SOGY 42
A SOCIOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE
ASIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Fall 2016
Dartmouth College

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Place: Kemeny 108
Time: 2A TuTh 2:25-4:15p
X-Hour: W 4:35-5:25p
Office Hours: M 9-11a (appt only) and W 2:30-4:30p (open)

Course Description
In 2012, there were an estimated 18.9 million U.S. residents who
identified as Asian. Although there was a 46% growth in the Asian
population between the 2000 and 2010—more than any other major
race group in the United States—Asian Americans and Pacific
Islanders (AAPIs) only make up approximately 5.6% of the overall U.S.
population. In this course, the “minority” status of AAPIs will be
examined via investigations of key historical, legal, and socio-cultural
topics.

This course first considers how the migration histories and racial/
ethnic experiences of AAPI groups differ significantly from other
“minority” groups (e.g., Blacks and Latinxs). By highlighting the
contexts of global and transnational migration, this course identifies the many ways in which AAPI
groups have been both excluded and differentially included in American politics and racial discourse
—whether as colonial subjects, exploited labor, transnational immigrants, or diasporic groups. We
will trace the multiple and heterogeneous histories, experiences, and cultural productions of AAPI
groups so that we can better understand how race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, citizenship, class, age,
and ability/disability have played pivotal roles in shaping the lives of AAPIs. We will engage in legal,
theoretical, empirical, and cultural texts to examine how AAPI has developed both as a racial
category and identity, especially in relation to other racial and ethnic groups.

In Unit 1, we will read theoretical texts about race and race
relations that will help ground our later discussions about the
Asian American Studies/Ethnic Studies Movement and the legal
and political history of AAPIs living in the United States.

In Unit 2, we will focus on how AAPIs have been contradictorily
portrayed as both the “Model Minority” and the “Yellow Peril.”
This unit uses historical events to help explain why certain
discourses were employed at different periods of time to justify
exclusion and/or inclusion. We will also explore the development of ethnic and racial consciousness—what it means to identify as
AAPI and who qualifies as AAPI. Even more importantly, we
must consider how AAPI groups and individuals have challenged
and confronted stereotypes and homogenizing narratives.

Twinkies
Paint your face red, white, and blue
Decorate your eyes with stars and Stripes
Insert color contacts until it gives you Cataracts
Bleach your black hair blonde
Don’t forget the roots
You’ll never wash your skin white
Consider yourself a Twinkie
Yellow on the outside—
Tasteful
In between—
White fluff.

—Ka Vang
**Course Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, including all readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments, students will be able to:

1. (Comprehension Level) explain why social science is a necessary contribution to Asian American Studies;
2. (Analysis Level) compare how social, historical, and political processes, both global and domestic, shape the social conditions of AAPI groups;
3. (Synthesis Level) design and create novel representations of AAPI inter- and intragroup heterogeneity;
4. (Evaluation Level) assess the ways in which AAPI groups nuance racial paradigms rooted in the black/white binary.

**Course Assessment**

**Participation**

Your participation will be evaluated based on your regular involvement in class, including but not limited to in-class engagement and active listening. I understand that not all students feel comfortable speaking up on a regular basis, but your daily reading along with your annotations should help you collect your thoughts and give you ideas to actively contribute to class dialogue. Each of you will also sign up to be discussion leaders for a chapter in the Lee and Zhou book. Detailed instructions will be given.

Guiding questions for assigned readings will be provided in Canvas. These questions are meant to help you organize your thoughts for class dialogue and for completing the Annotated Bibliography assignment. Although you do not have to submit your responses for a grade, you are still expected to annotate and take notes to answer these questions during in-class dialogue. You will have the option of responding to the guiding questions in the “Discussions” function in Canvas. You can also respond to your classmates’ responses. This can contribute to your participation grade.

You could also come up to speak to me after class or during office hours so that I can evaluate your engagement with the course. At the end of the course, **you will be required to submit a short 300 word write-up evaluating the quality of your participation in the course.** A prompt will be provided. Note: It may also be possible to speak too much. Please be respectful of your peers. Remember to “step up and step back.”

