

# ASH 3931 – GLOBAL ASIAN/AMERICAN HISTORIES (SPRING 2020)

Tuesdays, Periods 2-3: 8:30-10:25am, and Thursdays, Period 3, 9:35-10:25am,  
in Anderson 0021

**Instructor:** Joe Orser

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**Student Hours:** Tuesdays, 1-3pm, in Farrior; Fridays, 10-11am, in The Hub lobby (near Starbucks/UFIC)

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## Course Description

This course explores the transpacific migrations of Asians to the Americas since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Students will use a transnational and comparative approach to consider the intersections of labor migration, imperialism, and U.S. wars in Asia with community formation, ethnic identities, and national citizenship. In so doing, we will examine how international migration changed both sending and receiving societies. The course will also follow the lives of East Asians, South Asians, and Southeast Asians who left Asia and explore the transformations they and their descendants experienced throughout the migration and settlement processes.

Every syllabus is supposed to have a section devoted to telling students what they will learn over the course of the semester. But what I want you to get out of the class may not be as important as your own goals for this semester. What do you want to take away from this course on Global Asian/American Histories? I'm not asking you to know this on the first day of class. But later this semester, after you've had a chance to get your bearings, I will ask you to set some Learning Outcomes for yourself. In the meantime, because it is important that I signal my own intentions, here are the Learning Outcomes that guided my design of the course.

As students of transnational Asian/American experiences, you should be able to:

- Relate histories about Asians in the Americas and their ongoing economic, cultural, ethnic, and political networks and relationships with those in Asia.
- Understand the stories and historical contexts in Asia as well as in the Americas.
- Analyze Asian migration to the Americas and its impact on Asia and on U.S.-Asian relations.
- Emphasize the mutual, interactive nature of cultural, institutional, and economic flows across the Pacific.

As students of History, you should be able to:

- Recognize and describe continuity and change over time.
- Recognize and articulate the diversity of human experience, including ethnicity, race, language, sex, and gender, as well as political, economic, social, and cultural structures over time and space.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources and identify and evaluate evidence.
- Improve your critical reading, writing, verbal, and multimedia communication skills.

If at any time you feel that you are not making progress toward these goals, the problem almost certainly lies with something I am (not) doing. (This assumes, of course, that you are completing the readings and writings.) Please feel free to discuss with me things that I can be doing to help you achieve the desired outcomes.

**Required Texts**

The following books are available for purchase at the university bookstore. You may also find them at online vendors.

- Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir* (2017).
- Erika Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (2015).
- Julie Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic: A Novel* (2011).

Other materials (primary documents, secondary essays, and online readings and videos) will be made available on Canvas as PDFs or links.

**Breakdown of Graded Components** (more on the assignments below)

Participation and Attendance	15%	Online Postings and Responses	15%
Graphic Memoir Reflection Essay	15%	In-Class Exam	15%
Historical Narrative Assignment	15%	Group Project + Individual Memo	25%

Here is the grading scale. Grades are NOT curved.

A 92.5-100; A- 89.5-92.4; B+ 86.5-89.4; B 82.5-86.4; B- 79.5-82.4; C+ 76.5-79.4; C 72.5-76.4; C- 69.5-72.4; D+ 66.5-69.4; D 62.5-66.4; D- 59.5-62.4; E below 59.5

**What You Need To Do**

- *Participation and Attendance.* Classes are more productive when students participate. Merely showing up will not be enough to earn a passing grade in discussion. Come to class ready to discuss your readings and writings. I encourage you to ask questions, answer questions, offer observations, and engage with the comments of your classmates.  
*A note on absences:* Attendance is the responsibility of the student. If you’re not in class, you’re not participating. Everyone will be granted three “no questions asked” missed periods during the semester. Use them wisely. After that, each missed period will decrease your final grade 1/3 of a letter grade (so an A- becomes a B+, and so on). Note that Tuesday’s classes are two periods in length, and Thursday’s are just one period. Of course, absences due to medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances are considered excused with proper documentation. If multiple absences become necessary, please speak to me.
- *Online Postings and Responses.* Beginning in Week 5 (and going until Week 14), you will regularly select a recent online news article (or some other contemporary artifact) that addresses an issue facing the global Asian/American community and analyze it using the readings and themes of the course. Each student will post three online submissions (of about 300-500 words each); on the weeks you do not post a submission, you will post a brief response to the work of your classmates. Details will follow.

