SOCIAL HISTORY OF ASIAN AMERICANS

COURSE DESCRIPTION
On 16 March 2021, eight people were shot and killed at several spas in Atlanta, Georgia. Six of the victims were women of Asian descent: Daoyou Feng, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Soon Chung Park, Xiaoje Tan, and Yong Ae Yue. The Atlanta shootings were a spectacular crest in a sea of anti-Asian violence. While anti-Asian racism has surfaced in public consciousness during the Covid-19 pandemic, its roots are deep, vast, and formidable.

This course begins in death and tries to end in life. It examines the long history of anti-Asian racism as a necessary step toward its undoing. We will focus on how Asians, Asian Americans, and the Asiatic have been racialized alternately as subhuman (viruses, animals) and superhuman (model minorities). We will examine how these figurations have shuffled over time and animated legal exclusion, imperial expansion, social marginalization, and multiracial liberalism. We will see how Asians and Asian Americans have sought redress—sometimes by appealing to structures of oppression, sometimes by spearheading them, and sometimes by fighting them.

REQUIRED TEXTS
All texts are available on Canvas.

RECOMMENDED TEXT
Cathy J Shlund-Vials, Linda Trinh Võ, and K Scott Wong (editors), Keywords for Asian American Studies

This book provides helpful definitions for key terms in this class. The Auraria Library has an electronic version.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT
The University of _____ is located on the territories of the _____ nations. Invasion, land theft, and genocide are the historical conditions that allow our class to convene. Colonial brutality is a bloodstain on our dialogues, our community, our education, our degrees. Let us acknowledge that these histories continue and
that their violences are still unfolding. Let us acknowledge that Native resistance and resurgence also have a long, powerful history. Let us acknowledge that acknowledgments are but one step in a lifelong, generations-long struggle to undo colonial violence, heal lands and waters, and restore Native ways of being in the world. Let us honor that struggle in our engagement with this course.

COURSE MATTERS
EDUCATION
Life is hard, especially in the long 2020 aka the COVID-19 pandemic. The conditions of learning are still severely strained. I trust that you are doing your best to learn. I hope that you will challenge yourself to grow and be gentle with yourself when you cannot. Please let me know how I can support you.

Online courses are tough. They require exceptional discipline. They can feel distant. You are encouraged to share thoughts and questions about the readings when they arise. I would love to hear what you think!

Some readings will be theoretical and difficult. Consider them an opportunity to develop your reading skills and analysis. Academic texts require at least three readings: first, to get a general sense; second, to understand the main argument and other key points; and third, to see how different sections fit together. The process is daunting but also enriching. Reading gets easier, thinking gets richer, and you will be growing. Good things take time and effort.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
You will set your own learning objectives (see "Narratives" section below).

ACCESSIBILITY
If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Disability Resources and Services at _____. We will work together to make the appropriate accommodations.

CANVAS
Please stay updated by regularly checking Canvas for announcements. Note that there are no modules. Please follow the course schedule in this syllabus.

MEETINGS
Please make appointments via email.
ASSIGNMENTS
You begin this class with an A. You will keep that A if you turn in all assignments. Each assignment not turned in will result in your final grade being lowered by half a letter. I fully trust that you are dedicated to your learning and that you are sincerely trying your best in these hard times. Thus, while I will provide feedback on your work, assignments are not graded.

THREE PROCESS LETTERS
Process letters are reflections on your learning. They are meant to convey how your knowledge is growing.

In your process letter:

- Explain how 2-3 texts have made you curious over the past five weeks;
- Describe how that text has changed what you think. Explore specific passages. Say what you had previously thought (or didn’t think about);
- Discuss the importance of those texts to your understanding of a social history of Asian Americans.

Each process letter should be at least 600 words long. Could be longer. Write more than three if you are so inspired.

Process letters are due on February 20, April 3, and May 8. Please email process letters as a docx or doc file, named in this format: Lastname-Letter#

Late process letters may not receive feedback.

NARRATIVES
In this course, how we learn is as important as what. This assignment is meant for you to set your own learning goals, reflect on your progress, and improve your engagement with the course. You will complete three worksheets: "Introductory Narrative," "Midsemester Narrative," and "Culminating Narrative."

Introductory Narrative
Introduce yourself, reflect on your learning style, and set goals for yourself in the course. Complete the "Introductory Narrative" worksheet and return via email by 11:59pm on January 23.
Midsemester Narrative
Check in with yourself and your goals. Return to your introductory narrative and first process letter. Complete the “Midsemester Narrative” worksheet and return via email by 11:59pm on March 6.

