

Asian Pacific American Autobiography

CES 314/ Engl. 314
Topics in Asian Pacific American Literature
Spring Semester 2004
Time: MWF; 12:10-1:00
Place: CUE 207

Instructor: Rory Ong
Office #: Brian 302Q
Phone #: 335-7089
rjong@mail.wsu.edu
Office Hrs: MW: 3:30-5:00 pm

Required Texts:

Reading Autobiography. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson.
Beyond the Killing Fields: Voices of Nine Cambodian Survivors in America. Usha Welaratna
Last Witnesses: Reflections on the Wartime Internment of Japanese Americans. Erica Harth.
America Is In the Heart. Carlos Bulosan.
Living for Change. Grace Lee Boggs
Yell-Oh Girls. Vickie Nam
Supplemental Readings.

Objectives:

In this course, we will examine the autobiographical writings, memoirs, or life writings (personal essays) written by Asian Pacific Americans. We will specifically be looking at these writings, and the act of writing, for their influence on the invention of memory, personal history, and personal life story. We will also view current autobiographical films and documentaries as some of the new forms of lived discourses that are produced. For Asian Pacific Americans the task involves not merely telling one's story, but telling the personal tale as a rewriting of the American experience, an intervention in traditional American autobiography, and thus an interruption in the "lived site" Asians call America.

Course Requirements:

Reading Responses

I will be asking you to write responses for each week of the assigned readings. These need to be 2-3 pages in length, per week, and must be typewritten and double-spaced. These responses will help you begin exploring, formulating, and articulating your thoughts and ideas about the readings. Critical responses will be due periodically (see Syllabus). Late critical responses will be graded accordingly. These will count toward 15% of the total grade.

Article Review

Students are required to review one article from a scholarly journal, or a chapter from a collection of scholarly articles that address issues of autobiography, memoir, life writing, or life narratives. A list of possible journals and/or collection of scholarly articles and texts will be made available to you. The Article Review should be 3-4 pages typed, and double-spaced with the bibliographic information at the top of the page. The article review will count toward 20% of the total grade.

Position Paper/Presentation

A position paper is a "semi-in/formal" response to the materials we read. You are required to write 1 position paper, 3-4 pages long, typed and double-spaced. You will also read your paper to the class aloud as a point of departure for class discussion. The position paper must thoughtfully engage one of the assigned readings, or perhaps a theme that travels across several readings. **I do not want only summary, although this will be useful. I also want your critical**

engagement with the material. The position paper will count as 30% of the total grade.

Final Research Paper

Students are required to write a final research paper anywhere from 8-10 pages long, typewritten and double-spaced. Papers must have a bibliography of at least 5 references which include at least 3 pieces of literature and 2 scholarly articles (or scholarly chapters from books) as part of the research/analysis. Research papers may be extensions or revisions of the position paper. The final paper will count toward 35% of the total grade.

Policies:

Grading

Grades will be averaged in the following proportions:

Reading Responses	15%
Article Review	20%
Position Paper/Presentation	30%
Final Research Paper	35%

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. However, if you know in advance that you will have to miss class for a legitimate reason, contact me to see whether arrangements can be made to make up any work that will be missed. **If you have more than four (4) unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered one point for every absence thereafter.**

Extra Credit

Periodically there may be exhibits, speakers, or films that may serve as extra credit. I will announce them when they come up. For the extra credit write up a one page synopsis of the event. Extra credit in no way serves as an alternative to the course materials, only as a supplement. Extra credit only counts as 1 point per extra credit.

Disability Accommodations

I support those members of our university community who request disability accommodations. Please notify me during the first 2 weeks of class for any requirements needed for the course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. All formal requests should be made through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in the Administrative Annex Bldg, Rm. 206, 335-1566. Late notification may result in the request being unavailable.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, the use of primary or secondary sources without proper citation or acknowledgment, copying or claiming someone else's work as your own, is illegal and is not acceptable in this or any other class at WSU. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism will result in a grade of F for the assignment in question, or a grade of F for the entire course. Should there be any suspicion of plagiarism, I will Read the situation with you before penalties are enforced.

Syllabus:

Monday, January 12: Introduction to the Course. Handout Syllabus.

Wednesday, January 14: Read Chapter 1, "Life Narrative" in *Reading Autobiography* (RA).

