

# Slaying the Dragon & Reloaded STUDY GUIDE

SUBJECTS	LENGTH	OBJECTIVES	MATERIALS
Women Studies, Asian American Studies, Gender Studies, Film Studies, Social Studies, Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Sociology	55 -170 Minutes (select parts to shorten) <b>LEVEL</b> Grade 12 and college level	To critically understand the representations of Asian American Pacific Islanders in various media from the 20th century to the present and the effects of these depictions.	Slaying the Dragon & Slaying the Dragon: Reloaded dvd, 3x5 index cards/post-its, tape, dvd player or computer, projector & screen, whiteboard/blackboard

## SYNOPSIS

*Slaying the Dragon: Reloaded* is a 30-minute video documentary meant primarily but not exclusively for college classroom use. The first half of the video examines Hollywood representations of Asian women from about 1984 to the present in an attempt to address the questions of how commercial visual media in the U.S. reflect the dramatic social and demographic changes of the past quarter of a century. The second half of the video explores representations of Asian women in Asian American cinema, which has begun to blossom during the same time period, and new or alternative media, which has also been developing and proliferating in recent years.



## I. SCHEMA BUILDING ACTIVITY (20-30 mins)

### A. "Who am I?" game:

1. Divide class into groups of 5 students.
2. Each group gets a set of 3x5 index cards or post-its with a stereotypical persona already written. Or groups can brainstorm a list of their own personas (e.g., dragon lady, madame butterfly, lotus blossom, tiger mom, prostitute, FOB, science nerd) and write on the post it/ card, then throw them in a pile.
3. Pass out cards to each group, face down. Upon instruction, each student can look at the card but cannot show their group members. Pass around tape (if needed) and have each person tape/stick their card onto the back or forehead of another group member.
4. Each person then take turns asking 1 question that would inform them of who they are. Keep going around the group until everyone has guessed their persona.

## I. SCHEMA BUILDING CONTINUED

B. Based on the activity, elicit what questions were asked and what answers were given. (e.g., How did one guess that he/she was a dragon lady?)

C. Define 'stereotype' – What does it mean to you? Are there good vs. bad stereotypes? How can stereotypes be harmful even if they're good? (e.g., Model Minority myth – the common stereotype that all Asians succeed academically marginalizes those students who are Asian but struggle with school and yet, are not given the support they need or deserve based on a general assumption that they don't 'need' it.)

D. Spend some time discussing stereotypes relating to a) gender, and then b) race/ethnicity. Have groups come up with their own examples and then share as a class.

E. Where do these stereotypes come from? Again, elicit some answers from the class. Hopefully someone will mention TV, film, media, etc. or the instructor may have to prompt, but then transition into the film.

## II. SLAYING THE DRAGON (1st disc) (60-90 min)

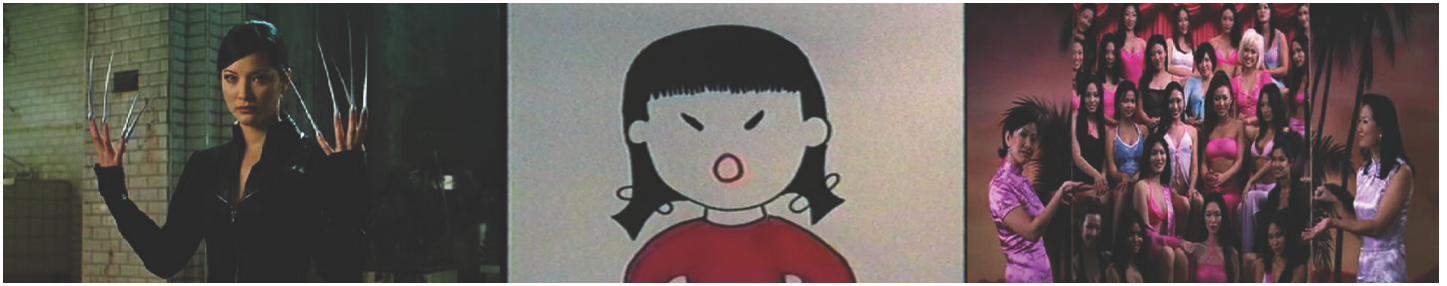
A. (option 1) play the entirety of Slaying the Dragon

