

COURSE OUTLINE Spring Term, 2023-2024  
Department of English  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**ENGE4240: Special Topics in Literature: Contemporary Asian American and Asian British Poetry**

**Professor: Prof. Dorothy WANG**

**Date and Venue: Class: Wednesdays, 2:30-4:15 p.m.**

**Tutorial—Wednesdays, 4:30-5:15 p.m.**

**Office location and office hours: TBD**

**Description:** This course will examine the exciting new English-language poetry being written in the United States and the U.K. by poets in the Asian diaspora. Three of the poets we are reading were born in Hong Kong: Mary Jean Chan, Marilyn Chin, and Sarah Howe; another was raised in Hong Kong (Don Mee Choi). Three or four of the poets—including Chan, Choi, Will Harris, and Prageeta Sharma--will be coming to CUHK from March 7 to 9, 2024, to read at “Poetry's Englishes in Asia and the Diaspora: An International Symposium,” co-organized by CUHK Prof. Collier Noguees and myself. Thus, students in this class will have the rare opportunity to speak to the accomplished international poets they are studying! In the course, we will closely read poems for their formal and linguistic qualities, while also thinking about the historical contexts of the production and reception of these works, paying particular attention to issues of race, colonialism, gender, class, sexuality, ideology, power, among other influences.

**Assessment Scheme:**

Class participation, including discussion in class and tutorials: 15%

One short close reading paper done in class (2 pages): 10%

Two response papers: (25%)

Final 5-7-page paper: (50%)

**Required texts:**

*Flèche* (2019) by Mary Jean Chan

*Hardly War* (2016) by Don Mee Choi

*Imperium* (2022) by Jay Gao

*Brother Poem* (2023) by Will Harris

*Loop of Jade* (2015) by Sarah Howe

*How to Wash a Heart* (2020) by Bhanu Kapil

*Undergloom* (2013) by Prageeta Sharma

Various PDFs and links to be posted to Blackboard

**Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course you will:**

- be able to do close formal readings of poems;
- have a firmer sense of formal innovation in English-language poetry;
- have gained a solid understanding of a sampling of contemporary Asian British and Asian American poets;
- have learned about the historical and ideological contexts of the production and reception of this poetry (especially how race, gender, class, sexuality, colonialism, imperialism, and militarism crucially undergird and/or influence the production and reception of poems);
- have a clearer understanding of the link between the “micro” aspects of poems (and all literary texts) and larger “macro” forces, both historical and trans-historical