ENG 362/CRN 26065  Asian American Writers
Winter 2011
MWF 13-13:50; 360 Condon
Professor Tolentino
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Description
This course focuses on themes of memory, authenticity, and return in contemporary Asian American fiction. Required readings include novels, short stories, essays, and a play. We will read works by famous and canonical writers such as Chang-rae Lee and Jhumpa Lahiri as well as by less-known writers that include R. Zamora Linmark and Shani Mootoo. We will begin by examining how literary and film representations of memory generate new perspectives on historic world events. Next, we will consider how writers have explored issues of authenticity through experiments with language and literary form. In the concluding weeks, we will study innovative renderings of home through narratives of coming out, domestic work, exile, and coming home.

Required Assignments and Evaluation
Please bring the assigned readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make an appointment to meet with me soon.
• Attendance Policy: After three unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter for each absence. (B- becomes C+). You are no longer eligible for a grade after six missed classes (excused or unexcused absences). Repeated tardiness/early departures will also lower your grade.
• Two essays, 3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced. Due Feb. 11, March 4 (50%)
• Two short essays, 2-3 pages. Due Jan. 21, March 11 (no late papers accepted for the March 11 essay) (30%)
If you want to write on a different topic, please consult with me at least 3 days before the due date. Papers that are submitted late will be marked down one letter grade. No papers will be accepted more than one week after the due date.
• Four in-class assignments e.g. group activity, response to book or film (20%)

Required Texts
• Books are available for purchase at the University of Oregon Bookstore or on 2-hour loan from Knight Library Course Reserves:
• Articles are available from the Assigned Readings folder on the Blackboard site for ENG 362/CRN 26065. Use your UO webmail ID and password to log into Blackboard.

Books

**Part 1: Memory**
Week 1
M 1/3 Introduction

W 1/5
No class - Professor Tolentino at MLA conference

F 1/7
No class - Professor Tolentino at MLA conference
Keep reading Chang-rae Lee, A Gesture Life

Week 2
M 1/10
Chang-rae Lee, A Gesture Life

W 1/12
Chang-rae Lee, A Gesture Life

F 1/14
Chang-rae Lee, A Gesture Life

Week 3
M 1/17
No class – Martin Luther King, Jr.

W 1/19


F 1/21
Film: “History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige” (1991, dir. Rea Tajiri, 32 min.)

2-3 page essay due – a literary portrait of Doc Hata in A Gesture Life

Week 4
M 1/24

W 1/26

F 1/28
Film: The Grace Lee Project (Dir. Grace Lee; 2005; 68 min)

Part 2: Authenticity

Week 5
M 1/31

W 2/2
Jhumpa Lahiri, The Namesake

F 2/4
Jhumpa Lahiri, The Namesake

Week 6
M 2/7

W 2/9
Film: “Fishbowl” (2005, dir. Kayo Hatta, 28 min.)

F 2/11
Film: What’s Wrong with Frank Chin? (2005; dir. Curtis Choy; 97 min)

3-4 page comparative essay due on the politics of authenticity (use at least two texts: Lahiri, Linmark, Mootoo)

Recommended:

Part 3: Fictions of Home and Return

Week 7
Exile
M 2/14
Film: The Fall of the I Hotel (2005; dir. Curtis Choy; 58 min)

W 2/16
F 2/18
Karen Tei Yamashita, I Hotel

Week 8 Community
M 2/21
Karen Tei Yamashita, I Hotel

W 2/23
Karen Tei Yamashita, I Hotel

F 2/25
Karen Tei Yamashita, I-Hotel

Week 9
M 2/28

W 3/2
Monique Truong, The Book of Salt

F 3/4
Monique Truong, The Book of Salt

3-4 page essay due on “home” and “domesticity” in I-Hotel and/or The Book of Salt

Week 10 Homecomings
M 3/7

W 3/9
Julia Cho, 99 Histories

F 3/11
Film: White Christmas (1993; dir. Michael Magnaye; 25 min)

2-3 page essay due – review of 99 Histories