

## AsAmSt 200: Introduction to Asian American Studies

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Office hours: W 4:30-6, Th 2-3:30

Fall 2015  
TTh 12:30-1:45  
S-2-063

### **Course Description**

This collaboratively taught course offers interdisciplinary perspectives on a variety of issues related to Asian American Studies and the Asian American experience. We will critically examine the establishment and evolution of the field of Asian American Studies, including the ideologies and goals that frame it as both an academic discipline and an educational intervention, while clarifying our understanding of current campus and community contexts. Through guest lectures and presentations we will sample the breadth of the field, exploring, for example, shared experiences and social issues for Asian Americans, history and law, empowerment and activism, and issues of building alliances among Asian Americans and between Asian Americans and other oppressed racialized groups. Throughout the course we will consider the connections between the personal and the political, between the contemporary and the historical, between unity and recognition of unique and varied experiences, and between the *status quo* and social change. Students' contributions of their own experiences and knowledge will constitute a vital component of the course.

#### **Goals:**

- To introduce the field of Asian American Studies, including origins, multiple methods of inquiry used, and the diversity of disciplines connected to Asian American studies.
- To explore the collaborative, interdisciplinary nature of Asian American studies and the ideologies and goals that unify the discipline.
- To consider the relevance and place of Asian American Studies and Asian American issues in the current context (Boston and UMass)
- To make connections and develop resources within Asian American Studies, disciplines and courses related to Asian American issues, and Asian American faculty/staff/resources at UMass. To facilitate connections to people, topics, disciplines, and ideas for students interested in the Asian American experience.

### **Course Requirements**

**Class Participation and Attendance (10%):** The success of this course will depend on you—your active presence and participation. If you need to be absent for some reason, please email to let me know (ahead of time whenever possible). You are responsible for making sure you understand and know about any materials missed during absences that are needed to complete the course requirements, e.g. lecture content handouts, announcements, etc.

**Class Preparation and Activities: 20%** Throughout the semester, a variety of handouts, worksheets, activities, and (possibly) quizzes will be assigned. These have several purposes: (a) to ensure that you complete the readings in a timely manner so that we can build upon this foundation in class to enable rich discussions and interaction; (b) to encourage reflection and integration of knowledge; and (c) to prepare you to demonstrate and share your knowledge and understanding with your class mates and other people. Collectively, these will be worth 20% of your total grade and will be evaluated based on thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and clear demonstration that you have completed and understood the related readings.

**Guest lecture postings and questions (15%)**: We will have approximately 10 guest lectures throughout the semester, with related readings assigned. To prepare for these, you will be expected to post a comment on Blackboard *for at least 8 of these sessions*. These will be evaluated based on thoroughness, thoughtfulness, and clear demonstration that you have completed and understood the related readings. *You can receive up to 4 points of extra credit if you post these the day before class no later than 6pm and include a question for the guest speaker.* Otherwise, they are due by the beginning of class on the day indicated.

**Essay (20%)**: One 5 page essay based on readings and class discussions. You will have a choice of essays (and due dates), but don't put this off! Your essay will be evaluated based on depth and detail and on thoughtful analysis of the readings with specific examples that demonstrate your understanding of the material and your ability to integrate and apply the concepts. Essay questions are available on Blackboard.

**Impact Project (35%)**: This requirement expects you to participate in a collaborative project exploring the meaning and impacts of Asian American Studies. You will develop and conduct an interview with a faculty or alumnus of AsAmSt, prepare a summary and analysis of that interview, participate in a group discussion to develop central themes, write a reflection memo on your own views of impacts and directions, and develop a poster that will be part of an overall mosaic mural. Further guidelines will be discussed in class and are in the Impact Project Overview available on Blackboard.

#### **Late assignments:**

Assignments due in class are due at the **beginning** of class on the date listed. Assignments turned in later that same day will be considered one day late. Late assignments will generally be penalized 5% of the total assignment **per day**. Under extenuating circumstances, of course, late assignments may be accepted but this must be discussed with me (preferably **ahead of time**). Please come and talk with me as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulties fulfilling the requirements of the course (completing any assignments, attending class, etc.). I want all of you to succeed and problems can more easily be resolved earlier, rather than later when the effects have multiplied.

#### **Required Reading**

On blackboard and listed below.

