



Photo: Aren Aizura, Minneapolis, George Floyd Uprisings, 2020

Fall 2024, AAS 184: Ethnic Studies Theory

Instructor Information

Name: Dr. Trung PQ Nguyen, Ph.D.

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Office Hours:

DMH 223 – Tuesday, 12PM-1PM; Thursdays 3PM-4PM

Starting Sept 5, Thursday Office Hours will be at CAPISE (Student Union 1520)

Course Time and Location

Tues/Thurs, 10:30A – 11:45AM, DMH 231.

Course Description

This course examines theories of race and racism from the perspective of critical/comparative ethnic studies and Asian American studies, with an emphasis on analysis of systems and connections across racial formations. Through key texts and emerging debates, this course will equip students with the tools to interrogate the shifting structural conditions that have differentially distributed life chances for bodies and communities marked for premature death. At the same time, we will examine modes and methods of resistance through theory and action. This course will also task students to write about and produce interdisciplinary research or creative projects – capaciously conceived – across, within, and beyond a variety of fields and objects (cultural studies, visual culture, history, ethnography, etc.). In short, this course is designed to provide students with a foundation to critically engage with and write about the complex imbrications of race and racism with reference to thinkers that circulate in the scholarly field of critical/comparative ethnic studies and Asian American studies.

Content Warning

This course will engage with difficult topics such as structural violence, racism, and war. Given the course's emphasis on a structural analysis, students will also learn about communities and systems beyond their own (and beyond Asian American studies). Students are expected to engage with these topics, materials, and with each other in a mature and scholarly way, and consider how each idea relates back to them.

Furthermore, students are expected to keep up with the reading and writing load of this course; students will be evaluated on all readings. A bare minimum pass for the class will require that students read all the readings before class, and write the reading responses. If a student feels unprepared to succeed in this class this semester, they should reconsider enrolling in this class and wait for a different semester or a different instructor.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of Comparative/Critical Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies as an interdisciplinary, intellectually rigorous academic field dedicated to the critical study of the systems that have facilitated premature death across racial difference (Ruth Wilson Gilmore's definition of racism)
2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of anti-racist, anti-colonial, and other theoretical vocabulary foundational to the academic fields of Comparative/Critical Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies such as (but not limited to): race, ethnicity, colonialism, settler colonialism, white supremacy, immigration, culture, chattel slavery, terror, empire, racial capitalism, Orientalism, and/or militarism
3. Articulate how systems of racism, racial formations, and racial perceptions are not fixed or essential, but rather shift according to specific historical conditions and will continue to do so
4. Compare how structural racism and systems of racism impacts racialized groups differently and against one another yet also produces unexpected points of solidarity between them
5. Design original critical social and historical arguments using theoretical vocabulary in Comparative/Critical Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies
6. Demonstrate competence in using multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives in critically evaluating, assessing, synthesizing, and seeking information about race, racism, Asian Americans, and the social world through a culminating research-based writing or creative sample
7. Communicate critical insights of Comparative/Critical Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies theory in interpersonal and professional settings
8. Articulate relevance of Comparative/Critical Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies theory in building a more just and equitable society beyond the Comparative/Critical Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies classroom

Course Policies

Modality: This class is an in-person course that meets twice a week. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, online may occur for some sessions and some office hours on an as-needed basis. If you are experiencing circumstances that will impact your performance in class, please contact me at trung.p.nguyen@sjsu.edu.

Course Website and Grade Posting: Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, additional readings, etc. can be found on the Canvas Learning Management System course login website. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through OneSJSU to learn of any updates. Be sure to also review your Canvas notification settings, as I will be posting announcements via Canvas. Elect to have announcements forwarded immediately to your primary email address. Furthermore, you will be required to submit some of your assignments via Canvas. Assignments posted on Canvas will

have grades posted on Canvas, but not all assignments will be posted there. The most accurate grade will be in my personal grade book, which will not be on Canvas. If you have any questions, come to office hours or consult the eCampus website.

Late Policy: Dependent assignment. See assignment details for specifics.

Required Texts/Readings: All readings will be available on the course Canvas website.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material: Come prepared with the below.

