HISTORY 43: Wars in the Pacific and Asian American Culture, Politics, & Identity

American wars in the Pacific mark a trajectory of increasing transnational political, social, and cultural entanglement and contest that has had immediate and lingering effects on the racial and sociological formation of Asian American communities. This course will examine how American wars in the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam and their representations have generated national myths, channels of migration, and new political and social identities. Topics include American imperialism, Philippine exile and diaspora, military war brides, the construction of historical memory, and Southeast Asian refugee politics. Primary sources include photographs, film, sculpture, and oral testimony in addition to documentary evidence.

Reading assignments do not combine to produce a single, coherent, chronological narrative, but rather highlight key themes and interpretive issues contemporaneous with different wars during the twentieth century. The readings are organized to invite your consideration of a number of broad questions. Some of these include: How do the histories of American warfare and militarization in various countries across the Pacific position Asian Americans within modern national historical narratives? What experiences bridge various Asian American communities and what incommensurable differences create fissures within this
pan-ethnic category? How do American foreign interventions cultivate immigrant ties to the United States and engender criticisms of the state? And how do certain national narratives become hegemonic and how are they disrupted, re-worked, and re-invented over time?

Course Requirements:
Attendance is absolutely mandatory for successful completion of this course. This means you must come to class on time and ready to participate. You should have your reading and written assignments completed before appearing in class at the start of each week (Tuesdays). Absences, tardiness or inattention during class will hurt your chances of passing this course. If you must miss class for medical reasons or another emergency, you are responsible for finding out what you missed during your absence. If you miss more than two classes for any reason, your grade will suffer by deduction of at least one letter grade. Two tardies will count as one absence, so please come on time and fully prepared. In cases of emergency or illness, contact me as soon as you can by phone or email.

All papers must be word-processed using double-spacing, 12-point font, and proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Pages should be numbered and formatted with at least a one-inch margin on all sides to be accepted. Additional guidelines for term papers will be reviewed in class.

Required Films:
Specific screening times and locations TBA. They will all take place outside of class.

A World Beneath the War
Arirang
Flag TV
History and Memory
The Deer Hunter
We Served with Pride

Course Texts:
The following books have been ordered for this course. Not all of these books will be read in their entirety. Please check the syllabus to see how much of each book will be assigned when deciding which ones you would like to purchase.
Dower, John, *War Without Mercy*
Hamamoto, Darrell Y., *Monitored Peril*
Johnson, Chalmers A., *Blowback*
Leong, Russell and Don T. Nakanishi, eds., *Afterwords*
Linenthal, Edward T. and Tom Englehardt, eds., *History Wars*
Moon, Katherine H. S., *Sex Among Allies*
Shaw, Angel Velasco and Luis H. Francia, eds., *Vestiges of War*

Additional reading assignments will be available on reserve at McCabe Library and/or on Blackboard.
Primary documents from *The Columbia Documentary History of the Asian American Experience* may be assigned for in-class review, or added to the weekly readings with advance notice. They are not included below so please be warned.

**Grading:**
Class Participation: 25%
Weekly Papers: 30%
Term Paper: 45%

**Assignments:**

Because a large percentage of your grade will be based on discussion, you are required to attend each class having read that week’s assignments. Discussion should consist of careful listening, analytical and constructive criticism, and thoughtful debate.
Each week students will prepare a brief 1-2 page reflection paper on the weekly readings according to guidelines made available during the first week of class. Weekly written assignments are due at the start of class each Tuesday. These papers will be graded on a scale of 1 to 10. Late work will not be accepted.

As part of your classroom participation grade you will also prepare one brief presentation designed to facilitate discussion on a portion of the weekly readings. The presentation should be no more than five minutes in length and conclude in the delivery of a discussion question relevant to the readings. This question should initiate a critical response (so it must not be purely factual in nature). A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the second week of class.

You will be required to write a 10-15 page paper on a topic of your choice. Topics must be discussed with the instructor and approved by the middle of the semester. Smaller assignments designed to help you organize your final paper will be announced during the semester. Late term papers for reasons beyond documented disability or illness will be assessed a grade reduction.

Weekly Schedule:
Please note that articles and chapters with an (*) can be copied from books available on reserve at McCabe library or they can be downloaded in segments from Blackboard.

All readings below are required unless specifically noted otherwise.

Week One: Introduction
August 31
Overview

September 2


**Week Two: American Imperialism, Filipino Resistance and Subjectivity**

September 7 and 9

*Schirmer and Shalom, eds.,* *The Philippines Reader*, 5-26.

**Week Three: Filipino Visibility and Invisibility**

September 14 and 16


**Week Four: World War II—Asian American Enemies and Allies**
September 21 and 23
*Rosenberg, A Date Which Will Live in Infamy, 11-33.
*Primary documents, TBD

Week Five: Narratives of Internment and Resistance
September 28 and 30
Fugita and Fernandez, Altered Lives 1-84, 105-133, 194-210
*Ng, “ The Collective Memories of Communities,” Asian Americans: Comparative and Global Perspectives.
Screening: History and Memory

Week Six: Minority American Soldiers, Race, and War
October 5 and 7
Dower, War Without Mercy, 147-200.
Ontal, “ Fagen and Other Ghosts,” Vestiges of War, 118-133.
Week Seven: Pacific Island Nations--Indigeneity, Resistance, Militarization
October 19 and 21


Optional:

*Robie, David, *Blood on their Banner; Nationalist Struggles in the South Pacific*, chapters 8, 9, and 10.
Week Eight: The Cold War, Immigration, Militarization, and Diaspora  
October 26 and 28  
Johnson, Blowback, 95-118.  
Moon, Sex Among Allies, 1-103  
Screening: Arirang parts I and II

Week Nine: Post-War Traces, American Communities  
November 2 and 4  
Moon, Sex Among Allies, 104-160.  
Min, “Kindred Distance,” Vestiges of War, 291-301.  
*Yuh, Beyond the Shadow of Camptown, chs. 2-3.  
*Kim, “Home is Where the Han Is,” Asian American Studies: A Reader, 270-289.  
*From East to America, xii-xiv, 207-218, 314-321.  

Week Ten: Recovering National Innocence, Re-Interpreting Massacre  
November 9 and 11  
Screening: The Deer Hunter
Week Ten: Exiles, Refugees, and Citizens
November 16 and 18
Duc, “The Hairy Hand” *Vestiges of War*, 303-311
*Koeuhn, “Lowell, Massachusetts, the “Long Beach of the East Coast’,” Not Just Victims*, 127-156.
Screening: *A World Beneath the War*

Week Twelve: Memorializing War--Nationalism, Art, and Politics
November 30 and December 2
Linenthal and Englehardt, *History Wars*, entire.

Optional: *Griswold, “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography,” Art and the Public Sphere*, 79-112.
Week Thirteen: 9/11, Profiling, and Reading the News

December 7

Johnson, *Blowback*, chs. 1 and 10

(-) Johnson, *Blowback*, chs. 2 and 3 optional

(-) Leong and Nakanishi, eds., *Afterwords*, review at least half instead of the entire issue. You can stick to what personally appeals to you.


Screening: *Flag T.V.*

Exam Period:

Term paper due by 5pm on December 15