

**ELIT24/ICS24 Asian American Literature**  
**De Anza College**  
**Winter 2012**

This class meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-2:20 in MCC-10

Instructor: Sherwin Mendoza, [mendozasherwin@deanza.edu](mailto:mendozasherwin@deanza.edu)

Office Hours and Location: Mondays 2:20-3:20 and by appointment, Multicultural Center

Course Web Site:

<http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/mendozasherwin/elit24ics24w12/index.html>

Course Blog: <http://aalitwinter2012.blogspot.com/>

This course is an introduction to Asian American Literature. The readings emphasize three themes: problems of identity as it relates to class, gender, mixed heritages, and sexuality; politics and the history of Asian American activism and resistance; and the diversity of cultures within the Asian American community. Regardless of whether you identify yourself as Asian American or not, as a result of taking this course you should become better at describing yourself and your experience.

The Student Learning Outcomes for this course state that at the end of the quarter you should be able to do the following:

- 1) Identify multiple cultural and historical issues pertaining to Asian American Pacific Islanders in literature.
- 2) Analyze issues pertaining to race, class, sexuality and/or gender in relation to Asian Pacific American communities.

Here is a partial list of issues that we will address in this class, and I hope that you develop thoughtful and informed positions on each of them:

Family (personal and political), Friends, Community

Do you think of yourself as an insider or outsider in your community/communities?

Rebellion and acquiescence

Gender roles

Assimilation, preservation and transformation of cultures and traditions

Romance

How do you feel about mixed relationships? How do you think your family or community feels about mixed relationships?

Same-sex relationships?

History

Is Asian American History important? Who should learn Asian American History? What should people in Santa Clara County know about Asian American History?

### Social Change

Under different conditions, what are appropriate ways to make social change?

### Immigration, Migration, and Refuge

Should people be deported?

Under what conditions do people become immigrants, migrants, and refugees?

Why do these conditions exist?

### Work

What rights should workers have? What is a good relationship between employers and employees? What is a good relationship between employees?

### Representation

How should Asian Americans represent themselves? What are appropriate representations of Asian Americans?

## **Course Policies**

Attendance is mandatory. All class time counts and attendance every day is required. Please contact me before class if you are unable to attend, and we will set up a way for you to make up the missed class time. Please respect my time and the time of your classmates by coming to class on time. Please turn in assignments on time to make it easier for me to track the progress of everyone in the class.

This course will abide by the college-wide policies of De Anza College with respect to academic conduct (honesty, respect for diversity, etc.).

## **Required Texts**

ICS24/ELIT24 Reader (Available from Postal Annex and in class)

*The Latehomecomer* by Kao Kalia Yang (available in the De Anza College bookstore)

## **Course Schedule**

### Unit 1: Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Histories and Struggles

#### Week 1: Intros

January 9 Go over the syllabus

Kelly Tsai

January 11 Census

*Latehomecomer* Prologue and Part I

Immigration and migration as an educational experience

#### Week 2: Individual, Family and Collective Stories

January 16 Holiday (No class meeting)

January 18 Introduce Telling Your Story; *The Latehomecomer* Part II and Part III; Jhumpa Lahiri; quiz

Week 3: Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Struggles

January 23 *The Latecomer* Part IV, Epilogue; quiz

Dawn Mabalon, Jeff Tagami, Ishle Park

January 25

Bich Minh Nguyen; quiz

Week 4: You, Your Family and History

January 30 Essay on *The Latecomer* due; quiz

R. Zamora Linmark, Trask, Trask

British, French, US Empire

Pacific Islands, South Asia, and Hong Kong

February 1 Telling Your Story Part I Presentations; Immigration History and your stories

Jose Vargas, Paul Kim

Form research groups

Telling Your Story Part I write-up due

Week 5: Discrimination, Prison, ICE

February 6 Angel Island poems (Anonymous)

Screen trailer for *Slaying the Dragon Reloaded*

February 8 Okubo, Mirikitani, Inada; quiz

Week 6: Migrant Labor and the Asian American Movement

February 13 Bulosan, Vera Cruz

Role-play

February 15 Yamashita, Tsang, Wong; quiz

Week 7: Post-1965

February 20 Holiday

February 22 Dong Hwan Ku, Youn Jae Kim, Hyun Yi Kang;

