

**CULTURE, ART & TECHNOLOGY 2**  
**Asian Diasporas in Film & Media**  
**Prof. Hoang Tan Nguyen**

Class: Tuesday & Thursday, Ledden Auditorium, 3:30-4:50pm

Office Hours: Tu 2-3pm & Th 5:15-6:15pm & by appointment, Literature 352

Email: htn057@ucsd.edu

**Course Description**

Asians are everywhere: on college and university campuses, in high tech companies and ethnic restaurants, from the West and East coasts, to the flyover states in between. This course examines the ubiquitous presence of Asians in the U.S. and around the world through film and visual media. Asians are both considered as forever foreigners ("Where are you really from?") but also as model minorities. On the one hand, Asians have been described as the threatening yellow peril and as robotic workers taking over America. On the other hand, Asians are loved and envied for their popular cultures (e.g. anime, K-Pop and dramas) and their cuisines (e.g. General Tso's Chicken, pad Thai, pho). The course considers the reasons why Asians venture far from Asia: to seek asylum from war-torn countries, to seek a good education and well-paying jobs, to search for and reunite with family, to look for love, to find a new home.

The Asian diasporic figures we examine will include: the refugee, the migrant worker, the transnational adoptee, the international student, and the Internet bride. We will consider the following questions: How does diaspora challenge, and reinforce, national identity? How does it disrupt gender and sexual norms? What intimate relationships does diaspora make possible and disallow? How does it interrogate notions of ethnic, racial, and cultural authenticity? In what ways does it trouble, and reinvest in, the idea of an originary homeland?

Students will develop and hone skills in film and media analysis, critical thinking, and writing and argumentation that can be applied to close readings of diverse visual and written texts.

**Required Texts**

- *They Say, I Say* (CAT-specific edition)
- All required readings are posted on TritonED (TED).
- All films are accessible at Digital Course Reserves.

**Recommended Texts** (All titles are on reserves)

- Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience* (any edition)
- Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (any edition)
- Film Terms: <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/>

**CAT 2 Course Goals**

- Identify, analyze, and respond to explicit and implicit arguments, and understand why some parts of an argument might not be visible or open to debate. Acknowledge, react, and effectively integrate counterarguments and other points of view (i.e. from readings) into arguments.

- Craft a compelling argument and support it with relevant and carefully evaluated evidence. Develop an ability to read, critique, and create arguments in diverse genres including, when appropriate, multi-media texts.
- Choose a tone that is appropriate to one's subject and audience.
- Practice proper citation and documentation of sources, including in multimodal assignments.

### **CAT 2 Course Policies**

- Attendance: in lecture, please sit with your discussion section. Your TA will take your attendance in lecture (sometimes just by roll but also by collecting discussion questions and quiz responses).
- Missing more than four class sessions, either lectures or sections, will result in deducting  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter grade off your final course grade (i.e. an A- would become a B+). Missing 8 or more classes, is grounds for failing the course. Excessive tardiness will also impact your grade and may be grounds for an absence.
- Students are expected to complete all readings and watch all assigned films before class, attend all class meetings on time, stay awake, and remain for the entire period. In addition, students should engage actively in classroom discussions and sections.
- No electronics in lecture or discussion, including phones, computers, and tablets. Please talk to your TA or me if you require electronics in lecture and section.
- Complete CAT policies on attendance and TurnItIn can be found at TED.

**Note on Course Content:** The topics that we will cover in this class may be socially, sexually, politically, and emotionally charged. Students will be asked to read, watch, and talk about materials pertaining to issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality. You are expected to engage with the material, and each other, in a respectful manner. Differences of opinion are bound to occur. They should be used to generate productive discussions, rather than to shut them down.

### **Assignments**

20% First Paper – Sequence Analysis  
 20% Second Paper – Sequence Analysis incorporating Sources  
 22% Visual Essay – Revision of First or Second Paper  
 10% Portfolio and Critical Reflection  
 25% Participation (attendance, discussion, pop quizzes)  
 3% Art Exhibition/Performance Visit – 250-word Write Up

### **Classroom Etiquette**

Students should follow proper standards of classroom decorum during all class meetings to ensure a productive learning environment for everyone. Proper etiquette includes engaging in active dialogue and respectful debates, allowing classmates equal time and opportunity to participate in discussions, and keeping focus on the topics at hand with minimal digressions. Please do not eat or drink during class. Laptops and cell phones should not be used.

**Late Work** will be graded down an entire grade (from A > B; B- > C-) if handed in within 24 hours. Papers more than 24 hours late will not be accepted. My policy about

deadlines is strict. Extensions past 24 hours are only granted in documented medical emergencies. Note: Make sure to double-check your document before you turn it in. I will not accept another version of your work past the due date because you submitted the wrong version of the assignment (previous drafts, missing pages, no Works Cited, etc). Whatever you turn in on the due date is the work I will grade. No exceptions.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to abide by the rules and regulations for academic integrity. Refresh your knowledge of UCSD's "Policy on Integrity of Scholarship" at the link: <<http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>>. I take plagiarism infractions seriously and will follow the policies and procedures laid out by the university. If you have any questions, please speak with me.

