Asian American Studies 121: History of the Chinese in the US

Course Description. This course covers the entire history of the Chinese in the U.S., from the Gold Rush period in mid-19th century to the present. Since Chinese immigration and exclusion are two continuous processes throughout this history, both will be the focus of the course. The two processes and their interaction with each other also generated considerable political, economic, and cultural dynamism in the settlement and development of the Chinese American community throughout the U.S. Adding to the complexity of the two processes and the community dynamics has been the continuous impact of the volatile diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. and the ever-present tension and multi-level interactions between the Chinese American community and its homeland, including, the clan, village, county, province, and China, as a nation and a culture. Finally, since Chinese have settled in over 140 countries throughout the world, the continuous Chinese immigration has brought Chinese from Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe to the U.S., contributing not only to the diversity and hybridity in the Chinese American population but also to a growing global networks, connections, interactions, and cross-fertilization for Chinese Americans. Globalization and global influence of the U.S. have had a tremendous impact on the Chinese diaspora at the grassroots level, at the center of which are the Chinese in the U.S.

Course Objectives. The primary objective of the course is to provide students with a comprehensive, analytical, and complex understanding of the history of the Chinese in the U.S. This means critical reading of books covering aspects of Chinese American life throughout history. Secondarily, this course aims at providing students an opportunity to do original research, in the form of a paper. Finally, it is the intention of this course to make history meaningful for understanding contemporary issues facing Chinese Americans. For these reasons, students must be prepared to do readings, participate actively in classroom discussion of the readings, and to write a research paper for the course. Students will also be expected to learn from physical historical sites that have relevance to our understanding of Chinese American history.

Course Requirements.
1. Lectures: Tu, Th, 9:30-11am. 102 Wheeler Hall. Instruction begins January 22, Tue. and ends May 3, Fri.
2. Midterm Exam-Feb 28. IDs (identification of concepts, events, person) and essay. (25%)
3. Discussion & Participation Grade. Includes 4 field trip/forum write-ups in bCourse. (1 of the 4 is a required field trip including Chinese Historical Society of America visit) and 3 more field trips are your choice from an online list. Discussion grade also includes attendance, participation, online quizzes, group presentations and online discussion board assignments. (25%)
4. Term Paper topic, outline and bibliography. Choose your term paper topic from a visit to Chinese Historical Society of America in S.F. 965 Clay St., open Tue-Sat. Check schedule in www.chsa.org. Topic to be inspired from museum display; must be specific and not too broad (due in bCourses, 4/6, 2 pages single spaced).

Option A: Finished research paper due, May 3 (8-10 pages double spaced or 4-5 pages single spaced with 5 minimum outside class sources; no dictionary or superficial internet sources.) Standard MLA footnote format & bibliography. (25%)

Option B: Video project paper due May 3 (6 pages double spaced with 5 in-class sources). Each student submits a 6-page work summary of their contribution to the video project which would include the process of choosing a theme, the production itself and what they learned. Research and select an approved Chinese American history project. Work with a team to produce a 5 minute oral-history based documentary video that will be presented at a community showing. Enroll in ASAMST 197 1-unit videography training course.

Presentation group assignment: See bcourses for detailed recommendation for presentation group comprised of reading excerpts, wiki entries, discussions, etc. Submit outline onto bcourses prior to event.
comprised of six sessions held on Saturdays. The finish product will be the documentary.

5. Final Exam. IDs and essays (5/15 Wednesday 11:30am-1pm, Exam Group 10). (25%)


**AAS121 Course Outline & Readings.**

Books with an asterisk (*) are recommended supplemental readings for discussion and research. Textbooks may be purchased at the Eastwind Books of Berkeley, 2066 University Avenue, near Shattuck. Copies will be placed on reserve in the Ethnic Studies Library, 30 Stephens Hall.

**Week 1. Course Orientation, Introduction, and Course Overview (1/22 & 24)**
Which perspectives on Chinese American history you find helpful in framing of Chinese American history?


What background context led to migration of Chinese worldwide during the second half of the 19th Century?


**Week 3. Immigration & the Economic Development of the West (1/30 & 2/1)**
In what ways were the Chinese indispensable to the development of the American West? What were their contributions and why weren't they given full recognition?

Week 4. Exclusion & Chinese as Perpetual Aliens. (2/5 & 2/7)
What were the reasons for Chinese exclusion and the idea that the Chinese were perpetual aliens?

Robert Schwendinger. Ocean of Bitter Dreams. Chapters 9-11

Week 5. Development of the Chinese American Community (2/12 & 2/14)
How did the community resist, accommodate and survive under exclusion?


Week 6. Great Depression & Class Relations (2/19 & 2/21)
What type of organization and resistance took place within Chinese American community during the Great Depression and was this different from previous periods?


**Week 8. WW2 and the Chinese American Community (3/5 & 3/7)**
Evaluate major changes during and following WW2 that affected Chinese Americans in the social, political and economic realm?


How did the Cold War affect Chinese Americans and what were the different internal community responses to their situation?


How were the social movements of the 1960s & 70s a turning point for the community?


**SPRING BREAK. (3/25 to 3/29) (Term Paper topics due 4/5 in bCourse)**

**Week 11. Transition from Student to Community Activism: Going to the Grass Roots. (4/2 & 4/4)**
In what ways did the Asian American movement build a grass roots movement in the community? Chapters 6-14 and Conclusion.


What changes led to the diversity and make-up of the Chinese American community today?


What issues separate and what issues unite fragmented parts of the Chinese American community today?


Week 15. Review & Summation (4/30 & 5/2) (Term papers due 5/3)