

# ASIA AM 125: Transpacific Literature & Theory

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**QUARTER:** Winter 2021

**PLACE:** UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar.

This undergraduate seminar examines Asian American and Pacific Islander novels and poetry from a transpacific framework, with a focus on Hawai‘i, Guåhan (Guam), Aotearoa (New Zealand), and the Marshall Islands. Transpacific studies asks: How are Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific Islands linked via shared histories of war, colonialism, imperialism, and trade? What circuits of cross-racial solidarity and cultural production have emerged in response to these histories? Putting Asian American studies in conversation with Pacific Islander studies and Asian studies, this course examines literary texts in order to chart circuits of U.S. imperialism, Asian migration, and Indigenous sovereignty. Part I examines imperial legacies and Indigenous resiliency in the Pacific. We will center oceanic perspectives and Indigenous cosmologies. Part II examines Asian immigrants’ political positionality across the Pacific Islands. We will engage Asian settler colonialism studies and grapple with the historical tensions and potentials for solidarity between Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- articulate the stakes and contours of the field of transpacific studies
- explain how Asian American and Pacific Islander literature both reflects and shapes understandings of the transpacific
- navigate tensions and intersections between Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander studies

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Throughout this course, students will learn how to:

- analyze literary texts for both form and content
- read and write different modes of literary criticism
- situate literature within a particular historical and political context
- discuss sensitive topics in a critical, generous, and productive manner

## LITERATURE

Please acquire the following books. (All other readings will be provided on CCLE.)

Brandy Nālani McDougall, *The Salt Wind: Ka Makani Pa'akai* (2008)

Craig Santos Perez, *from unincorporated territory: lukao* (2017)

Witi Ihimaera, *The Whale Rider* (1987) [Available as a digital Course Reader]

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, *Iep Jāltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter* (2017) [Available online via UCLA Library]

Kathleen Tyau, *A Little Too Much Is Enough* (1995) [Available as a digital Course Reader]

Shawn Wong, *Homebase* (1979) [Available online via UCLA Library]

Patricia Grace, *Chappy* (2015)

## **PART I: TRANSPACIFIC OCEANIA**

### **WEEK 1: Jan 5: Mapping Transpacific Studies**

Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 148-161.

Tina Chen, "Transpacific Turns," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature* (2020): 1-20.

**Suggested:** Lisa Yoneyama, "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (Sept. 2017): 471-482.

**In class:** Craig Santos Perez and Justyn Ah Chong, *Praise Song for Oceania: An Eco-Poem-Film* (2017).

AJ+, "Meet the Native Hawaiians Fighting U.S. Occupation," 3 March 2017.

### **WEEK 2: Jan 12: Kanaka Maoli Kinship Flows and Feminist Praxis**

Brandy Nālani McDougall, *The Salt Wind: Ka Makani Pa'akai* (2008).

Michelle Peek, "kinship flows in Brandy Nālani McDougall's *The Salt-Wind/Ka Makani Pa'akai*," *Feminist Review* 103 (2012): 80-98.

Hauanani-Kay Trask, "Feminism and Indigenous Hawaiian Nationalism," *Signs* 21, no. 4, (Summer 1996): 906-916.

**In class:** Brandy Nālani McDougall, selections from *Undercurrent* on YouTube

AJ+, "How The U.S. Territory Of Guam Became An American Colony"

### **WEEK 3: Jan 19: Pacific Indigeneity across Hawai'i and Guåhan**

Craig Santos Perez, *from unincorporated territory: lukao* (2017).

Huan He, "'On the Perpetual Motion of Search': The Transpacific Networked Poetics of Craig Santos Perez and Theresa H.K. Cha," *College Literature* 47, no. 1 (2020): 185-212.

**Suggested:** Tiara R. Na'puti, "Archipelagic Rhetoric: Remapping the Marianas and Challenging Militarization from 'A Stirring Place,'" *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 16, no. 1 (2019): 4-25.

