

ETHN 3501: Asian American Women's Writing

Professor: Jennifer Ho, Professor, Ethnic Studies, CU Boulder
Class: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:15pm

This course examines Asian American women's writing by focusing on multiple genres, including novels, short stories, critical essays, poetry, and film. Asian American women (and by women, I mean anyone who identifies as a woman whether cis-gender or transgender, and with whatever pronouns she/they want to use) have been award winning journalists, best-selling authors, Pulitzer Prize winning writers, and, most importantly, everyday women who have written for their eyes only. Asian American women's writing has focused on subjects such as war, the inequity of discrimination, American history, the strength of men, and the political importance of feminist activism. We will read a variety of women's writings and will examine themes of gender, race, and sexuality, among others.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Best We Could Do – (Abrams Comicarts) Thi Bui
Asian American Women and Men (Rowman & Littlefield, second edition) – Yen Le Espiritu
Know My Name (Penguin) – Chanel Miller
This Is One Way To Dance (University of Georgia Press) – Sejal Shah

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Final grades will be determined as follows along with your grading contract:

Participation	10%
Group Journal—Posting (5)	20%
--Responding (5)	10%
Revised Journal Post (1)	10%
Group Teaching Presentation	20%
Final Research Paper – Interview with an Asian American Woman (2,400-3,000 words—not including the Works Cited page) [plus: one-page description of interviewee]	30%

[For the Grading Contract you can adjust these up or down but nothing can be greater than 30% and nothing less than 10%]

Week 1:

T—Jan 11 Asian American Women's Writing – an Introduction
Th – Jan 13 *Woman Warrior* – Kingston (1-17) “No Name Woman” [Canvas pdf]
Due: Introductory letter & Student Care Survey

Week 2:

T—Jan 18 “Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality” – Trina Grillo [Canvas pdf]
Due: Grading Contract DRAFT & Did-You-Read-The-Syllabus-and-Canvas Quiz
Th—Jan 20 *Asian American Women and Men* – Espiritu (1-18: Ch 1) [Canvas pdf]
Sign up on Google Sheets for a mandatory grading contract meeting with Jennifer, Week 2 or 3

Week 3

T—Jan 25 *The Best We Could Do* – Bui (1-172: Ch 1-5)

Th—Jan 27 *The Best We Could Do* – Bui (173-210: Ch 6)

Week 4

T—Feb 1 *The Best We Could Do* – Bui (211-329: Ch 7-10)

Due: Top 3 Group Teaching Topics

Th—Feb 3 Group Presentation Work Day

Due: Grading Contracts & Group Journal Begins

Week 5

T—Feb 8 *Asian American Women and Men* – Espiritu (19-96: Ch 2-5)

Th—Feb 10 *Asian American Women and Men* – Espiritu (97-135: Ch 6)

Week 6

T—Feb 15 *Know My Name* – Miller (Intro-143: Ch 1-6)

Th—Feb 17 *Know My Name* – Miller (145-187: Ch 7)

Week 7

T—Feb 22 *Know My Name* – Miller (189-313: Ch 8-13)

Th—Feb 24 *Know My Name* – Miller (315-328 Ch 14 & Emily Doe’s Victim Impact Statement—and if you have the paperback version the afterword)

Week 8

T—Mar 1 *Fairest* – Talusan (Prologue & Chapter 17) [Canvas pdf]

Due: Readings for Group Teaching Projects

Th—Mar 3 Visit to CU Boulder Art Museum – meet at museum

Week 9:

T—Mar 8 Group Presentation Work Day

Th—Mar 10 Group Presentation Work Day

Due: Revised Journal Post

Week 10: GROUP TEACHING PROJECT

– find readings/viewings in Canvas under “Readings” in FILES

T—Mar 15 *Ahead of the Majority* – Blueberry

Th—Mar 17 Sexuality – Tangerine

SPRING BREAK – March 21-25

Week 12: GROUP TEACHING PROJECT

– find readings/viewings in Canvas under “Readings” in FILES

T—Mar 28 *American Revolutionary* – Lime

Th—Mar 30 Inter-racial – Peach

Week 13: GROUP TEACHING PROJECT
 --find readings/viewings in Canvas under “Readings” in FILES
T—Apr 5 Multiracial – Papaya
Th—Apr 7 Transracial adoption – Mango

