

ETHN 23: INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER CINEMA

In Workflow

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Approval Path

1. 2026-02-26T22:01:54Z
Clarence George Iii (clarence.george): Approved for ETHN Committee Chair
2. 2026-02-26T22:17:35Z
Brian Baker (baker): Approved for ETHN Chair
3. 2026-03-19T18:31:57Z
Bao Lo (lo): Approved for SSIS College Committee Chair
4. 2026-04-01T22:15:48Z
Emily Wickelgren (wickelgr): Approved for SSIS Dean

New Course Proposal

Date Submitted: 2026-02-17T00:26:23Z

Viewing: ETHN 23 : Introduction to Asian American and Pacific Islander Cinema

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Changes proposed by: Will Gow (223013739)

Contact(s):

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Catalog Title:

Introduction to Asian American and Pacific Islander Cinema

Class Schedule Title:

Intro Asian American&PI Cinema

Academic Group: (College)

SSIS - Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies

Academic Organization: (Department)

Ethnic Studies; African Studies

Will this course be offered through the College of Continuing Education (CCE)?

No

Catalog Year Effective:

Fall 2027 (2027/2028 Catalog)

Subject Area: (prefix)

ETHN - Ethnic Studies

Catalog Number: (course number)

23

Course ID: (For administrative use only.)

TBD

Units:

3

Is the ONLY purpose of this change to update the term typically offered or the enforcement of existing requisites at registration?

No

In what term(s) will this course typically be offered?

Fall, Spring

Does this course require a room for its final exam?

Yes, final exam requires a room

Does this course replace an existing experimental course?

No

This course complies with the credit hour policy:

Yes

Justification for course proposal:

This course fills a curricular need by creating a lower division intro course that pairs with our upper division ETHN 123 Asian American Media and Popular Culture. This course fills a need in our curriculum by adding a lower division 3A arts requirement that students can take which we hope will both help students fill the GE requirement while also increasing interest in our upper division film and media courses in Ethnic Studies, including ETHN 123.

Course Description: (Not to exceed 90 words and language should conform to catalog copy.)

This course examines the economic, political, and cultural impact of screen representations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders from the silent film era to the present. Through analysis of both mainstream Hollywood productions and independent film and video, students explore how cinematic images have shaped racialized and gendered notions of citizenship, national belonging, and colonial power. Students also investigate how Asian American and Pacific Islander filmmakers and activists have utilized independent media to challenge dominant representations and construct alternative visions of identity and community.

Are one or more field trips required with this course?

No

Fee Course?

No

Is this course designated as Service Learning?

No

Is this course designated as Curricular Community Engaged Learning?

No

Does this course require safety training?

No

Does this course require personal protective equipment (PPE)?

No

Does this course have prerequisites?

No

Does this course have corequisites?

No

Graded:

Letter

Approval required for enrollment?

No Approval Required

Course Component(s) and Classification(s):

Lecture

Lecture Classification

CS#02 - Lecture/Discussion (K-factor=1WTU per unit)

Lecture Units

3

Is this a paired course?

No

Is this course crosslisted?

No

Can this course be repeated for credit?

No

Can the course be taken for credit more than once during the same term?

No

Description of the Expected Learning Outcomes and Assessment Strategies:

List the Expected Learning Outcomes and their accompanying Assessment Strategies (e.g., portfolios, examinations, performances, pre-and post-tests, conferences with students, student papers). Click the plus sign to add a new row.

	Expected Learning Outcome	Assessment Strategies
1	Trace the major cinematic tropes, socio-historical trends, and aspects of film form that have defined popular screen representations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Hollywood and beyond from the early twentieth century to the present.	Weekly quizzes, midterm essay exam, annotated readings, participation in class discussions
2	Examine the ways that representations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have changed over time, paying attention specifically to the links between cinematic representations (content and form) and broader social, political, and cultural transformations.	Weekly quizzes, midterm essay exam, annotated readings, participation in class discussions
3	Analyze the role that mainstream cinematic representations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have played in constructing racialized and gendered notions of citizenship, national belonging, and colonial power in the United States.	Weekly quizzes, midterm essay exam, annotated readings, participation in class discussions
4	Evaluate the ways in which Asian American and Pacific Islander filmmakers, activists, and audiences have utilized independent media to challenge dominant representations and construct alternative visions of identity, community, visual sovereignty, and decolonial practice.	Weekly quizzes, midterm essay exam, annotated readings, participation in class discussions
5	Interpret and critique the content and form of screen images of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by drawing on contemporary theoretical frameworks from the field of Ethnic Studies, Cultural Studies, and Film Studies.	Weekly quizzes, midterm essay exam, annotated readings, participation in class discussions

Attach a list of the required/recommended course readings and activities:

AAPI Cinema Syllabus Updated.pdf

For whom is this course being developed?

Majors in the Dept
Minors in the Dept
General Education

Is this course required in a degree program (major, minor, graduate degree, certificate?)

Yes

Has a corresponding Program Change been submitted to Workflow?

Yes

Identify the program(s) in which this course is required:

Programs:

Minor in Asian American Studies

Does the proposed change or addition cause a significant increase in the use of College or University resources (lab room, computer)?

No

Will there be any departments affected by this proposed course?

No

I/we as the author(s) of this course proposal agree to provide a new or updated accessibility checklist to the Dean's office prior to the semester when this course is taught utilizing the changes proposed here.

I/we agree

University Learning Goals

Undergraduate Learning Goals:

Competence in the disciplines

Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world

Intellectual and practical skills

Personal and social responsibility

Is this course required as part of a teaching credential program, a single subject, or multiple subject waiver program (e.g., Liberal Studies, Biology) or other school personnel preparation program (e.g., School of Nursing)?

