

Honors 321
Asian Women & Popular Culture

Dr. Yi Sun
History Department
Office: PJ 270
ysun@san Diego.edu
Phone: 260-6811

Office Hours:
M: 12:30-3:30
T/TH: 10:45-11:45
And by appointment

Dr. Kristin Moran
Communication Studies Department
Office: C 121B
kmoran@san Diego.edu
Phone: 260-4085

Office Hours:
MW: 10:00 – 12:00
F: 11:00 – 12:00
And by appointment

Class meeting time: Wednesday 4:00 – 6:50 – F 124

Course Description:

In the age of globalization it becomes increasingly important for all of us to become aware of issues of diversity, and to be able to function and interact in a multicultural society. This course is designed to demystify the stereotypical perceptions of Asian and Asia American women. In doing so, you will be expected to develop a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of Asian cultures and societies in general as well as Asian-American experiences in the United States. This class will uncover how historical truth and popular culture images intertwine to create perceptions of Asian American women.

You will utilize critical/cultural communication theories to discuss the role of the mass media in generating the imagery of Asian and Asian American women and, consequently, in shaping and/or perpetuating the cultural perceptions of them in the mainstream society. The students will be exposed to a mix of feature films and documentaries that demonstrate the conventional stereotypes while discovering how historical facts are often represented or misrepresented. Media representations will be juxtaposed historical information on Asian cultures and societies, particularly that concern women. Ultimately, the class will enhance how you understand yourself in relation to the cultural construction of Asia, Asians, and specifically Asian women.

Course Requirements:

Readings: Since this class is narrow in its scope, it is difficult to find a textbook devoted to this topic. The readings for this class are on ERES and also available at Copley Library to be copied. We assure you that it is more cost effective for you to download the readings and then print them out, than it is to create a packet that requires you to pay

copyright fees. Be sure to do the readings before the day they are listed on the syllabus. We will assume that you are prepared to participate in a critical and thoughtful discussion about the selected readings.

Attendance: You are required to attend this class. It is imperative that you are present for each class period as we will be screening media texts each week as well as discussing those texts. Be an active and engage member of this class.

Academic Integrity: You are expected to do your own work for this class. As it becomes easier and easier to find resources on the Internet it becomes increasingly more important to use those resources ethically. In other words, cite your sources, both paper and electronic. Do not plagiarize. Do not cheat.

Graded Assignments:

There will be two exams – a midterm and final.

Participation: Attendance and participation in discussions will be calculated into your final grade. Each student will be assigned discussion leader duties during the semester, which will be part of your participation grade.

Book Review: You will choose a non-fiction book about the representations of Asian Americans in popular culture or the Asian American experience in general and write a review of the book's content. A review is not a summary of the book, but rather an *analysis* of the content.

Research Paper: Each student will be asked to investigate a particular topic of interest to her. The paper should reflect your ability to provide relevant insight into a specific historical event and the way it is presented in popular culture using the theoretical perspectives discussed in class. You may use MLA, APA or Chicago documentation style. Choose one and use it correctly.

Article: Using your research paper information, each student will write a news article to be published in the *Asian Images* newsletter to be distributed at the conference and given to the honors program coordinator. Each article should be a brief overview of the information in your paper and include at least ONE interview with an Asian American woman to add to your understanding of the topic. Your source should be accurately quoted within the article, using AP (Associated Press) style as your guide.

Conference: Each student will present their research paper at the *Asian Images* conference to be held at the end of the semester. You will have 15 minutes to present.

Breakdown of points:

Participation.....	50
Midterm.....	100
Book Review.....	50
Paper.....	100
Conference.....	25
Article.....	25
Final.....	100
Total.....	450

Tentative Schedule:

- 9/13 Class overview & Introduction
Documentary: Slaying the Dragon
- 9/20 “Gangsters, Gooks, Geishas, and Geeks” by Helen Zin and “The Asian Mystique”
and “Hollywood, Burbank, and the Resulting Imaginings” by Sheridan Prasso.
Impact of Stereotypes
- 9/27 Chinese Immigration
“The Chinese: The Early Years” and “The Chinese: After 1943: by Harry Kitano
and Roger Daniels”
Film: A Great Wall
Discussion Leaders: _____

- 10/4 “Joy Luck: The Perils of Transcultural ‘Translation’” by George Tseo and
“Between Mothers and Daughters: Love and Guilt” by Claire Chow and
“Constructing the Other: A Critical Reading of *The Joy Luck Club*” by Jing Yin
Film: The Joy Luck Club
Discussion Leaders: _____

- 10/11 “Articulating Silence: Sansei and Memories of the Camps” by P. Feng
and “The Japanese: The Early Years” and “Japanese Americans: After 1946” by
Harry Kitano and Roger Daniels and “Enemies in their Own Land: the Internment
of Japanese Americans during WWII” by David Goldstein-Shirley
Japanese immigration
Documentary: Family Gathering
Discussion Leaders: _____

Saturday 10/14 – Replacement class – attend San Diego Asian Film Festival

10/18 “The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age” by R. Rosenstone
and “Cinematic History as Genre” by Robert Toplin

History through film

Film: Come See the Paradise

10/25 **Midterm**

11/1 “The Real Memoirs of a Geisha” by Sheridan Prasso

Film: Memoirs of a Geisha

Due: Paper topic

11/8 “Pontcho of Long Ago” and “Art and Life” by Liza Cihfield Dalby

Guest: Beth Accomando, film critic

11/15 “The Koreans” by Harry Kitan and Roger Daniels and “The Burden of Double
Roles: Korean Wives in the USA” by Kwang Chung Kim and Won Moo Hurh
and “Three Days of Hell: Use and Abuse of Race and Culture”

Documentary: Sai-i-gu

Due: Article

11/22 No class

11/29 “Where are You From?” by Geeta Kothari “Medicalization of Racial Features:
Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery” by Eugenia Kaw and
Contemporary Beauty Standards

Documentary: Mixed Blood

12/6 “Local uses of the media: negotiating culture and identity” by M. Gillespie
Contemporary issues...finding “home”

Documentary: Daughter from Danang

Discussion Leaders: _____

12/13 ***Asian Images Conference***

Due: Paper

12/20 **Final 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.**