

**CES 211 / HST 201**  
**ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HISTORY**  
**T / Th 10:35 – 11:50, Fall 2007**

**John Streamas**  
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office hours: M 1:30 – 3:00  
T 3:00 – 4:30  
and by appointment

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**Course texts**

*Displacements and Diasporas: Asians in the Americas*, edited by Wanni W. Anderson and Robert G. Lee. Rutgers University Press, 2005.

*Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, by Sucheng Chan. Twayne, 1991.

*American Born Chinese*, by Gene Luen Yang. First Second, 2006.

*The Columbia Guide to Asian American History*, by Gary Y. Okihiro. Columbia University Press, 2001.

**Course description and objective**

This course is designed to teach the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans. Because almost three-fifths of the world's population is Asian, there are of course too many points of origin, too many peoples for a single course to cover adequately. I will apologize in advance if we spend too little time on South Asian Americans, Southeast Asian Americans, and Pacific Islander Americans. Though these are among the nation's fastest growing communities, still most of the existing literature concerns Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans, and our course will probably devote a disproportionate amount of attention—but hopefully not far too much—to these East Asian American groups.

My goal is to keep lectures to a minimum and to encourage and support discussion. Despite the large numbers of Asian Pacific Americans, still only two prominent histories exist, and one of these is usually taught in courses such as CES 111, the Introduction to Asian Pacific American Studies. We will read one of them, Chan's *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*; for, despite its age (published in 1991), still it remains generally the best overall work of its type. We will supplement and update it with Gary Okihiro's book on issues in Asian Pacific American history; with *Displacements and Diasporas*, a collection of very recent essays on a range of issues that are not often covered in courses such as this; and with Gene Luen Yang's graphic book *American Born Chinese*. These texts will be supplemented by handouts and films. We will watch documentaries such as *From 9066 to 9/11* as well as mainstream features.

**Course requirements**

*Reading journals.* On most Thursdays you will submit a Reading Journal, a short paragraph of six or seven sentences on the readings and films for the week. In your Journal you should indicate first whether you like or dislike the text and—mostly—you should explain why. Your explanation should say more than just “This reading assignment flowed well” or “This book makes no sense.” Why does a text flow well or make no sense? Explain. Your journals will count toward 10 percent of your course grade. Note that they will receive no individual grades. If you turn them in on time and explain your views of the assigned texts, you will

receive full credit for them. Note, however, that no late journals will be accepted unless you have cleared their lateness in advance.

*Attendance and participation.* Attendance is expected and required. An attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class period after the first week. More than three unexcused absences will result in reduced course grades. After the third absence, each new absence will shave one-half letter from your course grade. If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend on a given day, let me know in advance. Participation is also expected. Successful and useful discussions are possible only when you participate. Your attendance and participation will count toward 20 percent of your course grade.

*Midterm and final examination.* These will be fairly short tests of your grasp of the material and ideas we will discuss. The midterm will probably appear in two parts: a few multiple-choice questions and a few short-essay questions. The final will be a take-home test and will require a few short essay answers. If you keep up with assignments and discussions, you should do well on these. The midterm will count toward 10 percent of your course grade, the final toward 20 percent.

*Presentation.* During the semester you will make one presentation before the class, either a Text Presentation or a Paper Presentation. You will choose early in the term which type you will make. After choosing, you may not change.

A Text Presentation requires only that you lead a discussion of a text assigned for the day. You should briefly summarize the author's main points and then offer your own views of the text's strengths and weaknesses, and finally you should prepare two questions for the class. This should take roughly 15 minutes and will count toward 10 percent of your course grade.

You may choose, instead, to discuss your paper late in the term. A Paper Presentation should take 15 minutes. It should tell us the topic of your paper and explain your argument. You should also tell us why you chose the topic and how you wrote the paper. This will count toward 10 percent of your course grade.