- Access to Canvas
- A working laptop, tablet, or other electronic device that allows you to access Canvas and course materials (see: <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services-for-more>)
- Reliable internet access
- An active SJSU email account
- A notebook and preferred writing/notetaking instruments

Grading:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	97 to 100%
<i>A</i>	93% to 96%.
<i>A minus</i>	90 to 92%
<i>B plus</i>	86 to 89 %
<i>B</i>	83 to 85%
<i>B minus</i>	80 to 82%
<i>C plus</i>	76 to 79%
<i>C</i>	73 to 75%
<i>C minus</i>	70 to 72%
<i>D plus</i>	66 to 69%
<i>D</i>	63 to 65%
<i>D minus</i>	60 to 62%
<i>F</i>	Below 59.9%

University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. To learn about these rights and responsibilities, please read the [Student Rights & Responsibilities Policy S16-15 \[pdf\]](#): Students' Rights and Responsibilities and SJSU's current semester's [Policies and Procedures](#). These Policies and Procedures include links to relevant information should questions or concerns about a class arise. In general, it

is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as the next step. At any point, a student may contact the [University Ombudsperson](#).

Academic Integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 \[pdf\]](#) requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. Visit the [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#) website for more information.

Accommodation for Students' Religious Holidays

The [Religious Holidays Accommodation Policy S14-7 \[pdf\]](#) states that San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded classwork or activities for students observing religious holidays that require absence from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the absence. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed.

Adding and Dropping Classes

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](#). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes ([Late Drop Information](#)).

For more information on how to add/drop classes visit the [Office of the Registrar's](#) website.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is the responsibility of the student. However, attendance itself may not be used as a criterion for grading. Students are expected to attend all meetings for their courses, as they are responsible for all material covered, and active participation is frequently essential to ensure maximum benefit to all class members. Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated. The full policy language can be found in the [Presence in Class Policy F15-3 \[pdf\]](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

[Presidential Directive 97-03 \[pdf\]](#) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations register with the [Accessible Education Center \(AEC\)](#) to establish a record of their disability. AEC will contact the instructor with further details, if needed.

If special arrangements are needed in cases of emergency or if the building must be evacuated, please make arrangements with the instructor.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

The [Recording & Sharing Class Material Policy S12-7 \[pdf\]](#) requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course. The following criteria define expectations relating to recording a course.

- Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent. This prohibition includes sharing information with third parties and on websites.
- You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.
- Permission from the instructor, whether in writing or orally, may extend to either a single class or the entire semester.
- In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests must be obtained as well.

Timely Feedback on Class Assignments

Per [Timely Feedback on Assignments Policy S20-2 \[pdf\]](#), all students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades.

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course-related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Academic Resources and Accommodations

Counseling and Psychological Services

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the new Student Wellness Center, Room 300B. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate, or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. We also offer numerous workshops for students every semester. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) website.

Peer Connections

Peer Connections is your campus-wide resource for mentoring (time management, note taking, learning strategies, adjusting to college, etc.) and tutoring (including over 200 different courses and undergraduate writing). In addition, Peer Connections provides classroom support through Supplemental Instruction Leaders, Learning Assistants, Peer Mentors, and Embedded Tutors. Your instructor will announce if a Peer Educator is in your class. Peer Connections also has a welcoming space for studying in the Student Services Center right near parking. All services are FREE to SJSU students.

Please visit the [Peer Connections](#) website for more information on services, hours, locations, or a list of current student success workshops. To make appointments for mentoring or tutoring, you may visit [Spartan Connect](#) and log in using your SJSU student ID number and password.

SJSU Cares

Students experiencing challenges meeting their basic needs including, but not limited to, access to food, shelter, and a safe space are encouraged to contact [SJSU Cares](#). Students who feel that their class performance may be affected by these challenges are encouraged to notify their professors, if comfortable doing so. Faculty members may be able to provide flexibility within the course for students working with a case manager.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs and other resources for student use are available in: [Associated Students Print & Technology Center](#) in the Student Union (East Wing 2nd floor Suite 2600)

- [The Spaces and Technology](#) page at the MLK Library.
- [Student Computing Services](#)
- [Computers at the Martin Luther King Library](#) for the public at large
- Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from [Collaboration & Academic Technology Services](#) located in IRC Building. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and,

overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens, and monitors.

Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center offers a variety of free resources to help students become better writers. The center offers writing resources, workshops, and one-on-one and small-group tutoring sessions. Services support writing for students in all disciplines and at all levels. The SJSU Writing Center has two in-person locations, Clark Hall, Suite 126 and MLK Library, 2nd floor. Workshops and tutoring are also available through online platforms.

Visit the [Writing Center](#) website to make an appointment, or to use the many resources available online.

College of Social Sciences Student Success Center

College of Social Sciences Student Success Center (Clark Hall 240) provides advising for undergraduate students majoring or want to major in any in the Department of Social Sciences. Students can find academic tutoring and advising in critical areas such as writing and statistics in a quiet, comfortable study environment. Students can talk with a professional advisor about requirements for their major, general education courses, changing majors and much more.

Students can get advice on developing study strategies, improve time management, and general information on how to navigate the SJSU experience. For any student needs, problems or situations, this Center can provide a start for a solution. It is also a nice quiet place to study.

CAPISE (Center for Asian Pacific Islander Student Empowerment)

The Center provides community-building and cultural and academic empowerment opportunities for Asian and Pacific Islander students at SJSU. Students can find a study/lounge space here, drop-in advising, and programming related to community building, empowerment, identity development, and retention.

Assignments

Assignment	Percentage	CLOs Assessed
Participation*	15%	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
Weekly Reading Responses* (11 total)	25%	1, 2, 3, 4, 8
Midterm 1**	15%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Midterm 2**	15%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Final Essay and Reflection	20%	2, 5, 6, 7, 8
Quizzes	5%	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
Office Hours	5%	7, 8

*Note: Different CLOs may be reviewed per weekly assignment. For example, week 2 participation might assess CLO 2 and 3, week 4 participation might assess 3 and 5, etc.

**** Note:** Midterms will test multiple CLOs on different questions asked in the assignment. For example, Midterm 1 might include 5 questions, where each question will assess a different CLO.

Assignment Descriptions

- 15% Participation – Due each class meeting
Students will be assessed on in-class participation. This can include: active verbal or non-verbal (note-taking, nodding, writing down questions, engagement) contributions to class activities and discussions, and coming to class prepared.
- 25% Weekly Reading Responses – Due Tuesdays in class, paper only. Weeks 3-14. (First one due 09/03)
Students will be assessed on 11 reading responses throughout the semester. Reading responses will be due in class, 1-2 pages double spaced, printed out copy only, Tuesday each week. Responses should address anywhere between 1-all texts for that given week and focus not on summary but rather on: 1) what was illuminating about the text; 2) what connections students see to themselves, to class, their communities, and to society beyond them; and 3) relevant direct quotations from readings. Students are allowed to miss up to 2 reading responses and can still have full credit for this assignment.
- 5% Office Hours – Due end of Week 5 (Thurs 09/19)
Students should come to office hours any time between Week 1 – Week 6 to have a ten minute conversation about their interests and ways to support their success this semester. Students can come in during drop-in office hours or schedule a separate time. First come, first serve, and if there is no time to meet during Week 6, then students will miss out on credit. Students are welcome to come in groups of 2-4 if they do not want to go alone.
- 5% Quizzes – Up to three across the semester.
Quizzes will assess readings and conceptual knowledge from the week. Up to three may be given across the semester. They may or may not be announced.
- 15% Midterm 1– Due end of Week 6 (Thurs, 09/26)
Students will be assessed on two midterms throughout the semester. Midterms will be writing-based, non-cumulative, and assessed on demonstration of comprehension, synthesis, and critical analysis of the course materials. Midterm 1 will test concepts covered in Weeks 1-5 (see course schedule for key concept list)
- 15% Midterm 2 – Due end of Week 12 (Thurs, 11/07)
Same as above. Midterm 2 will test covered in Weeks 7-11.
- 20% Final Research Paper and Reflection Letter – Due Finals (Fri, 12/13)
Students will be assessed on a final culminating analytical paper. Paper must engage an area of the student's interest, engage key concepts, and include 3-4 readings from the course. Part of the assessment for this paper is a separate reflection letter assessing, students should evaluate what they've learned, how they've grown, and how the skills they've gained from this class will help them beyond it.

