**AAST398E: GROWING UP ASIAN AMERICAN: THE ASIAN IMMIGRANT FAMILY AND THE SECOND GENERATION**

Instructor: Mimi Khúc  
Semester: Spring 2016

Class hours: TuTh 2:00-3:15pm  
Room: SQH 1121  
Office hours: TuTh 3:30-4:30pm  
Room: SQH 2121  
Email: mimikhuc@umd.edu  
Course website: http://elms.umd.edu

**Introduction**

This interdisciplinary course examines the experiences of children of Asian immigrants in the U.S., focusing on intergenerational dynamics in the Asian immigrant family, their intersections with race, gender, class, sexuality, and religion, and how these shape second-generation Asian American life. Topics include identity and personhood, the model minority myth and education, work and leisure, language and communication, filiality and disownment, mental health and suicide.

**Texts**

* *My Mom is a FOB*, Teresa Wu and Serena Wu (collection of first-person stories and quotes)  
* *American Born Chinese*, Gene Luen Yang (graphic novel)  
* *Corona*, Bushra Rehman (short stories)  
* Other required readings will be available on ELMS page

**Learning Outcomes**

* Students will become familiar with the social and cultural issues that affect Asian immigrant life in the U.S. and their offspring.  
* Students will develop critical thinking skills around issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, and family in the U.S.  
* Students will hone research, analytical, presentation, and collaboration skills.

**Requirements**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance, participation, readings</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Final project</td>
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<td>Final Reflection Paper</td>
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Attendance, participation, readings
Attendance is mandatory for every class. Absences may be excused for illness and other extenuating circumstances IF you inform me BEFORE the class you are missing. Please treat class like a work-place: You are allowed sick days to be used at your discretion but you must handle them responsibly by informing your supervisor (me) and by catching up on your work. If you need to miss class, please contact a peer to see what you missed. Active participation is expected of every student. Active participation consists of completing the readings before class and contributing to class discussion in thoughtful ways that engage the readings, materials presented in class, and your classmates contributions. You MUST speak in class regularly to receive a passing grade for participation. Coming to office hours can also count towards participation.

Homework assignments
There will be several small assignments throughout the semester. Most will require online participation in discussions. One will be to screen the film Eating Welfare (2001) on your own by 2/23 (available streaming on ELMS), write a 2-page reflection on the film due 2/23, and then attend a talk on 2/23 4:30pm by Prof Eric Tang on Cambodian refugees in New York City (location TBD).

Presentation
Students are responsible for 1 group presentation (20 minutes) during the semester. There will be 8 presentations, on various topics throughout the semester. There will be a sign-up sheet in the first week. In the presentations, students are responsible for covering the assigned readings for their topic, identifying the main issues discussed in the readings and making connections with past course materials/concepts. Students may bring in outside materials to supplement their presentation where appropriate but this is not necessary. Tip: I do not recommend simply assigning one reading per student -- this makes for very uneven and disjointed presentations.

Midterm
In-class “lightning” oral exam. Students will be given essay questions ahead of time in order to prepare. On the day of the midterm, each student will orally answer the essay questions for 5 minutes.

Final Project
For their final projects, students will work in groups to create a workshop on a course topic. Students will present their workshops in a 20-minute presentation during the last 2 weeks of
classes. Students are also to submit a group write-up describing the workshop, due by the beginning of finals week. Guidelines will be distributed after the midterm.

Final Reflection Paper
A 5-page (around 1500 words) reflection paper that will discuss what you have learned in the course, how the course has affected you, and why the topics/issues of the class are important. This will be a personal reflection that must substantively engage course materials from throughout the semester (at least 5 texts, with at least 2 from after the midterm). Grading will be based on sophistication and depth of analysis. Due Monday 5/16 at 12:30pm.

Extra Credit
You can earn extra credit throughout the semester by writing 2-page reflection/response papers on outside materials/events related to the course. These can boost your participation grade and help bump borderline grades. You can write an infinite number of extra credit reflection papers. When choosing something to write on, run your ideas by me first.

Grades
Grades are based on your level of mastery of the course concepts and skills. Full effort is expected from every student; mastery of the materials will require effort and hard work, but “hard work” in itself will not guarantee mastery and therefore a particular grade. You will receive the grade that you earn based on your performance. Please see the UMD grading scale below for reference.
Please know that grades are not up for negotiation. If you have questions about your grades throughout the semester, feel free to come talk to me so that we can be clear on the expectations and the standards of assessment for the course. I am happy to go over any assignments and course expectations, in office hours, both before due dates and after grading.

A+, A, A- “Denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship.”
B+, B, B- “Denotes good mastery of the subject and good scholarship.”
C+, C, C- “Denotes acceptable mastery of the subject and the usual achievement expected.”
D+, D, D- “Denotes borderline understanding of the subject. Denotes marginal performance, and they do not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.”
F “Denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance.”
(D- and higher is a Pass if taking the course Pass/Fail)

Communication
Email is my preferred communication for brief matters. I will not discuss lengthy matters via email, especially assignments and grades. If you have questions about the course material, the assignments, or your grades, I am available in office hours by appointment. Also, I post regular
reminders on ELMS and send emails through ELMS so please make sure you check ELMS and your university email on a daily basis throughout the semester.

