**AAS 310 / RTF 301N - ‘Mixed Race’ and the Media**Spring 2012  
MWF 11-12 PAR 306

***Instructor:* Alexander Cho, M.A.**E-mail: **alexcho47@gmail.com** (*best way to reach me*)  
Office: CMA 6.130 Phone: 512-471-8624  
Office Hours: Th 2-4 p.m., or by appointment in person or Skype

***Course Description:***  
What is “race,” and what does it mean to be “mixed”? How is mass media responsible for channeling fears, desires, and anxieties about “mixed” bodies? Why are “mixed race” bodies suddenly desirable and chic? Can one exist in two or more categories at the same time? How do people think of “mixedness” in the U.S., and how is it different in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Brazil? Why do people care so much? Why do categories matter? Isn’t *everyone* “mixed” somehow? Where do *you* fit in?

This course will give students the tools to critically respond to these questions via a comparative, historically situated study of the representation of "mixed-race" people in popular media. Major attention will be paid to special concerns for Asian American populations; it includes substantial attention to African American and Latino populations. Chiefly U.S.-centered, but with a large transnational comparative component analyzing “mixed” racial formation in: North America, Latin America, Caribbean, Brazil.

***Course Goals:***This course’s chief goal is an understanding of “mixedness” not as fringe or outlying phenomenon, but as a *central tenet* of the way we think of race. Traditional racial and ethnic categories in the United States show strain when managing “mixed-race” bodies; accordingly, this course will “trouble” the construction of “Asian American” as a fixed, monoracial category, critically interrogating cultural assumptions inherent in this grouping. This course will train students to:

1. Critically analyze media texts in terms of the history of representations of race and “mixedness” in a U.S. context.
2. Understand how media industry policies and regulations have shaped representation of mixed-race people in the U.S.
3. Articulate the situation of “mixed race” people in Asian American populations and their history of mediated representation.
4. Evaluate historical policies that have shaped racial formation in the U.S.
5. Become conversant in comparative conceptions of “mixed” people transnationally.
6. Explore and articulate their own racial, ethnic, and cultural identity.

Key concepts to be explored include: miscegenation and yellow peril, hyper-/hypodescent, *mestizaje*, creole, blood quantum, one-drop rule, *Luso-Tropicalismo*, tragic mulatta/marginal man, *hapa*, hybridity, syncretism.

**This course fulfills undergraduate Writing Flag and Cultural Diversity in the United States Flag requirements:**

*Cultural Diversity in the United States:* This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

*Writing:* This course carries the Writing flag. Writing flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

***Required Texts:*1. Course Packet (available at Jenn’s at 22nd and Guadalupe)**

***Course Website:***This class has been designed with a substantial online participation component utilizing a Web platform called “Coursekit.” ([www.coursekit.com](http://www.coursekit.com)) Coursekit will host our class blog, which is integrated into a stream/feed design, much like Facebook. I will give you the access code at the beginning of class. It is your space to interact with each other, share news, information, Web links, videos, and the like that are pertinent to class. See “participation” below for details on how you will be graded on your use of this freeform class space.

***Grading and Course Requirements:***

*Auto-Ethnography Assignment.* As the first unit of the class draws to a close, you will write a self-reflexive account of your personal history in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, belonging, and community. Successful papers will display a substantial depth of research and will accurately employ class concepts and terms. 4-6 pages. Details to be distributed during the semester. 100 points possible / 20% of final grade.

*Critical Media Analysis Paper.* You will perform a textual and discursive analysis of an historical or contemporary media text that deals with “mixed-race” employing key class concepts. ***Draft due three weeks before the end of the semester*** *to allow for peer review, instructor review, and revision.* 6-8 pages. Details to be distributed during the semester. 100 points possible / 25% of final grade.

*Friday Guided Discussion.* At our Monday and Wednesday meetings, I will usually lecture and introduce new concepts. You will be divided into small “working groups” of 3-4 each which will be responsible for leading at least two Friday guided discussions. The goal of these meetings is to encourage in-class dialog and participation regarding all of the readings assigned for that week (including those for Friday). Working groups will be responsible for creating the “backbone” of the discussion for that week, including identifying the 2 most important reading concepts from the week, and drafting at least 6 discussion questions. They will also choose that week’s top 3 News Feed Items or Comments from the Coursekit blog. (See below for details.) 100 points possible / group grade / 15% of final grade.

