

RTF 359/AAS 320
ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA CULTURES
Fall 2018 Syllabus

Course Flag: Cultural Diversity in the United States

CLASS TIME: MONDAY-WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY 11:00 a.m.--12:00 p.m.

CLASSROOM: BMC 3.206

PROFESSOR: MADHAVI MALLAPRAGADA, PhD

Office Hours: Thursday 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

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TEACHING ASSISTANT: Hogeun Seo

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Course Description:

As we begin this semester, the film *Crazy Rich Asians* continues its box-office success while simultaneously cementing its status as an unprecedented moment for Asian American representation in US history. Yet the complex commentaries that have emerged around the film remind us that for historically marginalized groups in the US, the road to fuller and more complex participation within US media industries is fraught with complexity and ambivalence. Why is the location of Asian Americans in US media so complex? How can we locate the present status of Asian Americans in the media within a historical and cultural context? These two questions will guide our study of Asian American media cultures.

We will examine a variety of media examples, from the early 20th century to the present and focus on prevailing stereotypes as well as efforts to combat stereotypes. We will discuss representation alongside significant industry practices such as casting, writers and creative talent and explore controversies around color-blind casting. We will also consider examples of independent media production, activist media and transnational, digital media that offer alternative, local and counter-hegemonic images, narratives and discourses about Asian Americans as media creators, distributors, consumer and audiences.

This course is designed to help us understand the role and significance of media such as film, television, radio, the Internet, and social media platforms as it relates to Asian Americans. While we will be looking at examples of immigrant and transnational media, we will focus extensively on US media.

Course Goals: The overall goals of this course are two fold. The first goal to get a historical understanding of the roles (both in front and behind the camera) played by Asian Americans in US media. The second goal is to develop a critical approach to media production and media studies by exploring media narratives, industry practices, representational strategies and audience responses through past and present media examples that foreground Asian Americans. Class readings, assignments and discussions are geared to advance these two goals.

Course Requirements: (Plus/Minus awarded for the Course Final Grade)

Attendance	10%
Class Participation	10%
In-Class Quizzes	10%
Take Home/Screening-Based Assignments	10%
Response Paper 1	10%
Response Paper 2	10%
Group project & Presentation	15%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	10%

Required Course Readings: All the course readings will be uploaded on Canvas. Most of the readings will be scholarly readings and will be available as PDF files. On occasion, your weekly readings will be online popular pieces and/or online videos. In such instances, the document that will be available on Canvas will include the links to the online readings. All readings that REQUIRED material for this course. Please refer to the weekly schedule on this syllabus for information on assigned readings for each class day. On occasion, a reading that is listed on this syllabus might be replaced with another one that is more relevant to our class discussions. In such an event, you will be notified via email and in class.

You are expected to bring a physical or digital copy of the reading to class on the assigned day.

Course Procedures and Assignments

Assigned readings:

Class lectures, discussion topics and video screenings presume that all students have completed the assigned reading for each class meeting. Since we cannot cover all topics from the readings in detail during the lecture, it is important that you carefully go through the assigned readings before the class meeting. You should come to class prepared to discuss the key points and arguments of the readings. You are also required to bring a copy of the readings to class.

Lectures and In-class Screenings:

Lectures and in-class screenings or short clips are designed to supplement the assigned readings and will be part of the material you will be tested on. **You are expected to take notes of the materials covered in lectures and in-class screenings/short clips.** Exams are very closely tied to the lecture and material covered in class, so make a habit of taking notes in this course!

Attendance: (10%)

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting. Please be punctual. Each student is granted four personal leave days without penalty. This provision is meant to cover unexpected absences (such as not being in class because you are sick) and not intended as sanctioned holidays. The fifth absence, however, will lower your attendance grade by a half point and each subsequent absence will have a similar effect. **You are responsible for being aware of all assignments, handouts and announcements made in class.** Keep this in mind in the event you are late to class, leave early or are absent from class.

Class Participation (10%)

Beginning early in the semester, you will be asked to apply the course materials through class discussions and in-class quizzes. You are not only expected to actively participate in class, but also to demonstrate an ability to integrate the course materials into your discussions and assignments. In addition to being graded for your class participation, your responses to reading materials and class discussions are an integral and valuable part of the pedagogical practices of my class. So speak up in class!

In-class quizzes (10%)

Over the course of the semester, you will have **4 quizzes** based on the course reading for the day. These quizzes are designed to encourage you to keep up with the assigned readings. The quizzes will be unannounced and administered at the beginning of class.