- *Graphic Memoir Reflection Essay.* You will write an essay of about four pages in length that reflects on the Thi Bui book. What insights does *The Best We Could Do* offer to the study of Global Asian/American Histories? What value does the illustrated memoir bring to the study of history? We will discuss the assignment in greater detail at a later date. (Due to Canvas by 11:59pm on Friday, February 7)
- *Midterm Exam.* This will be an in-class exam on Thursday, February 27. Bring a bluebook.
- *Historical Narrative Assignment.* Taking Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* as your inspiration, you will use primary sources to tell a story about a Global Asian/American experience that is true to your sources and sheds insight into the historical past. Details will follow. (Due to Canvas by 11:59pm on Friday, April 10.)
- *Group Project + Individual Memo.* A semester-long course on "Global Asian/American Histories" can only cover so much. Working in a group of three or four, you will choose a topic that was not covered or only briefly mentioned in the class, trace its historical roots, development over time, and the causal links to its present form. You will work with group members to prepare and deliver an engaging presentation to the class. In short, address why your topic should be included in a course examining Global Asian/American Histories. In addition to the group presentation, each student will reflect on the experience through an individual "historians' memo". Details on the group project and individual memo will follow. (Presentations are tentatively scheduled to begin on April 21 and conclude during the final exam period.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

Two notes:

- Unless otherwise stated, reading assignments should be completed by the first meeting of each week.
- The course syllabus is subject to change. Because we go beyond scholarly writing about history and includes other sources of information, there is always the chance that I will add (and subtract) pieces to the syllabus as we go. Students will be notified at least one week before any changes. All new reading or viewing assignments will be posted to Canvas.

### **Part 1: A Globalized World**

Week 1 [Jan. 7, 9]: Global Asian/American Histories: An Introduction

Readings for Thursday, Jan. 9. Read for fun, to get a sense of themes, stories, and perspectives. Don't fret over them. If you can only read three, choose between Zia and Takaki for one of them.

- Helen Zia, "From Nothing, a Consciousness"
- Ronald Takaki, "From a Different Shore: Their History Bursts with Telling"
- Vijay Prashad, "The Forethought: Raw Skin"
- Paul Spickard, "Whither the Asian American Coalition?"

Week 2 [Jan. 14, 16]: Making Asian America, 1965 and Beyond

- Erika Lee, "Ch. 13: Making a New Asian America Through Immigration and Activism"

- Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, “Journeys for Peace and Liberation: Third World Internationalism and Radical Orientalism during the U.S. War in Vietnam”
- Ellen D. Wu, “Model Minority/Asian American”
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 3 [Jan. 21, 23]: Post-1965 Immigration and Asian America

- Lee, “Ch. 16: Transnational Immigrants and Global Americans”
- Edward Taehan Chang, “Confronting *Sa-i-gu*: Twenty Years after the Los Angeles Riots”
- Sandhya Shukla, “New Immigrants, New Forms of Transnational Community: Post-1965 Indian Migrations”
- Anna Romina Guevarra, “Living the Dream”
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 4 [Jan. 28, 30]: Refugees and their Struggles in Asia and America

- Lee, “Ch. 14: In Search of Refuge: Southeast Asians in the United States,” and “Ch. 15: Making a New Home: Hmong Refugees and Hmong Americans”
- Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do* (the whole thing)
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 5 [Feb. 4, 6]: Detention, Deportation, and Racial Violence

- John Richardson, “Is This Man a Monster?”
- Jaideep Singh, “Memory, Invisibility, and the Oak Creed Gurdwara Massacre: A Sikh American Perspective of the ‘Post-Racial’ U.S.”
- Jose Antonio Vargas, “My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant”
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