*Coursekit Semi-Structured Blog Posts, News Feed Items, and Comments.*   
  
1) When it is your group’s turn to lead discussion for the week, each person in your group will write a 400-word blog post on Coursekit about that week’s readings. These posts will be staggered, so one student will post for Monday, one for Wednesday, and one or two for Friday (if there are four in a group). These posts are due to be uploaded by 5 p.m. the day before class meets. These posts should be thoughtful and written in an academic style; however, the only requirement I have for these posts is that you *include as a quotation at least one full sentence from the poster before you*, and make it make sense in context of your own post.   
  
2) Everyone in the class is required to post one item to the Coursekit news feed each week related to the readings or discussion for the week, or referring back to previous weeks (this could be a comment on a blog entry, a link, a video, a picture, etc.) All comments and/or other feed posts must contain at least two sentences of explanation. You may skip one week. Discussion leaders are exempt.

100 points possible for required blog entries (individual grade) / 5 points for posting at least one item or comment to the news feed each week, total of 50 across the semester / 15% of final grade.

*Quizzes.* You will have a very short quiz each Friday on the readings for that week. There are 12 quizzes; you will drop your lowest 2 scores for the semester. You cannot make up quizzes. 100 points possible / 15% of final grade.

*In-class Participation & Attendance.* 100 points possible / 10% of final grade.

*Extra Credit.* Each time your comment or news feed item is selected as one of the “top 3” for the week, you will earn 2 extra points for that week’s news feed item grade.

***Course Policies:****Attendance.* Will be taken every class session. Advance notice is required for any excused absence.

*Late work.* Late papers will be accepted; the paper grade will drop one full letter grade each day the paper is late. Late blog posts are similarly marked down.  
*Academic misconduct:* The work that you produce in this class must be your own. Expect me to pursue every instance of suspected academic misconduct in this course. Two kinds of academic misconduct are **cheating** on quizzes and exams, and **plagiarism** (such as turning in someone else’s work, downloading a paper from the Web in part or in whole, or paraphrasing or quoting sources without citation). Penalties range from a zero on the assignment to expulsion from school.

The work that you turn in should honestly and accurately demonstrate your own academic efforts. Your assignments should reflect work done for this course. Do not turn in assignments done for another course or attempt to pass off readings or screenings from another course as your own research or analysis. If you have a question about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask! This class will adhere to the University’s full definition of academic misconduct and its possible penalties.   
  
*The University of Texas Honor Code*The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.  
 **Scholastic Dishonesty.** The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonest damages both the student’s learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services Web site at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs  
  
**Writing Center:** I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/>). The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. The consultants there work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Whether you are writing a lab report, a resume, a term paper, a statement for an application, or your own poetry, UWC consultants will be happy to work with you. Their services are not just for writing that has "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant's advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.  
  
**Services For Students With Disabilities.** The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.  
 **Religious Holidays.** Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss a work assignment or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

*‘MIXED RACE’ AND THE MEDIA: SPRING 2012 COURSE SCHEDULE*

***PART 1: COMING TO TERMS WITH “RACE”***

*Wk 1 – Introduction & What is Race?***W Jan 18 – Introduction and Overview**Read in class: Saulny, “Black? White? Asian? More Young Americans Choose All of the Above”

**F Jan 20 – Race and Category**Read: Ewen & Ewen, “Hierarchies of Humanity”*Wk 2 – Fundamentals of Race and Mediated Representation***M Jan 23 – Fundamentals of Representation I**Read: Hall, Stuart. *The Spectacle of the Other* (pp. 239-253)   
Watch in class: *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (California Newsreel, 2003) (excerpt)

**W Jan 25 – Fundamentals of Representation II**Read: Hall, Stuart. *The Spectacle of the Other* (pp. 257-268)  
Watch in class: *Ethnic Notions* (dir. Riggs, 1987) (excerpt)

**F Jan 27 – Power in the Everyday**  
*INTRODUCE WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1: AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY (DUE MONDAY FEB 20)  
WEEKLY READING QUIZ*Read: Dyer, selection from *White**Wk 3 – Historically Thinking “Mixing” // \*\*BLOG DISCUSSION GROUPS START\*\****M Jan 30 – Historical attitudes: Degeneracy, Miscegenation, Hyper/Hypodescent**Read: de Count Gobineau, “Recapitulation”; Nott & Gliddon, “Hybridity of Animals”; Darwin, “On the Races of Men.”

