Asian & Asian American Studies

AAS 500: Intellectual History of East Asia
This course examines the major intellectual traditions of East Asia with an idea that intellectual movements not only reflect but also influence historical developments. It is designed to help students enhance their understanding of East Asian thoughts, history, and culture. Topics will cover the intellectual movements in China, Japan, and Korea from ancient times to the early 20th century.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 501: Proseminar: Topics & Methods in Contemporary Asian and Asian American Studies
This course introduces students to qualitative and quantitative research methods commonly used in social sciences and humanities, including narrative research, phenomenological research, ethnographic research, case study research, correlational research, and survey research. Students are expected to identify a topic of interest of their own choosing within Contemporary Asian and Asian American Studies and develop a pilot research project. The instructor plays the role of a facilitator by leading methodological as well as thematic discussions on research topics initiated by students. This course takes the formats of lectures, workshops, student presentations, peer critique, and one-on-one instructor-student conferences.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 505: The Pacific, Travel and Empire
This cultural studies course examines the cultures of travel (i.e. fiction, memoirs, photography, and filmmaking) in narratives by and about the Pacific, South and Southeast Asia. We will study the empire by analyzing narratives about the former colonies of Spain, France, Britain and the United States. As we discuss the metaphors or tropes of empire, we will also examine the concept of empire as a historical and contemporary formation, or what an empire meant in the 19th century and what is means today in the early 21st century. The course begins with the premise that travel narratives and modern visual culture illuminate the relationship between the violence and romance of travel. The course includes modern travel narratives (i.e. novels by Asian Americans) that focus on the lives of those who are forced to travel or migrate due to civil war, poverty and/or economic instability.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 534: English in Asia
Study of the expanding roles of English in South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. With more non-native speakers than native speakers, and more in Asia than elsewhere, English has acquired new identities. We will study functions of English in colonial and post-colonial times; how it competes with, and complements local languages in business, advertising, media, education, research, administration, judiciary, creative literature, call centers, and on the Internet; the evolution of dynamic new Asian Englishes, such as Indian English, and their social and cultural contexts; controversies regarding English medium education and its impact on local languages, relevance of native English standards, and implications for theory, description, and method in diverse disciplines, such as, business communication, cultural studies, English, lexicography, speech recognition, journalism, media studies, sociolinguistics, teaching English as a second language, and Asian Studies.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 540: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies
This course is an examination of the critical theory on Inter-Asia cultures and phenomena. Emphasis is placed on the role of culture within the writing, documentation, and evidencing of history. Attention may be focused on a particular era, group, institution, type of object, or event.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 545: Learning of Asian Languages
This course will analyze the cognitive processes involved in the acquisition of Asian languages as second or foreign languages. We will start with discussion of first language acquisition and compare it with second language acquisition (SLA). Methodologies such as contrastive analysis and error analysis, and concepts such as interlanguage, native and non-native competence, bilingual competence, acceptability, correctness, standard language will be critically examined. We will also consider the variables that affect SLA, including age, context, exposure, attitude, cognition, attention and motivation. Special attention will be given to the applicability of current research paradigms and findings to the acquisition of languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Hindi, both in terms of their structural characteristics and in their socio-cultural context.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 547: Directed Reading in Contemporary Asian and Asian American Studies
This course provides an opportunity for graduate students in Contemporary Asian and Asian American Studies to pursue readings in an area of their interest as part of their graduate program studies. Independent readings in graduate topics in Contemporary Asian and Asian American studies. May be repeated. Prerequisites: Approval by Director of Graduate Studies
1-6 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)
May be repeated for credit.

