

LTCS/CGS 119GS Asian American Film & Media - Pleasure & Protest (1980-Present)

Professor Hoang Tan Nguyen

Course Description The course explores the role of pleasure, and protest, in the production, reception, and performance of Asian American identities in film and video. We will review the debates about stereotype criticism in Asian American media studies and go on to examine the “perverse” potentials of spectatorship. The course considers how the representations of the deviant sexuality of Asian Americans (e.g. hypersexual women and emasculated men) do more than uniformly harm and subjugate Asian American subjects. We will look at how Asian American filmmakers have protested toxic media representations *and* how they have articulated the pleasure and joy of Asian American lives in their work. We will study a range of media genres, including narrative fiction, documentary, experimental shorts, video art, and art cinema. For the Global Seminar edition, the second half of the course will showcase Vietnamese American film, examining such themes as Vietnamese diaspora, refugeeism, memory, archives, queerness, and narratives of return.

Required Texts

- All required readings are posted on Canvas.
- All films listed in the syllabus (accessible at Electronic Course Reserves)
- The Columbia Film Language Glossary, <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/>

Recommended Texts

- Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience* (any edition)
- Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* (any edition)
- Peter Feng, *Identities in Motion: Asian American Film and Video*
- Darrell Hamamoto and Sandra Liu, *Countervisions: Asian American Film Criticism*
- Lori Kido Lopez and Vincent N. Pham, *The Routledge Companion to Asian American Media*
- Glen M. Mimura, *Ghostlife of Third Cinema: Asian American Film and Video*
- Jun Okada, *Making Asian American Film and Video: History, Institutions, Movements*
- Celine Parreñas Shimizu, *The Hypersexuality of Race: Performing Asian / American Women On Screen and Scene* and *Straitjacket Sexualities: Unbinding Asian American Manhoods in the Movies*
- Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*

Course Requirements Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and films before class, attend all class meetings on time and stay for the entire period, engage actively in classroom

discussions, post five (5) reading/viewing responses to Canvas, take a film terms quiz, complete an in-class midterm, and write a final paper. In addition, students will give a twenty-minute group oral presentation.

Grades will be based on the following assignments:

25% Five (5) reading/viewing responses on Canvas

10% In-class participation

5% Film Terms Quiz

10% Group Oral Presentation

25% Midterm

30% Final Paper

Classroom Etiquette Students should follow proper standards of classroom decorum during all class meetings to ensure a productive learning environment for everyone. Proper etiquette includes engaging in active dialogue, allowing classmates equal time and opportunity to participate in discussions, and keeping focus on the topics at hand with minimal digressions.

Canvas Postings To facilitate class discussion, post a 500-word critical response to the week's assigned readings and/or film. While your gut reactions are important, I ask that you support your response with evidence from the reading and film. I encourage you to read your classmates' responses before posting your own.

Group Oral Presentation Once during the quarter, you will collaborate with 2-3 classmates on a twenty-minute presentation. The oral presentation offers you the opportunity to hone your public speaking skills by delivering a concise, provocative meditation on the central ideas generated by that week's readings and films. Avoid biographical and textual summaries. Instead, zero in on one or two concepts that you find surprising and/or insightful. Make connections between the readings and films, whether they be continuities, oppositions, and disruptions. Anchor your commentary with specific passages from the texts (or sequences from the films). End your presentation with 2 questions to jump-start class discussion.

Late Work will be graded down an entire grade (from A > B; B- > C-) if handed in within 24 hours. Papers more than 24 hours late will not be accepted. Our policy about deadlines is strict. Extensions past 24 hours are only granted in documented medical emergencies. Note: Make sure to double-

check your document before you turn it in. I will not accept another version of your work past the due date because you submitted the wrong version of the assignment (previous drafts, missing pages, no Works Cited, etc). Whatever you turn in on the due date is the work I will grade. No exceptions.

Academic Integrity All students are expected to abide by the rules and regulations for academic integrity. Refresh your knowledge of UCSD's "Policy on Integrity of Scholarship" at the link <<http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>>. We take plagiarism infractions seriously and will follow the policies and procedures laid out by the university. If you have any questions, please speak with me.

Accommodations Students who think they may need accommodations in this course because of the impact of a learning, physical, or psychological disability are encouraged to meet with me privately early in the semester to discuss their concerns. In addition, students must contact the Office for Students with Disabilities, (858) 534-4382 <<http://disabilities.ucsd.edu/>>, as soon as possible to verify their eligibility for reasonable academic accommodations. Early contact will help to avoid unnecessary inconvenience and delays.

Declaring a CGS minor or major Many students take a Critical Gender Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a university or college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. A Critical Gender Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, education, public health, social work, non-profit work and many other careers. If you would like information about the Critical Gender Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Joje Reyes-Alonzo, Critical Gender Studies Program Advisor, via email at <cgs@ucsd.edu>.

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COURSE SCHEDULE

Introduction

Watch:

* *First*, dir. Daniel Chew and Micaela Durand, 2019, 12 minutes

* *First Generation*, dir. Jeannie Nguyen, 2017, 9 minutes

* *Hoài (Ongoing, Memory)*, dir. Quỳên Nguyen-Le, 2018, 11 minutes

Module 1 – Slanted Vision

Watch:

* [*All Orientals Look the Same*, dir. Valerie Soe, 1986, 2 minutes](#)

* [*Picturing Oriental Girls: A \[Re\]Educational Videotape*, dir. Valerie Soe, 1992, 12 minutes](#)

* [*Slaying the Dragon: Reloaded*, dir. Elaine Kim et al, 2011, 30 minutes](#)

* [*The Slanted Screen*, dir. Jeff Adachi, 2006, 55 minutes](#)

*MISE-EN-SCÈNE <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/mise-en-scene>

*CINEMATOGRAPHY <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/cinematography> (Plus: point of view, camera angle, camera movement, long shot / medium shot / close-up, establishing shot, long take, pan, dolly, handheld shot, crane shot, aerial shot, deep focus)

Read:

* [John Kuo Wei Tchen, “Asian,” *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* \(2015\)](#)

* [Jigna Desai, “Film,” *Keywords for Asian American Studies* \(2020\)](#)

* [Martin Joseph Ponce, “Sexuality,” *Keywords for Asian American Studies* \(2020\)](#)

Module 2 – #RepresentationMatters

Watch:

* *Crazy Rich Asians*, dir. Jon M. Chu, 2018, 121 minutes

*EDITING <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/editing> (Plus: 180-degree rule, eyeline match, montage, dissolve)

*SOUND <https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/sound> (Plus: diegetic, non-diegetic, voice-over, soundtrack)

Read:

[*Lori Kido Lopez, "Excessively Asian: Crying, *Crazy Rich Asians*, and the Construction of Asian American Audiences," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* \(2021\)](#)

[*Melissa Phruksachart, "The Bourgeois Cinema of Boba Liberalism," *Film Quarterly* \(2020\)](#)

Module 3 – Becoming American

Watch:

[* *Green Card: An American Romance*, dir. Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, 1982, 80 minutes](#)

[* *Vault*, dir. Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, 1984, 12 minutes](#)

*TU - Excerpts:

[* *Manzanar* \(Robert A. Nakamura, 1972\)](#)

[* *Wong Sinsang \(Eddie Wong, 1971\)*](#)

[* *...I Told You So* \(Alan Kondo, 1973\)](#)

[* *Hito Hata: Raise the Banner* \(Duane Kubo and Robert A. Nakamura\)](#)

Read:

[* Jun Okada, "Noble and Uplifting and Boring as Hell': Asian American Film and Video, 1971-1982," *Cinema Journal* \(2009\)](#)

[* Beverle Houston, "Television and Video Text: A Crisis of Desire," *Resolution: A Critique of Video Art* \(1986\), **Read pages 110-114, 116-122**](#)

Module 4 – Documentary, Activism, Affect

Watch:

[* *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, dir. Christine Choy, 1987, 87 minutes](#)

Read:

[*Scott Kurashige, "Re-reading Vincent Chin: Asian Americans and Multiracial Political Analysis" \(2016\)](#) **Read pages 126-128, 137-155**

[*Renee Tajima-Peña, "Fast Forward to History" \(2002\)](#)

[*Cathy Park Hong, "Stand Up," *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* \(2020\)](#)

Module 5 – Video Memory

Watch:

**History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige*, dir. Rea Tajiri, 1991, 32 minutes

**Memories from the Department of Amnesia*, dir. Janice Tanaka, 1989, 13 minutes

Read:

*Marita Sturken, "The Politics of Video Memory: Electronic Erasures and Inscriptions," [Screening Asian Americans](#) (1996)

*David Eng, "The Feeling of Kinship: Affect and Language in *History and Memory*," [The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy](#) (2010)

Module 6 – Vietnamese Diaspora

Watch:

**The Scent of Green Papaya*, dir. Tran Anh Hung, 1993, 104 minutes

Read:

*Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Just Memory" and "On War Machines," *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (2018)

*Sylvie Blum-Reid, "Scented Papaya," *East-West Encounters: Franco-Asian Cinema and Literature* (2003)

Module 7 – Return Narratives

Watch:

* *Three Seasons*, dir. Tony Bui, 1999, 113 minutes

* *Sigh Gone*, dir. Jeannie Nguyen, 2019, 10 minutes

Read:

* Long T. Bui, "Empire's Residuals: The Return Migration of Former Exiles to Globalizing Vietnam," *Returns of War: South Vietnam and the Price of Refugee Memory* (2018)

* Michele Janette, "Look Again: *Three Seasons* Refocuses American Sights of Vietnam," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* (2006)

Module 8 – Refugee Memories / Archives / Futures

Watch:

* *Journey from the Fall*, dir. Ham Tran, 2006, 135 minutes

* *Nước (Water/Homeland)*, dir. Quyen Nguyen-Le, 2016, 6 minutes

Read:

* Lan Duong, "Archives of Memory: Vietnamese American Films, Past and Present," *Film Quarterly* (2020)

* Vinh Nguyen, "Refugeetude: When Does a Refugee Stop Being a Refugee?" *Social Text* (2018)

* Ly Thuy Nguyen, "Queer Dis/inheritance and Refugee Futures," *Women's Studies Quarterly* (2020)

Module 9 – Return Narratives #2

Watch:

* *Oh, Saigon*, dir. Doan Hoang, 2007, 57 minutes

**De Mai Tinh / Fool for Love*, dir. Charlie Nguyen, 2010, 95 minutes

Read:

*Võ Hồng Chương-Đài, "When Memories Collide: Revisiting War in Vietnam and the Diaspora," *Film in Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2012)

*Nguyen Tan Hoang, "Fooled by Love: Viet Kieu Intimacy in Charlie Nguyen's *De Mai tinh* (2010)," *Visual Anthropology* (2018)

Module 10 – Queer Vietnam

Watch:

**Thưa Mẹ Con Đi / Goodbye Mother*, dir. Trinh Dinh Le Minh, 2019, 106 minutes

Read:

*Richard Quang-Anh Tran, "An Epistemology of Gender: Historical Notes on the Homosexual Body in Contemporary Vietnam, 1986-2005," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* (2014)

*Megan Sinnott, "Borders, Diaspora, and Regional Connections: Trends in Asian 'Queer' Studies," *The Journal of Asian Studies* (2010)