**W Feb 1 – US Mixed Models: Passing, Tragic Mulatto/a, Marginal Man, Blood Quantum**Read: Omi & Winant, *Racial* *Formation in the United States*. (excerpt); Spickard, Paul, “The Illogic of American Racial Categories”  
Watch in class: *America the Melting Pot* (documentary)  
Read in class: Berry, Christina, “Blood Quantum – Why it Matters, and Why it Shouldn’t”  
http://www.allthingscherokee.com/articles\_gene\_040101.html

**F Feb 3 – Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*   
Read: Root, Maria P.P., “Within, Between, Beyond Race” and “Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage”; Nash, “Will the Census go Multiracial?”   
  
*Wk 4 – Early Hollywood Case Study:* Birth of a Nation**M Feb 6 – Hollywood and Miscegenation Fantasies**Read: Courtney, “Miscegenated Classics,” pp. 61-66

**W Feb 8 – *Screening***Watch in class: *Birth of a Nation* (dir. Griffith, 1915) (excerpt)Read: Courtney, “White Men Suffer at War, White Women Suffer at Home,” pp. 66-76

**F Feb 10 – Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*  
Read: Courtney, “Too Many Men,” pp. 76-82*Wk 5 – Troubling “Asian American”***M Feb 13 – Coming to Terms**Read: Spickard, “Who Is an Asian? Who is a Pacific Islander? Monoracialism, Multiracial People, and Asian American Communities”

**W Feb 15 - History: Gendered aliens and immigrant acts**  
Read: Johnson, Kevin R. “The History of Racial Exclusion in the US Immigration Laws.” <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/02rights/immigr09.htm>

**F Feb 17 – Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*  
Read: Lai, Eric. AsianWeek’s ***The new face of Asian Pacific America : numbers, diversity & change in the 21st century* (selections)**

***PART 2: LOGICS OF BORDER AND CONTAINMENT***

*Wk 6 – Asian Representation in Hollywood: Yellow Peril and Invasive Bodies***M Feb 20 – Yellow Peril and Model Minority  
*AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY PAPER DUE!***Read: Shim, “From Yellow Peril through Model Minority to Renewed Yellow Peril”  
Watch in class: *Sayonara* (1957); *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932) (excerpts)

**W Feb 22 – Miscegenation from the East, Production Code**Read: Marchetti. “The Rape Fantasy” pp. 14-22; Courtney, “A Short History of Cultural Repression” pp.113-116.  
Watch in class: *The Cheat* (1915), *The World of Suzie Wong* (dir. Quine, 1960) (excerpts).

**F Feb 24 – Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*Read: Marchetti, “The White Knight,” pp. 113-118.  
  
*Wk 7 – Excess, Melodrama, and Race Case Study:* Imitation of Life  
**M Feb 27 - Melodrama and Excess I**Read: Handzo, “Imitations of Lifelessness”  
Watch in class: *Imitation of Life* (dir. Sirk, 1959) (excerpts)

**W Feb 29 – Melodrama and Excess II**Read: Courtney, “The Problem with Peola,” pp. 142-149.  
Watch in class: *Imitation of Life* (dir. Stahl, 1934) (excerpts)  
  
**F Mar 2 - Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ  
INTRODUCE FINAL CRITICAL MEDIA ANALYSIS PAPER (DUE MAY 4)*Read: Courtney, “Two Hundred Pounds of Black Mother,” pp. 161-169.  
  
*Wk 8 – National Borders***M Mar 5 – *Mestizaje*, *La Raza Cosmica*, and critiques**Read: Miller, *Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race: The Cult of* Mestizaje *in Latin America*, pp. 1-7; 27-31.  
Read in class: Anzalduá, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (excerpt)

**W Mar 7 – Brazil**Read: Freyre, “New World in the Tropics”; Dzidzienyo, “An Obsession with Whiteness and Blackness”   
Watch in class: TBA

**F Mar 9 – Guided Weekly Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*Read: Ropp, “Do Multiracial Subjects Really Challenge Race?: Mixed-Race Asians in the United States and the Caribbean,” pp. 1-13.  *Wk 9 - Spring Break – Have fun!*

***PART 3: UNPACKING “ASIAN AMERICAN”***

*Wk 10 – Expanding “Asian American”***M Mar 19 – *Screening****No Reading Due.*Watch in Class: *My America, Or Honk if You Love Buddha* (dir. Tajima-Peña, 1997)