**\*\*\* GRAPHIC MEMOIR REFLECTION ESSAY DUE TO CANVAS BY 11:59PM ON FRIDAY, FEB. 7**

## **Part 2: Labor Migrations and Early Settlements**

Week 6 [Feb. 11, 13]: Deep Roots:

- Lee, “Ch. 1: *Los Chinos* in New Spain and Asians in Early America,” and “Ch. 2: Coolies”
- Yong Chen, “The Internal Origins of Chinese Emigration to California Reconsidered”
- Sucheta Mazumdar, “What Happened to the Women? Chinese and Indian Male Migration to the United States in Global Perspective”
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 7 [Feb. 18, 20]: Colonization in the Pacific

- Lee, “Ch. 3: Chinese Immigrants in Search of Gold Mountain”
- Ronald Takaki, “‘An Entering Wedge’: The Origins of the Sugar Plantation and a Multi-Ethnic Working Class in Hawaii”
- Elizabeth Sinn, “Pacific Ocean: Highway to Gold Mountain, 1850-1900”
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 8 [Feb. 25, 27]: From Restriction to Exclusion

- Lee, "Ch. 4: 'The Chinese Must Go!': The Anti-Chinese Movement"
- Gordon H. Chang, "China and the Pursuit of America's Destiny: Nineteenth-Century Imagining and Why Immigration Restriction Took So Long"
- Emma Jinhua Teng, "'A Problem for Which There Is No Solution': The New Hybrid Brood and the Specter of Degeneration in New York's Chinatown"
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

**\*\*\* IN-CLASS EXAM ON THURSDAY, FEB. 27. BRING A BLUEBOOK.**

### **Part 3: Imperial Migrations and Anti-Colonial Movements**

Week 9 [Mar. 10, 12]: The Settling of Japanese America

- Lee, "Ch. 5: Japanese Immigrants and the 'Yellow Peril'"
- Julie Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 10 [Mar. 17, 19]: Independence Movements, I: Korea

- Lee, "Ch. 6: 'We Must Struggle in Exile': Korean Immigrants"
- Lili Kim, "Korean Independence Movement in Hawaii and the Continental United States"
- Chris Suh, "What Yun Chi-ho Knew: U.S.-Japan Relations and Imperial Race Making in Korea and the American South, 1904-1919"
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 11 [Mar. 24, 26]: Independence Movements, II: India

- Lee, "Ch. 7: South Asian Immigrants and the 'Hindu Invasion'"
- Vivek Bald, "From Ships' Holds to Factory Floors"
- Joan M. Jensen, "Exporting Independence to Colonial India"
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 12 [Mar. 31, Apr. 2]: Positively No Filipinos Allowed

- Lee, "Ch. 8: 'We Have Heard Much of America': Filipinos in the U.S. Empire"
- Stefi San Buenaventura, "The Colors of Manifest Destiny: Filipinos and the American Other(s)"
- Eiichiro Azuma, "Racial Struggle, Immigrant Nationalism, and Ethnic Identity: Japanese and Filipinos in the California Delta"
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

**\*\*\*HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ASSIGNMENT DUE TO CANVAS BY 11:59PM ON FRIDAY, APRIL 10**

### **Global Politics, U.S. Citizenship, and the "Homeland"**

Week 13 [Apr. 7, 9]: Japanese/Americans and WWII:

- Lee, "Ch. 9: Border Crossings and Border Enforcement: Undocumented Asian Immigration" and "Ch. 10: 'Military Necessity': The Uprooting of Japanese Americans During World War II"
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 14 [Apr. 14, 16]: WWII and Cold War:

- Lee, “Ch. 11: ‘Grave Injustices’: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II,” and “Ch. 12: Good War, Cold War”
- Documents (PDF on Canvas)

Week 15 [Apr. 21]: Producing Global Asian/American Histories, I

- Group Presentations

Week 16 [Finals Week]: Producing Global Asian/American Histories, II

- Group Presentations