### **Accommodations**

Students who think they may need accommodations in this course because of the impact of a learning, physical, or psychological disability are encouraged to meet with me privately early in the quarter to discuss their concerns. In addition, students must contact the Office for Students with Disabilities, (858) 534-4382, <<http://disabilities.ucsd.edu/>>, as soon as possible to verify their eligibility for reasonable academic accommodations. Early contact will help to avoid unnecessary inconvenience and delays.

### **Email Policy**

Please use email judiciously. Always consult the syllabus and assignment guidelines to see if your question is already addressed there. I request that you give me a 48-hour window to respond (during 9am-5pm work hours). I prefer you speak to me about your questions and concerns face-to-face during office hours.

## **CAT 2: Course Schedule**

(Readings and films may be adjusted at my discretion.  
Additional readings from *They Say, I Say* will be assigned by your TA in section.)

### **Week 1**

#### **Tuesday, Jan 8 – Introduction**

#### **Thursday, Jan 10**

Watch: *Ronny Chieng: International Student* (2018), Episode 1

Read: Ien Ang, “On Not Speaking Chinese” (2001 [1992]), 16 pages

### **Week 2: The Immigrant**

#### **Tuesday, Jan 15**

Watch: *Flower Drum Song*, dir. Henry Koster, 1961, 132 minutes

Read: Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, pp. 38-60

#### **Thursday, Jan 17**

Read: Lisa Lowe, “Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique” (1996), 36 pages

### **Week 3: The Refugee**

#### **Tuesday, Jan 22**

Watch: *a.k.a. Don Bonus*, dir. Sokly Ny and Spencer Nakasako, 1995, 65 minutes

Read: Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, pp. 60-81

#### **Thursday, Jan 24**

Read: Heyang Julie Kae, “Collateral Narratives: Neoliberal Citizenship, Juvenile Delinquency, and Cambodian American Refugee Youth in *a.k.a. Don Bonus*” (2016), 20 pages

**Film Terms Quiz Tuesday 1/22 in Section**

**DUE Thursday 1/24: Paper #1 Draft**

### **Week 4: The Exile**

#### **Tuesday, Jan 29**

Watch: *Song of the Exile*, dir. Ann Hui, 1990, 100 minutes

**Thursday, Jan 31**

Read: Patricia Brett Erens, "Crossing Borders: Time, Memory, and the Construction of Identity in *Song of the Exile*" (2000), 17 pages

**Week 5: The Internet Bride**

**Tuesday, Feb 5**

Watch: *Seeking Asian Female*, dir. Debbie Lum, 2012, 84 minutes

**Thursday, Feb 7**

Read: Nicole Constable, "The Commodification of Intimacy: Marriage, Sex, and Reproductive Labor" (2009), 16 pages

**DUE Tuesday 2/5: Paper #1 Final Revision**

**LIBRARY WORKSHOP**

**Week 6: The Adoptee**

**Tuesday, Feb 12**

Watch: *First Person Plural*, dir. Deann Borshay Liem, 2000, 60 minutes

**Thursday, Feb 14**

Read: Kim Park Nelson, "'Loss is more than sadness': Reading Dissent in Transracial Adoption Melodrama in *The Language of Blood* and *First Person Plural*" (2010), 19 pages

**DUE Tuesday 2/12: Paper #2 Draft**

**Week 7: The Migrant Worker**

**Tuesday, Feb 19**

Watch: *Paper Dolls*, dir. Tomer Heymann, 2006, 80 minutes

**Thursday, Feb 21**

Read: Martin Manalansan, "Servicing the World: Flexible Filipinos and the Unsecured Life" (2010), 14 pages

**DUE Thursday 2/21: Paper #2 Final Revision**

**Week 8: The Displaced**

**Tuesday, Feb 26**

Watch: *Mississippi Masala*, dir. Mira Nair, 1991, 118 minutes

**Thursday, Feb 28**

Read: Binita Mehta, "Emigrants Twice Displaced: Race, Color, and Identity in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala*" (1996), 19 pages

**DUE Tuesday 2/26: Visual Essay Proposal**

**Week 9: The Flexible Citizen**

**Tuesday, Mar 5**

Watch: *Crazy Rich Asians*, dir. Jon M. Chu, 2018, 120 minutes

**Thursday, Mar 7**

Read: Aihwa Ong, "On the Edge of Empires: Flexible Citizenship among Chinese in Diaspora" (1993), 34 pages

**Week 10**

**Tuesday, Mar 12**

Wrap Up

**Thursday, Mar 14**

Wrap Up

**DUE Tuesday 3/12: Visual Essay**

**DUE: Finals Week: Portfolio and Critical Reflection**