

JSIS C 490B | Jackson School of International Studies | University of Washington
Special Topics in Comparative Religion: “Trans-Pacific Christianities”
Winter 2015 | MW 1:30 – 3:30 | 5 credits | Dr. Justin Tse | jkhtse@uw.edu

INTRODUCTION

As the title suggests, this course is a special topics class in comparative religion. There is a series of literary, historical, sociological, and even theological readings that I consider to be representative of a “special topic,” which I am calling “trans-Pacific Christianities.” We will work together to figure out what this topic is about. We will do this in the classroom by talking about the readings that I have assigned. There will be work outside the classroom, too, in a research paper where you write about something you are interested in.

GRADING

Blog Comments (20%; 40 points)

Conference (30%; 60 points)

Participation (10%; 20 points)

Paper (40%; 80 points)

REQUIRED READING

Frank Chin, Jeffrey Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong. *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Chinese and Japanese American Writers*. New York: Mentor, 1991.

Reinhold Niebuhr. *The Irony of American History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Mary Ting Yi Lui. *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Sung-Deuk Oak. *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876-1915*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013.

Peter C. Phan. *Christianity with an Asian Face: Asian American Theology in the Making*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003.

Russell Jeung. *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Jonathan Y. Tan. *Introducing Asian American Theologies*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008.

Timothy Tseng and Vikki Nakka-Cammauf. *Asian American Christianity Reader*. Castro Valley, CA: Institute for the Study of Asian American Christianity, 2011.

Office Hours: 1:30 – 2:30 PM, Tuesdays

Students are very encouraged to come by office hours to continue the conversation and to start new ones.

‘W’ Requirement

This course is a ‘W’ writing course in keeping with the University of Washington’s policy for intensive writing courses. Because of the film review and the research paper, as well as the weekly reflections, this course fits the ‘W’ requirement.

Participation

There are many ways to participate in the class; in fact, it would be hard not already be participating in the class if you do the required work. While the most obvious is to ask questions and make commentary, this is not the only way to participate. Active listening is also encouraged, as is coming to office hours. The blog comments should also be helpful in crystallizing your thoughts before you come to class so that you have something to say.

All participation should be respectful. Racist, sexist, and homophobic remarks are strongly discouraged, especially because of the sensitive subject matter that we will discuss in this course. We also understand that students will come from a variety of backgrounds; the objective of this course is to create conversation with whoever is in the room, so respect will be our *modus operandi*.

Academic Conduct

I will strictly enforce the University of Washington Student Conduct code, including the policy on plagiarism. For your reference, the entire code can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>.

Disabled Students

If you would like to request accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz Hall, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you require accommodations, please present the letter to me as soon as possible so that I can make necessary arrangements.

COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: ASIAN AMERICANS AND AMERICAN RELIGIOUS PUBLICS

- 1/5 The Open Letter to the Evangelical Church (in-class reading + Wong Fu Productions, *Just a Nice Guy*)
- 1/7 *Eve and the Firehorse* (in-class film) | **WATCH:** *Eve and the Firehorse* (trailer)
- 1/12 Is Asian American Studies Obsessed with Christians? *Aiiieeeee!* and the Movement | **READING:** *Aiiieeeee!*, 'Preface,' *'Aiiieeeee!' Revisited*, 'Fifty Years of Our Whole Voice'
- 1/14 Japanese American Christianities and the Movement | **READING:** *Aiiieeeee!*: John Okada, *No-No Boy* (selections); Momoka Ura, *The Gold Watch* (Act I); Hisaye Yamamoto, 'Yoneko's Earthquake'; Wakako Yamauchi, 'And the Soul Shall Dance'
- 1/19 **NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY**

PART II: TRANS-PACIFIC CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTERS

- 1/21 Reinhold Niebuhr: Religion and America's Orient | **READING:** Niebuhr, *Irony*
- 1/26 Chinatown missionaries, Chinese sex | **READING:** Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery*, Introduction, ch. 1-5; In *Aiiieeeee!*: Jeffrey Paul Chan, 'The Chinese in Haifa'; Louis Chu, *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (selections); Frank Chin, *The Chickencoop Chinaman* (selections)
- 1/28 Chinese Christianities: Greater China and transnational theological politics | **READING:** Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery*, ch. 6-7, Epilogue; In *Aiiieeeee!*, Diana Chang, *The Frontiers of Love* (selections); Shawn Hsu Wong, 'Each Year Grain';
- 2/2 Korean Christianities: are there actually Asian spirits? | **READING:** Oak, Introduction, ch. 1-3
- 2/4 Culture and Politics: Asian Christian geopolitics? | **READING:** Oak, ch. 4-6, Conclusion
- PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

