ASIA AM 125: Transpacific Literature & Theory
Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi, PhD

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

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**
**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).

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


**In class**: Kathy Jetnil-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**


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


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

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


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


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

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


**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

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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.