ICS24 Asian American Literature  
De Anza College  
Spring 2012

This class meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-2:20 in room E-35  
Instructor: Sherwin Mendoza, mendozasherwin@deanza.edu  
Office Hours and Location: Mondays 11:00-12:00 and by appointment, Multicultural Center (IIS Division main office)

Course Web Site: http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/mendozasherwin/ics24w12/index.html  

This course is an introduction to Asian American Literature. The readings emphasize three themes: problems of identity as it relates to class, gender, mixed heritages, and sexuality; politics and the history of Asian American activism and resistance; and the diversity of cultures within the Asian American community. Regardless of whether you identify yourself as Asian American or not, as a result of taking this course you should become better at describing yourself and your experience.

The Student Learning Outcomes for this course state that at the end of the quarter you should be able to do the following:

1) Identify multiple cultural and historical issues pertaining to Asian American Pacific Islanders in literature.  
2) Analyze issues pertaining to race, class, sexuality and/or gender in relation to Asian Pacific American communities.

Here is a partial list of issues that we will address in this class, and I hope that you develop thoughtful and informed positions on each of them:

Family (personal and political), Friends, Community  
  Do you think of yourself as an insider or outsider in your community/communities?  
  Rebellion and acquiesence  
  Gender roles  
  Assimilation, preservation and transformation of cultures and traditions

Romance  
  How do you feel about mixed relationships? How do you think your family or community feels about mixed relationships?  
  Same-sex relationships?

History  
  Is Asian American History important? Who should learn Asian American History? What should people in Santa Clara County know about Asian American History?
Social Change
Under different conditions, what are appropriate ways to make social change?

Immigration
Should people be deported?
Under what conditions do people immigrate? Why do these conditions exist?

Work
What rights should workers have? What is a good relationship between employers and employees? What is a good relationship between employees?

Representation
How should Asian Americans represent themselves? What are appropriate representations of Asian Americans?

Course Policies

Attendance is mandatory. All class time counts and attendance every day is required. Please contact me before class if you are unable to attend, and we will set up a way for you to make up the missed class time. Please respect my time and the time of your classmates by coming to class on time. Please turn in assignments on time to make it easier for me to track the progress of everyone in the class.

This course will abide by the college-wide policies of De Anza College with respect to academic conduct (honesty, respect for diversity, etc.).

Required Texts

ICS24/ELIT24 Reader (available in class during the second and third class meetings) The Latehomecomer by Kao Kalia Yang

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Immigrant Histories and Struggles

Week 1: Intros
April 9 Go over the syllabus
Kelly Tsai
April 11 Census
Latehomecomer Prologue (pp. 1-4)
Pre-test; what do you have to learn before you immigrate?
Immigration as an educational experience

Week 2: Individual, Family and Collective Stories
April 16 Introduce Telling Your Story; The Latehomecomer Part I, Part II, and Part III (pp. 5-210)
Mukherjee; quiz
April 18 *The Latehomecomer* Part IV, Epilogue (pp. 211-274); quiz
Dawn Mabalon, Jeff Tagami, Ishle Park

Week 3: Immigrant Struggles
April 23 Bich Minh Nguyen; quiz
Screening of *A Village Called Versailles*
April 25 Essay on *The Latehomecomer* due; quiz
R. Zamora Linmark, Trask, Trask
British, French, US Empire
South Asia and Hong Kong

Week 4: You, Your Family and History
April 30 Telling Your Story Part I Presentations; Immigration History and your stories
Jose Vargas, Paul Kim
Form research groups
Telling Your Story Part I write-up due
May 2 Lê Thị Diệm Thúy; quiz

Week 5: Discrimination, Prison, ICE
May 7 Angel Island poems
Screen trailer for *Slaying the Dragon Reloaded*
May 9 Okubo, Mirikitani, Inada; quiz

Week 6: Migrant Labor and the Asian American Movement
May 14 Bulosan, Vera Cruz
Role-play
May 16 Yamashita, Tsang, Wong; quiz

Week 7: Post-1965
May 21 Dong Hwan Ku, Youn Jae Kim, Hyun Yi Kang; Campi;
Bill Ong Hing; quiz
Review for exam
May 23 Exam 1

