

## Introduction to Asian American History

Focusing on the migration and settlement of Asians in North America, this course explores major themes concerning the histories of immigration, race, gender, ethnicity, class, labor, and international relations. We will trace the trajectory of American racialization of Asians from exclusion as inassimilable aliens to post-World War II celebrations as the model minority through changing conceptions of racial difference, evolving laws and government institutions, and shifting representations of ethnic identities and communities. Working with primary sources by and about Asians, we will explore how Asians have influenced understandings of national belonging and citizenship, ethnic identity and community, assimilation and acculturation, multiculturalism, labor and economic development, political participation, and transnationalism in influencing the emergence of the United States as a nation of immigrants.

This course may be used to fulfill three hours of the U.S. history component of the university core curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, personal responsibility, and social responsibility.

This course also carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of American cultural experiences. A substantial portion of your grade stems from assignments concerning the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

**Course Aims and Student Learning Objectives:** By successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify major concepts, problems, and historical questions in Asian American history and be able to connect them to broader themes in U.S. history;
2. Chart historical changes and continuities in the lives of Asian Americans over the past four centuries.
3. Demonstrate competence regarding how race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality have influenced Asian American experiences;
4. Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups of Asian Americans, and identify how these diverse experiences intersected with that of other racial and ethnic groups, including African Americans, Latinos, and White Americans, among others; and
5. Apply key issues in Asian American history to understand current social justice issues.

**Textbooks:** For purchase at the University Co-op, on reserve at PCL.

Shelley Lee, *A New History of Asian America* (Routledge, 2014).

Cathy Schlund-Vials et al ed., *Asian American: A Primary Source Reader* (Yale University Press, 2016). Denoted as CSV in reading assignments. On E-reserve.

Additional required readings will be posted to Canvas.

**Grade Distribution:** Final grades will be allocated as follows: A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 88-89; B 83-87; B- 80-82; C+ 78-79; C 73-77; C- 70-72 and so forth.

15% Class attendance and participation

20% Midterm (Oct. 23)

30% Final Exam (Dec. 15, 9:00 am-12:00 pm)

10% Family Immigration Narrative (Sept. 11)

25% Timeline project (rolling deadlines): presentations on Thursdays starting Week 3

### Lecture and Reading Assignment Schedule (Subject to Change)

#### **Week 1: Introduction: Orientation/Orientalism**

Reading: Gary Okihito, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (UW Press, 1994): 3-30; CSV 21-22

**Week 2: Introduction: Asians and Americans**

Reading: Lee, Chapter 1 “Orientalism Before Asian America,” 5-26; CSV 22-31

**Week 3: Asia’s Eastern Frontier**

Reading: Lee, Chapter 2 “The Asian Diaspora in the Pre-Exclusion Years,” 27-62; CSV Lafcadio Hearn “Saint Malo: A Lacustrine Village in Louisiana” (1883); CSV 207-215

**Week 4: Labor and Trade**

Reading: Lee, Chapter 3 “Making a Living: The Politics and Economics of Work before the 1930s” 63-94; Wong Sam and Assistants, “An English-Chinese Phrase Book” (1875) in Chan et al ed., *The Big Aiiieeeee!* (Penguin 1991), 93-110; CSV 219-232

**Week 5: Racism and Exclusion**

Reading: Lee, Chapter 5 “Racism and the Anti-Asian Movements” 121-150; CSV 31-60, 215-218

**Week 6: Asiatic Exclusion**

Reading: Lee, Chapter 6 “Response and Resistance,” 151-174; CSV 62-85

**Week 7: Forging Communities**

Reading: Lee, Chapter 4 “Social Intimacy and Asian American Communities before World War II,” 95-120; CSV 232-249; Kiyama excerpts;

**Week 8: American Empire**

Reading: Lee, Chapter 7 “Americanization, Modernity, and the Second Generation through the 1930s” 175-206; CSV 123-127; Excerpts from Ignacio et al ed., *The Forbidden Book* (I’boli Publishing, 2004), 7-79;

**Week 9: Midterm and Generations****Week 10: World War II**

Reading: Lee Chapter 8 “Asian Americans and the Crucible of World War II,” 207-244; CSV 127-161

**Week 11: Cold War Racial Liberalism**

Readings: Lee Chapter 9 “Asian America in the Early Cold War Years” 245-268; CSV 85-97

**Week 12: New Immigrants**

Readings: Lee Chapter 10 “The Vietnam War, Southeast Asians, and the Transformation of Asian America” 269-290; CSV 97-105

**Week 13: Representations/Representing**

Readings: Lee Chapter 11 “Politics and Activism in Asian America in the 1960s and 1970s” 291-314; CSV 184-201

**THANKSGIVING BREAK Nov. 22-25****Week 14: Civil Rights and Model Americans**

\*Readings: Lee Chapter 12 “The Watershed of 1965 and the Remaking of Asian America” 315-334; “Success Story of One Minority Group in US” in Wu and Song 158-163; CSV 161-183, 249-284

**Week 15: A Post-Racial 21<sup>st</sup> Century?**

\*Readings: Lee Chapter 13 “Reckonings: Asian America in the Late Twentieth Century” 335-350; CSV 106-114, 285-314