No

GE Course and GE Goal(s)

Is this a General Education (GE) course or is it being considered for GE?

Yes

In which GE area(s) does this apply?

3A. Arts

Which GE objective(s) does this course satisfy?

Develop an acquaintance and understanding of cultures and major dynamic social institutions which affect one's life.

Possess a significant and useful understanding of peoples from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds, including women and ethnic and other minority groups who have been the objects of prejudice and adverse discrimination within our society.

Attach Course Syllabus with Detailed Outline of Weekly Topics:

AAPICinemaSyllabusUpdated.pdf

Syllabi must include: GE area outcomes listed verbatim; catalog description of the course; prerequisites, if any; student learning objectives; assignments; texts; reading lists; materials; grading system; exams and other methods of evaluation.

Will more than one section of this course be offered?

No

General Education - Area 3A: Arts

Section 1.

Indicate in written statements how the course meets the following criteria for Area 3A. Relate the statements to the course syllabus and outline. Be as succinct as possible.

General criteria:

Indicate how the course is introductory and has no prerequisites.

This course requires no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of Asian American and Pacific Islander history, film studies, or ethnic studies. The course is designed for first- and second-year students fulfilling their GE Area 3A requirement.

Indicate how the course is broad in scope or survey in nature.

The course surveys over a century of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) screen representation, from the silent film era through more contemporary Hollywood cinema. It covers a wide range of cinematic forms including Hollywood studio productions, ethnographic film, documentary, and independent film and video. The films span multiple ethnic communities including Chinese, Japanese, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, and Māori. Organized chronologically across three units, the course traces the evolution of AAPI screen images in relation to shifting social, political, and cultural contexts in the United States and the Pacific.

Specific criteria:

Indicate in written statements how the course meets each of the following Learning Criteria for Area 3A. Relate the statements to the course syllabus and outline. Be as succinct as possible.

Think conceptually and critically about medium, performance or presentation, and production for at least one art form.

Students develop conceptual and critical frameworks for analyzing film as an art form throughout the course. In Unit I, students examine how Hollywood studio productions constructed racialized and gendered representations through specific cinematic techniques, narrative conventions, and genre tropes. In Unit II, students analyze how independent Asian American and Pacific Islander filmmakers employed documentary and activist media as alternative modes of production that challenged Hollywood's representational norms. In Unit III, students evaluate contemporary modes of production and distribution, from studio-released independent films to Netflix and collective filmmaking practices. The midterm essay requires students to analyze both narrative and stylistic elements of film clips, and the final presentation requires the incorporation and analysis of film clips and/or images.

Demonstrate knowledge of artistic production, aesthetic properties, and the way creative work is shaped by artistic and cultural forces.

Through weekly readings and in-class film analysis, students examine how the aesthetic properties of each film—including cinematography, narrative structure, and genre conventions—are shaped by the broader cultural and political forces of their historical moment. Assignments such as the midterm essay and final presentation require students to demonstrate this knowledge by connecting the formal and stylistic elements of specific films to the social, political, and cultural contexts in which they were produced.

Have an acquaintance with a broad understanding of artistic forms, genres, and cultural sources.

Students engage with a broad range of artistic forms and genres across the course, including silent melodrama, ethnographic documentary, Hollywood musicals, activist video, narrative independent film, and collective transnational filmmaking. This breadth is reinforced by cumulative weekly quizzes that assess students' ability to recall and draw connections across the full range of films, genres, and cultural contexts covered in the course.

Be able to develop and defend informed judgments about creative work

Students develop and defend informed judgments about creative work through participation in weekly discussions and in-class writing that require them to articulate positions grounded in the assigned readings and films. The final group presentation asks students to demonstrate mastery of all five course learning objectives by constructing an original analytical argument supported by film clips and/or images.

Includes a writing component described on course syllabus

1) If course is lower division, formal and/or informal writing assignments encouraging students to think through course concepts using at least one of the following: periodic lab reports, exams which include essay questions, periodic formal writing assignments, periodic journals, reading logs, other. Writing in lower division courses need not be graded, but must, at a minimum, be evaluated for clarity and proper handling of terms, phrases, and concepts related to the course.

2) If course is upper division, a minimum of 1500 words of formal, graded writing. [Preferably there should be more than one formal writing assignment and each writing assignment (e.g. periodic lab reports, exams which include essay questions, a research/term paper etc.) should be due in stages throughout the semester to allow the writer to revise after receiving feedback from the instructor. Include an indication of how writing is to be evaluated and entered into course grade determination.]

The course includes multiple writing components: an in-class midterm essay requiring students to analyze film clips using course readings and concepts, annotated readings assignments, and an individual reflection paper accompanying the final group presentation. Weekly quizzes include short analytical questions that require students to draw written connections between films,

readings, and course concepts, and in-class writing activities are evaluated as part of the participation grade. Students will also engage in short in-class writing in relationship to readings and film class.

Section 2.

If you would like, you may provide further information that might help the G.E. Course Review Committee understand how this course meets these criteria and/or the G.E. Program Objectives found in the CSUS Policy Manual, General Education Program, Section I.B.

This course contributes to several GE Program Objectives outlined in the CSUS Policy Manual. It advances the GE objective that students "possess a significant and useful understanding of peoples from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds, including women and ethnic and other minority groups who have been the objects of prejudice and adverse discrimination within our society." Through its chronological examination of screen representations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, this course enables students to possess a significant and useful understanding of peoples from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds, which is one of the stated objectives of General Education Program. Students engage with the distinct experiences of Chinese, Japanese, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, and Māori communities through film and scholarly readings that foreground how race, gender, sexuality, and colonialism have shaped these communities' relationship to American society.

Key: 15524