**Creative Narrative**

This creative narrative project allows you to use any medium of your choice (e.g., analytical essay; mock periodical; a collection of short stories, poems, paintings, and photographs; children’s book; performance; video; etc.) to apply what you have learned in this class and create a creative *jet* analytical narrative about something you think is currently relevant to AAPIs. Your topic may include your family or community (however you define it), but it must reference current or historical events, as well as course readings and topics. Your project **must** include a written contextual analysis that applies a critical sociological lens to investigating and documenting the multiple and heterogeneous AAPI experience. This means that you cannot simply turn in an overly individualized and decontextualized or purely historical story or project. When in doubt, refer back to Mills’ piece (Week 1) and consider the sociological imagination and how personal biographies are shaped by social histories. This project requires that you apply your personal lives and interests to the larger narratives, experiences, and theories about AAPIs. For more information, see prompts.
Final Exam
Exam questions will require you to synthesize and analyze all course readings, discussion, and lecture material. The exam is cumulative. You will be graded on how well you incorporate all elements of course material into your essay answers. Exams will be submitted as Word or PDF files via Canvas.

Course Format
The course will include a combination of lecture, dialogue/discussion, and film/other media analysis. Lectures and dialogue complement and supplement the required readings, rather than summarize them. Be sure to complete readings before class so that we all share an informed context when partaking in lectures and dialogue in class. Classes are run based on the assumption that you have done all the readings assigned for that day.

We will have readings, writing assignments, and dialogue that encourage students to develop a “sociological imagination,” as introduced by C. Wright Mills. This approach will be based on personal experience (biographies) and social history. We will also draw on the critical and contextualizing tools of sociology and social theory. See Week 1 Reading.

I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus as needed to reflect the needs of the students and the course —given that I will always give you fair notice if these changes arise.

Required Texts
The required texts for this course will be available for purchase at the Dartmouth Bookstore and Wheelock Books. They are also on reserve in the library. Additional readings must be accessed through our course Canvas site: http://canvas.dartmouth.edu.


Grading
Grade Distribution

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<td>A-</td>
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Note: I don’t round grades. (e.g., 77.9% = C+ not B-)
Guidelines and Policies

Honor Principle
All academic work is to be conducted in accordance with Dartmouth’s principles of academic honor (http://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/). It may also be helpful for students to read Dartmouth’s statement on sources and citations: https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth. Cheating, plagiarism, use of the same work in multiple courses, and unauthorized collaboration will not be tolerated.

Student Accessibility Services and Other Accommodations
Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~accessibility/) may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Classroom Etiquette
Be on time, be engaged, do not use handheld or other electronic gadgets unless it is for translation or note-taking, and do your part to help make a great learning experience. You may only use tablets and laptops during class for note-taking or accessing your readings. I will not police your electronics usage. But, your use of devices for non-class purposes will negatively affect your participation grade. Be respectful to me and your fellow students. The tone with which we engage one another is extremely important and should come from a place of mutual respect and understanding. You are encouraged to critique and disagree with views raised in the course material or by others in the class, but you must do so with a reasoned approach based on a thorough consideration of the other argument. Your contributions to course dialogue must be grounded in the readings and supported by textual and/or empirical evidence. With that said, it is also possible for individual students to dominate the discussion without regard to others’ input and feedback. Remember to “step up” but also “step back.” Disrespectful behavior and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Late Policy
No make-up examinations or written assignment extensions will be granted except in extremely rare cases in which some unforeseen crisis/emergency arises. Some examples include severe illness requiring a doctor’s visit or hospitalization, death in the family, or college-excused events (which must be approved ahead of time). General malaise, forgetfulness, poor planning, helping family member or friends, computer problems, etc. etc. are NOT considered extreme circumstances. When in doubt, call me.

Absences
I will not take attendance for this course. However, it is of your best interest to attend all courses, as I will not offer mini-lectures in office hours or X-Hours. Please ask your classmates for their notes if you are absent. Chronic absences will cause a significant loss of points from your participation grade, as will routinely showing up to class late or leaving early. Please see class policies on late and missed work. Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.


**Re-Grading of Assignments**

If you believe that I made an error in grading an assignment, please provide me with a written explanation of why your grade should be changed, not to exceed one page, along with a clean (unmarked) copy of the work in question. Based on your rationale and my careful examination of your work, your grade may go up, go down, or remain the same. You have one week from the date the assignment is returned to you to request that it be re-graded.

