

A/P/A Community Studies Theories and Practices
V15.0101 *Crosslist:* V99.0343 Metropolitan Studies

Professor Angel Velasco Shaw
Conference Room

Wednesday—11:00- 1:45

A/P/A Studies Program & Institute
269 Mercer St. Suite #609
tel: 992-9652

Office Hours: By Appointment

e-mail: angelshaw@hotmail.com

DESCRIPTION

What constitutes a community? What does “community” mean to the youth today? Who are Asian/Pacific “youth” in NYC? How do Asian/Pacific American youths create and define culture and by others who represent them? This sequel core course in A/P/A Studies will focus on Asian/Pacific American youth of yesterday and today and examine their experiences in relationship to community formations. In a comparative social, cultural, and political analytical context, the course participants will have the opportunity to investigate Asian/Pacific American youth culture within the larger American youth culture across the generations. Through a historical and multidisciplinary approach, we will discuss such social issues of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, migration, assimilation, intergenerational conflicts, peer pressure, and youth violence in relation to a range of topics which include identity politics, youth activism, building and sustaining communities, the creation and representation of A/PA youth culture (pop and subcultures), and how Asian/Pacific American youths relate to other youths.

ORGANIZATION

Young men and women from the Asia/Pacific region have been emigrating to the United States since the mid-17th century for a wide variety of reasons which often get collapsed into singular racial or ethnic-specific narratives, histories, and experiences. These Asian/Pacific youths of yesterday have struggled to form and sustain communities and create culture out of their life experiences. Many of our communities have been built by these previous generations. Vestiges of their Asian ethnic and pan-Asian/Pacific American cultures continue to resonant and inspire the youth. The goals of this survey course will be to promote critical consciousness about these (hi)stories, linking them to the communities we presently live in, to further cross-cultural understanding, to discover the variety of communities and cultures Asian/Pacific American youth are creating, and to become more critically aware of how larger social issues impact the youth of today.

The course is organized around weekly topics that fall under the theme of Asian/Pacific youth culture and community formation. The issues explored in readings and represented in in-class screenings of independently/alternatively produced film/video documentaries connect week to week in a backwards, forwards, and overlapping motion.

Some of the class time will be used to demonstrate basic interviewing techniques, how to transcribe the interviews, edit them on paper, pause-button audio editing, and produce a finished interview piece. There will be some in-class exercises based on the demonstrations. Participants will also learn to analyze the materials they have gathered within specific contexts relevant to community issues. (If a participant does not own or have access to a tape recorder, arrangements will be made so that they may complete the assignments).

Each participant is required to keep a weekly course journal. The due dates for each batch of entries are indicated with a “J.” The entries must be based on your observations, critical analyses, your interviewing experiences, and/or comments about course materials. Course participants are expected to attend all of the classes, read the required readings, engage in class discussions, and create two projects-- an individual mid-term project, and an individual/group final project, depending on the interests of the participants. Both projects will require accompanying short synthesis papers analyzing the completed projects in relationship to their production experiences and course materials discussed in class.

Regular attendance and class participation (20%), Response journals (20%), mid-term project (20%), final project (40%).

a) **Individual Mid-Term Project (10-15 minutes):** Within the context of Asian/Pacific youth culture, each participant must interview and collect data on an individual within a given “community” on a specific topic that is relevant to the interviewee in terms of their personal life or in relationship to their community affiliations. It is important that your interviewee is someone from an older generation than yourself, reflecting back on their youth. Oral histories, stories, data will be gathered via tape-recorded interviews, later to be transcribed and edited. A **short (5-7 page) synthesis paper** analyzing your findings in relation to course materials covered in the first half of the semester will accompany your transcribed interview. These projects will be presented to the class.

b) **Individual/Group Final Project (20-30 minutes):** Each individual/group will have the opportunity to design an audio/visual “book” project using disposable cameras and interview format. The assignment will be an investigation of Asian/Pacific American youth culture and community issues within a social, cultural, and/or political context. Each individual/group must decide on a topic to document within a “community” of their choice as long as this topic is relevant to the issues raised in the latter half of the semester. Topic choices will be provided along with a list of Asian/Pacific American community-based organizations in the New York area. Participants are encouraged to conduct interviews with people from these existing organizations or with someone from their own respective community. The individual/group is encouraged to discuss their project and interview questions with the instructor before they begin production. A **short (5-7 page) synthesis paper** analyzing your findings in relation to course materials covered in the latter half of the semester will accompany your transcribed interview. These projects will also be presented in class.

