

REL 249 / SOC 249 / AMST 249

Asian Religious Diasporas: The New Chosen People?

Spring 2014, Tue & Fri 1:10 p.m. – 2:25 p.m., Hollander 140

Instructor: Thien-Huong (“Huong”) T. Ninh

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Schapiro 112

Office Hours: Tue & Fri, 2:30 p.m.- 3:30 p.m. You must sign-up for office hours on Glow. Please e-mail me if you would like to meet outside of these timeframes.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

"Diaspora" is derived from a Greek word that means "to scatter" and historically refers to the Jewish community. Beginning in the 1990s, scholars, politicians, and journalists have expanded the meaning to include de-territorialized communities embedded within and extending outward from Asia. In this course, we will examine the how and why this phenomenon has developed. We will pay particular attention to religion as a proxy for identifying these "diasporas" and compare it with other types, such as economic, ethnic, and race. How is religion important in the classification of "Asian" forms of diaspora? What are the modes of power at play?

In answering these questions, our class will follow an interactive experiential learning model. We will directly engage with contemporary Asian religious communities (e.g. visits to nearby religious sites, guest lectures, films, and novels). We will then analyze how our observations contribute to, complicate, and challenge secondary readings about diasporas.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Analyze the term “diaspora” as a concept, analytical tool, identity category, and political group
2. Understand how the “diaspora” is performed, visualized, and maintained across space, time, and generations
3. Learn how “diaspora” is conceptualized in relations to “ethnicity” and “immigrant”
4. Identify exemplary cases of Asian religious diasporas
5. Locate and research several Asian religious diasporic communities near Williams

NOTE

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Please contact me to make advance arrangements if you need special assistance or consideration due to a documented disability.

Please observe the College’s Honor Code and other academic regulations and policies. For further information, visit: <http://web.williams.edu/Registrar/handbook/policies.html>

Plagiarism is not tolerated. Use appropriate quotation and citation styles to recognize other people's works.

NO COMPUTERS OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES PERMITTED DURING CLASS

REQUIRED TEXTS

None. All readings are either in the course packet or will be distributed before the due date.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADINGS

Graded Item	Points
<p>Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doctor's notes must be submitted at the next class meeting in order for the absence to be considered as "excused" (no other types of note are acceptable). - Only 2 excused absences are allowed - The third absence, regardless of the situation (excused or not), will result in a 30-point deduction (30% of maximum total class grade). 	10
<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contribute to class discussions - bring to seminars notecards with ideas and questions about class readings - lead at least three class meetings: summarize main points of the readings, raise important questions, etc. (4 points each) - mandatory fieldtrips (4 points each) to nearby Asian religious communities <i>tentatively</i> scheduled on: March 1 and April 19. 	40
<p>(1) Ethnographic website project (individual or 2-person group)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visit and research an Asian/Asian American religious community - create a website to document this community with photos, videos, and stories - one-on-one meeting with me to discuss the project idea (4 points) - presentation of the website to the class (4 points) - more detailed guidelines will be distributed during week 3 <p>Materials must be posted on your website by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 5, 2014 – NO EXCEPTIONS</p>	20
<p>(1) Final paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12-20 double-spaced pages - individual meeting with me (4 points) - final paper outline (4 points) - specific guidelines and grading criteria will be distributed immediately after Spring Break 	30

In PDF and Word -- Submit copies of your paper on Glow AND to my email ttn1@williams.edu by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 21, 2014 – NO EXCEPTIONS	
Extra Credit - None unless otherwise announced.	0
Total	100

SCHEDULE

WEEK 0 (Feb 5-7): Syllabus

WEEK 1 Introduction: Asian people and their religions on the move

Feb 11:

- Lee, 2011, “Maintaining Patterns: Community Rituals and Pilgrimage in a Diasporic Taiwanese American Religious Community”
- Kim, 2004, “Second-Generation Korean American Evangelicals: Ethnic, Multiethnic, or White Campus Ministries?”

