Asian American Literature

ENGL 65. Spring 2012: Tuesday and Thursday 11:20-12:35pm

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How does “Asian American” operate as a contested category of ethnic and national identity? This course examines literature, film, and critical theory created by contemporary writers in order to examine the development of Asian America as a literary field. While the course covers a diverse range of Asian immigrant histories, we will pay specific attention to the formation of Asian American subjectivities across differences of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class. Readings will be organized both chronologically and in response to a series of thematic issues, including:

• Asian American racial formation
• Gendered narratives of immigration
• Queering Asian America

The objective of this class is to critically examine the literary formation and political implications of what it means to be “Asian American.” The novels, short stories, plays and films we will study chart an ongoing movement in Asian American studies from domesticated narratives of immigrant assimilation towards increasingly transnational categories of nationhood and citizenship.

Required Texts

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Dictee
Frank Chin, Chickencoop Chinaman and the Year of the Dragon
David Henry Hwang, M. Butterfly
Maxine Hong Kingston, The Woman Warrior
Jhumpa Lahiri, Interpreter of Maladies
Chang-Rae Lee, Native Speaker
Lisa Lowe, Immigrant Acts
Lois-Ann Yamanaka, Blu’s Hanging