Please note that your grade on the presentation will not be based on your diction and poise. This is not a course in public speaking, and you will not be penalized for nervousness or other problems.

*Paper.* You will write a paper of roughly 6 to 8 pages on a topic of your choice that is relevant to the material we cover during the term. I will distribute an assignment sheet with specific instructions and several suggested topics, but feel free to devise your own topic, as long as you discuss it with me in advance. The paper should argue for a position on an issue in Asian Pacific American history. You will be required to do a small amount of research—a bibliography citing two or three outside sources will suffice. As this will be a formal paper, all the standards of formal writing will apply as I grade. The paper is due at the end of the twelfth week, and it will count toward 30 percent of your course grade.

Please note that the last chapter of Okihiro's book—pages 244-306—is a long list of books, videos, and Web sites that may serve as sources for your paper. The list is current to 2001, but it is valuable.

## **Note**

WSU recognizes a category called "Asian American Pacific Islander American." Though this is fairly common, we will discuss its value and its limitations. Many Pacific Islander Americans want to be separated from Asian Americans. Some argue for categorization with other indigenous peoples, some for an entirely separate category called "Pacific Islander" or

“Oceanic.” The department of Comparative Ethnic Studies has not yet recognized a distinction, and so we will speak of “Asian Pacific Americans” or “Asian American Pacific Islander Americans.” But we must always be aware of the contradictions and problems inherent in any categorizations of peoples, and we must remain open to change.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC) during the first two weeks of every semester to seek information or to qualify for accommodations. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the DRC (Admin Annex Bldg, Room 205). Call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability counselor.

### **The schedule**

Please note that all assignments below are subject to change. You will be responsible for noting and adjusting to any changes.

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The collection edited by Anderson and Lee is listed below as *Displacements*. All other texts are indicated by authors' surnames.

Aug 21: Introduction to the course and to each other. Distribute syllabus.

Aug 23: Chan: Preface and Terminology and Transitions, xiii-xvii.

Aug 28: Chan, chapter one.

Aug 30: Chan, chapter two. Begin Text Presentations. **FIRST JOURNAL DUE.**

Sept 4: Chan, chapter three.

Sept 6: Chan, chapter four. **SECOND JOURNAL DUE.**

Sept 11: Chan, chapter five. Film: *From 9066 to 9/11*.

Sept 13: Chan, chapter six. **THIRD JOURNAL DUE.**

Sept 18: Chan, chapter seven.

Sept 20: Chan, chapter eight.

Sept 25: Chan, chapter nine and Conclusion.

Sept 27: Okihiro, Introduction, xiii-xvii, and Part 4. **FOURTH JOURNAL DUE.**

Oct 2: Okihiro, Part 1: Chapter 1.

Oct 4: **MIDTERM EXAM.**

Oct 9: Okihiro, Part 2: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2.

Oct 11: Okihiro, Part 2: Chapter 5. **PAPER ASSIGNED. FIFTH JOURNAL DUE.**

Oct 16: Okihiro, Part 3: Chapter 4.

Oct 18: Okihiro, Part 2: Chapter 3; Part 3: Chapter 2.

Oct 23: Yang: read whole book.

Oct 25: Yang. SIXTH JOURNAL DUE.

Oct 30: *Displacements*, Chapter 1.

Nov 1: *Displacements*, Chapter 2. SEVENTH JOURNAL DUE.

Nov 6: Begin Paper Presentations.

Nov 8: PAPER DUE.

Nov 13: *Displacements*, Chapters 7 and 9.

Nov 15: *Displacements*, Chapter 4. EIGHTH JOURNAL DUE.

Nov 27: *Displacements*, Chapter 5.

Nov 29: *Displacements*, Chapter 6.

Dec 4: *Displacements*, Chapter 14. FINAL EXAM ASSIGNED.

Dec 6: *Displacements*, TBA. Conclusion to the course.

Dec 10: Final exams due in my office by 4:00 PM.