

Professor Malini J. Schueller
Office: 4113 TUR
Office Ph.: 392-6650

AML 6027
Spring '19
T 3-5 (9:35-12:35)

e-mail: malini@ufl.edu
Office Hours: T 3:30-5:30
R 4:30-6:00

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

Course Description: 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 figures the refugee, the illegal alien, the immigrant/non-citizen/citizen as sites of social and political critique that brings to light processes of U.S. colonialism, occupation, war, and violence in Asia and the Asia Pacific. We will also see these texts in relation to specific immigration acts, laws of racial exclusion and restriction, as well as to racialized stereotypes such as “Orientals” and model minorities.

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. We will also engage with U.S. empire studies, postcolonial theory, critical race studies, critical refugee studies, and collective memory studies.

Texts

Jade Snow Wong Fifth Chinese Daughter (1950)
Frank Chin Chickencoop Chinaman (1972)
Carlos Bulosan America is in the Heart (1946)
Maxine Hong Kingston China Men (1980)
Bharati Mukherji Jasmine (1989)
*Timothy Linh Bui Green Dragon (2001)
Loung Ung Lucky Child (2005)
Viet Thanh Nguyen The Refugees (2017)
Aimee Phan They Should Never Meet (2004)
Moshin Hamid Exit West (2017)
Mine Obuko Citizen 13660 (1946)
Julie Otsuka When the Emperor Was Divine (2002)
Electronic readings on Canvas
*Available on Amazon Prime
Readings on Canvas

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Position papers on the readings due during class (2-3 pages): 15%

These should be critical and evaluative rather than summations of the readings. Raise questions here but be specific and try to link the readings with each other (you might not be able to link all but comment at least on 3 readings) or to issues discussed earlier. You need to turn in a total of 5 position papers but you may turn in more if you wish. I'm happy to read more. The position papers should be on the readings for that day and should be uploaded on canvas before class. It would be a good idea to do position papers on possible texts you'll be working with on your final paper. You may not do position papers after the material has already been discussed in class.

Two Oral presentations: 20%

The purpose of these presentations is to make you think critically and intensively about the texts you are reading and to engage you in further research. For one presentation, choose a critical work from which we are reading for the day and do a full presentation of the book. Your presentation should include (a) the book's main argument, (b) a summary of each chapter and (c) what you found most useful and most problematic. What you're doing here is basically a book review plus adding a bit of informational content for the class. A short handout for the class would be good. For the second presentation, evaluate 3 critical articles on a literary text/film being discussed in class. Present the arguments of each essay, the methodologies used, and your assessment of the successes and problems of the arguments. I have listed the articles/essays for many of these. Again a short handout for the rest of the class would be good but **please don't simply read the handout. Both presentations should take no more than 15 minutes so please time yourself beforehand.** Again it would be a good idea to pick presentations which would help you with your final paper. Another option would be to do a presentation on a section of <https://aaww.org/heretostay-14-things-to-read-as-you-stand-by-undocumented-immigrants/> when we are doing readings about "aliens."

Final paper (20 pages): 65%

These should be analytical papers about 20 pages in length (excluding Notes and Bibliography). They may be extensions of the work you've done for the presentation or entirely new papers. Whatever option you choose, you need to do a complete MLA search on your subject and incorporate the research into your paper. Be sure that your papers have a theoretical angle so that the argument you make is significant not only because of the specific works you are considering but also to an interpretation of certain cultural issues. Connect your critical angle to current scholarship on the subject. You need not deal with the specific texts we're discussing in class (although you can) but the paper should be about settler colonial studies.

As part of the requirements for the paper you need to :

1. Find conference with a Summer or Fall deadline for CFP
2. Write the required abstract for the conference, as well as the letter of submission.

If you are a Ph.D. student, I strongly urge you to think about your paper as a possible publication. You will need to look at some journal issues in order to see how you need to frame

your argument. I will be happy to work with you on these papers both during the semester and after the semester is over.

Attendance

It is understood that graduate students do not skip class. Please remember that this is an intensive discussion class and part of the work of the class is building up a series of discussions which we continue to build upon in the course of the semester. Because your participation is central to these discussions, you are expected to read all materials carefully and attend every meeting. If you are presenting a paper at a conference and have a conflict with ONE weekly meeting, please see me. There will be a grade penalty for classes missed beyond the one meeting.

Reading Materials

You are required to read all assigned material and bring the readings to class.

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

Jan 8: Introduction

Jan 15: William Peterson "Success Story Japanese American Style"

Lisa Lowe "Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique" from Immigrant Acts pp. 1-36

Viet Thanh Nguyen from Race and Resistance, pp. 1-31; 143-171.

David Palumbo-Liu From Asian/American, pp. 234-254

Aihwa Ong "Asian Immigrants as the New Westerners" from Buddha is Hiding pp. 253-273

Michel Foucault From The History of Sexuality Vol 1, pp. 135-159.

