The University of Utah
The Asian Pacific American Experiences
Ethnic Studies/ETHNC 2580-090

Course Description and Objectives

The first question for the students of this class is naturally “how much do you know about America?” Certainly your future success is conditional upon how much you know about the country you live in. This class is designed to systematically survey the Asian Pacific American (APA) experiences in the United States. The course is divided into four dimensions: the demographics of Asian Pacific Americans, an APA history, contemporary APA issues, and a study of racial relations concerning APAs, one of the fastest growing racial groups in the nation.

While a major segment of the course is devoted to an objective and historical examination of APAs, the students are challenged to think about the US history from an angle that will not only empower themselves to understand the trajectory of American democracy, but also equip themselves to better deal with the ever-changing American demographics and the increasing diversity in the society as a whole as well as the communities they belong to. In doing so, the major APA ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian Asians, Koreans, Asian Indians, Vietnamese, Pacific Islander Americans, Filipinos, Southeastern Asians, and others will be the main focus of the study. Moreover, the key issues concerning Asian Americans—some of which are controversial—such as hate crimes, equality in education and workplace, interracial marriages, sports, media and culture, will also be exposed and scrutinized.

Through the systematic analyses of the APA experiences, the students are trained to develop their critical thinking skills, enlarge their empirical and theoretic knowledge of diverse communities, and take on leaderships roles in their future careers.

Instructor

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A Short Bio:

Dr. Baodong Liu is a professor of political science and ethnic studies, and his most recent scholarly books include The Election of Barack Obama: How He Won, and Race Rules: Electoral Politics in New Orleans, 1965-2006. For his research on racial and electoral politics, Professor Liu has been the winners of the 1999 Byran Jackson Award from the American Political Science Association, the 1999 Ted Robinson Award from the Southwestern Political
Science Association, the 2004 Artinian Award from Southern Political Science Association, the 2001 Jessie Ball duPont Summer Fellow at the National Humanities Center, and the 2007 Triss Endowed Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

Professor Liu has published 7 scholarly books and more than 30 peer-reviewed articles. He has provided his expertise to the US Department of Justice, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in Washington D.C., NAACP, the National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, Wisconsin Security Research Consortium, etc.

Dr. Liu currently has been a member of Board of Director of the National Association for Ethnic Studies. A former member of editorial board for Urban Affairs Review, Professor Liu also served as the editor of Urban News for the American Political Science Association's Urban Politics Section, and was elected as a co-chair of the Asian Pacific American Caucus of the American Political Science Association from 2004 to 2006.

At the University of Utah, Dr. Liu served as the interim Director of Ethnic Studies and a special assistant to Associate Vice President for Diversity between 2011 and 2013. He was also the University MLK Overall Committee Chair in 2013.

Office Hours

Students can make an appointment with me to meet at my office to discuss any questions or concerns they may have regarding this class. Furthermore, my TA will be available online to answer questions on Tuesdays from 5:00-6:00 pm (online or in person).

Required Texts


Grading System

Test 20%
Discussion Responses 60%
Short Research Paper  20%
Total 100%

Grading Explanations

Test:
There will be ONE "open-book" test in the form of multiple choice and/or true/false questions (a total of 20% of the final grade). To perform well in the test, you need to be familiar with the Takaki book. (You must complete your reading assignments in time to have an accumulative process of learning and be ready for the test.)

The test will be open on Monday, September 25. You will have a total of one hour to complete the test. The access to the test will be closed at precisely 10:00pm, so the latest time to start your test is at 9:00 pm on September 25. **Log on to your canvas account to do the test (check your calendar very carefully).** The test will be in the Quizzes section of Canvas.

No student will be given any opportunity to make up the missed exam. Only under very unusual circumstances, a make-up exam be given and it will require a very strict procedure (i.e., documentation from authorities such as Dean of Students, and/or a doctor's note proving that the circumstance is beyond the student's control and the student cannot do the test on that specific day).

Short Research Paper:
There is no final exam in this class. Instead, during the final month of the semester, you need to write a short research paper (8-10 pages) which is used to gauge your ability to integrate the reading materials into coherent theoretic and empirical statements (20% of your grade). Please see the detailed instruction from our Announcements section.

On-Line Discussions
Since this is an on-line class, students will not meet in a real classroom setting. But your on-line participation will be crucial to your success. There will be a total of SEVEN discussion sessions. I will post a research question and open the DISCUSSION section a week before the deadlines marked on the syllabus (always Thursdays).

The discussion questions are posted for you to "think aloud" as you continue with your reading materials. Please provide your answer as a reply to the DISCUSSION question. For each discussion question, you will need to post at least two entries. The first entry (400-500 words) will be your own thought about the reading materials, and you will be evaluated based on how thorough your understanding of the reading materials is. The second entry (around 200 words) is your critique of one or more fellow students' entries, and you will be evaluated based on how fair your criticism is.

Sometimes there is no perfect answer to the questions as they often are "controversial". Your reasoning becomes critical in this case.
Directly coping other fellow students’ comments is strictly prohibited.

I also reserve the right to reward those students who make major contributions to our on-line discussions by giving them as many as 5 extra points at the end of the semester.

**Group Study Sessions**

My TA will organize the group study sessions on Canvas to help you understand our reading materials and prepare for the test and short research paper. Please see the detailed times of group study sessions from Announcements section.

**Policy of Using Public Space**

While freedom of expression is protected, please respect your fellow classmates' opinions. Any unrespectful languages and hostile comments to any individuals or groups will be subject to initial warning and final removal from the public space.

If you have any personal questions for the professor or teaching assistant, please write a private email, and do not use ANNOUNCEMENTS or DISCUSSIONS sections, which are for public use. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Topics/Reading List/Calendar**

**I. Who are Asian Americans? Where are they? What are the characteristics of Asian cultures?**

Liu book, chapter 1

**Discussion 1, August 31**

Liu book, chapters 6-7

**Discussion 2, September 7**

**II. Asian Americans from a Historical Perspective**

Asian Immigration, Takaki, Chapters 1, 2.

Chinese, Takaki, Chapter 3, 6, pp. 370 – 378

Japanese, Takaki, Chapter 5, pp 379-405

**Discussion 3, September 14**

Hawaiian Asians, Pacific Islander Americans: Takaki, Chapter 4:
South Asians — Asian Indians in America, Takaki, Chapter 8
Koreans, Takaki, Chapter 6, pp. 493-497
Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian Americans, Hmong, and Tibetans, Takaki, Chapter 11
Filipinos, Takaki, Chapter 9
Test 1, One Hour Exam Time, open September 25, Monday, 8 am-10 pm

III. The Model Minority Mystery
Liu book, Introduction
Liu book, chapters 2-5
Discussion 4, October 5

IV. Parenting and Education
Amy Chua's book, Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother
Discussion 5, October 19

V. Public Images of Asian Americans and Gender Issues
Liu book, chapters 8-11
Discussion 6, October 26

VI. Affirmative Action, Hate Crimes and political participation
Liu book, chapters 12-14 and Conclusion
Discussion 7, November 16

VII. Short Research Paper (Due December 7)