

Representations of Asia in Popular Culture

Performing Asian America

Section 1

Instructor/Title	Hyunjung Lee/Professor
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【Course Outline / Description】

This course examines the ways in which the image of Asia or the theme of “Asian-ness” have been manipulated and consumed through contemporary (Western/American) plays, musicals, and other versions of popular culture. In this context, we will explore what is to be done in order to situate and perform a dramatic literature in a certain public arena; and how thematic variations in theatre and literature convey new meanings through different styles of performance.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

This course aims to explore to what extent literature and theatrical performance can be a cross-cultural, ethnographic representation. And more broadly, through different genres of culture/art such as musical theatre and film, we will explore how the notion of “Asia” and/or “Asian-America” has been received and consumed in American contemporary pop culture.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

(Note: Some of the contents and the schedule are subject to change)

Week 1: Introduction

Explain syllabus, Introduction

Week 2: Rodgers and Hammerstein, *South Pacific* (The Musical)

Rodgers and Hammerstein, *South Pacific* (Read Script)

Week 3: Rodgers and Hammerstein, *South Pacific* (The Musical)

Rodgers and Hammerstein, *South Pacific* (Read Script)

Week 4: *King and I* (The Musical)

Rodgers & Hammerstein, *King and I* (Read Script)

Week 5: *King and I* (The Musical)

Rodgers & Hammerstein, *King and I* (Read Script)

Week 6: *King and I* on Hollywood

Andy Tennant, *Anna and the King* (1999)

Week 7: *King and I* on Hollywood

Andy Tennant, *Anna and the King* (1999)

Week 8: *Flower Drum Song* (Musical)

Rodgers & Hammerstein, *Flower Drum Song* (Read Script)

Week 9: Excerpts from C.Y. Lee, *The Flower Drum Song* (a novel)

C.Y. Lee, *The Flower Drum Song* (excerpts), Wrap-up

Week 10: *Madama Butterfly*

Puccini, *Madama Butterfly* (opera) [explained in-class]

Week 11: *M. Butterfly*

Henry David Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (read script), film version shown in-class

Week 12: *Miss Saigon* and Beyond

Boublil & Schonberg, *Miss Saigon* (musical)

Week 13: *Miss Saigon* and Beyond

Boublil & Schonberg, *Miss Saigon* (musical)

Week 14: Japan & U.S.

Joshua Logan (dir.), *Sayonara*

Week 15: Japan & U.S.

Joshua Logan (dir.), *Sayonara* (Discussion & Wrap-up)

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

All Scripts and readings available on Blackboard

Rodgers and Hammerstein, [South Pacific](#)

R&H, [King and I](#)

R&H, [Flower Drum Song](#)

C.Y. Lee, [The Flower Drum Song](#)

Henry David Hwang, [M. Butterfly](#) (1988)

Puccini, [Madama Butterfly](#)

Boublil and Schonberg, [Miss Saigon](#) (1989)

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

1. Weekly short-response papers/Group work, etc.: 40%

*Weekly Short Response Papers with comments and/or questions about the readings/texts: Students are required to use and submit **9 (minimum)** short response papers evenly throughout the semester. Length: **maximum of 250 words (either typed or handwritten)**.

These are “informal” papers aimed to show how actively you have done the readings. You are free to write either/or short responses, confusions, questions that arose while you were doing the class readings (or after watching the films). **You CANNOT submit these short-responses (9 or more) in lump-sum at the end of the term. You CANNOT submit multiple number of papers (like 3-4) at a single-time** (i.e. The purpose of these response papers is to assist in the class discussion at a time when it happens. So old responses will not help at all).

2. Writing Assignment: 30% (Prompt will be distributed ahead of time)

3. Final Exam: 30%

Section 5

【Additional Information】

How to make this course productive

- 1) All readings will be available on Blackboard. Students are required to download, read, and digest the assigned readings before coming to class
- 2) Active class participation is mandatory. Your expressive, energetic communication skills and preparations for in-class discussions will be expected
- 3) You won't be able to make up for any in-class writing activities, tests, etc. you have missed caused by your absence