### Student conduct and academic dishonesty:

It is assumed that in this class each student and I will act in a professional and honest manner. Therefore any student who engages in an act of Academic Dishonesty, plagiarizing a paper (copying from any source without quotes and referencing is plagiarizing), etc., will receive a failing grade for that assignment and in most cases a failing grade for the course. The University strictly adheres to a Code of Student Conduct regarding issues of cheating, plagiarism, or other inappropriate behavior that interferes with the educational environment. Please see the following for more details:

- Student code of conduct: [https://www.umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/policies/community/code](https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code).
- Description of academic honesty violations:  
[https://www.umb.edu/pages/standard\\_page/19536](https://www.umb.edu/pages/standard_page/19536)

*If you have questions about Academic Honesty, student conduct, appropriate behavior, or expectations in this course please see me.*

### Special Assistance:

In accordance with Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 the University of Massachusetts Boston attempts to accommodate all students with a documented disability. Through the **Ross Center** for Disability Services various aids such as sign language interpreting, readers, testing accommodations, etc. are available to students. If you believe that you require such services, please contact the Ross Center (Campus Center Upper Level Room 211) at 617.287.7430. as soon as possible. Please let me know, as well.

### Resources and Support Services at UMass

- First and foremost for our class is the **Asian American Student Success Program** which offers a range of services and supports for students. One of the best things they can do is help figure out who can help most!: <https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/aassp>. McCormack Hall, 3rd Floor, Room 703 (in the Ryan Lounge)
- **Reading, Writing, & Study Strategies Center**, which can help with study skills, research and writing assignments (preparation, organization, grammar/language, analysis, etc.): [http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic\\_support/tutoring/rwssc/](http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic_support/tutoring/rwssc/).
- The **library** is a great resource with more information than you (or I) can possibly take in. The library staff can also help you with research techniques and library use. Part of the job of reference librarians is to help you find what you need, so don't be afraid to ask for help!
- **Subject, Math skills, and ESL Tutoring and Writing Workshops:**  
[https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic\\_support/tutoring](https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/academic_support/tutoring)
- Student support services such as **academic advising, financial aid, referral to appropriate on and off campus resources:** <https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass>. Contact them by email at [sss@umb.edu](mailto:sss@umb.edu), Phone: 617-287-5820, or at Student Support Services. Campus Center, 1st Floor, Room 1100.
- Student Support Service's U-ACCESS can help students meet **various non-academic challenges**, such as homelessness, parental neglect, chronic or persistent poverty, domestic violence, legal issues, financial emergencies, or other unanticipated events:  
[http://www.umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/uaccess](http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/uaccess)

**Course Calendar (as of 09/28/15)**

*This calendar is subject to change*

<b>WHAT, WHO, AND WHY IS ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES?</b>	
Tu 9/8	<b>Introduction and Overview</b>
Th 9/10	<p><b>What is Ethnic Studies? What is Asian American Studies?</b></p> <p>What is "Asian American Studies"? We will consider the origins of Asian American Studies and the possible themes that bring together the diverse disciplines and areas linked within Asian American Studies. We will also explore the challenges facing Asian American studies in recent years and today, as well as the potential of Asian American Studies as transformative education.</p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Hune: Opening the American Mind....</p> <p>Endo &amp; Wei, Developing Ethnic Studies, read only pp. 6-7 "Early History"</p> <p>Omi, Just aint the 60s</p> <p>Kiang: Pedagogies of life and death... (start this, you can finish it for next time)</p> <p><u>Check out on-line:</u> <a href="http://www.asianamerican.net/centers.html">http://www.asianamerican.net/centers.html</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose at least two of the colleges/university programs and check out their websites. Consider what these tell you about the meaning of Asian American Studies.</li><li>• Also, look at at least one website for "area" studies—Asian studies, East Asian Studies, South Asian Studies, South East Asian Studies, Middle East Studies. Consider the missions, curriculum, and faculty in these programs/departments as compared to the Asian American Studies programs. What are the differences between Asian American Studies and Asian or area studies? Consider what these tell you about the meaning of Asian American Studies.</li></ul> <p><u>Due:</u></p> <p>What is AsAmSt 1 handout</p>
Tu 9/15	<p><b>What is Asian American Studies? (continued)</b></p> <p><i>Add/Drop Deadline!</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Omatsu: Freedom schooling: Reconceptualizing Asian American Studies... (finish) Kiang: Pedagogies of life and death...</p> <p><u>Due:</u></p> <p>What is AsAmSt 2 handout</p>

