

CAT 2D: Asian Diasporas in Film & Media
Prof. Hoang Tan Nguyen
Winter 2020

Class: Tuesday & Thursday, 3:30-4:50pm, Solis 107

Office Hours: Tu 2-3pm, Th 1:30-2:30pm & by appointment, Literature 352

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Teaching Assistants

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Course Description

CAT 2 is a 6-unit course and is the second part of Sixth College's writing intensive sequence. While the topics of CAT 2 differ, all courses explore an intersection of culture, art, and technology in the contemporary moment. The overarching purpose of CAT 2 is to build on skills developed in CAT 1 (critical reading and writing as process) and teach students argumentative writing and critical analysis.

Course Topic

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 immigrant, the exile, the refugee, the transnational adoptee, the Internet bride, the global gay, and the restaurateur. 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 diaspora trouble, and reinvest in, the idea of an original 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.

Course Objectives

By the end of the quarter, you should be able to:

[Writing and Rhetoric]

- Practice clear prose that advances the rhetorical purpose
- Choose a tone that is appropriate to the subject and audience

[Argument: Organization, Evidence, and Analysis]

- Craft and organize 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, multimedia texts.
- 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 to, and effectively integrate counterarguments and other points of view (such as from readings) into arguments.

[Revision & Citation]

- Practice writing as revision by using revision effectively to rethink and reimagine your work.
- Practice proper citation and documentation of sources, including in multimodal assignments.

Required Texts

- *They Say, I Say* (CAT-specific edition)
- All required readings are posted on Canvas.
- All films are accessible at Digital Course Reserves <<https://reserves.ucsd.edu>>.

Recommended Texts (Available at Digital 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/>

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

- First Paper – Sequence Analysis (15%)
- Second Paper – Sequence Analysis Incorporating Sources (20%)
- Visual Essay and Critical Reflection (25%)
- 5 Response Papers (20%)
- Participation – Attendance, Discussion, Pop Quizzes, Library Visit (20%)

COURSE POLICIES

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 lecture and section, including speaking and listening in big and small groups.

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 listening, 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.

I ask that you take notes by hand in a notebook. No electronics in lecture or section, including phones, computers, and tablets. If you require the use of a laptop due to a learning accommodation, please talk to your TA or me.

Attendance

In lecture, please sit with your discussion section. Your TA will take your attendance in lecture

(through sign-up sheets or quizzes). Missing more than four (4) class sessions, either lectures or sections, will result in a deduction of $\frac{1}{3}$ of a letter grade off your final course grade (i.e. an A- would become a B+). Missing eight (8) or more classes, is grounds for failing the course. Excessive tardiness will also impact your grade and may be grounds for an absence.

Assignment Submission and Late Work

All major assignments require you to submit a rough draft before the final due date. While the draft on its own does not count towards your grade, failure to submit a draft will result in the loss of a letter grade on the final submission. Late work will be graded down an entire grade (from A > B; B- > C-) if handed in within 24 hours. 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 we will grade.

Academic Integrity

UCSD has a university-wide Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, published annually in the General Catalog, and online <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>. All students must read and be familiar with this Policy. All suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to UCSD's Academic Integrity Coordinator. Students found to have violated UCSD's standards for academic integrity may include suspension or dismissal, and academic sanctions may include failure of the assignment or failure of the course.

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.

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### **Participation**

Showing up to lecture and section are a small portion of what counts as participation. You must earn your participation grade through various forms of engaging with the course. Such forms include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in section discussion
- Asking questions in lecture
- Completing readings
- Working respectfully with others
- Coming to lecture and section on time
- Staying for the entire time during lecture and section
- Taking notes
- Putting away distractions (no cell phones and other electronics)
- Attending office hours with either your TA or Instructor

TAs will determine your participation holistically, which means they will assess which of the following characteristics best represents your average participation:

A – You are well prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: having all your materials; consistently contributing to discussion; asking productive questions; listening actively and taking notes; engaging in group work; supporting and respecting other students; respecting TAs, the instructor and course material; attending office hours; coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; taking responsibility for any work or material missed if absent; overall proactive and attentive.

B – You are somewhat prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: occasionally contributing to discussion; listening actively; engaging in group work; respecting other students; respecting TAs, the instructor, and course material; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall responsible.

C – You are inconsistently prepared for lecture and section, demonstrated by: rarely contributing to discussion; missing materials; managing time poorly; working well with others, but unable to contribute fairly; respecting TAs, instructor, and course materials; mostly coming to lecture and section on time and staying for the entire class time; overall, inconsistent.

D – You are physically present but mentally disengaged from the course, demonstrated by: never contributing to discussion in lecture or section; consistently coming to class late or leaving early; working well with others, but unable to contribute fairly; failing to develop any relationships with TAs and/or instructor; overall, disengaged.

0 – You demonstrate through behavior and/or language that you are uninterested in learning; or, alternatively, you are regularly disrespectful of other students, TAs, the instructor, or course material.

