Gendered Migration in Transnational Asia
Fall 2012
Meeting time
Location
Instructor: Hsun-Hui Tseng
Office hours
Email address

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will investigate contemporary women’s transnational migration from developing countries to newly developed countries in Asia and beyond. We will look at Filipina, Vietnamese and Chinese women migrating to Taiwan, Korea, Japan and the United States for marriage and employment. We will discuss issues related to labor and marriage migrations, as well as trafficking in women, on both macro- and micro-levels. We are going to ask: how does the global economic restructuring shape the gendered migration today? What makes female labor different from male labor in the global labor market? What are push-and-pull factors that trigger these women to leave their hometown to be workers or wives in foreign countries? What difficulties do they experience after entering host societies and what impact would the migration flow bring to both laborer/bride receiving and sending countries? Moreover, we will explore the global market formation of transnational commodified marriages between women from developing countries and men from more developed countries. Taking the matchmaking industry in Taiwan and Vietnam for example, we will ask: how should we perceive the subjectivity of women who marry abroad through brokers? How could we challenge the assumption that the brokerage business in transnational marriage is part of human trafficking practice, and women involved in this activity are victims? To better address this issue, we may also need to address the question: what is trafficking in women? How are women as victims represented in the global anti-trafficking campaign and how the politics of charity influences the state’s immigration policymaking and women’s transnational mobility? We will approach these issues from a critical perspective in order to challenge given social perception that ignore women's agency at work.

To help students better understand the phenomenon in transnational Asia, this course will introduce socio-cultural and economic developments of some bride/labor-sending and receiving countries. Throughout the semester, we will read theoretical and empirical works from many disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, political economy and women's studies. In addition, we will read primary source materials including news reports, online forums and watch documentaries and film clips. To facilitate class discussions, students are requested to read all assigned materials before coming to class.

REQUIRED READINGS

Books:

Required:


**GRADING POLICY**

1) **Class Participation (15 points)**

This class is combination of lecture and discussion. Therefore, you need to come to class to participate in discussions. 10 in-class writing assignments (either in group or in individual) will be given throughout the semester. Keeping quiet in class and being absent from class without notifying me in advance will lead to a low grade.

2) **Independent Research Project (40 points)**

A. **Project Proposal** (3 pages) 10 points

You are asked to conduct an ethnographic study on migration. You can choose any topic covered in the course. Contents of the proposal should include research questions, methods, outline, and bibliography.

B. **Project Progress Report** 5 points

You are required to make an appointment with me to discuss your project during my office hours after week Four.

C. **Project Final Paper** (12-15 pages) 25 points

In your final paper you have to engage with some key concepts or perspectives you learn from readings and in-class discussion.

3) **Three Response Papers (45 points)**

You are asked to hand in three response papers for three weekly topics of your own choice. You need to weave the main points or arguments of the readings together and give comments or suggestions. Borrowing ideas and quoting from other scholarly works is fine as long as proper citations are included.

4) **Extra Credits**

Everyone has a chance to get extra credits by writing the forth response paper. It will account for additional 5% of the final grade.

**Paper Format:** All written papers must be typed in Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced, and formatted with one-inch margins.

**Late Work:** Papers are due at the start of class. You must submit all written work to pass this course. No late work is accepted without a legitimate excuse. You can make up lost grades by getting extra credit.

In case of family emergencies, illness, or other pressing circumstances, which force you to miss class, please let me know on an individual basis.
COURSE SCHEDULE

W1  Sept 2-8: Class introduction

Section I: Migration in the Global Economy
W2  Sept 9-15: Migration Theory: an Interdisciplinary Perspective

   *Film: Her Way to Work: The Road to Quality Jobs for Women (1999)
   (Summary: women are entering an unmapped landscape of new jobs spurred by globalization; this video explores some of the critical concerns surrounding migrant workers, micro-enterprise and informal sector jobs, home-work, as well as women working in export-processing zones)

W3  Sept 16-22: Gender and the New International Division of Labor (Project Proposal Due)


Section II: Gender Politics and Modernization in the Asian Context
W4  Sept 23-29

   Taiwan and China


*Film: China Blue (2005)*
Summary: Following a pair of denim jeans from birth to sale, China Blue links the power of the U.S. consumer market to the daily lives of a Chinese factory owner and two teenaged female factory workers. Filmed both in the factory and in the workers' faraway village, this documentary provides a rare, human glimpse at China's rapid transformation into a free market society.

W5 Sept 30- Oct 6 (First Response Paper Due)

Japan and Korea


Vietnam and Philippines


W6 Oct 7-13 Cultural Logics of Desire and Imaginary Modernity


Section III: Labor Migration

W7 Oct 14-20 Global Care Chain and Negotiated Motherhood


*Film: Chain of Love (2002)*

Summary: A film about the Philippines' second largest export product - maternal love - and how the international trade in love and care affects the women involved, their families, and families in the West

W8 Oct 21-27 Migrant Workers in Destinations (Second Response Paper Due)


W9 Oct 28-Nov 3 Between Worker and Wife


Section IV: Marriage Migration

W10 Nov 4-10 Asian Marriage Migration


W11 Nov 11-17 Transnational Marriage Brokerage


Vietnamese Mail Order Bride (Taiwan and Singapore)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCk_kA2o4wk&NR=1
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FScxMqC9cI&feature=relmfu

*Film: From Asia with Love (2003) 15mins
Summary: A critical look at the proliferation of the mail-order bride industry in Asia and its representations of Asian women in the West.

*Film: In the name of Love (2002) (recommend)
Summary: One consequence of Russia’s dismal post-Soviet economy is that many desperate young Russian women turn to marriage agencies in a bid to escape—those linking Russian women with "rich" American men are thriving. This film examines the motivations of two agency heads and follows several of these women as they seek a brighter future.

W12 Nov 18-24 Social Consequences of the Flow of Marriage Migration (Third Response Paper Due)


Section V: Trafficking Issues

W13 Nov 25-Dec 1 Representation and Victimization of Transnational Migrant Women

-- What is Trafficking? Mainstream perspectives
http://www.heart-intl.net/HEART/030106/TheNewUN Trafficking.pdf


*Film: Dying to leave (2006)
Summary: Explores the current worldwide boom in illicit migration, and looks at the dire circumstances that drive desperate people from their homes. Part 1, Human cargo, tackles the unseen world of people smuggling, usually involving voluntary passage in search of better economic or social conditions. Part 2, Slaves of the free market, looks at human trafficking--smuggling activity that includes a new kind of indentured servitude, where impossible debt is combined with brutal working conditions.

W14 Dec 2-8 Women’s Agency and Resistance (Optional: Forth Response Paper Due)


W15 Dec 9-10: Summary (Project Final Paper Due)