

English 353 *Asian American Literature (Honors)*

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Office hours: MWF 11:00-12:00
TR 8:15-9:15
and by appointment

Fall 2019
10:00 MWF
Combs 004

Course Description and Outcomes

This class in Asian American Literature will include poetry, short fiction, and novels. "Asian" is a broad category that includes but is not limited to persons who trace their roots to at least China, Japan, Korea, Burma (or Myanmar), Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Pacific Islands, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, or Pakistan. As such, it represents people whose common racial categorization belies their very diverse histories and traditions--not only in their mother or home nations, but also in the United States, where waves of immigration, labor practices, attempts at assimilation, and shifting prejudices (among other factors) have variously affected the often difficult transition from "Asian" to "Asian American." Even for writers born and raised in the United States, the unique perspective of one "between worlds," as one critic has phrased it, makes their writing of great interest.

Obviously race (with all of the complicated things that term might mean) will be a primary topic of analysis this semester, and gender (ditto) will be as well. The pain and beauty of forging a racialized and gendered self while one negotiates the expectations, stereotypes, and limitations of different cultures is expressed in numerous important works of literature by Asian American writers, literature which has flourished in the last forty years. The availability of texts will keep our focus this semester primarily contemporary (post 1945), but we will also study the work of one author from early in the twentieth century whose personal story is of additional interest in understanding the publishing history of Asian American literature. Representing a variety of Asian ethnicities and experiences, our readings this semester will be drawn from writers of Japanese, Chinese, Filipina, Vietnamese, Korean, and Indian descent. Appropriate theory, criticism, and historical documents will also inform our readings.

We will consider questions such as these: how do Asian American writers represent the United States? how do they represent their nations of origin or the traditions and history of their ancestors? how are they affected by the racial prejudice of whites, and are they themselves also fearful or disdainful of racial others? how do they understand the very concept of "race"? how does gender intersect with race or ethnicity? where are they positioned in complex intersectional networks? what constructions of identity control or liberate them? what models of selfhood do they embrace? if they are bi- or multilingual, how do the writers balance their languages, and what does it mean to make the choice to write in English? are the texts themselves remarkable in genre, style, form, or language? what historical events or experiences do they examine and illuminate? how does history shape their contemporary lives and attitudes?

Our course will develop in two spaces: the physical classroom and our collaborative website, which can be accessed at <http://asianamlitf19.themanger.net>.

This course is an elective for the English major, an elective for the Asian Studies minor, an elective for the American Studies major, and an elective for the Women's and Gender Studies major. For the English major, it specifically addresses the following desired topics and skills:

- ✓ Literary history, including an understanding of historical context and its impact on literary periods;
- ✓ Literatures in English, including literatures in translation;
- ✓ Literary theory and its application;
- ✓ The major genres of literature;
- ✓ How issues of culture, race, gender, class, and historical period influence the development and interpretation of literary works;

and

- ✓ Adapting writing to a variety of purposes, contexts, and audiences;
- ✓ Completing competent seminar quality research;
- ✓ Applying literary methods as a means for analyzing oral and written discourse.

Additionally, **this is an Honors-designated course.** The Learning Outcomes that have been identified for students in Honors courses at UMW are as follows. Students will

- ✓ formulate an academic argument with appropriate research documentation;
- ✓ articulate the value of the goals of the honors program as it relates to the liberal arts as a multidisciplinary, systematic approach to knowledge;
- ✓ apply specific academic solutions to broader, interdisciplinary fields of study;
- ✓ integrate multiple viewpoints involving different cultures and/or perspectives.

Required Texts

Frank Chin, *Donald Duk*

Franny Choi, *Soft Science*

Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide*

Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*

lê thi diêm thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*

John Okada, *No-No Boy*

Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor was Divine*

Ocean Vuong, *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*

Onoto Watanna, *A Japanese Nightingale* (pdf)

Paul Yoon, *Once the Shore*

Selected essays or documents (pdf)

Course Requirements

Assigned Readings: This course is reading intensive; it has a demanding and constant reading load, often several hundred pages a week from challenging texts. You **must** complete assigned readings before class and should bring the necessary books to each meeting. For pdf files (**which can be found in Canvas→ Files→ Readings**), bring a printed copy or a device on which you can read in digital form.

Additionally, you must regularly read the blog, including checking the reading questions that will be posted by your classmates.

