

Discipline Placement: Ethnic Studies (Masters Required) or English (Masters Required)

Department: English

Prefix and Number: ENGL 150

Catalog Course Title: Asian American Literature

Banner Course Title: Asian American Literature

Units and Hours

	Hours per Week	Total Hours per Term (Based on 16-18 Weeks)	Total Units
Lecture	3.000	48.0 - 54.0	
Lab	0.000	0.0 - 0.0	
Outside-of-Class Hours	6.000	96.0 - 108.0	
Total Student Learning Hours	9.0	144.0 - 162.0	3.0

Total Contact Hours	3.0	48.0 - 54.0	
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Number of Times Course may be Repeated

0

Grading Method

Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

Requisites

English 101: Freshman Composition

Entrance Skills

None

Catalog Description

This course surveys the literature written by American authors of Asian descent, ranging from China, Japan, Korea, India, Pacific Islands and South East Asia. Course material offered will encompass a variety of genres, including memoir, fiction, poetry, drama, ethnographic studies, graphic novels and others, and will present a mosaic of stories representative of the Asian American experience.

Course Content:

The term “Asian American” encompasses diverse geographies, politics, languages, religions, journeys and experiences, and the literature written by Asian Americans reflects that deep complexity. While its texts are heterogenous, this genre has manifested recurring themes, such as: memory, cultural legacy, traditions vs. modernity, contextualizing “model minority” stereotypes, and reclaiming Asian American identities and experiences as legitimately American.

This course will be structured thematically, representing a sampling of 150 years worth of historical narratives presented by a kaleidoscope of Asian races. In order to understand these varied stories, students will be provided a basic cultural, historical and political lesson on the countries of origins represented.

Themes include:

1. The Immigrant Experience: Assimilation and Memory
2. Intersectionality: The Evolving Identity
3. The Model Minority Stereotype: Anti-Racist and Equity Struggles
4. Racial Validation: The Use of Fantasy and Comedy to Dilute Racial Trauma
5. Dominant Perspective of Asian Bodies: Fetishization, Hypersexualization and Otherness

**Sample Writing assignment included below based on themes

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand the basic history, politics and culture of varied Asian countries through reading stories from authors from those regions.
2. Develop an awareness of an Americanness not conventionally focused on and broaden one's perspective and empathy on what it means to be American.
3. Recognize the intersections of race, class, politics, gender, sexuality within the Asian American community through the synthesis of narratives.
4. Engage with and write about ethnic studies concepts of struggle, resistance, racial and social justice, and how these concepts are central and specific to the Asian American experience.
5. Apply anti-racist and anti-colonial concepts to critically analyze how racial categories of varied Asian races have been constructed and deconstructed in the U.S. the last 150 years.
6. Through the study of Asian American literature, examine concepts such as racism, racialization, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, decolonization and challenges specific to diasporic Asian communities, focusing on the complex factors that have led to an increase in AAPI hate crimes.

Methods of Instruction

- Exams/Tests
- Quizzes
- Research Projects

- Papers
 - Class Participation
 - Class Work
 - Home Work
 - Writing Requirements
 - Other
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Assignments

Sample Writing Assignment #1: The Immigrant Experience: Assimilation and Memory

Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* braids talk- stories from China with life in the U.S., balancing the delicate relationship between the desire to assimilate and accept cultural lineage. Utilizing this theme common among Asian American literature, compare and contrast this with other sources read in this course. How do the protagonists in these stories accept dual realities and identities?

Sources:

1. Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*
2. Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*
3. Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada and Shaw Wong, *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*
4. Gus Lee, *China Boy*
5. Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*
6. Andrew X. Pham, *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam*
7. Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*
8. Yi Yun Li, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*

Sample Writing Assignment #2: Intersectionality: The Evolving Identity

Intersectionality refers to the experience in which Asian American marginalization or oppression is intensified when an individual identifies with an additional category of difference that is also marginalized, such as gender, sexuality, social class, or disability. Asian women, for example, standing at the "intersection" of gender and race, have

suffered oppression and marginalization through multiple dimensions, and experience complex social inequalities.

In this essay you will analyze two of the assigned readings that represent Asian American intersectionality. You will clearly state what intersectionality is represented in each text, and make a claim—by way of a thesis statement—about how those intersections function similarly or differently in the two texts.

Sources:

1. Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*
2. Ye Chun, *Hao*
3. Celeste Ng, *Little Fires Everywhere*
4. Jenny Zhang, *Sour Heart*
5. Jean Kwok, *Girl in Translation*

Sample Writing Assignment #3: The Model Minority Stereotype: Anti-Racist and Equity Struggles

Utilizing the personal narratives and scholarly journals read in this class, analyze how focusing on the financial and academic success of Asians immigrants in America is a way for the white majority to discredit the struggles of Hispanics and African Americans. How has the “Model Minority” stereotype altered societal expectations of Asian Americans? How does this single-story stereotype contribute to political divisiveness and an increase in AAPI hate crimes?