**In class:** Maps in *from unincorporated territory: hacha* (2008), 29, 85.

Craig Santos Perez, selections from *Undercurrent* on YouTube

RNZ, "[Decolonisation](#)."

### **WEEK 4: Jan 26: Maori Cosmologies and Transpacific Eco-poetics**

Witi Ihimaera, *The Whale Rider* (1987).

Hsinya Huang, "Toward Transpacific Eco-poetics: Three Indigenous Texts," *Comparative Literature Studies* 50, no. 1 (2013): 120-147.

**In class:** Adam Jonas Horowitz, *Nuclear Savage* (2011). Clips: 10:20-15:14 (testimonies from Marshalls, footage of Bravo) 16:44-18:20 (explanation of Project 4.1), 26:57-27:44 (jellyfish babies), 44:33-47:33 (evidence of intentional radiation exposure), 50:15-53:06 (Project 4.1, change from mice to human subjects, knowledge of weather conditions)

### **WEEK 5: Feb 2: U.S. Nuclear Testing and Indigenous Resilience on the Marshall Islands**

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, *Iep Jāltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter* (2017).

Teresia K. Teaiwa, "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans," *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 87-109.

Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, "An Island Is a World," in *Allegories of the Anthropocene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 165-196.

**Suggested:** Dan Zak, "A Ground Zero Forgotten," *Washington Post*, 27 November 2015.

Aimee Bahng, "The Pacific Proving Grounds and the Proliferation of Settler Environmentalism," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2020): 45-73.

**In class:** Kathy Jetnill-Kijiner and Dan Lin, *Anointed* (2018)

Midterm Participation Self-Evaluation

**Project Proposal due Friday, Feb. 5 at midnight**

## **PART II: TRANSPACIFIC ASIAN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS**

### **WEEK 6: Feb 9: Asian Settler Colonialism across Oceania**

Vicente M. Diaz, "To 'P' or Not to 'P'?: Marking the Territory Between Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 7, no. 3 (2004): 183-208.

Haunani-Kay Trask, "Settlers of Color and 'Immigrant' Hegemony: 'Locals' in Hawai'i," *Amerasia Journal* 26, no. 2 (2000): 1-26.

Dean Itsuji Saranillio, "Why Asian Settler Colonialism Matters: A Thought Piece on Critiques, Debates, and Indigenous Difference," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3-4 (2013): 280-294.

### **WEEK 7: Feb 16: Mixed-Race Culture and Politics in Hawai'i**

Kathleen Tyau, *A Little Too Much Is Enough* (1995).

Maile Arvin, "Hating Hawaiians, Celebrating Hybrid Hawaiian Girls: Sociology and the Fictions of Racial Mixture," in *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 96-124.

**Literature Review due Friday, Feb. 19 at midnight**

### **WEEK 8: Feb 23: Chinese Exclusion and American Militarism in Guåhan**

Shawn Wong, *Homebase* (1979).

Hsuan L. Hsu, "Guahan (Guam), Literary Emergence, and the American Pacific in *Homebase* and *from unincorporated territory*," *American Literary History* 24, no. 2 (2012): 281-307.

**Suggested:** Eryn Lê Espiritu Gandhi, "Historicizing the Transpacific Settler Colonial Condition: Asian-Indigenous Encounters in Shawn Wong's *Homebase* and Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer*," *MELUS* (2020).

### **WEEK 9: Mar 2: Japanese-Māori Kinship and Oceanic Memory**

Patricia Grace, *Chappy* (2015).

Leonie John, "'i am the dreams of your tipuna': Constructing Oceanic Memory in Contemporary Anglophone Māori Literature," *Pacific Dynamics: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 2, no. 2 (2018): 146-160.