Bill Ong Hing, lê, thi diem thúy; quiz

Review for exam

Week 8: Exam

February 27 Exam 1

February 29 Introduce Unit 2, Analytical Essay Due

Unit 2: Making Our Cultures

Week 9: Group Projects

March 5 Group meetings

Marilyn Chin

Group proposal due after the meeting

March 7 Group meetings

Week 10: New Media and Self-Expression

March 12 Group Presentations

March 14 Group Presentations; YouTube write-ups due

Week 11: Telling Your Story Part II

March 19 Telling Your Story Presentations

March 21 Telling Your Story Presentations

Week 12: Course Wrap-up

March 26 Exam Review; Telling Your Story Part II write-ups due

Final Exam:

11:30-1:30, Wednesday March 28

### **Assignments**

Points for each part of each assignment are in parentheses.

100 points: In-Class Participation

In-class writing assignments, group work, quizzes

100: Blog

Discussion questions (20)

Responses (80)

200: Formal Essays

Mid-term paper on *The Latehomecomer*, 3-5 Pages (100)

Option 1: Analytical paper, 3-5 Pages (100)

Plan for analytical paper (20), 1 page

Analytical paper on a poetic or fictional text (80), 3-5 pages

Option 2: Oral histories of educational experiences (100)

200: YouTube Group Presentations

Group meeting, preparation (50)

Group proposal (50)

Presentation (50)

Reflection (50), 1-2 pages

200: Telling Your Story

Part I write-up (50), 1-2 pages

Part I presentation (50)

Part II write-up (50), 2-3 pages

Part II presentation (50)

200: Exams

Mid-term (100)

Cumulative final (100)

1000: Total

## **Grading Scale**

A+	1000 or more points
A	950-999
A-	900-949
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-759
C-	700-729
D	600-699
F	Less than 600 points

## **Assignment Descriptions**

### Blog

The blog will be one chance for you to give direction to our classroom discussions. To get full credit you will need to post two questions (ten points apiece) and respond to at least ten blog questions (eight points apiece). Aim for something you're interested in and/or something that will lead to discussion. If there is more than one reading assigned you can choose to address one or more than one of the readings.

You can either e-mail me questions, speak with me after class, or post directly to the blog. I encourage you to read your classmates' responses, and I hope that the blog has the feel of a conversation, just not entirely face-to-face. If you want you can reference previous responses or readings. Good questions (like good literary works) often address what everyone is thinking but hasn't asked about, and your questions can be about the readings, the course topics, or even the class itself

I will post on the course website detailed descriptions for the following assignments.

### YouTube

The basic goal for this assignment is for you to form thoughtful opinions about YouTube videos and the comments on videos. You should also be able to identify the positions of YouTube videos with respect to issues discussed in this class.

You will have group meeting time during the scheduled class time the week of March 5. Your group meetings will lead to a group presentation on the week of March 12 about a YouTube video with at least 5,000 views. On Wednesday of that week you will turn in a write-up that elaborates on the content of your presentation. In your write-up you will also evaluate your fellow group members.

### Mid-term Essay

In this essay you will relate your family's story to Yang's. For this assignment you should learn how to tell a collective story, and you should decide on the group or groups you belong to.

### Analytical Essay or Oral History about Educational Experiences

For this assignment you will have the option of either working in a group to conduct oral histories or of writing an individual research paper that contextualizes at least one of the course texts aside from *The Latehomecomer* in terms of the history of immigration and migration to the US for the immigrant/migrant group or groups that the text represents. You should describe the position of the text with respect to one of the issues that we have discussed in this class.

### Telling Your Story

To a large extent this class is built on your stories. Historically the vast majority of people who have taken this class are either first- or second-generation immigrants from Asia. The basic idea is that the best way for you to learn about Asian American immigration is to listen to the stories of immigrants from Asia and to compare and contrast your own experiences.

This assignment consists of two parts. In the first part, you will tell your story directly through a narrative. In the second part you will tell your story indirectly by sharing something that is significant to you, and I encourage you to do creative projects in small groups in which you tell the class about your relationship to what you are sharing.