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. The instructor reserves the right to change any course requirements listed below provided s/he informs you verbally and via e-mail of the changes.

**Course Description**

Asian Americans have long been subjects of the popular American cinematic imagination. If these filmic representations have often been reductive and derogatory, our work is to examine the provenance and function of some of the most visible of these representations. Out of what historical and political contexts do they arise? What larger constructions of what it means to be “American” do they bolster or enable? We will consider the roles Asian Americans play in popular (big studio) American cinema, specifically in relation to shifting formations of “America” and “American,” focusing on films engaging three “periods”: the Vietnam War, the ‘80s, and post-9/11 America. Course requirements include a presentation, midterm and final exams, and a long paper.
Course Learning Outcomes

- students will learn to view films critically, with attention to historical contexts and political issues
- students will acquire an understanding of a number of theoretical lenses for considering the representation of Asian Americans
- students will acquire an understanding of Asian American history
- students will learn to craft analytical, argumentative responses to films

Required Texts

(Re)Collecting the Vietnam War (REVN)
Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of Sept. 11, e-version
(texts not available at the bookstore; ordering instructions will be provided on Canvas)

Course Requirements

Participation:
Be a regular contributor to in-class discussions. No participation points if absent.

Response “Journals”
Formulate responses to the films. The “journals” will be collaborative, meaning you will exchange responses with group members, with two responses by each member, and post the exchange on the appropriate Canvas discussion board forum. Each journal should focus on a particular scene from the film and analyze the significance of key elements, whether visual, narrative, or otherwise; you can think about the scene in relation to other portions of the film, but you should be addressing specific details or aspects of that particular scene. Each journal is due the week after we finish the film the journal engages. Each group will also be responsible for turning in one document containing all the group’s journals at the end of the semester. You will be graded on the quality of analysis—what interpretive readings you pose and how well you explain and support them.

Group Presentations:
There are two options for group presentations throughout the semester:

1. On one of the various secondary materials we’ll be reading, which you’ll briefly summarize for the class and connect to the film we’re currently watching.
   - What is central argument/exploration of the reading?
   - What is the exigence of the piece?
   - And how can we apply the main argument/exploration, or specific elements of that argument, to the film we’re watching—how does the argument add to or change our understanding of the film or some portion of the film?
   You should answer these questions making reference directly to key passages from the reading, explaining any quotations clearly, particularly taking care to explain any difficult terminology.

2. On research your group conducts about the sociohistorical context out of which a particular film emerges. You can focus on what’s going on in Asian American or broader American or even world history at the time of the film’s release (and/or the setting of the film), but be sure that your research is clearly relevant to the film and illuminates some key aspect or backdrop of it. Focus on depth rather than
breadth, and on connection to the film. How does a particular element of research add to or change how we understand a particular aspect of the film? Or vice versa.

Presentations should be roughly 10-15 minutes long; an outline, to be posted on Canvas, should accompany presentations. The class presentation schedule is a shared google doc on Canvas.

Exam:
Take mid-term and final exams. Exam review will be provided in the classes preceding the exam dates.

Essay:
Write one 10-12 page essay. It must pose a clear interpretive thesis that you devise about one or two of the course films. The essay must be turned in via Canvas, as word document, before the start of class on the due date. Late submissions will be penalized half of a letter grade per 24-hour period. The essay must follow MLA style. It should either make use of 1-2 course readings or sociohistorical context from class presentations—but not include any additional outside research.

Course Percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Throughout semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>by sign-up, throughout semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response “Journals”</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Throughout semester; Final Journal due 5/9/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5/2/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3/23/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Guidelines
Students earn grades based on their performance on the course requirements listed above. Here is a description of the grading criteria according to the UMD Faculty Handbook (http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/grades.html).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+, A, A-</td>
<td>“Denotes excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+, B, B-</td>
<td>“Denotes good mastery of the subject and good scholarship.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+, C, C-</td>
<td>“Denotes acceptable mastery of the subject and the usual achievement expected.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+, D, D-</td>
<td>“Denotes borderline understanding of the subject. These grades denote marginal performance, and they do not represent satisfactory progress toward a degree.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>“Denotes failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance and Participation: Students should attend all class meetings, be on time, and be prepared to participate on a substantive and analytical level in discussions of the readings and topics. If you do miss class, contact a classmate to make sure you are up to date on all changes.
Bring the appropriate texts and syllabus to class every time we meet. Note that UMD’s official attendance policy is available at (http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/atedasse.html).

**Academic Integrity:** The AAST takes the issue of academic honesty very seriously. We expect our students to uphold high standard of conduct. The University of Maryland is dedicated to ensuring academic integrity, symbolized by the Honor Code upheld by the Student Honor Council. 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 these policies: (http://www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/dishonesty.html)

**Classroom Etiquette:** The AAST values the diversity of its student body and is committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages the equitable participation of all students. At all times students should be respectful of others’ opinions. If you disagree with someone you should express your alternative view using the evidence that led you to your interpretation. Personalized comments, inappropriate language, insults, sleeping, and raised voices are not conducive to learning and will not be tolerated in the classroom. In addition, cell phone texting or viewing and laptop use other than taking notes are disruptive activities that inhibit students’ ability to learn and are to be refrained from in lecture and discussion section. Please place your cell phone on silent or “vibrate” mode while in lecture or discussion section.

