**CHAPTER 9**

**Asian Americans**

**Classroom Activities and Suggestions for Discussion**

1. Show your students a well-made documentary on Asian Americans and discuss it in relation to the concepts and theories in the textbook. Two interesting documentaries arel:

* *No Hop Sing, No Bruce Lee: What Do You Do When None of Your Heroes Look Like You?* (Available from http://www.eai.org) In this short documentary, Asian American actors discuss ethnic identity, mass media stereotyping, and their subservient roles in the mass media.
* *Between Worlds*. This hour-long documentary explores the experiences of Vietnamese Americans who left Vietnam in 1992 through the Orderly Departure Program. The film follows them from a refugee camp in the Philippines to their arrival in different regions of this country. It documents their lives for five years as they struggle to learn English, pursue their education, and find employment.

1. Ask your students to consider the various socio-economic statistics for each particular segment of the Asian American community (as listed in the text). Now ask them to consider why some populations tend to have greater wealth than others, higher rates of literacy and education, and lower rates of poverty. How do U.S. foreign policy decisions play a role in these economic statistics?
2. Watch the film *Joy Luck Club* (1993, directed by Wayne Wang) and discuss it in terms of relevant concepts and theories from the text.
3. Ask your students to research the wide and varied cultural differences in the Asian American populations (Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, South Korean, etc.). Ask them to explore language, “homeland” geography, music, literature, religion, foods, family expectations and organization, clothing and dress, gender roles, and other significant factors of culture. Ask them to present their findings to the class. Then ask the class, “Given these significant differences, why are Asian Americans thought of as one monolithic group?”
4. Ask your students to view the film, *Crash* (2004). Have them identify Asian actors and the roles that they play in the film. Have students apply theories on racialization and model-minorities. How do these theories inform students’ views ofcharacters in the film? Are there any roles that offer surprising ends? Provide examples.
5. Look to the Network TV daily line-up of shows. Identify shows that focus on Asian families. How many are found? How are those families depicted?
6. Look through the Network TV daily line-up of shows. Identify shows that feature a leading Asian actor. Share what the characteristics of these characters are. How many shows did you find? How many characters did you identify?
7. Look to the U.S. Census and find out what categories/labels Asians have had over the life of the decennial U.S. Census. What were the race and national origin options? How have these changed over the years?
8. Research the origins of the Asian panethnic identity. When and where did it originate? What was the purpose of this category? Who were the actors involved in its creation? Make the connection to the U.S. decennial Census and discuss this in group.