Accommodations

I recognize that students have a range of dis/abilities. If you have any kind of disability, whether apparent or non-apparent, learning, emotional, physical, or cognitive, and you need some accommodations or alternatives to lectures, assignments, or exams, please feel free to contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss reasonable accommodations for your access needs. Please also see Disability Support Services (DSS) for guidelines, procedures, and more information: [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS), (301)314-7682, 0106 Shoemaker Building.

Academic Integrity

The University takes the issue of academic honesty very seriously. You are asked to write the following pledge on all your written work: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).” Even if you choose not to write the pledge on your work, you are still bound by it.

The Student Honor Council defines the following as academic dishonesty:
* Cheating: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
* Fabrication: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
* Facilitation: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of the Honor Code.
* Plagiarism: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise without citation.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with University policies on dishonesty.

Course Schedule
(subject to change)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class title</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/26</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title and Authors</td>
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| 2    | Suicide and Asian American Mental Health | Jenn Fang, *Top 10 Myths about Asian Americans and Mental Health*  
Mimi Khuc, “Living Under Siege”  
Ask a Model Minority, “72-hour Hold Part 1”  
OPTIONAL: Jenn Fang on coverage of suicide in the New York Times  
| 2/4  |  |  |
| 3    | Tiger Moms | Amy Chua, “*Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior*”  
Ask a Model Minority Suicide, “Why Chinese Mothers are Superior -- We'll see”  
Not That Kind of Asian Doctor, “To Love In This Way”  
Jeff Yang, “Mother Superior”  
Jeff Yang, “Tiger Babies Bite Back”  
Paul Tullis, “Poor Little Tiger Cub” |
| 2/9  |  |  |
| 2/11 |  | Yanan Wang, “*Tragedy of a Golden Daughter’s Fall*” |
| 4    | Filial Debt | erin Ninh, *Ingratitude*, excerpt |
| 2/16 |  |  |
| 2/18 |  | NPR, “*What’s Going on In There?*” Act 2 |
| 5    | “Fobby” Mothers | Teresa Wu & Serena Wu, *My Mom is a FOB* |
| 2/23 |  |  |
| 2/25 | Model Minorities | Jennifer Lee, “*The Truth About Asian American Success*”  
Janelle Wong, “*The Source of Asian American Advantage isn’t Asian Cultural Values*”  
Helen Jun, “Asian Americans in the Age of Neoliberalism” |
| 3/1  |  | Julia Wong, “*The Complicity Cost of Racial Inclusion*”  
API Resistance, “*Bringing it Home*” |
<p>| 3/3  |  |  |</p>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3/8</th>
<th>Race, Gender, Sexuality</th>
<th>Gene Luen Yang, <em>American Born Chinese</em></th>
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</table>
| 3/10 | Mark Tseng Putterman, “*When Asian Emasculation Meets Misogyny*”  
Jenn Fang, “*There Can Be No Room in This Movement for Misogyny*” |
| 8   | 3/15 | Spring Break             |                                         |
|     | 3/17 | Spring Break             |                                         |
| 9   | 3/22 | Midterm review           |                                         |
|     | 3/24 | MIDTERM                  |                                         |
| 10  | 3/29 | Race, Gender, Sexuality, cont. | *Queer APA coming out stories* [Choose and read 3 stories by queer Asian Americans and 2 stories by their parents]  
You-Leng Leroy Lim, "Webs of Betrayal, Webs of Blessings" |
|     | 3/31 |                          |                                         |
| 11  | 4/5  | Bushra Rehman, *Corona*  |                                         |
|     | 4/7  |                          |                                         |
| 12  | 4/12 | Passed Down?  
War, Trauma, Postmemory | *Yen Le Espiritu, “We Don't Sleep Around Like White Girls”  
Kenji Oshima, “*Margaret Cho*”  
Margaret Cho, selections:  
  - [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/margaret-cho/it-gets-better_2_b_1294023.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/margaret-cho/it-gets-better_2_b_1294023.html)  
  - [http://jezebel.com/5875219/cho-mad-twitter](http://jezebel.com/5875219/cho-mad-twitter)  
  - [Brandy Worrall, “Legacies”  
Thu Minh Pham, “My Mother's War”  
Bao Phi, untitled poem (cookie tin)] |
|     | 4/14 | Passed Down?  
War, Trauma, Postmemory | *Lawrence-Minh Bui Davis, “A Messenger of Ill Tidings”  
Cathy Schlund-Vials, “Lost Chapters and Invisible Wars: Hip-Hop and Cambodian American Critique”  
Brandy Worrall, “Legacies”  
Thu Minh Pham, “My Mother's War”  
Bao Phi, untitled poem (cookie tin)] |
OPTIONAL: Tarfia Faizullah, *Seam* reviews:
- [http://www.americanliteraryreview.com/reviews-interviews/review-tarfia-faizullahs-seam](http://www.americanliteraryreview.com/reviews-interviews/review-tarfia-faizullahs-seam)

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<tr>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>Passed Down? Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/26</td>
<td>Race and Religion after 9/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>No class -- work on your final projects!</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>Final Projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Final Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
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<td>Viet Nguyen, “<em>On Ferguson</em>” Matthew Williams, “Parenting in a Post-Ferguson Era”</td>
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This syllabus is subject to change depending on new developments or pace of the class. You are responsible for any and all changes announced in class. I reserve the right to change any course requirements, and I will inform you in class and via ELMS.

**Class filmography:**
*Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (2011)
*Eating Welfare* (2001)
*Better Luck Tomorrow* (2002)
*Saving Face* (2004)
*Can* (2012)