

## English 4AW3 – Asian American Writing – Winter 2022

**Instructor:** Theresa Kenney (she/her/siya)

**Instructor Email:** [kennet1@mcmaster.ca](mailto:kennet1@mcmaster.ca)

**Class Time and Location:** Thursdays, 2:30-4:20pm in CNH 332

**Office Hours:** Thursdays, 12:30-1:30pm in CNH 225 and virtually, or by appointment

**Course Description:** This seminar course offers a focused study of contemporary Southeast Asian North American texts from the late-2010s and 2020s. Together we will explore how these texts articulate the fullness of Asian North American and Asian diasporic theorizations, visuals, poetics, sonics, and practices that are developing (and surviving) in relation to both transnational movements and racialized settlement on stolen land. We will engage with these contemporary interventions through a historical and contemporary conversation with scholarship on identity, race, gender, sexuality, disability, nation, refugeeism, (anti-) colonialism, capitalism, transnationalism, COVID-19, and diaspora.

### Learning Goals:

1. Devise and carry out a research project on a topic of your choice that demonstrates your growing understanding of key concepts in Asian North American studies.
2. Develop effective questions to generate discussion among peers about creative and theoretical texts through thoughtful engagement with Asian North American theory and popular genres.
3. Critically approach the creative methodologies of the course readings through a practice of making.
4. Strengthen close reading, presentation, critical thinking, research, citation, and essay writing skills.

### Required Reading Materials:

Souvankham Thammavongsa – *How to Pronounce Knife* (Short Stories – 2020)

A free copy is available at the Mills library

Copies are available for purchase at the Campus Store (\$35)

Anthony Veasna So – *Afterparties* (Short Stories – 2021)

A free copy is available at the Mills library

Copies are available for purchase at the Campus Store (\$24.95)

All other readings are available on Avenue to Learn.

**Course Assessment and Assignments:** For full assignment details, including how each will be assessed, please see the “Assignments” tab on Avenue to Learn.

Participation – 10%

Short Essay (1000 – 1500 words, due February 17) – 20%

E-Zine (3 webpages, due March 31) – 10%

Final Essay (2000-2500 words, due April 7) – 40%

Seminar Presentation (15 minutes) – 20%

Bonus: Self-Assessments (300 words) – 3%

**Class Format and Expectations:** This course is a seminar, which allows us to dive into both the richness of the assigned texts and the expansiveness of your analytical thoughts. Seminars rely on thoughtful participation in order to be fulfilling, which means we should all prepare to engage in the best ways that we can each class. Students are expected to engage with the materials before class and to prepare ideas to share in seminar every class (approx. 1.5 prep hours per week). Generally, I will open the class with an invitation for us to share a few (2-5) keywords that we have noted from our readings of the week's materials. Following this short collective thinking, we will then invite our presenter(s) to begin and then they will open our wider class discussion through their questions. Throughout the class, we will share our questions, critiques, background knowledge, and research to generate lively, care-filled, and rigorous conversation together. The expectation is that these weekly conversations will revolve around each week's readings as well as the creative methodologies of these materials. We will shift between readings throughout the class to ensure that we discuss a range of ideas, contexts, and methods.

**Policy on missed work, extensions, and late penalties:** Each major assignment has a specific due date as outlined above and on Avenue to Learn. These dates are laid out to hopefully offer a sustainable workload for us throughout the semester to meet all the assessment expectations of this course. At the same time, this course attempts to engage with disability justice frameworks that recognize the ebbs and flows of life, especially at times of crisis. Therefore, there are no late penalties applied to assignments submitted after the specified due date. I encourage you, however, to contact me to set up alternative submission dates. If you are struggling with the work and the world is too much, please reach out sooner than later. I will also check-in with you as necessary regarding assignments if there seems to be an inconsistency with submissions just to see how to support you throughout the term. Please anticipate submitting all course assessment requirements by the end of term (April 7th).

**Email Policy:** It can take between 24 to 48 hours for me to respond to emails, especially over weekends. Please be patient. I will reply as promptly as I can. Please note that unless there are extenuating circumstances, I will not respond to emails for 24 hours before an assignment is due and I will not respond to emails for 24 hours after an assignment is handed back.

**Citation:** Citational practice is an important part of Asian North American studies. It is key to think critically about who, why, and how we cite. In this course, we will use MLA 8<sup>th</sup> edition format to practice our citations throughout our assignments.

**Course Reading Schedule:** Please see the "Other Course Information" section of this document for more information about course readings and materials.