Week 14: GROUP TEACHING PROJECT
 – find readings/viewings in Canvas under “Readings” in FILES
T—Apr 12 Pop culture – Pineapple
Th—Apr 14 No Class
 Due: One-page description of Asian American Woman Interviewee

Week 15
T—Apr 19 *This Is One Way to Dance* – Shah (ix-90) – photographer Patrick Campbell comes
Th—Apr 21 *This Is One Way to Dance* – Shah (91-104)

Week 16
T—Apr 26 *This Is One Way to Dance* – Shah (105-164)
Th—Apr 28 Last Day of Classes

***Final Paper Due Date: Friday, April 29 @5:00pm MT**
***Grading Contract Reflections: Saturday, April 30 @5:00pm MT**
***Mandatory End-of-Semester Meetings to discuss Final Grades: May 2 & 3—sign up on class google sheet**

January 2022

Dear Students,

It is my custom to write an introductory letter to all my students, and in return I ask that you write a letter back to me. In fact, it is the first assignment due the next time we meet (and please note that **all assignments need to be turned in as a Microsoft Word document to Canvas**—this is detailed in the “Guidelines for Submitting Work” file in the Housekeeping folder on Canvas). Feel free to share as little or as much as you want about yourself—these letters give me a small glimpse into who you are, and I hope you also get to know me a bit.

The transition into 2022 has been an odd one for me, and maybe for all of you. On December 30, like many in Boulder County, I evacuated due to the Marshall Fire. Though I was not in one of the evacuation zones in Louisville or Superior, living in Lafayette I was in the pre-evacuation zone, and my neighborhood was blanketed with smoke. Thankfully we only spent one night away and were able to come back to our undamaged home/neighborhood. The same can't be said for many of our friends and co-workers. The images are heartbreaking—and the recovery for our community will be long—and I hope that we can find ways to provide aid and comfort to those in need. Living in the midst of a global pandemic has shown the best and worst of humanity, which I suppose is what crises reveal—the best and worst of who we are as humans.

More about me: I grew up in the Bay Area of California, and my parents still live in the suburban ranch home where I spent my childhood. I moved to Colorado in August 2019 after teaching for 17 years at UNC Chapel Hill, where I developed a deep appreciation for biscuits, grits, and pimento cheese. Among the things I love about Colorado are the incredible outdoor spaces, green chile, and the clouds—that last one may sound funny, but the cloud formations are incredible here. The member of my family who loves Colorado the most is our corgi, Chaucer—who has a double coat and loves smooshing his face in the snow. My husband is a nurse at Clinica, a job he loves, especially because as a Spanish major he gets to speak Spanish cada dia, something I envy since I aspire to conversational Spanish, pero necesito practicar mucho mas.

Since this is a class about Asian American women's writing, I'll share that something I'm working on is a breast cancer memoir. I was diagnosed with stage II breast cancer in 2010 and am a dozen years in remission. Getting a breast cancer diagnosis made me think about my gender and sexuality in a very visceral way and in a way that I hadn't ever been forced to think about before—about what it would mean to no longer have breasts after my bi-lateral mastectomy surgery—about my decision not to have reconstructive surgery and the judgments of so many who questioned why I wouldn't want breasts, and what it would mean for me to be thrown into early menopause and no longer have ovarian functioning after chemotherapy (it doesn't happen for all women but it did happen for me). And being one of the few Asian American women at the cancer center in the US south definitely made me think about not just my gender and sexuality but my racial identity—things we'll definitely be talking about this semester. I'm very open talking about my breast cancer, so if you have questions you want to ask, in or out of class, feel free to ask away. I'm writing a memoir about all of it, so talking about cancer is not something I'm shy about (and I'm an extrovert, which is helpful being a teacher).

I look forward to learning more about all of you, in your letters and over the course of the semester!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Ho". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned at the bottom left of the page, below the main body of text.