- Friday, January 16: Read “Where Are You From?” by Geeta Kothari (Supplemental Reading--SR).
- Monday, January 19: **Martin Luther King Holiday. All University Holiday.**
- Wednesday, January 21: Read “Introduction: The Shame of Arrival” by Amitava Kumar (SR).
- Friday, January 23: Read Chapter 4 “Life Narrative in Historical Perspective” (RA).
- Monday, January 26: Read Chapter 2, “Autobiographical Subjects” (RA); also read “The History of Asians in America” by Timothy Fong (SR).
- Wednesday, January 28: Read “America Is In The Heart” by Carlos Bulosan.
- Friday, January 30: “America Is In The Heart,” cont’d.
- Monday, February 2: “America Is In The Heart,” cont’d. **Reading Responses due.**
- Wednesday, February 4: Read “Documentaries As Social History” by Jun Xing (SR) Film: *Bontoc Eulogy*.
- Friday, February 6: Film: *Bontoc Eulogy*, cont’d.
- Monday, February 9: Read “Nineteen in ’98: A Conversation On Studying the Internment” in Part IV of *Last Witnesses* (LW).
- Wednesday, February 11: Read “Another Spring” by Toyo Suyemoto; “Legacy of Silence I” by Mitsuye Yamada; and “Legacy of Silence II” by Jeni Yamada in Part I (LW).
- Friday, February 13: Read “Mixing Stories” by Stewart David Ikeda in Part II (LW).
- Monday, February 16: **President’s Day. Class Holiday.**
- Wednesday, February 18: Read “A Daughter’s Need to Know” by Marnie Mueller in Part II (LW).
- Friday, February 20: Read “Memories from Behind Barbed Wire” by John T. Tateishi; and “From Manzanar to the Present: A Personal Journey” in Part III (LW).
- Monday, February 23: Read “The Life and Times of *Rabbit in the Moon*” by Chizu Omori in Part IV (LW); Clips from *Rabbit in the Moon*.
- Wednesday, February 25: Video: *Family Gathering*.
- Friday, February 27: Video: *History and Memory*. **Reading Responses due.**
- Monday, March 1: Read “No Name Woman” by Maxine Hong Kingston; also “Lalita Mashi” by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni (SR).

- Wednesday, March 3: Read “The Faintest Echo of our Language” by Chang Rae-Lee (SR); Video: *Miss India Georgia*.
- Friday, March 5: Video: *Miss India Georgia*, cont’d. **Article Review due.**
- Monday, March 8: Read Chapter Two “Autobiographical Acts” (RA).
- Wednesday, March 10: Read “Introduction” and Chpt. 1 “East Is East—Or Is It?” in *Living for Change* (LC)
- Friday, March 12: Read Chpt. 4 “Jimmy” and Chpt. 5 “The City Is the Black Man’s Land” (LC).
- Mon-Fri, March 15-19: **Spring Break.**
- Monday, March 22: Read Chpt. 7 “Going Back to China,” Chpt. 8 “New Dreams for the Twenty-First Century,” and Chpt. 9 “On My Own” (LC).
- Wednesday, March 24: Conference.
- Friday, March 26: Conference.
- Monday, March 29: Read “Name” by Amitava Kumar (SR). Clip: *I’m British but . .*
- Wednesday, March 31: Video: *Third Person Plural*.
- Friday, April 2: Video: *Third Person Plural*. **Reading Responses due.**
- Monday, April 5: Read Chpt. 1 “Historical Background” and Chpt. 3 “Look Tha: A Former Bhuddist Monk in *Beyond the Killing Fields* (BKF).
- Wednesday, April 7: Read Chpt. 5 “The Khmer Rough Revolution” and Chpt. 7 “Bun Thab: A Khmer Rouge Escapee” (BKF).
- Friday, April 9: Read Chpt. 9 “Coming to America,” Chpt. 10 “Niseth: A College Student,” and Chpt. 11 “Nya Srey: A Widowed Single Parent” (BKF).
- Monday, April 12: Video: *Xiclo*; also video clip from *Honk if you Love Buddha*.
- Wednesday, April 14: Conference.
- Friday, April 16: Conference. **Final Papers due.**
- Monday, April 19: Read sections “Orientation” and “Family Ties” in *Yell-O Girls*.
- Wednesday, April 21: Read sections “Dolly Rage” (YOG).
- Friday, April 23: Read sections “Finding My Voice” and “Girlwind” (YOG).

Monday, April 26: Video: *Kelly Loves Tony*. **Reading Responses due.**

Wednesday, April 28: Video: *Kelly Loves Tony*. **Course Evaluations.**

Friday, April 30: Individual Conferences.

Mon-Fri, May 3-7: **Finals Week.**