

DRAFT – August 11, 2011

Seminar on AAS Scholarship: Alternate Social Science Approaches
SOCIOLOGY 82800, CUNY Graduate Center, Fall 2011

Instructors: Paul Ong

Thursday 4:15 pm - 6:15 pm

Initial Meeting: Graduate Center - 365 5th Ave, Room TBD

Subsequent Meetings: AAARI, 25 West 43rd Street

PURPOSE:

One of the major challenges facing Asian American Studies (and ethnic studies in general) is defining a set of reasonable and acceptable scholarly and creative activities. Three salient factors have shaped AAS: an activist historical root, expansive coverage in terms of diverse populations and multiple issues, and the inclusion of scholars and creative agents from disparate disciplines and traditions. Given this framework, it is critical for those pursuing AAS to have an exposure to and appreciation for alternative paradigms and epistemologies. The course will cover three major social science disciplines (sociology, economics and political science) focusing on both academic and applied research and publications. Although the course utilizes examples from Asian American Studies, many of the lessons are applicable to other fields.

GRADING:

Weekly Class Participation 15%

Critique of readings (3 out of 4 options, 10% each) 30%

Term Paper: Draft and presentation 20%; Final Paper and Presentation 35%

Grades for late assignments are reduced by a 1/2 grade reduction per week.

ASSIGNMENTS:

You are expected to write three short critiques of the disciplines covered by the course (3-5 pages each, double spaced, standard fonts, margins and formatting) using class and outside readings. Each should include a concise definition of the core ideas of each discipline, how they are applied the study of Asian Americans, and the strengths and weaknesses of the disciplinary approach. The definition of the discipline can be based on either a standard text or a seminal work. (You can use Wikipedia as a starting point, but you must consult the original academic work.) The application to Asian Americans is based on class readings. The assessment is based on your evaluation of what insights the discipline provides and what the discipline misses. Each critique is due at the start of the class focusing on that particular discipline. You may substitute one of the critiques with another focusing on a social science discipline not covered by the class.

You are expected to write a 15-20 page term paper on an Asian American topic of your choice using at least two of the social science disciplines. More details will be provided on week 4. A draft of the paper is due at the start of class in week 9, and students will make a brief presentation based on the draft. The final paper is due on the last day of class, and students will make a brief presentation.

READINGS

You can order copies of *Amerasia* and NEXUS from UCLA's Asian American Studies Center
<http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/default.asp> ; <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/thecollection.asp>
Wong, et al., can be ordered from the Russell Sage Foundation:
<https://www.russellsage.org/publications/asian-american-political-participation>

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1: Overview of course

WEEKS 2-3: Framing the course

Discussion of Key Concepts:

Social Science Knowledge, Creative Expression, and Critiques of Creative Works
Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Discussion of critical elements and characteristics of AAS scholarship:

Activist roots, multi-disciplinary, inclusionary diversity, and identity.
Collective and/versus Individual Responsibility
Academic freedom and accountability

WEEK 4: DISCUSSION OF TOPICS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR TERM PAPER

WEEKS 5-6: SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION AND COMMUNITY

Amerasia Journal, "How Do Asian Americans Create Places?" Vol. 34, No. 3 (2008)

AAPI NEXUS: Policy, Practice and Community, Special Issue on "Community Development,"
1:1 (2003).

WEEKS 7-8: ECONOMICS AND MARKET OUTCOMES

AAPI NEXUS: Policy, Practice and Community, Special Issue on "Employment/Work Issues,"
3:2 (2005), Guest Editor: Deborah Woo

AAPI NEXUS: Policy, Practice and Community, Special Issue on "Glass Ceiling/Health Issues,"
4:1 (2006), Guest Editors: Marjorie Kagawa-Singer and Deborah Woo

Varisa Patraporn, Paul Ong and Deirdre Pfeiffer, "Closing the Asian-White Wealth Gap?", *Asian American Policy Review*, Volume 18, 2009.

WEEK 9: STUDENT PRESENTATION OF DRAFT OF TERM PAPER

WEEKS 10-11: POLITICS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

AAPI NEXUS: Policy, Practice and Community, Special Issue on "Voting," 2:2 (2004).

Asian American Political Participation: Emerging Constituents and their Political Identities.
Janelle Wong, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, Taeku Lee, and Jane Junn (Russell Sage Foundation,
Available October 2011)

Weeks 12-13: SYNTHESIS, CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Week 14: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS