Asian American History and Culture
History 901

Fall Semester 2006
5245 Humanities; 11am-1pm

Professor: Cindy I-Fen Cheng
Office: 5106 Humanities
Office Hours: Mon 2:15-4:30 pm and by appointment
E-mail: CICHENG@wisc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Asian American, as a category of analysis, uncovers the production of knowledge. As a trace, it exposes not only the narratives suppressed in order to create a certain vision of the world along with ways of being in that world but also the disciplinary mechanisms deployed in order to construct narratives that seek to define who or what constitutes as “Asian American.”

The process of uncovering the meanings and values that inform our understanding of Asian American is indeed useful. It casts the production of culture as a contestation over meanings, where the “universal” is but a hegemonic ideal rather than an epistemic truth. It also explains how national memory is produced and sustained and proposes alternatives that unsettle the fixity of that memory.

In our semester together, we will build on this productive potential and develop how the category of Asian American can interrogate and challenge the disciplinary strictures that have guided knowledge production. We will also explore what alternative narratives and subject formations can be produced that speak to this desire to “unbelong.” To help jumpstart our discussions, we will explore texts that deals with the illicit and the transnational.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Active participation and listening are required in every seminar meeting. In addition, you will present on one of the weekly assigned reading(s) of your choosing. There are two paper assignments for this course. The first is a short 5-7 reaction paper examining key themes and concepts developed in an assigned text. The final critical thinking paper is a 15 page write up that offers a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis on overall themes explored in this course.

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course Participation</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Course Reader

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**WEEK 1** Course Introduction

W 9.6

**WEEK 2** The Question of Disciplinarity and Asian American Cultural Politics

W 9.13

Readings:
   a. Frank Chin and Jeffery Paul Chan, “Racist Love”.
   c. Elaine H. Kim, “‘Such Opposite Creatures’: Men and Women in Asian American Literature”.
   d. King-Kok Cheung, “The Woman Warrior versus The Chinaman Pacific: Must a Chinese American Critic Choose between Feminism and Heroism?”
   e. Leslie Bow, “‘For Every Gesture of Loyalty, There Doesn’t Have to Be a Betrayal’: Asian American Criticism and the Politics of Locality”

**WEEK 3** National Culture: A Contested Terrain

W 9.20

Readings:

**WEEK 4** Disciplining Knowledges

W 9.27

Readings:
### WEEK 5  Asian American Subject Formation

W 10.4

**Readings:**

### WEEK 6

W 10.11

**Readings:**

### WEEK 7

W 10.18  **Reaction Paper DUE**

**Readings:**

### WEEK 8

W 10.25

**Readings:**

### WEEK 9

W 11.1

**Readings:**

### WEEK 10

W 11.8

**Readings:**

**WEEK 11**

W 11.15

Readings:

**WEEK 12**

W 11.22  **Thanksgiving Holiday – No Seminar Meeting**

**WEEK 13**

W 11.29

Readings:

**WEEK 14**

W 12.6

Readings:

**WEEK 15**

W 12.13

Readings:

Critical Thinking Paper – DUE Wednesday, December 20, 2006