CALENDAR

The calendar may be amended to accommodate the interests of the students in each topic. Guest speakers and possible field trips to be announced.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (available at the Asian American Writers Workshop Bookstore. 16 West 32nd St. Suite 10A. Bet. Broadway & 5th Ave.)

- 1) Bone novel by Fae Myenne Ng
- 2) Course Reader (available at Advanced Copy Center—552 LaGuardia Place)

Jan. 23: Overview: Creating Youth Culture & Community

Screening: *My America...Honk If You Love Buddha* a film by Renee Tajima (85 min. 1997) VCA 7988

(optional) “Site-Seeing through Asian America: On the Making of Fortune Cookies” by Renee Tajima from Mapping Multiculturalism edited by Avery F. Gordon & Christopher Newfield

Jan. 30: The Journey Over: Migration (Hi)stories *guest speaker- Prof. Jack Tchen*

Writing Assignment DUE: Write a two page paper expressing how you imagine a community and youth culture’s relationship to it. What does “community” mean to you? Are you a part of a community or communities? If so, in what ways and how do you participate?

- “Overblown with Hope: The First Wave of Asian Immigration” excerpt from Ronald Takaki’s Strangers from a Different Shore (**reader**)
- “A Pioneer Settlement” & “Edifying Curiosities” from New York Before Chinatown by Jack Kuo Wei Tchen (**reader**)
- “Work, Immigration, Gender: Asian “American” Women” by Lisa Lowe from Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics (**reader**)

Screening: *Sewing Woman* a film by Arthur Dong (14 min. 1983) VCA 1478

(J1) Feb. 6: The Journey Over: Migration (Hi)stories

- “Dollar a Day, Dime a Dance: The Forgotten Filipinos” excerpt from Ronald Takaki’s Strangers from a Different Shore (**reader**)
- “A General theory of Subcultures” by Albert K. Cohen from The Subcultures Reader edited by Ken Gelder & Sarah Thornton
- “Subcultures, Cultures, and Class” by John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson, & Brian Roberts from The Subcultures Reader edited by Ken Gelder & Sarah Thornton

Screenings: *A Dollar A Day, Dime A Dance* by Geoffrey Dunn & Mark Schwartz (29 min. 1984) VCA 2292 & *Fall of the I-Hotel* by Curtis Choy (58 min. 1984) VCA 6109

* *Exercise in formulating questions (primary and probing). Course participants conduct short in-class interviews with each other. Tips on how to record interviews.*

Feb. 13: “The State of Asian America: 1960s-1990s”

- “The Four Prisons and the Movement of Liberation” by Glenn Omatsu from Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader eds. Min Zhou & James V. Gatewood (*reader*)
- “Our Country—to Change for the Better” by Grace Lee Boggs from Crossing the Color Line: The End of the 20th Century—AmerAsia Journal, Vol. 25. Number 2, 1999 (*reader*)
- “At the Margins of the Asian American Political Experience: The Life of Grace Lee Boggs” by Jennifer Jung Hee Choi from Crossing the Color Line: The End of the 20th Century—AmerAsia Journal, Vol. 25. Number 2, 1999 (*reader*)

Screening: *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* by Christine Choy & Renee Tajima (87 min. 1988) VCA 1874

*** *Demonstrations in transcribing, editing and analyzing interviews*

(J2) Feb. 20: Get Up Stand Up

- “All the Colors of the Rainbow, and Many Shades in Between: Putting Racism in Its Place” by Arif Dirlik from Across the Colorline 2001, AmerAsia Journal, Vol.26 Number 23, 2000/2001 (*reader*)
- “Different” within a World of Differences” by Remy Gastambide from Across the Colorline 2001, AmerAsia Journal, Vol.26 Number 23, 2000/2001 (*reader*)
- “An Asian American Outside: Crossing Color Lines in the United States and Africa” by Yoon Jung Park from Across the Colorline 2001, AmerAsia Journal, Vol.26 Number 23, 2000/2001 (*reader*)

Screening: *Yuri Kochiyama: Passion For Justice* by Pat Saunders & Rea Tajiri (58 min. 1993) (VCA 6099)