Oral and Digital Participation (200 pts.): This course asks you to respond thoughtfully in several ways to our readings as we progress through the semester. Active participation is essential to doing well in this course. A primary way is through class discussion, which will be the typical mode of each class period, whether in large or small groups. You needn't in any way be an "expert" to participate; our purpose here is dialogue and collaborative learning, not monologues that establish individual brilliance. Oral participation naturally is not possible if you are not present for the class meeting; therefore, attendance is a must.

Excessive absences (more than 4) will significantly lower this portion of the grade. Chronically tardy arrivals are not acceptable. It is your responsibility to find out what you have missed when you are absent.

The course blog should also be seen as a primary site for participation, a digital extension of the physical classroom. It is always open for free blogging, which I expect you to do. The blog will function as a place to develop threads we begin in class, to introduce topics of interest we didn't talk about, to supplement our knowledge with outside materials, links, or information, to respond personally or creatively to the literature we read, and more. (Don't know how to start? Check out the links on the blog and discuss something you find there.) ***Though class discussion may shift primarily to new literary texts every week, it is appropriate to free blog about any book from class throughout the semester.*** Original posts and comments on posts are equally valuable; as with oral participation, this should emerge as a dialogue, not a series of disconnected soliloquys. It is a nearly limitless space in which we may build our community, our voices as readers/writers, and our collective knowledge, and **my anticipation is that it will be animated.** ***Even on days that you do not post, you should be reading the blog to keep up with the conversation and check for class announcements.***

Some of the works we read may raise strong responses; I should not need to say that I expect respect and civility even in disagreement both in the classroom and on the blog.

Participation, both oral and free blogging, is heavily weighted in this course because it gives you the opportunity to take initiative and to engage on your own terms with the course material, and it encourages a model of learning that is collaborative and fluid. ***Don't take this part of your grade for granted or assume that showing up is enough.*** Participation in both fora will be assessed for frequency and quality; see the rubric below.

Grade	Before and Between Classes	In Class
A Excellent	Student prepares for class by reading thoroughly and critically, taking notes or marking the text, developing questions, and reading the current blog posts. Student substantially responds to others' posts or writes new posts regularly (goal: 1-2 times per book).	Student attends all or nearly all classes, arrives on time, and brings all materials for the day's assigned work. Student demonstrates enthusiastic engagement through interaction with the class conversation and classmates, including listening respectfully and carefully, posing questions, and engaging in dialogue with the ideas of others (students, instructors, and texts). Student participates fully in all class work besides discussion, including but not limited to in-class writing, small group discussions, peer assessment, or instructor-initiated activities.
	Student prepares for class by reading to get	Student attends most classes, arrives on time,

B Good	a good grasp of the material, possibly taking notes or marking the text, developing questions, and being familiar with current blog posts. Student responds to others' posts or writes new posts consistently through the semester.	and brings all materials for the day's assigned work. Student demonstrates interest and positive attitude toward class, including materials, members, and instructor. Student willingly engages with all class activities in the shared effort to make meaning.
C Adequate	Student demonstrates that they have read at least well enough to be familiar with plot or characters and has done explicitly assigned activities prior to class. Student usually is up-to-date with current blog posts and responds to others' posts or writes new posts on several occasions during the semester.	Student meets the minimal expectations for attendance and brings necessary materials a majority of the time. Student voluntarily participates in discussion, at least to read aloud, occasionally but possibly without intellectual rigor or enthusiasm. Student engages in class activities as asked, though engagement may be more superficial or tentative.
D Needs Improvement	Uneven preparation prior to class. Student rarely demonstrates that they have read with care, possibly just skimming the text, or that they have otherwise prepared for class. Student contributes to the blog very little or quite irregularly.	Student has excessive tardiness and/or inadequate attendance, or routinely fails to bring necessary materials. Student does not participate, or only at a minimal level, in dialogue and activities, whether individual or group. Student's attitude or behavior indicates disengagement from the teacher, the students, or the material.
F Unsatisfactory	Little to no preparation. Student does not demonstrate that they have read, taken notes, or otherwise prepared for class. Student contributes not at all or negligibly to the blog.	Student's punctuality and attendance is not acceptable within course guidelines; if student is present, they often do not have necessary materials and make no effort to engage with class work of various kinds. Being disruptive and/or disrespectful to classmates, teacher, or course subject matter may result in a failing class participation grade.