Models of Immigration

Assimilation

Jan 22 : Jade Snow Wong Fifth Chinese Daughter

Robert G. Lee from Orientalism pp. 1-15; 145-180.

Sau Ling Cynthia Wong from Reading Asian American Literature pp. 55- 71

Claiming America

Jan 29: Michael Omi and Howard Winant "Racial Formation" from Racial Formation in the United States, pp.105-136.

Frank Chin and Jeffrey "Racist Love"

Frank Chin and Jeffrey Chan "Preface to Aiiieeee"

Frank Chin Chickencoop Chinaman and the Year of the Dragon

Impossible Subjects

Undesirable Aliens

Feb 5: Mae M. Ngai from Impossible Subjects pp. 1-14; 96-126
Giorgio Agamben from Homo Sacer, pp. 9-14 (acc. to pdf. It's the intro)
Carlos Bulosan America is in the Heart

Illegal Aliens

Feb 12: The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=47&page=transcript>
Giorgio Agamben from State of Exception, pp. 1-31.
Maxine Hong Kingston China Men

Feb 19: Bharati Mukherji Jasmine

Patricia Chu "Reinventing Bildung; Bharati Mukherji and the Jasmine Controversy"
From Assimilating Asians, pp. 128-138.
Joey Slaughter From Human Rights Inc, pp. 1-24, 111-

War, Militarization, Refugees

Feb 26: Timothy Linh Bui Green Dragon (please watch on your own)
Hannah Arendt "We Refugees"
Giorgio Agamben "We Refugees"
Levinas "Ethics as First Philosophy" in The Levinas Reader, pp. 75-89.

Mimi Thi Nguyen from The Gift of Freedom, pp. 1-32

March 5: Spring Break

March 12: Yen Le Espiritu from Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es), pp. 1-23.

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

Viet Thanh Nguyen from Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War, pp. 1-19

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

Loung Ung Lucky Child

.

March 19: Viet Thanh Nguyen The Refugees

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

Viet Thanh Nguyen from Nothing Ever Dies pp. 71-100

March 26: Yen Le Espiritu from Body Counts, ch 4

Aimee Phan We Should Never Meet

Text of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Paper Abstracts Due in class

April 2: Moshin Hamid Exit West

Discussion of Paper Abstracts

Denationalization and Internment

April 9: Ronald Takaki “The Myth of ‘Military Necessity’ for Japanese_American Internment”
From Strangers From a Different Shore, pp. 379-405.

Hannah Arendt from The Origins of Totalitarianism, pp. 269-302

Maria Sturken “Absent Images of Memory” from Perilous Memories, pp. 33-49.

Mine Obuko Citizen 13660

James Scott From Weapons of the Weak, pp. 314-340

April 16: Julie Otsuka When the Emperor Was Divine

Judith Butler From Precarious Life, pp. 19-49

April 23: Work on Papers

April 26: Papers Due. Hard copies in my mailbox.

Reserve Book List

- Giorgio Agamben Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1995)
- Giorgio Agamben State of Exception (2005)
- Hannah Arendt The Origins of Totalitarianism (1968)
- Carlos Bulosan America is in the Heart (1943)
- Judith Butler Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence (2004)
- Judith Butler Frames of War: When is Life Grievable (2009)
- Frank Chin Chickencoop Chinaman and the Year of the Dragon (1981)
- Patricia Chu Assimilating Asians Gendered Strategies of Authorship in Asian America (2000)
- Yen Le Espiritu Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities (1992)
- Moshin Hamid Exit West (2017)
- Elaine Kim Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context (1982)
- Maxine Hong Kingston China Men (1989)
- Robert G. Lee Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture (1999)
- Haney Lopez White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race (1996)
- Lisa Lowe Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics (1996)
- Bharati Mukherjee Jasmine (1991)
- Mae M. Ngai Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America (2014)
- Mimi Thi Nguyen The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt and Other Refugee Passages (2012)
- Viet Thanh Nguyen from Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War (2016)
- Viet Thanh Nguyen The Refugees (2017)
- Viet Thanh Nguyen Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America (2002)

Mine Obuko Citizen 13660 (1946)

Michael Omi and Howard Winant Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s (1994)

Aihwa Ong Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America (2003)

David Palumbo-Liu From Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier (1999)

Crystal Parikh Writing Human Rights: the Political Imaginaries of Writers of Color (2017)

Aimee Phan We Should Never Meet (2004)

Cathy Schlund-Vials War, Genocide, Justice : Cambodian American Memory Work (2012)

James Scott Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (1985)

Joey Slaughter From Human Rights Inc: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law (2007)

Ronald Takaki Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian America (1989)

Loung Ung Lucky Child : A Daughter of Cambodia Reunites with the Sister She Left Behind (2005)

Jade Snow Wong Fifth Chinese Daughter (1950)

Sau Ling Cynthia Wong Reading Asian American Literature: From Necessity to Extravagance (1993)