**W Mar 21 – Placing “Hapa”**Read: Nakashima, Cynthia. “Servants of Culture: The Symbolic Role of Mixed-Race Asians in Popular Discourse”; Dariotis, “Hapa: The Word of Power”: <http://mixedheritagecenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1259&Itemid=34>  
View online: The Hapa Project: <http://www.myspace.com/hapaproject>  
Hapa Community: <http://www.seaweedproductions.com/comm/community.aspx>  
Watch in Class: *Banana Split* (dir. Kip Fulbeck, 1991); *MiXeD mE* (dir. Kristen Lee, 2010). <http://www.vimeo.com/10278646>

**F Mar 23 – Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ* **READ: Spickard or Daniel Nakashima TBA***Wk 11 – Troubling “Hapa”***M Mar 26 – Blackness and Asian America**Read: Thornton & Gates, “Black, Japanese, and American: An Asian American Identity Yesterday and Today”  
Watch in class: *Mixed Blood* (dir. Soe, 1992)

**W Mar 28 – Feeling Queer**Read: Williams-León. “The Convergence of Passing Zones: Multiracial Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals of Asian Descent”

**F Mar 30 – Weekly Guided Discussion**  
*WEEKLY READING QUIZ*  
Read: Weisman, “The Tiger and His Stripes: Thai and American Reactions to Tiger Woods’s (Multi-) ‘Racial Self’”

***PART 4: CONTEMPORARY MULTIRACIAL MOMENTS***

*Wk 12 – Hollywood, Neoliberalism, Multiculturalism***M 4/2 – Neoliberalism and “Colorblindness”**Read: Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality* pp. 4-17  
Read in class: Fogel, “Grey’s Anatomy Goes Colorblind”

**W 4/4 – New Hollywood “Racelessness”**Read: Beltran, “The New Hollywood Racelessness”  
Watch in class: *The Fast and the Furious* (dir. Cohen, 2001) (excerpts)

**F 4/6 – Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*Read: Williams, “The Emperor’s New Clothes”  
  
*Wk 13 – Celebrity I***NO REQUIRED BLOG THIS WEEK****M Apr 9 – Guest Lecture -- Star Studies Fundamentals   
FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE FOR PEER REVIEW**   
Read: TBA

**W Apr 11 – “Outing” and “Closets”**Read: Nakamura, “MixedFolks.com: ‘Ethnic Ambiguity,’ Celebrity Outing, and the Internet”

**F April 13 – PEER REVIEW OF FINAL PAPER DRAFT / COMMENTS DUE***Wk 14 – Celebrity II: Multiracial Masculinities***M Apr 16 – Raced Masculinities I**Read: Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man,* pp. 3-13

**W Apr 18 - Raced Masculinities II**Read: Carter, “From Blaxploitation to Mixploitation: Male Leads and Changing Mixed Race Identities”  
Watch in class: *Multi-facial* (dir. Vin Diesel, 1995)

**F Apr 20 – Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*  
Read: Jones, “In or Out: On Keanu, *Akira*, and expectations for multiracial actors”   
<http://www.racialicious.com/2011/05/31/in-or-out-on-keanu-akira-and-expectations-for-multiracial-actors/>*Wk 15 – Asian “Multiracial Chic” and Cosmopolitanism***M Apr 23 - “Hybridity” and its Critiques I**Read: Matthews, ““Eurasian Persuasions: Mixed Race, Performativity and Cosmopolitanism”

**W Apr 25 – “Hybridity” and its Critiques II**Read: Lo, “Miscegenation’s ‘Dusky Human Consequences’ ”

**F Apr 27 - Weekly Guided Discussion***WEEKLY READING QUIZ*Read: Frankel, “Devon Aoki: Face Value.” *The Independent (London)* May 15, 1999 <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/devon-aoki-face-value-1093630.html> ;   
Lee Simmons, Kimora. *Fabulosity: What it is, and how to get it,* pp. 27-39*Wk 16 – Negotiated Revelations* **M Apr 30 – Social Media, Digital Gates**Read: Cho, Alexander. “Negotiated Revelations: Asian-Descent Multiracial Identity on MySpace.com,” pp. 70-86.

**W May 2 – Alternate Possibilities**Read: Williams and Houston, “No Passing Zone”  
 **F May 4 – Reprise, Review, Key Themes  
FINAL PAPER DUE**