Week 8:
May 28 Holiday
May 30 Introduce Unit 2, Analytical Essay Due

Unit 2: Making Our Cultures

Week 9: Group Projects
June 4 Oral History, introduce YouTube; Chin
June 6 Oral History
Week 10: New Media and Self-Expression
   June 11 Group Presentations
   June 13 Group Presentations; YouTube write-ups due

Week 11: Telling Your Story Part II
   June 18 Telling Your Story Presentations
   June 20 Telling Your Story Presentations

Week 12: Course Wrap-up
   June 25 Exam Review; Telling Your Story Part II write-ups due

Final Exam:
   11:30-1:30, Friday June 29

Assignments

Points for each part of each assignment are in parentheses.

100 points: In-Class Participation
   In-class writing assignments, group work, quizzes
100: Blog
   Discussion questions (20)
   Responses (80)
200: Formal Essays
   Mid-term paper on *The Latehomecomer*, 3-5 Pages (100)
   Analytical paper, 3-5 Pages
      Plan for analytical paper (20), 1 page
      Analytical paper on a poetic or fictional text (80), 3-5 pages
200: Group Presentations
   Group meeting, preparation (50)
   Group proposal (50)
   Presentation (50)
   Reflection (50), 1-2 pages
200: Telling Your Story
   Part I write-up (50), 1-2 pages
   Part I presentation (50)
   Part II write-up (50), 2-3 pages
   Part II presentation (50)
200: Exams
   Mid-term (100)
   Cumulative final (100)

1000: Total
Grading Scale

A+  1000 or more points
A   950-999
A-  900-949
B+  870-899
B   830-869
B-  800-829
C+  770-799
C   730-759
C-  700-729
D   600-699
F   Less than 600 points

Assignment Descriptions

Extra Credit

Up to 100 points, 20pts apiece
Attend and write up an event related to this class (see me first).

Blog

The blog will be one chance for you to give direction to our classroom discussions. To get full credit you will need to post two questions (ten points apiece) and respond to at least ten blog questions (eight points apiece). Aim for something you're interested in and/or something that will lead to discussion. If there is more than one reading assigned you can choose to address one or more than one of the readings.

You can either e-mail me questions, speak with me after class, or post directly to the blog. I encourage you to read your classmates' responses, and I hope that the blog has the feel of a conversation, just not entirely face-to-face. If you want you can reference previous responses or readings. Good questions (like good literary works) often address what everyone is thinking but hasn't asked about, and your questions can be about the readings, the course topics, or even the class itself.

I will post on the course website detailed descriptions for the following assignments.

YouTube

The basic goal for this assignment is for you to form thoughtful opinions about YouTube videos and the comments on videos. You should also be able to identify the positions of YouTube videos with respect to issues discussed in this class.

You will have group meeting time during the scheduled class time the week of June 4. Your group meetings will lead to a group presentation on the week of June 11 about a
YouTube video with at least 5,000 views. On Wednesday of that week you will turn in a write-up that elaborates on the content of your presentation. In your write-up you will also evaluate your fellow group members.

**Mid-term Essay**

In this essay you will relate your family's story to Yang's. For this assignment you should learn how to tell a collective story, and you should decide on the group or groups you belong to.

**Analytical Essay or Oral History about Educational Experiences**

For this assignment you will have the option of either working in a group to conduct oral histories or of writing an individual research paper that contextualizes at least one of the course texts aside from *The Latehomecomer* in terms of the history of immigration and migration to the US for the immigrant/migrant group or groups that the text represents. If you choose to conduct an oral history you will work with a group to film interviews of people who received at least a portion of their education in Asia, and your film will be screened in class.

**Telling Your Story**

To a large extent this class is built on your stories. Historically the vast majority of people who have taken this class are either first- or second-generation immigrants from Asia. The basic idea is that the best way for you to learn about Asian American immigration is to listen to the stories of immigrants from Asia and to compare and contrast your own experiences.

This assignment consists of two parts. In the first part, you will tell your story directly through a narrative. In the second part you will tell your story indirectly by sharing something that is significant to you, and I encourage you to do creative projects in small groups in which you tell the class about your relationship to what you are sharing.