Week One – January 13: Introduction, Colonialism, and *Ingat Kayo*

- Candice Fujikane – "Unsettling" (Video Lecture – 5 mins – 26:05-31:05)  
[youtu.be/OT0iFOPYxTc?t=1565](https://youtu.be/OT0iFOPYxTc?t=1565)
- Lukayo Diwata Bitoon – "The Ground Cries Out" (Poem – 4 pages)

- J.A. Ruanto-Ramirez – “Opinion: As a queer, Indigenous Asian American refugee, my story is rarely told. I hope to change that” (Op-Ed)  
[www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2021-03-11/opinion-learning-ethnic-studies-complicated-identities](http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/story/2021-03-11/opinion-learning-ethnic-studies-complicated-identities)

Week Two – January 20: Asian Canadian, Asian American, Hybridity and (Beyond) the Hyphen

- Eleanor Ty and Don Goellnicht – Introduction to *Asian North American Identities* (13 pages)
- Lisa Lowe – “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Asian American Differences” (23 pages)

Week Three – January 27: Genres, Methodologies, and Zines

- Dai Kojima, John Paul Catungal, and Robert Diaz – “Introduction: Feeling Queer, Feeling Asian, Feeling Canadian” (9 pages)
- Cathy Park Hong – Selections from *Minor Feelings* (27 pages)
- Browse the following:
  - “Evolution of a Race Riot #1”  
[issuu.com/poczineproject/docs/evolution-of-a-race-riot-issue-1](http://issuu.com/poczineproject/docs/evolution-of-a-race-riot-issue-1)
  - Malaka Gharib’s Zine: [twitter.com/MalakaGharib/status/1124315559867420672](https://twitter.com/MalakaGharib/status/1124315559867420672)

Week Four – February 3: Dishing into Diaspora and Dining

- Adrian De Leon – “Siopao and Power: The Place of Pork Buns in Manila's Chinese History” (10 pages)
- Gastropod – “Why Thai?” (Podcast Episode – 43 mins) [gastropod.com/why-thai/](http://gastropod.com/why-thai/)
- Khaty Xiong – “Pork Rinds, Watered Rice,” “Northwest” (Poems – 2 pages)
- Kay Ulanday Barrett – “Aunties love it when seafood is on sale” (Poem – 2 pages)
- Therese Estacion – “Ama&Apo” (Poem – 2 pages)

Week Five – February 10: Donuts, Dancing, and Destabilizing the category “refugee”

- Anthony Veasna So – *Afterparties* (9 Short Stories – 256 Pages)
  - Focus on: “Three Women of Chuck’s Donuts,” “The Shop,” “Human Development,” and “Generational Differences”
- Monica Sok – “Americans Dancing in the Heart of Darkness” (Poem – 1.5 pages)
- Vinh Nguyen – “Refugeetude” (18 pages)

Week Six – February 17: Language, Refuge(e), and Relation

**\* Short Essay Due\***

- Souvankham Thammavongsa – *How to Pronounce Knife* (14 Short Stories – 176 pages)
  - Focus on: “How to Pronounce Knife,” “Chick-A-Chee,” and “You Are So Embarrassing”
- Monica Sok – “ABC for Refugees” (Poem – 1 page)
- Bryan Thao Worra – “Pronunciations in Diaspora” (3 pages)
- Joanne Leow – “Reading the Non-Human” (2.5 pages)

- Y-Dang Troeung – “On Names and Resonances” (2 pages)

## Week Seven – No Class: Reading Break

### Week Eight – March 3: Feels, Fails, and the Model Minority Myth

- Summer Kim Lee – “Staying In: Mitski, Ocean Vuong, and Asian American Asociality” (18 pages)
- Ocean Vuong – “Ode to Masturbation” (Poem – 6 pages)
- Olivia Rodrigo – “brutal,” “good 4 u” (Songs – 6 mins)
- Eleanor Ty – Introduction to *AsianFail* (26 pages)
- Browse the following:
  - Leenda Dong – @yoleendadong (Tik Tok Account)
  - Asia Jackson – #MagandangMorenx (Instagram and Twitter)

### Week Nine – March 10: Queering Immigrant Sonics and Drag Matters

- Casey Mecija – “‘The desert’s no home for a rose’: Filipinx childhood and music as aesthetic experience” (12 pages)
- Eva Noblezada, Dale Watson – “Quietly Into The Night from *Yellow Rose*” (Music Video - 2 mins) [youtu.be/uIJ8S1k7RMs](https://youtu.be/uIJ8S1k7RMs)
- *Asian Enough Podcast* – “Jujubee” (60 mins) [www.podchaser.com/podcasts/asian-enough-1030218/episodes/jujubee-92347112](http://www.podchaser.com/podcasts/asian-enough-1030218/episodes/jujubee-92347112).