Film (in class): *Happy Birthday Mazu*

Feb 14: Holiday, Winter Carnival

WEEK 2 What is “Asian religious diaspora”? Conceptual introduction

Feb 18:

- Andrew Lam, 2009, “Cao Dai Integrates World Religion, Expands to California”
- Ro, 2011, “Korea Beyond Korea: Korean Diaspora and the Role of the Korean Americans (A New Challenge for Korea in the 21 Century)”
- Tololyan, 1996, “Rethinking Diaspora(s)”

Film: *The Left Eye of God*

Feb 21:

- Vertovec, 1997, “Three Meanings of ‘Diaspora,’ Exemplified Among South Asian Religions”
- Tololyan, 2007, “The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies”

Youtube: JusReign

WEEK 3 Group identity and politics outside of the homeland

Feb 25:

- Cherry, 2014, *Faith, Family, and Filipino American Community Life*, “Communities in Conflict” and “Building Centers of Community”
- Park, 2008, “Second-Generation Asian American Pan-Ethnic Identity: Pluralized Meanings of a Racial Label”

Discussion Facilitator: _____

Feb 28:

- Kurien, 2001, “Religion, Ethnicity, and Politics: Hindu and Muslim Indian Immigrants in the United States”
- Kim, 2010, “Shifting Boundaries within Second-Generation Korean American Churches”

Discussion Facilitator: _____

March 1 – Fieldtrip # 1

WEEK 4 Race and ethnicity

March 4:

- Hoskins, 2011, “Diaspora as a Religious Doctrine: An ‘Apostle of Vietnamese Nationalism’ Comes to California”
- Chen, 2002, “The Religious Varieties of Ethnic Presence: A Comparison Between a Taiwanese Immigrant Buddhist Temple and an Evangelical Christian Church”
- Alexander, 2010, “Diasporas, Race and Difference”

Discussion Facilitator: _____

March 7: OIT presentation on how to create a Wordpress website.

WEEK 5 Gender issues and female worshipping

March 11:

- Pelaud, 1997, “Three Women and a Master”
- Kim, 1999, “The Labor of Compassion: Voices of Churched Korean American Women”
- Kurien, 1999, “Gendered Ethnicity: Creating a Hindu Indian Identity in the United States”
- Werbner, 2002, “The Place which is Diaspora: Citizenship, Religion, and Gender in the Making of the Chaordic Transnationalism”

Discussion Facilitator: _____

March 14:

- Fibiger, 2012, “When the Hindu Goddess Moves to Denmark”
- Wilson, 2008, “‘Deeply Female and Universally Human’: The Rise of Kuan-yin Worship in America”
- De La Cruz, 2009, “Coincidence and Consequence: Marianism and the Mass Mass Media in the Global Philippines”

Discussion Facilitator: _____

WEEK 6 Sexuality**March 18:**

- Chu, 2013, *Does Jesus Really Love Me?*
- Yuan and Yuan, 2011, *Out of a Far Country*

Film: *In God's House*

Discussion Facilitator: _____

March 21:

Meet with me individually for 20-30 mins to discuss your class website project. You must prepare a detailed outline, research plans, and contact information necessary to carry out your project.

WEEK 7 (Spring break)

March 25: Work on ethnographic website project

March 28: Work on ethnographic website project

WEEK 8 (Spring break)

April 1: Work on ethnographic website project

April 4: Work on ethnographic website project

WEEK 9 Ritualization and materiality**April 8:**

- Fadiman, 1997, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

- Fjeldstad and Nguyen, 2011, *Spirits without Borders: Vietnamese Mediums in a Transnational Age*
- Khan, 2007, "Ritual in Diaspora: Pedagogy and Practice Among Hindus and Muslims in Trinidad"

Film: *The Split Horn: Life of a Hmong Shaman in America*

Background information on the film: <http://www.pbs.org/splithorn/>

April 11:

- Sevastopulo, 2013, "Filipino Diaspora Rallies After Typhoon Haiyan"
- Ha, 2002, "The Evolution of Remittances from Family to Faith: The Vietnamese Case"
- Sultan Khan and A.F.M. Ebrahim, 2014, "The State of Philanthropy amongst the Muslim Diaspora in South Africa"
- Shain and Sherman, 2001, "Diasporic Transnational Financial Flows and Their Impact on National Identity"

(Optional) April 12 & 13, "Crossing Borders Conference" at Williams

WEEK 10 In Focus: South Asian religious diasporas

April 15:

- Williams, 2000, "South Asian Christians in Britain, Canada, and the United States"
- McDermott, 2000, "From Hinduism to Christianity, from India to New York: Bondage and Exodus Experiences in the Lives of Indian Dalit Christians in the Diaspora"
- Werbner, 2004, "Theorising Complex Diasporas: Purity and Hybridity in the South Asian Public Sphere in Britain"

April 18:

- Jacobsen, 2008, "Creating Sri Lankan Tamil Catholic Space in the South Asian Diaspora in Norway"
- Kumar, 2008, "Rathayatra of the Hare Krishnas in Durban: Inventing Strategies to Transmit Religious Ideas in Modern Society"
- Singh, 2005, "On the Politics of the Sikh Diaspora"

April 19 Fieldtrip #2

WEEK 11 In Focus: East Asian religious diasporas

April 22:

- Kim, 2013, "Korean Missionaries: Preaching the Gospel to 'All Nations,' including the United States"

- Matsue, 2006, “Religious Activities among the Japanese-Brazilians: ‘Dual Diaspora’ in Japan”
- Sheffer, 2006, “Transnationalism and Ethnonational Diasporism”

“The First Korean Church of Boston” (<http://www.bu.edu/cgcm/research/korean-diaspora-project/the-first-korean-church-of-boston/>)

April 25:

- Yang, 2002, “Chinese Christian Transnationalism: Diverse Networks of a Houston Church”
- Nagy, 2006, “Chinese Christian Community in Bucharest, Romania: A Missiological Approach to the Ecclesiogenesis”
- Farrer, 2006, “Chinese Catholic Center in Tokyo: Institutional Characteristics in Contexts”

WEEK 12 In Focus: Southeast Asian religious diasporas

April 29:

- Butler, 1992, *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*
- Bankston, 2000, “Vietnamese-American Catholicism: Transplanted and Flourishing”
- Parrenas and Siu, 2007, “Introduction: Asian Diasporas – New Conceptions, New Frameworks”

Film: *A Village Called Versailles*

Additional info: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2008/08/a_village_calle.html

May 2:

- Prague Daily Monitor, 2012, “Czech Vietnamese Plan for Buddhist Temple in Prague”
- Yamada, 2004, “The Spirit Cult of Khleang Moeung in Long Beach, California”
- Mayer, 1999, “Healing for the Millenium: Master Dang and the Spiritual Human Yoga”
- Cheah, 2011, *Race and Religion in American Buddhism: White Supremacy and Immigrant Adaptation*

WEEK 13 In Focus: Asian religious diasporas near Williams

>>>> **May 5: Class website projects due by 5 p.m.** <<<<

May 6: Ethnographic website project presentations

May 9: Ethnographic website project presentations

WEEK 14 What is “Asian religious diaspora”? emergence and possibilities

May 13:

Meet with me individually to discuss your final paper (4 points). Bring your detailed paper outline (4 points).

May 16:

- Park and Ecklund, 2007, "Negotiating Continuity: Family and Religious Socialization for Second-Generation Asian Americans"
- Lal, 1999, "The Politics of History on the Internet: Cyber-Diasporic Hinduism and the North American Hindu Diaspora"
- Rai, 1995, "India On-line: Electronic Bulletin Boards and the Construction of a Diasporic Hindu Identity"

Reading period (May 17-20) & final examinations (May 21-26)

>>>> Due by 5 p.m. on Fri, May 21, 2014 -- Submit your final paper (in PDF and Word) on Glow AND to my email ttn1@williams.edu. NO EXCEPTIONS <<<<