### Grading Policies

- Failure to turn in one of the three major writing assignments will result in a failure of the course, regardless of numerical grade.
- Grades are assigned by letter and correspond to specific numerical percentages. Limitations on possible numerical grades enable more effective holistic grading on essay assignments, as well as discourage arguments over points.

| Excellent  | Good       | Average    | Inefficient | Needs Extensive Revision |
|------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| A+ = 98.5% | B+ = 88.5% | C+ = 78.5% | D = 65%     | F = 55%                  |
| A = 95%    | B = 85%    | C = 75%    |             |                          |
| A- = 91.5% | B- = 81.5% | C- = 71.5% |             |                          |

- All disputes over grades must be conducted according to the following guidelines:
  - Wait 48 hours after receiving a grade before disputing it.
  - Contact your TA for an appointment to discuss the grade.
  - Attend your appointment having read the TA's comments and the CAT rubric thoroughly.
  - Only after you have discussed your essay with your TA may you request a regrade from the course instructor

## **ADDENDUM 01/10/2020**

### **Biweekly Response Papers (worth 20% of your course grade)**

Students will write five (5) critical response papers. For each paper, compose three (3) bullet points summarizing central concepts of the reading. Pick one of the bullet points and write a 250-word elaboration. How does the author's thesis argument expand and/or challenge your understanding of Asian diasporas? You may make connections between the reading and that week's film, or between that week's reading and film and a previous week's material. Anchor your commentary with a specific passage from the reading or a sequence from the film. Response papers are due every other week according to your section. They are due on Wednesdays, 11:59pm, at TurnItIn on Canvas.

The following sections should submit your response papers on Wednesdays, **Jan 15, Jan 29, Feb 12, Feb 26, & Mar 11:**

Section D1 (5-5:50pm, Li)  
Section D3 (7-7:50pm, Daigle)  
Section D4 (5-5:50pm, Meyer)  
Section D6 (7-7:50pm, Lopez Rivas)  
Section D7 (5-5:50pm, Teck)  
Section D11 (6-6:50pm, Vilaya)  
Section D12 (6:6:50pm, Hallingstadt)

The following sections should submit your response papers on Wednesdays, **Jan 22, Feb 3, Feb 19, Mar 4, & Mar 11:**

Section D2 (6-6:50pm, Li)  
Section D5 (6:6:50pm, Meyer)  
Section D8 (6-6:50pm, Teck)  
Section D9 (5-5:50pm, Daigle)  
Section D10 (5-5:50pm, Lopez Rivas)  
Section D13 (7-7:50pm, Vilaya)  
Section D14 (7-7:50pm, Hallingstadt)

NOTE: For Week 10 (Mar 11), there are no assigned readings or films. I will ask you to respond to a prompt addressing your learning experience in CAT 2D.

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### **CAT 2D: 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 7 – Introduction**

Watch in-class:

*A Sweet & Sour Christmas*, dir. Aram Siu Wai Collier, 2019, 17 minutes [excerpt]

*Mommy*, dir. Maggie Lee, 2015, 56 minutes [excerpt]

### **Thursday, Jan 9**

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

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

#### **Tuesday, Jan 14**

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

Read: Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, pp. 38-61

#### **Thursday, Jan 16**

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

**Film Terms Quiz** (in section)

### **Week 3: The Kung Fu Master**

#### **Tuesday, Jan 21**

Watch: *The Way of the Dragon*, dir. Bruce Lee, 1972, 100 minutes

Read: Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, pp. 61-81

#### **Thursday, Jan 23**

Read: Chris Berry, "Stellar Transit: Bruce Lee's Body or Chinese Masculinity in a Transnational Frame" (2006), 17 pages

**DUE Tuesday 1/21: Paper #1 Draft**

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

#### **Tuesday, Jan 28**

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

#### **Thursday, Jan 30**

Read: Vanita Reddy, "Afro-Asian Intimacies and the Politics and Aesthetics of Cross-Racial Struggle in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala*," (2015), 26 pages

### **Week 5: The Refugee**

#### **Tuesday, Feb 4**

Watch: *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, dir. Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989, 108 minutes

## **Thursday, Feb 6**

Read: Trinh T. Minh-ha with Laleen Jayamane and Anne Rutherford, “‘Why A Fish Pond?’: Fiction at the Heart of Documentation” (1992), 15 pages

## **DUE Tuesday 2/4: Paper #1 Final Revision**

**Library Workshop** (during section Tuesday Feb 4)

## **Week 6: The Adoptee**

### **Tuesday, Feb 11**

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

### **Thursday, Feb 13**

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 2/11: Paper #2 Draft**

## **DUE Friday 2/14: Peer Editing Sheets**

## **Week 7: The Internet Bride**

### **Tuesday, Feb 18**

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

### **Thursday, Feb 20**

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

## **DUE Tuesday 2/18: Paper #2 Final Revision**

## **Week 8: The Diasporic Queer**

### **Tuesday, Feb 25**

Watch: Wayne Yung’s short experimental videos

*The Queen's Cantonese: Conversational Course*, 1998, 33 minutes

*Search Engine*, 1999, 4 minutes

*Field Guide to Western Wildflowers*, 2000, 5:30 minutes

*My German Boyfriend*, 2004, 18:30 minutes

*In Transit*, 2013, 6:30 minutes

### **Thursday, Feb 27**

Read: Mike Hoolboom, “My Heart the Travel Agent: An Interview with Wayne Yung” (2008), 11 pages

## **DUE Thursday 2/27: Visual Essay Proposal**

**Week 9: The Restaurateur**

**Tuesday, Mar 3**

Watch: *Always Be My Maybe*, dir. Nahnatchka Khan, 2019, 102 minutes

**Thursday, Mar 5**

Read: Soleil Ho, “Craving the Other: One Woman’s Beef with Cultural Appropriation and Cuisine”; and Promise Li, “‘Always Be My Maybe’: Gentrification and the Asian American Rom-Com”

**Week 10: Wrap Up**

**Tuesday, Mar 10**

**Thursday, Mar 12**

**DUE: Tuesday, Mar 17, 6pm, Visual Essay and Critical Reflection**