**Canvas**

Canvas will be our primary source of communication outside of class. Make sure you check it regularly and notify me immediately if you have any trouble accessing the course Canvas site.

**Correspondence and Communications**

If you have a question, you must first consult the syllabus and then ask a friend in the class. Thereafter, please call me at my office phone (603) 646-1091. I am usually in my office, and when I am not, I will have access to my voicemails after hours. If a matter is urgent, I will respond within 24 hours via email or phone (if you leave me your phone number). If the matter can be resolved by reviewing the syllabus, you can interpret my non-response as a clue for you to scour the syllabus.

**Office Hours Location**

The easiest way to find my office is to go through the back entrance of the White Church/The Church of Christ (through the RED door), located at 40 College Street, next to the SAE House. There are several other entrances, but this one is the easiest for you to locate my office. Once you go through the red door, walk up the half flight of stairs. Go through the door at the top of the stairs and make an immediate left. The Society of Fellows office is directly across from the Ombuds Office and next to the single stall/gender neutral bathroom. If you come in through the other entrances, follow those landmarks and you will find my office. If you see children, you are in the basement. And if you see the sanctuary, walk towards the restrooms near the back of the church.

**Course Schedule**

NOTE: Bring all texts to class. Readings are to be completed by class time on the day noted below.

**Unit 1. Situating Asian America**

Week 1, Tuesday 9/13 – Theorizing Assimilation, Race, and Intersectionality


Week 1, Thursday 9/15 – Theorizing Assimilation, Race, and Intersectionality

Week 2, Tuesday 9/20 – Theorizing Assimilation, Race, and Intersectionality


Week 2, Thursday 9/22 – Immigration and the Durability of Inequality


Week 3, Tuesday 9/27 – Making Asian America


*Due: Creative Narrative Proposal

Week 3, Thursday 9/29 – Interrogating the AAPI Experience

Ishizuka, Karen. 2016. Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties. ACT II

Week 4, Tuesday 10/4 – Interrogating the AAPI Experience, continued


Week 4, Wednesday 10/5 X-Hour – Workshop rubrics

Week 4, Thursday 10/6 – Struggling to Define Citizenship


Unit 2. Interrogating Difference through Empire and War

Week 5, Tuesday 10/11 – War Time: Shadows of War


*Due: Creative Narrative Rubric
Week 5, Wednesday 10/12 X-Hour – “First Personal Plural” [https://dartmouth.kanopystreaming.com/video/first-person-plural]

Week 5, Thursday 10/13 – War Time: Shadows of War

Week 6, Tuesday 10/18 – Southeast Asians and Critical Refuge(e) Studies

Week 6, Thursday 10/20 – Critical Refuge(e) Studies, continued.

Week 7, Tuesday 10/25 – Critical Refuge(e) Studies, continued.

*Due: Creative Narrative Annotated Bibliography*

Week 7, Wednesday 10/26 X-Hour – Peer Review of Creative Narratives

Week 7, Thursday 10/27 – Critical Refuge(e) Studies, continued.
Chiu, Monica. “Medical, Racist, and Colonial Constructions of Power in Anne Fadiman’s *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down.*” Pp. 370-392 in *AAS Now Reader.*

Week 8, Tuesday 11/1 – Contemporary Cultures, Politics, and Communities
[https://lettersforblacklives.com/about-the-letter-ed27ca67eb2e#.la7j2gn0o]

Week 8, Thursday 11/3 – A Sociological Inquiry: The Asian American Achievement Paradox

*Due: Creative Narrative*

Week 9, Tuesday 11/8 – A Sociological Inquiry: The Asian American Achievement Paradox

Week 9, Wednesday 11/9 X-Hour – Sharing of Creative Narratives with classmates and invited guests

Week 9, Thursday 11/10 – A Sociological Inquiry: The Asian American Achievement Paradox

Week 10, Tuesday 11/15 – Sharing of Creative Narratives with classmates and invited guests

*Due: Participation Evaluation*

**Final Exam**
- Available Wednesday, November 16 via Canvas
- Due Sunday, November 20, 2016 at 11:59p via Canvas