**In class:** Workshop final papers/short stories.

### **WEEK 10: Mar 9: Nuclear Imperialism across the Marshall Islands and Marianas**

Fiona Amundsen and Sylvia C. Frain, "The Politics of Invisibility: Visualizing Legacies of Nuclear Imperialisms," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2020): 125-151.

Jane Chang Mi, (*See Reverse Side.*) (2017), <http://janecmi.com/See-Reverse-Side>.

Jessica A. Schwartz, "Radiation Songs and Transpacific Resonances of US Imperial Transits," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2020): 153-171.

**In class:** Final Participation Self-Evaluation; Student Presentations of final papers/short stories.

**FINALS WEEK: Final Paper/Short Story due via CCLE on Thurs. March 18 at midnight.**

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## **GRADE BRAKEDOWN**

Participation: 25%

Weekly Responses: 40%

Final Paper/Short Story:

Project Proposal: 5%

Literature Review: 10%

Project Presentation: 5%

Final Paper/Short Story: 15%

## PARTICIPATION

This is a discussion-based seminar. You are expected to attend class on Zoom and actively participate in class discussions to the best of your ability, given the ongoing pandemic and unexpected Internet failures. Please prepare for class by reading the assigned readings generously but critically. What are key scenes, passages, or themes that stood out to you from the poetry/novel? What is the central argument of the secondary text(s)? How do the readings relate to others we've read for this course? Your participation grade will be based on a participation self-evaluation form that you will complete during Weeks 5 and 10 and will take into account pandemic accommodations.

## WEEKLY RESPONSES

In preparation for class discussion, please post a response to the assigned readings on the online forum. This includes both the literary text as well as the secondary text(s). Your response should consist of three parts:

- 1) Identify a passage in the novel/poetry that exemplifies transpacific studies and/or that addresses a key theme for that week. (If it's short, transcribe the passage; if it long, you can just give us page numbers and/or describe the scene.) Write 3-5 sentences that explain why you found this passage interesting.
- 2) Identify something you didn't understand and/or want to discuss further. (For example, maybe there was an argument in the secondary source that you'd like to unpack.)
- 3) Pose a question for your classmates, based on one or more of the readings. (Avoid "yes/no" questions and instead think of something that could generate productive discussion; consider connecting to past weeks' readings.)

Responses should be grounded in the readings. Direct quotes with page numbers are encouraged. **Responses are due Monday at 3pm** prior to our class meeting for Weeks 2-9. Each response is worth up to 5 points each. Please read each other's responses before coming to class, as we will discuss your responses during class.

### FINAL PAPER/SHORT STORY

For the final project, you have two options: the first option is to choose one of the literary texts that we read for this quarter and write a literary analysis paper. Your paper may address broad questions of form (such as chapter organization or overall narration) or analyze a short passage (paying attention to allusion, metonymy, syntax, etc.) Make sure your literary analysis paper is driven by a central argument. The second option is to write a short story that relates to the transpacific studies themes that we have discussed. This assignment consists of four parts: a project proposal due Week 5, a literature review due Week 7, a project presentation during Week 10, and the final paper/short story itself due during finals week. Regardless of which option you choose—a literary analysis paper or a short story—your final product should be 5-6 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1” margins.

### **GRADE CALCULATION**

A, 93 and above	C+, 77-79.99
A-, 90-92.99	C, 73-76.99
B+, 87-89.99	C-, 70-72.99
B, 83-86.99	D+, 67-69.99
B-, 80-82.99	D, 60-66.99
	F, 59.99 and below

### **LATE SUBMISSION POLICY**

All late submissions will be docked 5% for each week that they are late. Given the global pandemic, please don't hesitate to reach out if you need an extension.

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

Several times throughout the quarter there will be extra credit opportunities to attend online events related to this class. If you attend one of the approved events and would like to receive extra credit, please upload to the “Extra Credit” folder on CCLE a photo/screenshot of yourself at the event plus a one-paragraph reflection. You may earn up to 3 extra credit points over the course of the quarter.