Reading Schedule

W1, 08/xx-22

Ethnic/Studies/Theory: Another End of the World is Possible

How do we understand race-making as an active process and ever-changing social force in our everyday lives?

Key Terms: race, racism, fascism, ethnic, study, ethnic studies, theory

Thurs:

(1995) Morrison, Toni. "Racism and Fascism."

Introductions

Syllabus

W2, 08/27-29

Dialectical and Relational Thought

How do dialectical and relational thought help us think about history, our future, and social transformation?

Key Terms: dialectical, relational, revolution, materialism

Tues:

(1974) Boggs, Grace Lee, and James Boggs. "Dialectics and Revolution." *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*. (excerpt - p. 121-129)

(2015) Davis, Angela. "Closures and Continuities." *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*.

Activity: Exercises in thinking dialectically

Thurs:

(2021) Fujino, Diane. "Black-Asian Solidarity Requires Us to Think and Act Relationally" <https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/black-asian-solidarity>

(2019) HoSang, Daniel Martinez and Natalia Molina. "Toward a Relational Consciousness of Race." *Relational Formations of Race*. (excerpt – p. 1-9)

W3, 09/03-05

Settler/Colonialism

How do settler states (like the U.S.) benefit from inventing and eliminating Native subjects and how is this process ongoing?

Key Terms: settler colonialism, colonialism, Indigenous, Asian settler colonialism, Zionism.

Tues:

(2012) Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yane. "Decolonization is not a Metaphor." (excerpt – "Introduction" to "Settler Moves on Innocence" p. 1-9; "Incommensurability is Unsettling" 28-31; "Conclusion" 35-36)

Activity: Systems Analysis on Settler Colonialism

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(2012) Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani and Patrick Wolfe. Interview. "Settler Colonialism Then and Now"

(2023) Erakat, Noura, Darryl Li, and John Reynolds. "Race, Palestine, and International Law."

Optional: (2000) Trask, Haunani-Kay. Settlers of Color and “Immigrant” Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai‘i

W4, 09/10-12

Imperial Knowledge

How is all knowledge political and what are its racial effects?

Key Terms: imperialism, knowledge, Orientalism

Tues:

(2012) Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. “Colonizing Knowledges.” *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.

(1979) Said, Edward. “Introduction.” *Orientalism*. (excerpt – p.1-9)

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(1996) Lowe, Lisa. “Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization: Asian American Critique.” *Immigrant Acts*. (excerpt – p.1-29)

Activity: Systems Analysis on Imperialism

Optional: (1963) Fanon, Frantz. “Concerning Violence.” *The Wretched of the Earth*.

W5, 09/17-19

Racial Capitalism

How does capitalism exploit and how does it benefit from race-making/racism?

Key Terms: capitalism, racial capitalism, exploitation, surplus value, prison-industrial complex, primitive accumulation

Tues:

(1983) Robinson, Cedric. “Racial Capitalism: The Nonobjective Character of Capitalist Development.” *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*.

(2020) Thier, Hadas. “The Working Class is the Vast Majority of Society.”

<https://jacobin.com/2020/09/working-class-peoples-guide-capitalism-marxist-economics>. *A People’s Guide to Capitalism: An Introduction to Marxist Economics*.

OPTIONAL: (2017) Wolff, Richard. “How Capitalism Exploits Us.”

<https://sustainablehuman.org/stories/how-capitalism-exploits-us/>

Activity: Systems Analysis on Racial Capitalism

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(2004) Federici, Silvia. “Colonization, Globalization, Women.” *Caliban and the Witch*. (excerpt – p.103-107)

(2003) Davis, Angela. “The Prison Industrial Complex.” *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

Activity: Systems Analysis on Prisons

Due: Last opportunity for Office Hours credit.

W6, 09/24-26

No Meetings. Work on Midterm 1 & Reflection

W7, 10/01-03

Work and Social Reproduction

Whose work gets devalued and what does exploitation look like today?

Key Terms: Social reproduction, racial division of labor

Tues:

(1992) Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor."

