

Fall 2007 Syllabus
ENGL 8090, Section 003: Seminar in Special Subjects
Asian American Cultural Criticism
Tuesdays 1:00-3:30 p.m. Central Time
University of Minnesota: Jones Hall, Media Room 35
The Ohio State University: Bolz Hall, Room 101

Josephine Lee
University of Minnesota
21 Lind Hall
Phone: (612) 625-9510
Email: jolee@umn.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-11 a.m. or by appointment

Books:

Jean Wu and Min Song, ed. *Asian American Studies: A Reader* (Rutgers 2000)
Robert Lee, *Orientalists: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Temple 2000)
David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*
(Stanford UP 1999)
Mimi Thi Nguyen and Thuy Linh Nguyen, *Alien Encounters: Popular Culture in Asian America* (Duke UP 2007)

Course description: This seminar will consider contemporary formulations of Asian American racial formation, identity, history, community, and politics with an emphasis on Asian Americans as cultural objects, producers, and consumers. Topics will include postwar versions of orientalism, the legacies of civil rights activism and cultural nationalism, and contemporary directions for imagining “Asian America.” We will also look at a number of models for current research in Asian American Studies. Participants will be expected to collect, analyze, and present a number of source materials as well as write a final research paper.

Schedule of readings:

September 4: Introductions. Video: *The Slanted Screen* (2006). Exercise:

“Chinoiserie” and “Yellow Peril” images; competing or complimentary fantasies?

Browse items under keyword “Chinese” at the “Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music ca. 1820-1860,” Music Division, Library of Congress at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/sm2html/sm2home.html> (Background on the collection can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/collections/sm2/file.html>)

Browse images on site: “Yellow Promise, Yellow Peril: Foreign Postcards of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5)”
http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027j/yellow_promise_yellow_peril/yp_menu.htm
↓

Browse: "Imagining the Orient," October 5, 2004 – April 3, 2005, Getty Museum
<http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/orient/>

September 11: ***Orientalism and *Race.** Omatsu, "The 'Four Prisons,'" Omi and Winant, "On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race," in Wu and Song; Robert Lee, *Orientalism*, preface, introduction, and chapters 1-2. In-class exercise: archival sources, "oriental" images.

September 18: ***Cultural Nationalism.** Lee, *Orientalism*, chaps. 3-4; Claire Jean Kim, "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans," *Politics and Society* 27:1 (March 1999) 105-138 (available online through www.lib.umn.edu). Video: Excerpts from *What's Wrong with Frank Chin?* (2005); *Mighty Warriors of Comedy* (2006).

September 25: ***Pan-Ethnicity.** Kibria, "Not Asian, Black, or White?" Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian American Differences," Spickard, "What must I Be?" in Wu and Song; Lee, *Orientalism*, chaps. 5-6. Video: *The Grace Lee Project* (2005).

October 2: ***Transnationalism.** Masao Miyoshi, "A Borderless World" in Wu and Song San Juan Jr, "In Search of Filipino Writing," Takagi, "Maiden Voyage," Koshy, "The Fiction of Asian American Literature," *Orientalism*, chaps. 7-8.

October 9: ***Modernity.** Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, introduction, parts I and II. Video: *Songs of the Dragons* (2006)

October 16: Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, parts III and IV.

October 23: Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, part V, appendix.

October 30: Nguyen and Nguyen, *Alien Encounters*, introduction, parts 1 and 2. Decide on readings for final weeks.

November 6: Nguyen and Nguyen, *Alien Encounters*, introduction, part 3.

November 13: Nguyen and Nguyen, *Alien Encounters*, introduction, part 4.

November 20: Bibliographies/catalogues due. Readings TBA.

November 27: Presentation of final projects. Readings TBA.

December 4: Presentation of final projects. Readings TBA.

December 11: Presentation of final projects. Readings TBA.

Assignments:

- 1) WORKING DEFINITIONS. For each week marked with an asterisk (*), please bring into class a working definition of the week's term ("panethnicity," "transnationalism") as it might apply to Asian American Studies. Include several examples of how this term might be applied to "Asian American" objects or other subjects of study.
- 2) LEADING DISCUSSION. Each class member will be responsible for leading one class discussion. This responsibility includes presenting the class with several questions to be distributed the week prior to the reading, introducing the work, and moderating the discussion.
- 3) ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY/DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE (primary or secondary sources; 8-10 items; due November 20).
- 3) SEMINAR PAPER. (due in the English Department main office, Lind 207, by noon on Wednesday, December 19; electronic submissions [MSWORD or RTF formats preferred] to jolee@umn.edu): 15-25 page research and/or critical analysis paper on a specific topic related to the course.

