

**Introduction to Asian American History  
History 2640/AAS 2130/AMST 2130  
Fall 2009  
TR 10:10-11:25  
Stimson G01**

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Office Hrs: M 12:45-1:45 in 425 Rockefeller Hall  
T 11:30-12:30 in 454 McGraw Hall

### **Course Description**

This is an introductory history of Asians in the United States from the mid-19th century to the present. We will explore immigration, community formation, racism and resistance, the lives of workers, the experiences of women, the role of imperialism, the influence of global politics and economics, and struggles for equality and justice. Key events covered include the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Philippine War, Japanese Internment and World War II, the Asian American Movement, the murder of Vincent Chin, and labor organizing.

The purpose of this course is four-fold: (1) to introduce you to the major themes in Asian American history; (2) to provide a critical perspective on the conventional narrative of American history – a narrative that largely excludes Asian Americans; (3) to analyze past Asian American experiences within the context of complicity with and challenges to hierarchies of race, gender, and class; and (4) to examine the continuities and discontinuities between past experiences of Asian Americans and those of Asian Americans today.

### **Requirements**

1. Midterm. An in-class midterm exam. (20%)
2. Final Project. Due the final day of classes. (20%)
3. Final Exam. A take-home exam. (25%)
4. Questions for Class Discussion. Each student will be asked to submit at least three (3) discussion questions to a Blackboard discussion board by Monday at 4:00 p.m. the day before the first class of the week. The questions should be broad and designed to encourage conversation and/or debate. Failure to submit more than 3 sets of questions will result in the forfeiture of the entire 15% credit for this requirement. (15%)
5. Attendance and participation. Attendance is mandatory. If you miss more than 4 classes, you will forfeit the 20% credit for class participation. Discussion of readings is an integral part of this class. Do the readings carefully and come to class prepared to discuss them. Readings are due on Tuesday of every week. (20%)

Students may be asked to attend lectures by guest speakers. A class will be cancelled for each corresponding lecture. Attendance at the lectures is required unless there is an unavoidable scheduling conflict.

If you have any questions during the semester about your performance in any area of the course, please see me to discuss your concerns. If you are unable to make my regular office hours, please call or email me to arrange another appointment.

For all assignments, students are required to abide by Cornell University's Code of Academic Integrity. A copy of the code can be found at the following URL: <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity, especially plagiarism, may result in a failing grade in the course. Students are urged to read and complete the exercises on "Recognizing and Avoiding Plagiarism" at <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>.

### **Required Texts**

The following books are required reading and can be purchased at the student bookstore:

Yen Le Espiritu, Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities. Temple University Press, 1992. ISBN: 1566390966.

Lon Kurashige and Alice Yang Murray, Major Problems in Asian American History: Documents and Essays (Major Problems in American History Series) (Paperback). Houghton Muffin, 2003. ISBN: 0618077340.

Vijay Prashad, The Karma of Brown Folk. University of Minnesota Press, 2000. ISBN: 0816634394.

Nadia Kim, Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA. Stanford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0804758875.

Andrew Lam, Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora. Heyday Books, 2005. ISBN: 1597140201.

Gary Y. Okihiro and Leslie A. Ito, Storied Lives: Japanese American Students and World War II. University of Washington Press, 1999. ISBN: 0295977965.

### **Texts on Reserve**

Reserve readings are available electronically on the course's Blackboard site. Access is restricted to registered students in the class. You can access Blackboard at the following url: <http://www.blackboard.cornell.edu/>

### **Course Webpage**

The syllabus, writing assignments, and other announcements will be available through Blackboard at <http://blackboard.cornell.edu/>.

## Class Schedule

**First Day**     **Introductions**  
8/27             Whose History?

**Week 1**         **Framing Asian American History**  
Read:           *Kurashige/Murray*: Chapter 1: Essays by Daniels, Takaki, Yanagisako,  
                         Ong, and Hing;  
                         *Espiritu*: Chapter 2

9/1               Asian American History's History  
9/3               Asian American History as Immigration History

**Week 2**         **Deep Roots**  
Read:           *Kurashige/Murray*: Chapter 2: Introduction, Documents 2-8;  
                         *Prashad*, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, Preface, Chapters 1-3  
On Reserve:   *Okihiro*, "When & Where I Enter"

9/8               "Knowing" Asians  
9/10              Race, Culture, Nation

**Week 3**         **Migration & Settlement**  
Read:           *Kurashige/Murray*: Chapter 2: Essays by Chen and Takaki; Chapter 3:  
                         Documents 1-8; essay by Chan and Iriye; Chapter 4: Introduction, all  
                         documents and essays; Chapter 8: Documents 1-9, essay by Kurashige

9/15              Japanese & Chinese Migration to the Americas  
9/17              Building Community

**Week 4**         **Empire**  
Read:           *Kurashige/Murray*: Chapter 5: Introduction, all documents, and essays;  
                         *Kim*, *Imperial Citizens*, Chapter 1 and 2

9/22              Japanese Imperialism  
9/25              American Imperialism

**Week 5**         **Different Vectors**  
Read:           *Kurashige/Murray*: Chapter 7: Introduction, all documents, all essays;  
                         Chapter 8: Essay by Yung  
On Reserve:   *Espiritu*, "Labor, Laws, and Love"  
                         *Espiritu*, "Stretching Gender, Family, and Community Boundaries, 1840s-  
                         1930"

9/29              Labor Migrations and Class  
10/1               Gender

**Week 6**         **Yellow Peril**  
Read:           *Kurashige/Murray*: Chapter 6: Introduction, all documents, all essays;

*Prashad, The Karma of Brown Folk, Chapter 4*

10/6 Popular Orientalisms  
10/8 Midterm

**Week 7 World War II**  
Read: *Okhiro and Ito, Storied Lives, ALL*

10/13 FALL BREAK  
10/15 Internment

**Week 8 Citizenship: The Nation & Geopolitics**  
Read: *Kurashige/Murray: Chapter 9: Introduction, all documents, all essays;  
Chapter 10: Introduction, all documents, all essays;*

10/20 WWII Beyond the Japanese American Experience  
10/22 Cold War

**Week 9 Postwar Asian America**  
Read: *Kurashige/Murray: Chapter 11: Introduction, all documents, and all essays;*

10/27 The Immigration Act of 1965  
10/29 The Asian American Movement

**Week 10 Politics & the State**  
Read: *Kurashige/Murray: Chapter 13: Introduction, all documents, and all essays;  
*Espiritu, Asian American Panethnicity, Chapters 3-7**

11/3 Defining the Political  
11/5 Engaging the State

**Week 11 Identity and Politics: A Case Study**  
Read: *Prashad, The Karma of Brown Folk, Chapter 5-10*

11/10 Model Minorities  
11/12 The Problem of Identity Politics

**Week 12 Transnationalism: Another Case Study**  
Read: *Kim, Imperial Citizenship, Chapters 3-9*

11/17 Race and the Nation  
11/19 Transnational Asian America

**Week 13 Refugees**  
Read: *Kurashige/Murray: Chapter 12: Introduction, all documents, all essays;  
*Lam, Perfume Dreams, ALL**

11/24 Asia/America  
11/26 THANKSGIVING

**Week 14 Asian American History for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Read: *Kurashige/Murray*: Chapter 15: Introduction, all documents, all essays;

12/1 Whose History?  
12/3 Wrapping Up