(2022) Red Canary Song, et. al. *Un-Licensed: Asian Migrant Massage Licensure and the Policing of Poverty*.

Activity: Systems Analysis on Social Reproduction

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(2021) Hua, Julietta and Kasturi Ray. "Uber Drivers as Service Workers." *Spent Behind the Wheel*.

Activity: What is work today? How is exploitation produced?

W8, 10/08-10

Punishment and Policing

Who/what is protected or made safer by policing, and who isn't?

Key Terms: policing, criminalization

Tues:

(2016) Camp, Jordan T. and Christina Heatherton. "Policing the Planet" (excerpt). *Policing the Planet*. (excerpt – Section I)

(2009) Escobar, Martha. "Understanding the Roots of Latina Migrants' Captivity."

Activity: Systems Analysis on Global Policing

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(2016) Kelley, Robin D.G. "Thug Nation: On State Violence and Disposability." *Policing the Planet*.

Film, *CointelPro 101* [<https://vimeo.com/15930463>]

W9, 10/15-17

Neoliberalism

Why have you been taught to hate welfare and the poor?

Key Terms: neoliberalism, individual, austerity

Tues:

(2005) Harvey, David. "Introduction." *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

(2014) Esposito, Luigi and Fernando M. Perez. "Neoliberalism and the Commodification of Mental Health."

Activity: Demystifying the "Individual"

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(2021) Rodriguez, Dylan. "The 'Asian exception' and the Scramble for Legibility: Toward an Abolitionist Approach to Anti-Asian Violence."

(2010) Willse, Craig. "From Pathology to Population: Managing Homelessness in the United States." *The Value of Homelessness: Managing Surplus Life in the United States*.

Optional: (2005) Fujiwara, Lynn. "Mothers Without Citizenship: Asian Immigrant and Refugees Negotiating Poverty and Hunger in Post-Welfare Reform."

W10, 10/22-24

Global War on Terror (GWOT)

How did the GWOT give the police and military more authority to kill and detain people?

Key Terms: sovereignty, security, war on terror, terrorist, torture, enemy alien

Tues:

(2020) Qutami, Loubna, "Censusless: Arab/Muslim Interpolation into Whiteness and the War on Terror"

(2013) Correa, Jennifer - "'After 9/11 everything changed': Re-formations of state violence in everyday life on the U.S.-Mexico border."

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(2011) Rana, Junaid. "The Muslim Body." *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora*.

W11, 10/29-31

Militarization and Resistance

Who is made safer by the U.S. military and who isn't?

Key Terms: militarization, border, base

Tues and Thurs (Class selection TBD):

(2009) Enloe, Cynthia. *The Bases of Empire*

The Global Struggle Against U. S. Military Posts.

OR (2021) Walia, Harsha. *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism.*

(2014) Madar, Chase. "How the US is Bankrolling Israel."

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/us-israel-foreign-aid-military-bankroll/>

Due: Reading Response

W12, 11/05-07

No Meetings. Work on Midterm 2 & Reflection

W13, 11/12-14

Property and Speculation

Why is rent so damn high and who gets most affected?

Key Terms: property, speculation, gentrification

Tues:

(2021) "Speculation and Speculative Futures." *The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project. Counterpoints: A San Francisco Bay Area Atlas of Displacement & Resistance.*

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

(2022) Maharawal, Manissa. "Tech-Colonialism: Gentrification, Resistance and Belonging in San Francisco's Colonial Present."

Guest Conversation: San Jose Nikkei Progressives

W14, 11/19-21

Another Beginning is Possible

What now?

Key Terms: undercommons, university, resistance, solidarity, student

Tues:

(2013) Moten, Fred and Stefano Harney. "The University and the Undercommons."
The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study.

Due: Reading Response

Thurs:

Read three - (2024) Qutami, Loubna and Students at Brown University. *Palestine in Comparative Ethnic Studies: Essays from Brown University Students.*
<https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1655978>

W15, 11/26-28

Tues:

No meeting, open office hours, work on Final

Thurs:

No meeting, Thanksgiving Holiday (Th)

W16, 12/03-05

Tues:

Wrap Up and Evals

Thurs:

No meeting, office hours, work on Final

Fri 12/13

Final Exam Due