Culminating Narrative
Reflect on the semester and your goals. Return to your introductory and midsemester narratives and process letters. Complete the “Culminating Narrative” worksheet and return via email by 11:59pm on May 8.

**DEADLINES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory narrative</td>
<td>January 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>First process letter</td>
<td>February 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midsemester narrative</td>
<td>March 6</td>
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<td>Second process letter</td>
<td>April 3</td>
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<td>Third process letter</td>
<td>May 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culminating narrative</td>
<td>May 8</td>
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*All deadlines are 11.59pm*
COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 // JANUARY 16
TEMPERATURE CHECK: ANTI-ASIAN RACISM TODAY

• Maria Cecilia Hwang and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, “The Gendered Racialization of Asian Women as Villainous Temptresses” (2021)
• Rumya S Putcha, “White Supremacy and the Wellness Industry, or, Why It Matters that This Happened at a ‘Spa’” (2021)
• Madhavi Mallapragada, “Asian Americans as Racial Contagion” (2021)

WEEK 2 // JANUARY 23
ORIENTALISM

***PRELIMINARY NARRATIVE DUE JANUARY 23 BY 11:59PM***


WEEK 3 // JANUARY 30
BECOMING YELLOW

• Robert Ji-Song Ku, “Yellow” (2015)

WEEK 4 // FEBRUARY 6
CHINATOWN: DISEASE IN THE AMERICAN BODY POLITIC

WEEK 5 // FEBRUARY 13
BORDERS AND BODIES, OR, THE GEOPOLITICS OF DISEASE

• Nayan Shah, “Making Medical Borders at Angel Island” from Contagious Divides (2001)
• Neel Ahuja, “‘An Atmosphere of Leprosy’: Hansen’s Disease, the Dependent Body, and the Transoceanic Politics of Hawaiian Annexation” (pages 65-70 optional) from Bioinsecurities: Disease Interventions, Empire, and the Government of Species (2016)

WEEK 6 // FEBRUARY 20
YELLOW PERIL

***FIRST PROCESS LETTER DUE FEBRUARY 20 BY 11:59PM***


WEEK 7 // FEBRUARY 27
EXCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP

• Takao Ozawa vs United States (1922)
• United States vs Bhagat Singh Thind (1922)

WEEK 8 // MARCH 6
WAR: FROM ENEMY TO ALLY

***MIDSEMESTER NARRATIVE DUE MARCH 6 BY 11:59PM***

WEEK 9 // MARCH 13
ASIAN SETTLER COLONIALISM


SPRING BREAK // MARCH 20

WEEK 10 // MARCH 27
LEGACIES OF WAR: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THE ERASURE OF TRAUMA


WEEK 11 // APRIL 3
MODEL MINORITIES

***SECOND PROCESS LETTER DUE APRIL 3 BY 11.59PM***

- Andrew Yang, “We Asian Americans Are Not the Virus, But We Can Be the Cure” (2020)

WEEK 12 // APRIL 10
THE WAR ON TERROR

WEEK 13 // APRIL 17
ANTI-ASIAN RACISM TODAY, AGAIN

• Claire Ching Jen, “How to Survive Contagion, Disease, and Disaster: the ‘Masked Asian/American Woman’ as Low-Tech Specter of Emergency Preparedness”

WEEK 14 // APRIL 24
CLAIMING YELLOW

• Amy Uyematsu, “The Emergence of Yellow Power in America” in Gidra (1969)
• Larry Kubota, “Yellow Power!” in Gidra (1969)
• Kat Chow, “If We Called Ourselves Yellow” (2018)
• Minju Bae and Mark Tseng-Putterman, “Reviving the History of Radical Black-Asian Internationalism” (2020)

WEEK 15 // MAY 1
HISTORY IN THE MAKING? ASIAN AMERICA OTHERWISE

• Setsu Shigematsu, “The Sky Is Falling: On Asian American Imperial Entitlement to Life” (2021)
• Dylan Rodríguez, “The ‘Asian exception’ and the Scramble for Legibility: Toward an Abolitionist Approach to Anti-Asian Violence” (2021)
• Red Canary Song and Survived and Punished, “Our Response to Charges Being Pursued” (2021)

WEEK 16 // MAY 8
FINALS WEEK

***THIRD PROCESS LETTER AND CULMINATING NARRATIVE DUE MAY 8 BY 11:59PM***