Feb. 27: Crossing Borders

- Bone a novel by Fae Myenne Ng (pp.3-102)
- “New Immigrants and Refugees” from Asian Americans: An Interpretative History by Sucheng Chan (pp.145-165) (*reader*)

Screening: *Umbilical Cord* by Angel Velasco Shaw (27 min. 1998)

Out-of-class Screening: *A.K.A. Don Bonus* by Spencer Nakasako and Sokly Ny (55 min. 1995) VCA 6092

(J3) March 6: Family /Friends as Community

- Bone a novel by Fae Myenne Ng (pp.103-194)

MID-TERM PRESENTATIONS

SPRING RECESS—MARCH 11-MARCH 16

March 20: Finding Voice/Giving Voice

- “Writing Up Fieldnotes 1: From Field to Desk” from Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes by Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw (pp. 39-65) **(reader)**
- “Writing Up Fieldnotes II: Creating Scenes on the Page” from Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes by Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw (pp. 66-107) **(reader)**
- “Pursuing Members’ Meanings” from Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes by Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw (pp. 108-141) **(reader)**

*** *Discuss final project brainstorming ideas, subject/topics, questions. Ethnographic methods*

(J4) March 27: Asian American Youth Culture & “Youth Culture”

- “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” by Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno from Media and Cultural Studies Key Works edited by Meenakshi Gigi Durham & Douglas M. Kellner **(reader)**
- “From Culture to Hegemony; Subculture: The Unnatural Break” by Dick Hebdige from Media and Cultural Studies Key Works edited by Meenakshi Gigi Durham & Douglas M. Kellner **(reader)**
- **(optional)** “The Commodity as Spectacle” by Guy Debord from Media and Cultural Studies Key Works edited by Meenakshi Gigi Durham & Douglas M. Kellner **(reader)**

*** *Continuation of how to analyze interviews in more depth & Discuss Final Projects*

Fieldtrip: Walk around NYU vicinity and observe how youth interact with each other across race, ethnicity, age, class, gender and sexual orientation. Look for visible evidence of Asian American youth culture within larger representations of youth culture. Take fieldnotes of observations.

April 3: Questions of Community: Cultural Practices *Guest Speakers*

- “All Aboard the Night Train”: Flow, Layering, and Rupture in Postindustrial New York by Tricia Rose from Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America (pp. 21-61) **(reader)**
- “The Politics of “Cool”: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City by Sunaina Maira from Encounters: People of Asian Descent in the Americas edited by Roshni Rustomji-Kerns (pp.177-193) **(reader)**
- “Henna and Hip Hop: The Politics of Cultural Production and the Work of Cultural Studies” essay by Sunaina Maira **(handout)**

Screening: *Beats, Rhymes & Resistance* by Dawn Mabalon, L. De Leon, J.S. Ramos (15 min., 1997), *Desi Remix Chicago Style* by Balvinder Dhenjan

April 10: Towards a Cross-Cultural Understanding

- “Imagining Los Angeles in the Production of Multiculturalism” by Lisa Lowe from Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics (pp. 84-96) (**reader**)
- “The Milk Ain’t Clean: National Identity and Multiculturalism” by Henry A. Giroux from Fugitive Cultures: Race, Violence & Youth (**reader**)

Screenings: *The Number 7 Train* a video by Hye Jung Park and J.T. Tagaki (30 min. 1999. VCA 9568) & *Sa-I-Gu:4.29* by Christine Choy, Elaine Kim, & Dai Sil Kim-Gibson (39 min. 1993. VCA 3659)

April 17: Talkin’ Bout My Generation—*guest speaker- Sidd Joag*

- “Looking to Get Paid: How Some Black Youth Put Culture to Work from Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban American by Robin D.G. Kelley (**reader**)
- “Tales of an Asiatic Geek Girl: Slant from Paper to Pixels” by Mimi Nguyen from Technicolor: Race, Technology, and Everyday Life (**reader**)
- “Myth: The Media Tell the Truth about Youth” by Mike Males from Framing Youth: Ten Myths About the Next Generation (optional) (**reader**)

Screening: *Vinyl Word* (15 min. documentary NYU Students on Fifth Platoon) & *Asian American Rave Scene* (15 min. documentary NYU Students) & *Asian American Frats at NYU* (15 min. documentary NYU Students)

April 24: CLASS CANCELLED

May 1: FINAL PRESENTATIONS

May 8: FINAL PRESENTATIONS