**Online Expectations:** We will assume that the e-mail address that you provided to the university is accurate, up to date and checked at least once a day during business days. If your official e-mail address is not up to date, please update it. In addition, all students will be required to sign into Blackboard in order to obtain or view course-related files or information. On Blackboard we will have links and handouts relating to the course. Note that the instructor will generally inform you verbally and via e-mail when an item has been added to Blackboard. You can find information relating to getting started with Blackboard here: (http://elms.umd.edu)

**Writing Center:** The UMD English Department offers a superb resource in the form of the campus writing center. It is recommended that you bring your written work to the writing center so that they can help you improve your writing.
Writing Center website: (http://www.english.umd.edu/the-writing-center-front-page)
Office Number: (301) 405-3787 (The Grammar Hotline)
Location: 1205 Tawes Hall
Religious Observances: University policy provides that students “should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances.” Please inform the instructors at the start of the semester if you are going to miss any lecture sessions, discussion sections, exams, or other assignments due to religious observances so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Special Accommodations: If you require any special accommodations due to disability please inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that the instructor can make arrangements for exams and other items. In addition, please make an appointment with the Disability Support Services (DSS) so that you can learn the procedures and fill out the necessary paperwork. DSS contact information:

- DSS Website: [http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS)
- Main office phone number: 301.314.7682 (fax 301.405.0813)
- Location: Susquehanna Hall, Fourth Floor

Course Evaluations: During the end of the semester, you will be asked to fill out online course evaluations via the website at [www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu). Please take the time to fill out these forms because the AAST takes them very seriously as tools which we can use to improve our teaching. Therefore, over the course of the semester please think about what worked well in the course, what was ineffective in the course, and what you would recommend be done to improve the course.

Course Schedule

**The ‘80s!**

week 1 (1/25):
- class canceled—snow day
- watch *16 Candles* (1984, 93 minutes)

week 2 (2/1):
- syllabus and class intros
- excerpt from *Fixed Ideas*
- *16 Candles* comic

week 3 (2/8):
- presentation: *16 Candles* context (Vincent Chin, auto industry)
- *The Karate Kid* (1984, 126 min)
- presentation: Karate Kid context (Japanese American internment, redress movement)

week 4 (2/15):
- *The Karate Kid*
- presentation: “The Oriental Monk in American Popular Culture”

**The Vietnam War**

week 5 (2/22):
- *Apocalypse Now Redux* (202 min)
- presentation: *Apocalypse Now* context (film)
- “*Apocalypse Now: The Extras’ Commentary,*” by Cathy Linh Che (*REVN*)
- “Operation Babylift flipbook,” by Maya Espiritu (*REVN*)
- “Bomb Ponds,” by Vandy Rattana (*REVN*)
week 6 (2/29): *Apocalypse Now*
presentation: “The View from the Bottom,” by Lan Cao (*REVN*); “From Refugee Asylum Advocacy to Dissident Human Rights Struggle,” by Hoi Trinh (*REVN*)

week 7 (3/7): *Apocalypse Now*
curator’s note, Mariam B. Lam (*REVN*)
curator’s note, Vo Hong Chuong-Dai (*REVN*)
curator’s note, Viet Le (*REVN*)
midterm review

week 8 (3/14): SPRING BREAK
week 9 (3/21): **Midterm Exam**
week 10 (3/28): *Full Metal Jacket* clips
2 Live Crew video
“Me No Love You Long Time,” by Sylvia Shin Huey Chong (*REVN*)

week 11 (4/4): *Gran Torino*
presentation: *Gran Torino* context
“Minnesota in Winter,” by Soul Vang (*REVN*)
“40 Years after the War, and the Fight Continues,” by Kao Kalia Yang (*REVN*)
“Lima Site 20,” “Dear Exile,” “Final Dispatch From Laos,” “Sojourn With Snow,” by Mai Der Vang (*REVN*)

week 12 (4/11): *Gran Torino*
presentation: “Scenes Lost from Gran Torino: Hauntings of Hmong of Laos,” by Bee Vang and Louisa Schein (*REVN*)

**Post 9/11**
week 13 (4/18): presentation: *The Siege/Reluctant Fundamentalist* context (9/11, Islamophobia, Oak Creek gurdwara)
“Introduction,” by Rajini Srikanth (*Commemorating*)
“testimony,” by Sonny Singh (*Commemorating*)
“testimony,” by Unais Ibrahim, Shahara Ahmed, and Tauseef Kazi (*Commemorating*)

**Paper workshop: rough draft due**

presentation: “forum: On 9/11 as Rupture” (*Commemorating*)
“I Guess You Had to Be There,” by Anant Raut (*Commemorating*)

week 15 (5/2): *The Siege*
presentation: “The Long View: An Interview” (*Commemorating*)
“testimony,” by Elizabeth OuYang (*Commemorating*)

**Paper Due**

week 16 (5/9): *The Siege*
“Afterword,” by Parag Khandhar (*Commemorating*)

**Final Journals Due**
Final exam review
Final exam location, date, and time are to be determined. As soon as this information is known it will be announced both in class and via e-mail.