Sources:

1. Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings*
2. Amy Chua, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mom*
3. Scholarly publications, editorials and ethnographies on the subject

Sample Writing Assignment #4: Racial Validation: The Use of Fantasy and Comedy to Dilute Racial Trauma

In *Minor Feelings*, Cathy Park Hong defines “minor feelings” as “the racialized range of emotions that are negative, dysphoria, and therefore untelegenic, built from the sediments of everyday racial experience and the irritant of having one’s perspective of reality constantly questioned or dismissed” (Hong 55). Hong makes the argument that due to a societal disregard of the Asian American struggle, writers create stories focused on a white audience. Utilizing Charles Yu’s *Interior Chinatown* and Gene Luen Yang’s *American Born Chinese*, analyze: In what ways did the protagonist in these stories use fantasy and comedy in order to dilute racial trauma? Why did these Chinese American protagonists believe that their oppression is less warranted? How is Kung Fu used as a

literary device that represents a source of cultural pride and a stereotype Asian American males are oppressed by?

Sources:

1. Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings*
2. Charles Yu, *Interior Chinatown*
3. Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese*

Sample Writing Assignment #5: Dominant Perspectives of Asian Bodies: Fetishization, Hypersexualization and Otherness

We learned from our assigned readings that for over 100 years Asian bodies have been fetishized in popular western culture. Historically, American and European men fighting wars in Asia spiked demand for Asian sex workers, which gave rise to the trope of the hypersexual but docile Asian woman who is the object of white men's desire.

The damaging effects of this trope are salient today. In 2021 Robert Aaron Long, a white 21-year-old gunman, killed eight people in Atlanta, six of whom were Asian women. He told the police the spas where the women worked were a "temptation he wanted to eliminate" because of his sex addiction. This recent example demonstrates how the individual, unique, and invaluable human lives of Asian women were reduced to objects of desire that needed to be "eliminate[d]."

Less overt but pervasive examples of modern fetishization are found in Korean Pop or "K-pop." Popular music videos such as "Gangnam Style" by Korean artist, Psy, have led western audiences to generalize and fetishize Korean identity based on popular representations. The assumption that all Korean men are like Psy has a dehumanizing effect and strips Asian men of individuality.

Choosing either Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, Lysley Tenorio's *Monstress: Stories* or Patricia Park's "The Madame Butterfly Effect: Tracing the History of a Fetish," compare the fetishization, hypersexualization or otherness of Asian bodies in one of these texts to another, real-life example of the fetishization, hypersexualization or otherness of minority bodies you have identified. Describe how both serve as examples, and answer the following: What is achieved by those who are fetishizing, hypersexualizing or othering people groups? What are the consequences for those on the receiving end? What do you propose can be done to combat the fetishization, hypersexualization or othering of minorities?

Sources:

1. Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*
2. Lysley Tenorio, *Monstress: Stories*
3. Patricia Park's "The Madame Butterfly Effect: Tracing the History of a Fetish"

Texts and Other Instructional Materials

1. Cathy Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: As Asian American Reckoning*
2. Frank Chin, Jeffrey Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, Shawn Wong, *The Big Aiiieeeee!: An Anthology of Chinese American and Japanese American Literature*
3. Rajini Srikanth and Min Hyoung Song, *The Cambridge History of Asian American Literature*
4. Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, *Race, Class and Gender: Intersections and Inequalities*

Other Appropriate Texts:

Gus Lee, *China Boy*

Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*

Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*

Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese*

Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*

Adrian Tomine, *Shortcomings*

Lysley Tenorio, *Monstress: Stories*

Craig Santos Perez poetry

Ha Jin, *A Free Life*

Ye Chun, *Hao*

Michelle Zauner, *Crying in H Mart*

Yi Yun Li, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*

Gish Jin, *Who's Irish?*

Celeste Ng, *Little Fires Everywhere*

Chang-Rae Lee, *My Year Abroad*

Andrew X. Pham, *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam*

Jenny Zhang, *Sour Heart*

Jean Kwok, *Girl in Translation*

Amy Chua, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mom*

Gary Okihiro "Is Yellow Black or White?"

Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*

Hisaye Yamamoto, *Seventeen Syllables*

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Contextualize works written by American authors whose lineages come from countries throughout Asia.

2. Understand qualities specific to Asian American Literature and relevant historical, political, cultural contexts and critical frameworks that backdrop these narratives.
3. Critically analyze and research ethnic studies concepts rooted in the Asian American experience.
4. Develop skills in literary analysis, critical thinking and college writing.

Justification for Need

What need does the new course/course modification serve? For course modifications, specify how the outline will be modified.

The Asian American Literature course will support both the English Department and the Ethnic Studies program, providing students with the opportunity to explore diverse stories, which will increase overall empathy of different cultures, improve racial representation on campus and create awareness of varied perspectives.

How did you determine demand for this course and what is the basis for enrollment projections? Attach supporting data.

Mission Appropriate

ALLAN HANCOCK COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT *Allan Hancock College provides quality educational opportunities that enhance student learning and the creative, intellectual, cultural, and economic vitality of our diverse community.*

How does this course/program proposal align with Allan Hancock College's mission statement? Educational Master Plan? Strategic Plan? Will it provide a basic skill, transfer, or vocational need? Will it be included in a certificate? Degree? Licensure?) Please refer to your program review, and/or annual update.

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The Asian American Literature course aligns completely with AHC's mission statement, in particular by providing material not currently taught on campus that supports diversity in our community. This course will provide transfer level credits for English and Ethnic Studies majors, and could be included in a certificate program.

Program Selection Skills (Certificate of Accomplishment - Active)

English

Ethnic studies