Reading Questions (100 pts.): Each of you will have one assignment for which you will produce a set of three critical reading questions. Pretend that you are the teacher and are going to have to initiate and prompt rich, meaningful discussion on one of our books. What would you ask, and in what way? **Your goal is NOT to present your own argument or thesis but to think about what is important about the book and how you could open it for discussion.** Very few, if any, of your questions are likely to have “correct” answers, but many, or all, will make good use of the text itself rather than posing vague queries. Relating to the specific reading for the following class, the questions should be designed to focus the class on rich, helpful, important, complex issues that arise in the text (what is it really about? how did it convey that? what does it “answer” and what does it “ask”? how does it make me feel—and why and how?). **There is an assessment rubric available in Canvas for your information while working.**

Length: 3 rich questions

Submission:

- 1) as a post on the blog entitled “[Name’s] Reading Questions for [Date=next class]”—e.g., “Suki’s Reading Questions for October 2”
- 2) on Canvas:

- a) publish your blog post
- b) click on its title
- c) copy the url
- d) drop the url as your Reading Questions submission on Canvas

Due: **no later than midnight on the class day PRIOR to the one you are assigned**—e.g., if you are assigned to Friday, September 20, then your questions are due by midnight on Wednesday, September 18; if you have a Monday assignment, questions are due by Friday at midnight. Choose your assigned focal date/author [HERE](#).

Literary Analysis Essays (2 at 225 pts. each=450 pts.): In the course of this semester you will write **two essays, one before Fall Break and one after.** These short-ish essays may closely analyze a passage to engage an important point of the text, compare a work to another piece of literature from the class or consider it through a helpful theoretical lens, develop something from class discussion, connect the text interdisciplinarily to material from another course, etc. **In any of these cases, you will be well served to use textual evidence, write with grace and correctness, and choose a focus that can be meaningfully developed in such a short piece of writing but indicates the depth and sophistication of your reading.** See Canvas assignments for more details and an assessment rubric.

There is an element of choice to these essays; **you may write on the work of your choice, as long as you 1) meet the deadline for that text as outlined on the course schedule, and 2) complete one essay by the Monday of Fall Break (October 14) and one after.**

Length: 1200-1500 words per essay

Submission: as a word document or pdf in Canvas

Due: as indicated on the course schedule. Essays may be turned in any time during the designated period.

Researched Multimedia Project and Top Ten List (200 pts.): This assignment, which will be completed with partners or in groups for due dates throughout the semester as shown on the course schedule ([chosen by August 30 HERE](#)), is designed to use all of our combined person-power to increase our collective knowledge base. The purpose is to provide the class with helpful background knowledge that is historical, political, or cultural that contextualizes our specific readings. Some projects may concern an aspect of the Asian culture or nation and others will focus on something about the appropriate group's American experience.

College-level, appropriate research (UMW Libraries databases, books, or journals, with some use of high-quality open web sources like the CIA Factbook) is the heart of your project. The project must include citations (for all material, including images) and a bibliography of all sources in MLA format ([link on blog for help](#)).

The projects will be completed on a Google doc, established by me, that will feed into the class blog and they will **make full use of multimedia capabilities.** Though they will include substantial explanatory text, they must also use images, video, audio, links, or other methods to enrich and support the traditional scholarship. ***Partners should color code their writing in the Google doc so I can easily distinguish work for assessment.***

Additionally, at the start of class on the day your RMP is due, you and your partner(s) will provide the class with a **Top Ten Most Important Facts and Concepts.** Choosing the items for your list will

require you to summarize or generalize in an intellectually rigorous way: what is most important and what criteria will determine that? how can the information be both extremely brief and still lucid to the class?
This should not exceed 3-5 minutes.

See Canvas assignments for an assessment rubric that may help guide your work.

Length:

- 1) written: approximately 500 words per student + multimedia
- 2) oral: in the manner of a traditional top ten list, divided between partners, not to exceed 3-5 minutes

Due: *at classtime*, as indicated on the course schedule, dependent on RMP

Submission: completion in google document I provide, no other action needed + oral list in class

RMP Topics

1. Legal and human history of Chinese immigration
2. Political/cultural history of China in the 20th century
3. Japanese American military service in World War II
4. Japanese American containment and resettlement in World War II
5. Korean immigration patterns and immigrant profiles
6. Political history of the Philippines 1850-1990
7. Language, class, ethnicity, religion in the Philippines
8. The Partition of the Indian subcontinent
9. South Asian immigration patterns and immigrant profiles
10. The Fall of Saigon
11. Vietnamese refugees and resettlement patterns
12. The Hmong people (culture, relation to US, immigration patterns)

In order for these projects to fulfill the goal of contextualizing our literary works, they must be READ by the class. My expectation is that all students will read the RMPs within a reasonable period of time after they are complete; they will be accessible on the blog under the RMP tab. You may certainly use or comment on information from the RMPs in blog posts, reading questions, or the short essays.

