nyers “Abject Cosmopolitanism: the politics of protection in the anti-deportation movement” *Third World Quarterly* 24 no. 6 (2003), 1069-1093 (read limited pages).

Panel # 9: What is the function of cosmopolitanism in Exit West?

Memory and Home

March 28: Michael Schudson “Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory” from Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains and Societies Reconstruct the Past, pp. 346-364.

Socheata Poouv New Year Baby In class screening

Discussion of New Year Baby

March 30: Marianne Hirsch *The Generation of Postmemory* 29 I (2008), 103-128.

Panel # 10: How does *New Year Baby* represent memory work?

Discussion *New Year Baby*

April 4: Dinaw Mengestu *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* pp. 1-138 (chs 1-10)

April 6: Dinaw Mengestu *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*

Vinh Nguyen “Refugeetude: When Does a Refugee Stop Being a Refugee” *Social Text* 37 ii (2019), 109-131

Panel 11: Is *The Beautiful Things* a refugee narrative?

April 11: James Scott From *Weapons of the Weak*, pp. 314-329

Junot Diaz *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, pp. 1-118 (last ch is “El Hollywood”)

America’s Backyard screening (first 15 minutes)

April 13: Junot Diaz *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* pp. 119-201 (end of Book I)

April 18: Junot Diaz *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, pp. 202-end

Anna Menendez “Baseball Dreams”

April 20: Anna Menendez ”Her Mother’s House” and “The Party”

April 25: Work on Papers

April 26: Paper #2 Due 10:00 am