Th 9/17	<p><b>What is Asian American?</b></p> <p>What does "Asian American" mean? Who is Asian American? We will consider issues of defining race and ethnicity and overview current numbers and other demographic information, particularly in Massachusetts/Boston.</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  Reeves and Bennett: We the People  Watanabe: Asian Americans in Metro Boston  Kibria: Contested meanings...</p>
Tu 9/22	<p><b>Who is Asian American?</b></p> <p>Who is considered Asian American and how is this determined? We will explore individual, social, and political meanings, ingroup and outgroup defining and boundaries.</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  Suyemoto: Redefining "Asian American"...</p> <p><i>Recommended to read:</i> Uba, Constructions of race and culture</p> <p><u>Due:</u>  Who is Asian American handout</p>
Th 9/24	<p><b>What is Asian American Studies? Why is Asian American Studies?</b></p> <p>Reflection and Introduction of Projects</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  AASO (After 20 years...)  Review prior readings on AsAmSt (esp. Hune, Endo &amp; Wei, Omatsu, Kiang)</p> <p><u>Check out on-line:</u>  <a href="https://www.umb.edu/asamst">https://www.umb.edu/asamst</a></p> <p><u>DUE:</u>  Open discussion memo</p>
Tu 9/29 6-8:30pm <b>EVENING CLASS</b>	<p><b>Community/Alumni/AsAmSt Discussion: Why is Asian American Studies?</b></p> <p>Come on time and prepared to facilitate discussion!</p>
Th 10/1	<p><b>Project Discussion and Resources Session</b></p> <p><u>Due:</u> Learning notes from open discussion</p>

FOUNDATIONS OF UNITY	
Tu 10/6	<p><b>Community needs and connections</b>  <b>Guest Panelists:</b> Pat Neilson, Thanh Nguyen</p> <p>This session will focus on exploring challenges and needs within the Asian American community. We will also explore some of the structures, organizations, and services that aim to address these needs and their connections to Asian American Studies (faculty, scholarship, students, and program).</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  Hong and Ham: Clinical implications of migration</p> <p><u>Due:</u>  Guest lecture posting/question (post by Mon. Oct 5 by 6pm for extra credit)</p>
Th 10/8	<p><b>In our own voice</b>  <b>Guest Speaker:</b> Shirley Tang</p> <p>This session explores intergenerational dynamics in Asian American communities in both local and transnational contexts as expressed in media projects -- including websites, lookbooks and digital stories -- co-produced by students and the Asian American Studies Program at UMass Boston.</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  Tang, Shirley (2010). "Developing Media Literacy for Feminist Advocacy in Asian American Communities." In On Campus With Women 38 (3). On-line journal. <a href="http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume38_3/national.cfm">http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume38_3/national.cfm</a>.</p> <p><u>Due:</u>  Guest lecture posting/question (post by Wed. Oct 7 by 6pm for extra credit)</p>
Tu 10/13	<p><b>Culture, racialization, and mental health</b>  <b>Guest Speakers:</b> TBA</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  Alvarez: Racism...  Meyer et al: Psychopathology and clinical issues....</p> <p><u>Due:</u>  Guest lecture posting/question (post by Mon. Oct 12 by 6pm for extra credit)</p>

Th 10/15	<p><b>Foundations of Unity: History Jigsaw and current connections</b></p> <p>We will look at the history of Asian Americans and consider the implications of this history for unity and current day experiences.</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Fong Asian American Timeline</p> <p><u>Check out on-line:</u> <a href="http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/voices/voices_content.cfm?vid=1">http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/voices/voices_content.cfm?vid=1</a> <a href="http://www.asian-nation.org/index.shtml">http://www.asian-nation.org/index.shtml</a></p> <p><u>DUE:</u> History jigsaw worksheet</p>
Tu 10/20	<p><b>Is Yellow White or Black?</b></p> <p>Guest Speaker: <b>Paul Watanabe</b></p> <p>This session focuses on the complex and varied racial constructions of Asian Americans. The impact of these varied constructions on legal, political, cultural, and socioeconomic matters with regard to Asian Americans historically and presently will be considered.</p> <p><u>Read:</u> TBA</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Guest lecture posting/question (post by Mon. Oct 19 by 6pm for extra credit)</p>
Th 10/22 Boston AsAmFilm 10/22 to 10/24	<p><b>Foundations of Unity Section Integration and Reflections</b></p>
Tu 10/27	<p><b>Project Session</b></p> <p><u>DUE:</u> Interview notes and memo Due at end of class: thematic notes</p>