Final Activity (50 pts.): Details TBA. This assignment will offer the opportunity for various creative, artistic, digital or other forms of engagement with our course materials in addition to more traditional options.

A few final notes

- Deadlines are not approximations. If you know that you will not be able to complete your work on time, ask me beforehand (preferably at least 24-48 hours) for an extension. Late work will be penalized.
- The Writing Center, Speaking Center, and Digital Knowledge Center are all housed on the fourth floor of the HCC and may be valuable resources for you. All are staffed by trained peer tutors who can provide targeted feedback on and support for your assignments in this course. You can make an appointment [here for the WC](#), [here for the SC](#), or [here for the DKC](#).

Electronic Devices

Laptops, tablets, or phones may be used in class when they pertain specifically to class work, including reading pdfs from Canvas or referring to the course blog. But use of electronic devices in ways that are not related to class is both distracting and disrespectful. Don't do it.

Email Communication

Email remains a primary form of communication at the university. I try to answer emails quickly but will generally do so only during business hours (M-F, 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.), so please plan accordingly.

Policy on audio or visual recording of class

It is prohibited to record classroom lectures, discussion, or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use. Students who wish to record lectures or class activities for study purposes must inform the faculty member first. Students with approved accommodations from the Office of Disability Resources permitting the recording of class meetings must present the accommodation letter to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. On any days when classes will be recorded, the instructor will notify all students in advance. Educational privacy law prohibits the distribution or sale of class recordings without the written permission of the instructor and all other students who are recorded. This policy is consistent with UMW's Policy on Recording Class and Distribution of Course Materials.

Academic Integrity

All work in this course is covered by the UMW Honor Code, and I expect you to adhere to it at all times. This refers to the promise you made to your fellow students and the UMW community not to lie, cheat, or steal. Details of the UMW Honor System are available [here](#).

Plagiarism, like all cheating, is a serious offense. It means presenting another person's work as your own--whether that person is a friend, writing center or speaking center tutor, professional, or published author. Copying passages or paraphrasing ideas belonging to another person without acknowledging the source of those ideas is plagiarism. You can avoid this offense if you simply cite and reference the source you use, if any. I am quite willing to help you understand strategies for quotation and citation but I am not willing to be lenient on plagiarism, so please consult with me if you need to.

Disability services

The [Office of Disability Resources](#) has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you have not made contact with ODR and would like to discuss accommodations, they can be reached at 540-654-1266 or in Lee 401.

If you receive services through ODR and require accommodations for this class, please bring your accommodation letter to me as soon as you can. Disability is another factor of our identities that brings diversity to the community, and as much as possible I'd like for it not to hinder access to education or to your high goals.

Support for Basic Needs

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, and you believe this may affect your performance in this course, please [contact Cedric Rucker, Dean of Student Life](#), for support. I am happy to help you make this contact and identify resources if you are comfortable talking to me about the situation.

Title IX Statement

University of Mary Washington faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University's *Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence*. Under Title IX and this policy, discrimination based upon sex or gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. ***While you are always welcome to talk to me, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, I MUST report to UMW's Title IX Coordinator what you share.*** If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, please contact the below confidential resources. They can connect you with support services and help you explore your options. You may also seek assistance from UMW's Title IX Coordinator. Please visit <http://diversity.umw.edu/title-ix/> to view UMW's *Policy on Sexual and Gender Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence* and to find further information on support and resources.

Resources

Stefanie Lucas-Waverly
Title IX Coordinator
Office of Title IX
Fairfax House
540-654-5656
slucaswa@umw.edu

Crystal Rawls
Title IX Deputy for Students
UC 303
540-654-1801
crawls@umw.edu

Confidential Resources

On-Campus

Talley Center for Counselling Services –
Lee Hall 106 and Tyler House
540-654-1053

Student Health Center
Lee Hall 112

Off-Campus

Empowerhouse: 540-373-9373

RCASA: 540-371-1666

Provisional Course Schedule

All reading should be completed before class time on the day it is assigned. Pdf files are available on Canvas → Files → Readings; you should have a digital or printed copy of those works in class on days they are assigned.