AAS 555: Heritage Languages of Asian Americans
English has long been the dominant language used in the United States, while the languages of numerous indigenous and immigrant communities have declined and many have died. At the same time, the United States extensive global role, the rising geopolitical rise of Asian powers, such as China, India, Japan, South Korean, and others has highlighted the need to foster greater Asian language and cultural skills among Americans. In that context, maintaining the existing diversity of languages spoken among American immigrant populations becomes as important and effective as teaching the languages to new populations. There is an increasing recognition that the advantages of such multilingualism are not only cultural, but also cognitive, diplomatic, security, commercial, social, and political as well. Retaining knowledge of the home language is found to promote the minority individuals psychological well-being, facilitate communication and bonding across generations, and ease the process of adjusting to life away from the home country, while promoting a pluralistic outlook and providing globally valuable job skills. Still, the brunt of the actual effort to foster multilingualism has been left to individual families despite the known fact that parental effort at maintenance alone are not enough to prevent an eventual shift to English. This new course is a critical examination of the nature and extent of available support (institutional, social, family, and other) for maintaining this valuable resource of Asian immigrants languages. Students learn through through in-depth readings, class lectures and discussions, and directed research in language communities of their choice.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)
AAS 560: Empire, Memory and Narratives of Asian America
Asian American literary scholars have focused on the tropes of immigration and settlement as major paradigms for mapping the landscape of Asian American writing. The late 1990s, however, witnessed the emergence of novels, memoirs, narrative and experimental films that departed from current notions of Asian American literature and films. A distinct cohort of writers and filmmakers, who are first-generation immigrants, created cultural forms that focus on the homeland or the experiences of war, violence, personal and national memory. The seminar considers how these fictional and non-fictional narratives engage with new aesthetic and political questions regarding Asian American writing, filmmaking and the politics of memory in the digital age.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 565: Food, Labor and Asian America
An authentic taste of Asia is a marketing phrase haunted by the violent histories of Orientalism, Western expansion and wars in Asia. In truth, the success and popularity of some Asian food is more than the celebration of the immigrant work ethic. Behind the popularity are geopolitical and labor issues. The consumption of beef and poultry in the U.S., for example, is intimately connected to the exploitation of immigrants from the global south. Undocumented immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia, East Africa and the Americas perform the dirty task of slaughtering millions of animals: chickens, turkeys, pigs, ducks, sheep, lamb, calves. In 2009 alone, 33,300,000 cattle were killed for their meat in the United States. Immigrant laborers of American industrial slaughterhouses carry out dirty and dangerous work, killing and disemboweling animals even as the laborers themselves live in crowded, unsanitary quarters. Similarly, the cooks of America’s kitchens are immigrants from Asia and other parts of the world. This new MA course focuses on the emerging field known as food studies, in particular the politics and histories of Asian food and its popularity in the United States. If the old adage is well, we are what we eat, what does it mean that Asian food in the U.S. is intimately connected to the histories of wars in Asia, undocumented labor, and the exploitation of immigrant food workers?
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 571: Islamic Thought in Asia
Islam is commonly considered a Middle-Eastern religion, but most of the Middle East lies within the Asian continent, and the vast majority of Muslims over the centuries have been non-Arabic speakers, living across south and central Asia into India, China, and Indonesia. We will survey the importance of Islam as the today’s largest Asian religion (numerically speaking) and look at some of the distinctive features of its local variants. We will pay special attention to the manner in which teachings were presented in the languages besides Arabic that became Islam’s vehicles, in particular Chines, which witnessed a remarkable synthesis of the Islamic and Confucian worldviews.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 572: Topics in Asian Philosophy I
This course presents in-depth student of specific topic in an Asian philosophical tradition. Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge through mastery of native terms and concepts from that tradition. May be repeated as the topics changes.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.) May be repeated for credit.

AAS 573: Orientalism
Edward Said’s Orientalism, written in 1978, was a polemical attack on the discipline of Orientalism and the representations of the Orient in western thought. Almost thirty years later, the debate still rages: are all western scholars writing about Asia complicit in imperialism? Is there such a thing as objective scholarship, or are power and knowledge so deeply intertwined that all intellectual activity is inherently political? Taking our start from Said’s ideas, we will look at authors who extended Said’s critique to the fields of South Asian and East Asian Studies, and also examine some of Said’s most outspoken critics. In investigating these issues, students will learn about some of the major figures in the history of Asian students. We will conclude the semester by exploring the possibilities for post-orientalist approaches to the study of Asian cultures and religions, and by examining the pervasiveness of Orientalist themes in popular culture.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 575: Multilingualism & Communication in Asia
Survey of multilingualism as a cognitive phenomenon and communication strategy with special reference to traditionally multilingual societies. Structural, sociolinguistic, cultural, and cognitive models are evaluated for their adequacy in representing multilingualism in Western and especially non-Western (Asian and African cultures. Topics include concepts of multilingualism, typology of multilingualism; functional distribution of languages in education, media, social media, and business; diglossia, code-switching and code-mixing, psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic models of multiple language representation and processing in the brain; synchronic and diachronic dimensions of language contact and interaction in the individual and society: accents, interference, transfer on various linguistic levels; borrowing, linguistic convergence, emergence of pidgins, creoles, mixed languages, styles, and non-native varieties; multilingualism as a pragmatic and stylistic literary device speech acts and multilingual creativity; socio-political dimensions of multilingualism: multilingualism and identity; accommodation and assimilation; language maintenance and shift; language rivalry and conflict; spread of languages of wider communication and minority languages; anxiety about hegemony and endangerment; cross-cultural case students of pluralistic models of coexistence.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 585: Translation Studies of Asian Languages
Inquiry into issues in the translation of Asian languages into/from English. This course introduces the recent theories and concepts of translation studies and applies them to the analysis of a variety of Asian texts as source texts or target texts. Students are expected to gain insights into the lexical, grammatical, cognitive, pragmatic, and socio-cultural characteristics of Asian languages as well as social and political issues that surround translation of Asian texts. Texts to be analyzed include, but are not limited to, literary works, newspaper articles, advertisements, brochures, and business letters. Advanced skills in one of the Asian languages are required.
3 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.)

AAS 587: Supervised Research in Contemporary Asian and Asian American Studies
This course provides thesis credit for students in the graduate program, Contemporary Asian and Asian American Studies. Thesis credit. Independent graduate research under the supervision of a faculty member. May be repeated to a limit of 6 credits. Prerequisites: Approval of Director of Graduate Studies
1-6 credits, Letter graded (A, A-, B+, etc.) May be repeated 6 times FOR credit.