

ELIT24/ICS24 Asian American Literature
De Anza College
Fall 2011

This class meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-3:20 in MCC-17

Instructor: Sherwin Mendoza, mendozasherwin@deanza.edu

Office Hours and Location: Mondays 3:20-4:20 and by appointment, Multicultural Center

Course Web Site:

<http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/mendozasherwin/elit24ics24f11/index.html>

Course Blog: <http://apalitfall2011.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

Should people be deported?

Under what conditions do people immigrate? 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

The Latehomecomer by Kao Kalia Yang (Look in the bookstore under "ELIT 24")

Course Schedule

Unit 1: Immigrant Histories and Struggles

Week 1: Intros

September 26 Go over the syllabus

Kelly Tsai

September 28 Census

Latehomecomer Prologue (pp. 1-4)

Week 2: Individual, Family and Collective Stories

October 3 *The Latehomecomer* Part I, Part II (pp. 5-128); quiz

October 5 Introduce Telling Your Story; *The Latehomecomer* Part III (pp. 129-210)

Week 3: Immigrant Struggles

October 10 *The Latecomer* Part IV, Epilogue (pp. 211-274); quiz
Dawn Mabalon, Jeff Tagami, Ishle Park

October 12

Bich Minh Nguyen; quiz
Screening of *A Village Called Versailles*

Week 4: You, Your Family and History

October 17 Essay on *The Latecomer* due; quiz
R. Zamora Linmark, Trask, Trask

October 19 Telling Your Story Part I Presentations; Immigration History and your stories

Jose Vargas, Paul Kim
Telling Your Story Part I write-up due

Week 5: Discrimination, Prison, ICE

October 24 Angel Island poems

October 26 Okubo, Mirikitani, Inada; quiz

Week 6: Migrant Labor and the Asian American Movement

October 31 Bulosan, Vera Cruz

November 2 Yamashita, Tsang; quiz

Week 7: Post-1965

November 7 le, Wong

Plan for analytical essay due

November 9 Dong Hwan Ku, Youn Jae Kim, Hyun Yi Kang; quiz

Review for exam

Week 8: Exam

November 14 Exam 1

November 16 Introduce Unit 2, Analytical Essay Due

Unit 2: Making Our Cultures

Week 9: Group Projects

November 21 Group meetings * Very strict enforcement *

Group proposal due after the meeting

November 23 Class held electronically

Week 10: New Media and Self-Expression

November 28 Group Presentations; Chin

November 30 Group Presentations; Chin; YouTube write-ups due

Week 11: Telling Your Story Part II

December 5 Telling Your Story Presentations

December 7 Telling Your Story Presentations

Week 12: Course Wrap-up

December 12 Exam Review; Telling Your Story Part II write-ups due

Final Exam:

1:45-3:45, Wednesday December 14

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)

Analytical paper, 3-5 Pages

Plan for analytical paper (20), 1 page

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

200: 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

Extra Credit

Up to 100 points, 20pts apiece

Attend and write up an event related to this class (see me first).

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 November 21. You will decide with your group members on the location for your meeting. During

this week you will consult electronically with me, and we will decide together on the form of consultation.

Your group meetings will lead to a group presentation on the week of November 28 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.

Formal Academic Essays

I encourage you to have someone at the Reading and Writing Center read a draft of these essays. If necessary I will require you to go to the WRC.

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: This assignment asks you to write a research paper that contextualizes at least one of the course texts aside from *The Latehomecomer* in terms of the history of immigration to the US for the immigrant 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.