Week 1

M Aug 26	Introductions
W Aug 28	PDF Essay: Wing Sue et al, “Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience.” A Grossly Reductive Lecture by mns. Add yourself as a user to the blog!
F Aug 30	PDF Essays: Said, excerpt from <i>Orientalism</i> ; Okihiro, “When and Where I Enter”

By midnight on August 30:

- sign up for [ONE Reading Question date/author](#)
- sign up for [ONE RMP date/topic](#)

Week 2

M Sept 2	Labor Day—no class
W Sept 4	Watanna , <i>A Japanese Nightingale</i> 85-124 (pdf)
F Sept 6	Watanna 125-171 and “Chinese Exclusion Act” (pdf)

Week 3

M Sept 9	Chin , <i>Donald Duk</i> 1-85
W Sept 11	Chin 86-172; RMP 1
F Sept 13	Kingston , <i>The Woman Warrior</i> 1-53 (“No Name Woman” and “White Tigers”); RMP 2

Week 4

M Sept 16	Kingston 55-109 (“Shaman”) Last call for Watanna Essays midnight tonight
W Sept 18	Kingston 111-160 (“At the Western Palace”)
F Sept 20	Kingston 161-209 (“A Song for the Barbarian Reed Pipe”) Last call for Chin Essays midnight tonight

Week 5

M Sept 23	Okada , <i>No-No Boy</i> XXIII-93 (Preface + chapters 1-4)
W Sept 25	Okada 94-167 (chapters 5-8) and “How to Tell Japs from the Chinese” (pdf); RMP 3
F Sept 27	Okada 168-221 (chapters 9-11)

Week 6

M Sept 30	Otsuka , <i>When the Emperor was Divine</i> 1-48; RMP 4
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W Oct 2 **Otsuka** 49-105 **Last call for Kingston Essays midnight tonight**
F Oct 4 **Otsuka** 106-144 and “Japanese American Creed” (pdf)

Week 7

M Oct 7 **Choi** 1-34 (“Glossary of Terms” and “Turing Test_Empathetic Response”) **Last call for Okada Essays midnight tonight**
W Oct 9 **Choi** 37- 65 (“Turing Test_Boundaries” and “Turing Test _ Problem Solving”) **RMP 5**
F Oct 11 **Choi** 69-89 (“Turing Test_Love” and “Turing Test_Weight”)

Week 8

M Oct 14 **Fall Break** **Last call for Otsuka Essays midnight tonight; everyone MUST have ONE essay submitted by this point**
W Oct 16 **Yoon**, *Once the Shore* 3-56
F Oct 18 **Yoon** 57-111

Week 9

M Oct 21 **Yoon** 112-197 (focus story: “The Woodcarver’s Daughter”)
W Oct 23 **Yoon** 199-266 (focus story: “And We Will Be Here”) **Last call for Choi Essays midnight tonight**
F Oct 25 **Hagedorn**, *Dog eaters* 1-54

[Asian Cultural Celebration](#)

October 27-November 2

Highlights:

Keynote Performer, Prem Raja Mahat (Nepal)

Sunday 10/27, 4:00, Digital Auditorium, HCC

Visualizing Marginalized Histories of Women in Contemporary Asian Art

Monday 10/28, 6:00, Digital Auditorium, HCC

Taste of Asia

Saturday 11/2, 4:00, Chandler Ballroom, UC

Week 10

M Oct 28 **Hagedorn** 55-118; **RMP 6**
W Oct 30 **Hagedorn** 119-187; **RMP 7**
F Nov 1 **Hagedorn** 188-251 **Last call for Yoon Essays midnight tonight**

Week 11

M Nov 4
W Nov 6
F Nov 8

Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* 1-69; **RMP 8 and 9**
At NCHC Conference; class will not meet
At NCHC Conference; class will not meet

Week 12

M Nov 11
W Nov 13
F Nov 15

Ghosh 69-209
Ghosh 209-273 **Last call for Hagedorn Essays midnight tonight**
Ghosh 273-329

Week 13

M Nov 18

W Nov 20
F Nov 22

lê, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* 3-35 (“suh-top!”) and archival documents on the Fall of Saigon and Vietnamese refugees (pdf); **RMP 10**
lê 36-99 (“palm” and “the gangster we are all looking for”); **RMP 11**
lê 100-158 (“the bones of birds” and “nu’ó’c”); **RMP 12**

Week 14

M Nov 25

Poems from Angel Island and the Japanese internment camps (pdf)

Tuesday, November 26: Last call for Ghosh Essays midnight tonight

W Nov 27
F Nov 29

Thanksgiving Break
Thanksgiving Break

Week 15

M Dec 2
W Dec 4
F Dec 6

Vuong 3-51
Vuong 55-85
Vuong

Saturday December 7 at midnight: last call for lê or Vuong Essays midnight tonight;
everyone MUST have TWO essays submitted by this point

FINALS WEEK

Monday, December 9, 8:30-11:00 a.m.