For useful guidelines to writing annotated bibliographies, see the following sites:

CORNELL LIBRARY

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>

CLAREMONT GRADUATE LIBRARY

<http://writecenter.cgu.edu/students/annobib.html>

Sample annotated bibliography/descriptive catalogue entries:

PRODUCTION/PLAY: From the California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives Annotated Catalog to Productions and Scripts in the Asian American Theater Company Archives. Compiled by Cindy Kee, July 1997.

Title: *Fred Eng's Chinatown Tour*

Year Written: n.d.

Playwright(s): Frank Chin

Date(s) Produced: 1) March 22, 1974; 2) April 19, 1974; 3) April 27, 1974; 4) May 4, 1974; 5) May 17, 1974; 6) June 1, 1974-June 2, 1974

Production Location(s): 1) Luther Burbank High School Auditorium, Sacramento, CA; 2) Calvary Presbyterian Church; 3) Forum I, De Anza College; 4) University of California, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA; 5) Pine Methodist Church; 6) American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) Playroom

Director(s): Frank Chin and Janis Chan

Producer(s): N/A

Cast: 1) N/A; 2) N/A; 3) (In order of appearance) Don Tanaka, Eric Hayashi, Gil Chooy, Kathleen Chin, Cindy Goo, Joe Yoshino, Jr., Marc Hayashi, Marilyn Wong, Michael Chan, Woody Moy, Kathleen Frank Chinlin Abe; 4) (In order of appearance) Don Tanaka, Eric Hayashi, Gil Chooy, Cindy Goo, Kathleen Chin, Joe Yoshino, Marc Hayashi, Marilyn Wong, Mike Chan, Woody Moy, Kathleen Frank Chin Abe; 5) Haley Yee, etc. ; 6) (In order of appearance) Don Tanaka, Eric Hayashi, Gil Chooy, Kathleen Chin, Cindy Goo, Joe Yoshino, Jr., Jeff Yuen, Marilyn Wong, Michael Chan, Woody Moy, Esther Yuen, Chris Salcedo, Franklin Abe

Script Available?: No

Notes: 1) N/A; 2) Only Act 1 of *Fred Eng's Chinatown Tour* was performed, 3-4) N/A; 5) This was "An Evening of Asian American Theater" presented by the San Francisco Center for Japanese American Studies. Haley Yee, as Freddie Eng, introduces his Chinatown tour; 6) N/A. *Fred Eng's Chinatown Tour* was developed by the actors and directors from taped interviews with Chinese Americans made for the Combined Asian American Resources Project, CARP.

Synopsis: *Fred Eng's Chinatown Tour* takes you on a journey through the Asian American communities of the West Coast, from Seattle to Hanford, from San Francisco's Chinatown to the migrant labor camps of the San Joaquin Valley, and right into the kitchen of his own home to meet his family in their apartment overlooking the gaudy trappings of the Chinese New Year's parade. Utilizing the voices of housewives, actors, businessmen, laborers, and others from a collection of interviews, this production is a combination of drama, music, dance and mime. (From Asian America Theater Workshop/Company press release)

BOOKS (Sample from the Claremont Graduate Library website):

Davis, Lennard J. *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1996. Influenced by Foucault's studies on modes of discourse, Davis attempts to describe the novel's "threshold" (the point at which texts become what we now recognize as novels) by analyzing the "ensemble" of written texts surrounding and leading to the formation of the novel, including literature, newspapers,

advertisements, laws, etc. While the conflation of fact and fiction in journalism, history and literature—and the contrary move towards separating the categories by law—may be interesting and insightful, the book as a whole lacks coherence and integrity in its claims.

JOURNAL ARTICLES (Samples from the Cornell University Library website):

The following example uses the **APA format** for the journal citation:

Goldschneider, F. K., Waite, L. J., & Witsberger, C. (1986). Nonfamily living and the erosion of traditional family orientations among young adults. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.

This example uses the **MLA format** for the journal citation:

Waite, Linda J., Frances Kobern Goldscheider, and Christina Witsberger.
"Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.