Take-Home/Screening-Related Assignments: (10%)

Take home assignments will require you to write a brief response based on either a reading or screening relevant to class. You will have **2** of them. Further details will be given at the time of each individual assignment. **Due Dates: September 17th and November 5th**

Group Project and Presentation: (15%)

You are required to do a group project and presentation for this course. Each group will also assign the class reading for the day of presentation. Topics and detailed guidelines for the project will be handed to you in class. Group Presentation dates are listed on the weekly schedule.

Two 3-4 page Response Papers: (10% each; total 20%)

You are required to do write **2 response papers**, between 3-4 pages in length, over the course of the semester. Each response paper will address an idea, or a topic that I will outline in class. You will be given a handout in class giving you specific instructions on how to develop your response paper. The goal of the response papers is to give you an opportunity to put down your arguments, ideas and thoughts in writing while simultaneously synthesizing your ideas with relevant scholarship. Deadlines are listed on the syllabus. No electronic versions will be accepted. Further guidelines will be handed to you in class. **Due Dates: October 10th and November 14th**

Exams: (Exam 1 is 15%; Exam 2 is 10% → Total 25%)

There will be two exams over the course of the semester. **Exam 1 is on Friday, October 19th.** (Week 8) and will include materials covered from Week 1 to Week 7. **Exam 2 is on Monday, December 10th** (Week 16) and will cover materials from Week 8 to Week 16. You will be given an exam review sheet

prior to the exam. Material for the exam will include course readings, class lectures, class discussions, class screenings and in-class clips. The format will be discussed in class.

General Course and Academic Guidelines

Services for Students with Disabilities

The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY.

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor.

By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonest damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services Web site at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>

Undergraduate Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center, located in the FAC 211, phone 471-6222, <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc/> offers individualized assistance to students who want to improve their writing skills. There is no charge, and students may come in on a drop-in or appointment basis.

Moody College Writing Support Program

The Moody College Writing Support Program, located in BMC 3.322, <https://moody.utexas.edu/students/moodywriting> offers one-on-one assistance without charge to students seeking to improve their professional writing in all fields of communication. We have specialists in Journalism, RTF, CSD, CMS, and PR and Advertising. In addition, we offer workshops to strengthen core-writing skills in each field and to inspire students to strive for excellence. Students may book half-hour appointments on our website or drop in for assistance during all stages of the writing process.

Religious Holidays

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss a work assignment or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

Classroom Evacuation Procedures

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. For more information, please go to <https://preparedness.utexas.edu/>

Class Schedule

All readings should be completed prior to the class session across which they are listed. Readings may be subject to change—in which case, you will be notified

Week 1	Topic:	Course Introduction and Overview
Readings:	Wed 8/29	Introduction to course; Syllabus handed out
	Fri 8/31	2 readings; Barnes, "Crazy Rich Asians Tops Box Office" [online] Han," CRA is a win for Asian Americans. But it gets Singapore Wrong"[online]
Week 2	Topic:	Cultural Diversity and Media Minorities
Readings:	Mon 9/3	NO CLASS; LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

	Wed 9/5	Takaki, "One-Tenth of the Nation: Asian Americans in the 21 st Century"
	Fri 9/7	2 readings: Zia, "Gangsters, Gooks, Geishas and Geeks;" Galang, "A General Timeline of the Asian American Experience"
Week 3	Topic:	Asian Americans in/and US Media: Key Issues and Themes
Readings:	Mon 9/10	2 readings: Rice, "7 Things about Asian Americans you'll never learn from mainstream media" Media Action Network for Asian Americans, "Asian Stereotypes: A Memo from MANAA to Hollywood" <u>In-Class Screening: Take Home Assignment # 1 handed out</u>
	Wed 9/12	2 readings: Hess, "Asian American Actors...Will not be Ignored" McDermott, "Asian American Actors... and Readers Respond" <u>Response Paper # 1 Assignment will be handed out</u>
	Fri 9/14	2 readings: Chan, "Where are all the Asian Americans in Hollywood?" Lee, "Was 2014 a Banner Year for Asian Americans on TV?"
Week 4	Topic:	Theoretical Frameworks: Key Themes and Issues
Readings:	Mon 9/17	Take home assignment# 1 due in class Xing, "Cinematic Asian Representations" part 1
	Wed 9/19	Xing, "Cinematic Asian Representations" part 2
	Fri 9/21	Xing, "Cinematic Asian Representations" part 3
Week 5	Topic:	The Cultural Production of Asian' Stereotypes in Early Hollywood
Readings:	Mon 9/24	Miyao, "A Star is Born... <i>The Cheat</i> and its Race and Gender Politics"
	Wed 9/26	Wong, "The Early Years: Asians in American Films...WW II"
	Fri 9/28	Marchetti, "White Knights in Hong Kong... <i>The World of Suzie Wong</i> "
Week 6	Topic:	The Enduring Legacy of the "Model Minority" Image
Readings:	Mon 10/1	Chan, "Charlie Chan: A Model Minority Man"
	Wed 10/3	Lee, "The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority Myth" part 1

