



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

ETHS 40 - Introduction to Asian American Studies

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

Total: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

Course Description: This course is a survey of the rich and diverse cultural history of various Asian American communities (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Southeast Asian American, etc.). Emphasis is given to the cultural and historical circumstances that caused various Asian populations to resettle in the United States. Various Asian American populations will be described according to their immigration and refugee challenges, cultural adaptations, and unique contributions to American society as a whole.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. critically analyze primary and secondary sources pertaining to the Asian American experience.
2. synthesize social science models that conceptualize culture change as experienced by various Asian Americans.
3. describe and evaluate terminology, concepts, and contemporary issues in the field of Asian American Studies.
4. describe and assess Asian American cultural history.
5. apply theory and knowledge produced by Asian American communities to describe the critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived-experiences and social struggles of those groups with a particular emphasis on agency and group-affirmation.
6. critically analyze the intersection of race and racism as they relate to class, gender, sexuality, religion, spirituality, national origin, immigration status, ability, tribal citizenship, sovereignty, language, and/or age in Asian American communities.
7. describe and actively engage with anti-racist and anti-colonial issues and the practices and movements in Asian American communities to build a just and equitable society.
8. explain and assess how struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, solidarity, and liberation, as experienced, enacted, and studied by Asian Americans are relevant to current and structural issues such as communal, national, international, and transnational politics as, for example, in immigration, reparations, settler-colonialism, multiculturalism, language policies.
9. analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self-determination, liberation, decolonization, sovereignty, imperialism, settler colonialism, and anti-racism as analyzed in Asian American Studies.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Asian American History - from the first wave of immigration in the mid-nineteenth century to the present	9.00
Asian Americans Identity	3.00
Asian American Activism - then and now	3.00
Asian American Studies - the emergence of the discipline in the 1970s and what it represents today	3.00
Race and Asian America	9.00
Sexuality, Gender, and Asian America	3.00
Media Representations of Asian Americans	3.00
Cultural Diversity within Asian America	3.00
Asian American Women's Issues	3.00
Asian American Men's Issues	3.00
Contemporary Issues	9.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Collaborative Group Work
- B. Group Discussions
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Lecture

E. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Quizzes
- B. Homework
- C. Class participation
- D. Written Assignments
- E. Book reports
- F. Class Discussion

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the book "When the Emperor was Divine" by Julio Otsuka. After reading the book, write a 2-3 page paper that demonstrates that you understood the various themes and messages Otsuka offers in her book. Your work should be more analytical than descriptive. That is, you should go beyond the mere descriptions provided in the narrative and examine their meanings and implications. Key here is that you track how the events in the novel shape the conditions of Japanese American families during World War II. If necessary, you can employ the theories, definitions, arguments, and historical facts we have been using through the semester.
2. After reading assigned chapters from "Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940" by Him Mark Lai, Genny Lim, Judy Yung (Editors), come to class prepared to discuss the intersectionalities addressed. Then, briefly discuss the similarities you find with contemporary immigration issues. Finally, pick one poem that you identified with and briefly discuss why.

Writing Assignments

1. Read the assigned chapters from "Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans" by Jean Pfaelzer. Write a 3-4 page reflective paper on the anti-Chinese sentiment of 19th century California and discuss the historical consequences this had on the Asian American Community in the 20th century. To conclude your paper, briefly discuss contemporary connections to the 21st century and Asian Americans in the United States.
2. Select a personal aspect of Asian American identity found in Nicholas Daniel Hartlep's "The Model Minority Stereotype". This could include aspects of family background, cultural heritage, experiences of discrimination, immigration stories, or any other relevant aspect. Write a 2-3 page critical reflective essay that explores intersectionality (e.g., gender, race, sexuality, socioeconomic background, or generational status). Discuss how these intersections influence your experiences and understanding of Asian American identity and its connection to the diaspora.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Choose an Asian American cultural event, festival, art exhibition, performance, workshop, or any other cultural activity that aligns with the themes and topics covered in the class. Attend the chosen event/activity and actively participate or observe. Take notes, photographs, or recordings to document your experience. After attending the event/activity, write a 2-3 page critical reflective essay that includes the following elements: A brief overview of the event/activity, including its name, location, date, and your reasons for selecting it. A discussion of how the event/activity relates to the themes and concepts studied in your Asian American Studies class. Analysis of the cultural significance and impact of the event/activity within the Asian American community. Personal reflections on your experience, including any new insights gained and emotions evoked during the event. Connections between what you observed/experienced and the academic materials from the class. In addition to the written reflection, incorporate a short video or audio recording capturing highlights that showcase your engagement with the event/activity.
2. Listen to the podcast by Takeo Rivera "Model Minority Masochism: Performing the Cultural Politics of Asian American Masculinity". As you listen, take detailed notes on key themes, narratives, stories, and the overall message of the podcast. In a well-structured essay, provide a 2-3 page critical evaluation of how the podcast portrays Asian American identity, culture, and experiences. Include any personal reflections on how the podcast affected your understanding of Asian American identity.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Bonus, R. (2020). The ocean in the school: Pacific Islander students transforming their university. *Duke University Press*, 1st. 9781478006725.

Cheng, L., & Bonacich, E. (2021). Labor immigration under capitalism: Asian workers in the United States before World War II. *University of California Press*, 1st. 9780520317802.

Hartlep, N. D. (2021). The model minority stereotype: Demystifying Asian American success. *IAP*, 2nd. 9781648024771.

Lew-Williams, B. (2021). The Chinese must go: Violence, exclusion, and the making of the alien in America. *Harvard University Press*, 1st. 9780674260351.

Zero Cost Textbook

Gutierrez, E. Hund, J., Johnson, S., Ramos, C., Rodriguez, L., & Tshako, J. Race and Ethnic Relations in the U.S.: An Intersectional Approach. Long Beach City College, Cerritos College, & Saddleback College via ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative (OERI)

Minimum Qualifications

Sociology (Masters Required)

Ethnic Studies (Masters Required)

Created/Revised by: McCabe, Deborah
Date: 12/04/2023