PART III: PRACTICING CHRISTIANITY IN ASIAN AMERICA

- 2/9 Liberation theology in Asian America: Filipino Catholicism | **READING:** Phan, Part 1; *Aiiieeeee!*, Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart* (selections)
- 2/11 Inculturation: the politics of Vietnamese Catholicism | **READING:** Phan, Part 2
- 2/16 **NO CLASS: PRESIDENTS' DAY**
- 2/18 The Politics of Asian American Christianities: silent exodus? | **READING:** Jeung, ch. 1-4; Doreen Carvajal, 'Silent exodus'; Helen Lee, 'Silent exodus'; Helen Lee, 'Silent no more' | **WATCH:** Sa-I-Gu, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_UyYj-pR8U
- 2/23 Asian American sexual politics and the model minority: racial formations | **READING:** Perry v. *Schwarzenegger*, trial transcript; *Aiiieeeee!*, 'Rough notes for Mantos'; Jeung, ch. 5-8
- 2/25 Asian American Christianities, social justice, indigenous politics | **READING:** Killjoy Prophets, <http://sueypark.com/2014/07/06/killjoy-prophets-asian-americans-and-racial-reconciliation-part-1/>; Andrea Smith, 'Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy,' 'Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy'
- 3/2 **CONFERENCE DAY 1 | DUE: PAPER DRAFT**
- 3/4 **CONFERENCE DAY 2**
- 3/9 **CONFERENCE DAY 3**
- 3/11 Conclusion: The Public Significance of Trans-Pacific Christianities, or #TPCIU

ASSIGNMENTS

BLOG COMMENTS (20%): 40 points total (2 points each)

For every class, I will have a short blog post up about the readings. You are required to write a comment for each blog post by 12 noon before each class. If you write nothing, you will get 0 points. If you write something, you will get 1 point. If you write something insightful, you will get 2 points.

RESEARCH PAPER AND CONFERENCE (70%): 140 points

This paper allows you to explore a topic that is interesting to you. Pick a very specific topic.

A paper proposal is a working title and an abstract (max. **250** words) of what you think you are going to write about. Include a working title. This is due in-class on **February 4**.

The draft paper is due on **March 2**. That is the same day our conference will start. You will get comments from fellow students and from me on the draft. Then you should make revisions.

Our **class conference** (15%: 30 points) will take place on **March 2, 9, and 11** (sign up; first come, first serve). Depending on the size of the class, you will make approximately 20 minute presentations (shorter if there are more people) on your paper. If there are too many students, we will have rotating poster presentations.

The final revised paper is due in my office on **March 18**. The final paper should be 4,000-6,000 words, with a title page, citations, and a bibliography. Citation style is open (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.), as long as you are consistent.

GRADING POLICY

Grading Philosophy:

The course is taught to mastery. That is, if you master the material and express your ideas in a clear, critical and creative way, you can attain the best score. This syllabus includes a numerical grading guide that will correspond to the total possible points of 200.

Policy on grading appeals

Appeals will be accepted only if a student presents a case that an obvious error has been made in the grading of an essay. All appeals must be typewritten and are due one week following the date the exams/essays are returned to the class. For final exams or papers, appeals will be accepted two weeks into the following academic quarter. The typewritten appeal must address the substantive reasons why the student thinks the grade is inappropriate. The professor reserves the right to reject the appeal and has the option of reducing the grade as the situation warrants.

Guide for Grading Writing:

A 3.7 - 4.0 demonstrates not only passion and enthusiasm, but creative control of that energy and a consistent focus on the assignment; this means you have argued your point logically and creatively, and written clearly. A 3.5 is a diamond with a visible flaw, such as a problem in the writing style or a minor problem in the logic of the argument. A 3.3 to 3.0 is very good, but the argument is slightly flawed or the logic, grammar and writing are not as clear as they should be. A 2.0 to 2.5 communicates you tried but the argument is not fully developed and the writing is unclear.

Specific Criteria for Evaluating Papers:

- 1) The writing is articulate; including grammar, sentence structure and language.
- 2) The student has understood text well enough to be critical and analytical.
- 3) The student approaches the subject in an engaging and creative way.

Grading Scale (200 points):

"A" Range:	156 = 2.8	130 = 1.5
196 - >200 = 4.0	154 = 2.7	
192 - 195 = 3.9	152 = 2.6	"D" Range:
190 - 191 = 3.8	150 = 2.5	128 = 1.4
186 - 189 = 3.7		126 = 1.3
183 - 185 = 3.6	"C" Range:	124 = 1.2
180 - 182 = 3.5	148 = 2.4	122 = 1.1
	146 = 2.3	120 = 1.0
"B" Range:	144 = 2.2	118 = 0.9
176 - 179 = 3.4	142 = 2.1	116 = 0.8
171 - 175 = 3.3	140 = 2.0	114 = 0.7
167 - 170 = 3.2	138 = 1.9	
163 - 166 = 3.1	136 = 1.8	<57 = 0.0
160 - 162 = 3.0	134 = 1.7	
158 = 2.9	132 = 1.6	