### Week Ten – March 17: Femmes and Bottoms

#### \* Zine Submission Opportunity\*

- Richard Fung – “Looking for my Penis” [richardfung.ca/index.php?/articles/looking-for-my-penis-1991/](http://richardfung.ca/index.php?/articles/looking-for-my-penis-1991/)
- Viet Le – “Pornography of Days” (Poem – 1 page)
- Kay Ulanday Barrett, Karen Buenavista Hanna, Angang Palomar – “In defense of the x” (23 pages)
- Kimmortal – “Sad Femme Club” (Music Video – 4 mins) – [youtu.be/CVQ7g7IGf60](https://youtu.be/CVQ7g7IGf60)

### Week Eleven – March 24: The (Home)Land

#### \* Zine Submission Opportunity\*

- Natalie Wee – “Silverfin,” “When I Say I’m Queer I Mean,” “Let Us Be Fireflies” (Poems – 4 pages)
- Khairani Barokka – “ultimatum orangutan,” “tuban planting,” “abecedarian for other alphabets” (Poems – 8 pages)
- Mai Der Vang – Selections from *Yellow Rain* (Poems – 7 Pages)
- Mel Y. Chen “Toxic Animacies, Inanimate Affections” (18 pages)

### Week Twelve – March 31: Care Work, Disability, and COVID-19

#### \* Zine Submission Opportunity\*

- Adrian De Leon and Dolly Li – “Why ‘The China Virus’ Has Always Been A Part of U.S. History” (Video – 9 mins) – [youtu.be/s2VdmcVHDFY](https://youtu.be/s2VdmcVHDFY)
- Khairani Barokka – “how to avoid oneself as a vulnerable person in a pandemic” (Poem – 1 page)
- Therese Estacion – “Iron Body” (Poem – 1 page)
- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarsinha – *Selections from Care Work* (20 pages)

Week Thirteen – April 7: Reverbs and Reflections

**\* Final Essay Due\***

- Saweetie feat. Doja Cat – “Best Friend” (Music Video – 4 mins) [youtu.be/\\_xJUCsyMQes](https://youtu.be/_xJUCsyMQes)
- Pantayo – “Heto Na” (Music Video – 4.5 mins) [youtu.be/4\\_khrQsXQIM](https://youtu.be/4_khrQsXQIM)
- Summer Kim Lee – “Asian Americanist Critique and Listening Practices of Contemporary Popular Music” (15 pages)

**Content Warning, Accessibility, and Seminar Space:** This course explores both the pleasures and horrors of Asian North American experience – historically and contemporarily. The chosen readings attempt to engage with Southeast Asian North American and diasporic Southeast Asian texts, writers, and creators with specific connections to Indonesian, Javanese, Singaporean, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Hmong, Pilipinx/a, Thai, Laotian, and/or Malaysian kin, geographies, and ethnicity. We will be discussing a range of topics including detailed sexual practices, food consumption, fatphobia, racism, colonialism, war, genocide, refugeeism, imperialism, (intergenerational) trauma, ableism, saneism, deportation, death, COVID-19, etc. Due to the overlapping nature of these topics, this course will not provide specific content warnings for each reading on the syllabus. These materials and contexts can be emotionally overwhelming to engage with, especially for those of us with much closer proximities to these Asian North American experiences. We may feel joy. We may feel angry. We may feel uncomfortable. These are all feelings that are important to learning and engaging with different authors, genres, and (con)texts. And since everyone brings different knowledges and capacities to a classroom setting each time, I encourage all of us to share and participate in ways that do not violate personal, physical, mental, and emotional boundaries (yours or another person’s). Please be respectful, empathetic, self-aware, and mindful of the seminar dynamic and your place in it all while practicing the important work of critique and collaboration. At the same time, it is my role as your instructor to provide challenging, but accessible content for each of us to engage with. My aim is to provide an anti-colonial and accessibility-centered course, which can be modified further based on your individual accommodations. If you have questions about the readings, accommodations (with or without documented disability), or if you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by the course materials/discussion at any point in the term, please reach out to me.

**Supports for Students on Campus and in Hamilton:** “Care” is a key concept in our course. It is important to take care of ourselves to do our best in and outside of school. And we can find different kinds of care for ourselves through our networks on campus and in Hamilton. I encourage you to reach out to these resources as you need throughout the term:

Student Wellness Centre - [wellness.mcmaster.ca](http://wellness.mcmaster.ca)  
Student Accessibility Services - [sas.mcmaster.ca](http://sas.mcmaster.ca)  
Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area) SACHA - [sacha.ca](http://sacha.ca)  
Hamilton Food Share - [hamiltonfoodshare.org](http://hamiltonfoodshare.org)  
Hamilton Asian Alliance - [instagram.com/hamontasianalliance](https://www.instagram.com/hamontasianalliance)

### **Please Note the Following Policies and Statements:**

Academic Integrity: You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection: Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

Courses with an On-Line Element: Some courses use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

**Conduct Expectations:** As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online. It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

**Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) e-mail to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

**Email correspondence policy:** It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from each student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

**Modification of course outlines:** The University reserves the right to change dates and/or deadlines etc. for any or all courses in the case of an emergency situation or labour disruption or civil unrest/disobedience, etc. If a modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Any significant changes should be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

**Request for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work:** McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

**Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO):** Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their

examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright and Recording: Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances: The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.