<b>EMPOWERMENT AND ACTIVISM</b>	
Th 10/29	<p><b>Gentrification in Chinatown USA: Legal and Community Activism</b>  <b>Guest Speaker: Andrew Leong</b></p> <p><u>Read:</u>  Chinatown Then and Now. Read pp. (pp. 1-21 and 41-43): <a href="http://aaldef.org/Chinatown%20Then%20and%20Now%20AALDEF.pdf">aaldef.org/Chinatown Then and Now AALDEF.pdf</a></p> <p><u>Due:</u>  Guest lecture posting/question (<b>post by Wed. Oct 28 by 6pm</b> for extra credit)</p>
Tu 11/3	<p><b>Asian Americans and Education</b>  <b>Guest Speaker: Peter Kiang</b></p> <p>How is education activism? How can AsAmSt impact the education and development of Asian American children and their families through the K-12 curriculum in ways that contribute to empowerment and social justice? This class will explore these questions and related issues nationally and locally with some examples from UMass Boston's AsAmSt Program.</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  TBA</p> <p><u>Due:</u>  Guest lecture posting/question (<b>post by Mon. Nov 2 by 6pm</b> for extra credit)  5 page essay if you are choosing option 1 or 2</p>
Th 11/5	<p><b>Our Future's At Stake! DACA, Education Equity, and Immigrant Youth</b>  <b>Guest Speaker: Loan Dao and members of the Student Immigration Movement</b></p> <p>We will look at the demographics of Asian and Pacific Islander American youth in terms of their eligibility and access to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the experiences of Asian and other immigrant undocumented youth, and the inter-racial organizing that's happening locally with the Education Equity Bill and nationally with the immigrant rights movement.</p> <p><u>Read:</u>  TBA</p> <p><u>Due:</u>  Guest lecture posting/question (<b>post by Wed. Nov 4 by 6pm</b> for extra credit)</p>
Tu 11/10	<p><b>Section Integration and Reflection</b></p>



SOLIDARITY AND ALLIANCES	
Th 11/12	<p><b>Project Session</b></p> <p><u>DUE:</u> Project reflection AND poster draft</p>
Tu 11/17	<p><b>Building Alliances across Race: Undermining Divide and Conquer between Blacks and Asians</b></p> <p>Guest Speaker: <b>Tahirah Abdullah</b></p> <p>This presentation will focus on strategies that may be helpful in building alliances across race, particularly between Blacks and Asians. We will discuss historical underpinnings of relations between Blacks and Asians, including the ways that "divide and conquer" maintains white supremacy. We will also discuss some of the potential challenges of building cross-racial alliances and ways to address those challenges.</p> <p><u>Read:</u> TBA</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Guest lecture posting/question (<b>post by Mon. Nov. 16 by 6pm</b> for extra credit)</p>
Th 11/19	<p><b>Keeping the Pacific in the Asia-Pacific: The donut in the hole syndrome</b></p> <p>Guest Speaker: <b>Ping-Ann Addo</b></p> <p>Thus far in the semester, we have been discussing "Asian American Studies" with only a brief nod to the place of Pacific Islanders and the categorization of Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs). Yet, there is an active debate about the place and role of Pacific Islanders within Asian American Studies. This session will explore these issues and consider the activism of Pacific Islanders to make space for their voice and experiences.</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Stillman, "Pacific-ing Asian Pacific American History, Yamamoto</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Guest lecture posting/question (<b>post by Wed. Nov 18 by 6pm</b> for extra credit) 5 page essay if you are choosing option 3</p>

<p>Tu 11/24</p> <p>Nov 25 is Pass/Fail and withdraw deadline!</p>	<p><b>Constructing the Enemy: Cycles of Discrimination and Resistance</b></p> <p>Guest Speaker: <b>Rajini Srikanth</b></p> <p>After the events of September 11, 2001, many communities, including Asian American communities, became targets of an aggressive state. Muslim Americans (including South Asian Americans), Arab Americans, and Cambodian Americans became targets of surveillance, detention, and deportation. We will examine the impact on these Asian American communities of governmental policies and practices that constructed them as potential terrorists and resurrected memories of the Japanese American internment. We will also discuss the growing solidarity as well as suspicions between Asian Americans and Arab Americans after 2001.</p> <p><u>Read:</u> TBA</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Guest lecture posting/question (post by Mon. Nov 23 by 6pm for extra credit)</p>
Th 11/26	<b>Thanksgiving—no class</b>
Tu 12/1	<p><b>Section Integration and Reflections</b></p> <p><u>Due:</u> Connections handout</p>
<b>WRAPPING UP</b>	
Th 12/3	<b>Project Work</b>
Tu 12/8	<b>Project Presentations: Campus Wide Presentation</b>
Th 12/10	<b>Wrap-up</b>
Tu 12/15	<p><u>Due</u> (via email by 12:30 pm): 5 page essay if you are choosing option 4</p>