Fri 10/5 Lee, "The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority Myth" part 2
In-Class Screening

Week 7 Topic: Critiquing the Model Minority Image

Readings: Mon 10/8 Ono and Pham, "Threatening Model Minorities" part 1

Wed 10/10 **Response Paper #1 due in class;** Ono and Pham, part 2; In Class Screening

Fri 10/12 August and Kim, "The Turn to 'Bad Koreans': Transforming...Ethnicity"
Response Paper # 2 Assignment will be handed out

Week 8 Topic: Independent Films and Public Service Media

Readings: Mon 10/15 Tajima-Peña, "Moving the Image: Asian American Independent Filmmaking 1970-1990"

Wed 10/17 Reviews of *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*

Fri 10/19 **EXAM 1; Bring Blue Books**

Week 9 Topic: Countering Stereotypes: Asian Americans as Cultural Producers

Readings: Mon 10/22 Oren, "Secret Asian Man: Angry Asians...Visibility"

Wed 10/24 Nakamura, "Measuring Race on the Internet"

Fri 10/26 Au, "Using the Tools of the YouTube Generation"

Week 10 Topic: Casting, Diversity and Color Blind Issues

Readings: Mon 10/29 Media commentaries on Hari Kondabolu's *The Problem with Apu* [online]; Take Home Assignment #2 will be handed out

Wed 10/31 UCLA Bunche Center's Hollywood Diversity Report 2017

Fri 11/2 Oral Histories of Asian American Actors [online]

Week 11 Topic: Mixed Race and Media Matters

Readings: Mon 11/5 Beltrán and Fojas, "Introduction: Mixed Race in Hollywood Film and Media Culture"; **Take Home Assignment # 2 due in class**

	Wed 11/7	Nishime, "Stunning: Digital Portraits of Mixed Race Families from Slate to Tumblr"
	Fri 11/9	<u>Student Presentations: Day 1</u> ; the presenters will select Reading
Week 12	Topic:	The Kung Fu Genre and Transnational US-Asian Media Flows
Readings:	Mon 11/12	Shu, "Reading the Kung Fu Film in an American Context: From Bruce Lee to Jackie Chan"
	Wed 11/14	Klein, "Martial Arts and the Globalization of US and Asian Film Industries;" Response Paper # 2 due in class
	Fri 11/16	<u>Student Presentations Day 2</u> ; the presenters will select Reading
Week 13	Topic:	Global Asian Media and US Audiences
Readings:	Mon 11/19	Desai, "Planet Bollywood: Indian Cinema Abroad"
	Wed 11/21	No Class; Thanksgiving Holiday
	Fri 11/23	No Class; Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 14	Topic:	Student Presentations
Readings:	Mon 11/26	<u>Student Presentations Day 3</u> ; the presenters will select Reading
	Wed 11/28	<u>Student Presentations Day 4</u> ; the presenters will select Reading
	Fri 11/30	<u>Student Presentations Day 5</u> ; the presenters will select Reading
Week 15	Topic:	<i>Crazy Rich Asians</i> and What Lies Ahead (<u>Readings will be news stories from Aug-Nov. 2018 hence uploaded by mid-Nov.</u>)
Readings:	Mon 12/3	Reviews/ Critiques of <i>Crazy Rich Asians</i> [online]
	Wed 12/5	Opinion Pieces about State of Asians Americans in Media in 2018 [online]
	Fri 12/7	In Class Screening and Class Discussion (No Reading Assigned!)
Week 16	Topic:	Course Conclusion
	Mon 12/10	<u>Exam 2; Bring Blue Books</u>

December 10th is the last day of class.