B. (option 2) play the following snippets of Slaying the Dragon (30 minutes)

1. 0 - 3:23 (Intro.)
2. 3:26 - 6:53 (Anna May Wong, Yellow Peril & the Dragon Lady)
3. 12:50 - 18:20 (Geisha girl)
4. 22:25 - 29:20 (Suzie Wong vs. Lotus Flower stereotypes)
5. 36:00 - 40:15 (Connie Chung anchorwoman)
6. 45:55 - 49:55 (why Asian women date white men)

C. Discussion questions (depending on the students' knowledge and familiarity with the subject matter, the instructor can either go over these questions before showing the film and then have students answer them while viewing it, or students can take notes and answer Qs individually, in pairs or in small groups after viewing the film).

1. Possible themes to discuss: polarized portrayals of AAPI women (servile, docile, innocent = lotus flower vs. hypersexual, fierce, manipulative = dragon lady)
2. Who was Anna May Wong?
3. The role of the Caucasian male = hero archetype and his relationship to the Asian female. What is the connection of the US military presence throughout Asia and the representation of Asian/AAPI women in film (e.g., Suzy Wong, Rambo)? How did war change the perception of Asian/AAPI women?
4. According to the AAPI women interviewed in the film, how have these portrayals affected their everyday lives?
5. Do you believe any of these stereotypes continue to be perpetuated today? Has enough been done to effect any change in these stereotypes?



### III. RELOADED (30 min play time; 20 min discussion)

**A. If time permits, it's really helpful to play the Director's notes, particularly the part about why the filmmakers and producers felt the need to make the reloaded version.**

**B. Discussion:**

1. According to the film, what are some stereotypes about AAPI women and men that still remain in the media?
2. What does 'browning of faces but a continuing whitening of character' mean?
3. What images of Asian women and fantasy do mainstream hip-hop videos perpetuate?
4. One speaker, Sylvia Chan-Malik, questions whether everyone is 'in on the joke'; what does she mean?
5. What do we learn about representations of Asian/AAPI women in films made by AAPI men?
6. How do the portrayals of Asian/AA characters by AA independent filmmakers and in alternative media (youtube) counter the traditionally stereotypical characters of Asians and Asian Americans in mainstream media?
7. What other portrayals of Asian/Asian American women have you seen in media? How do they impact the current stereotypes (i.e. Modern Family, Walking Dead)
8. "I don't see a problem today with the representations and portrayals of AAPIs." Do you agree/disagree this statement? Why?

### IV. WRAP-UP/BOTTOM LINE: ASSIGNMENT

**A. Response Video**

**(Can be done by students as an individual video response or as a group response.)**

**Instructions:**

**Materials:** smartphones, digital cameras, tablets, computers, or any multimedia equipment with audiovideo recording capability; internet connection or USB drive to upload videos to a course website, a social media sharesite such as Youtube or Facebook, or directly to a classroom computer for group viewing.

1. Ask the student(s) to come up with a question or a statement related to issues raised by "Slaying The Dragon" &/or "Slaying The Dragon: Reloaded" to respond to in a video format. Statements and discussion questions in the "Four Corners" activity in *Section V. Extension Activities* can be used, or students can generate new statements and questions.
2. Students then come up with a video response to a statement or question.

## IV. WRAP UP CONTINUED

Suggested guidelines:

a. This activity can be done as a timed in-class activity where students are given anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour or more as classtime permits to come up with, videorecord, and finally upload their video response for shared viewing. The quality of responses is not dependent on high production quality, though of course a minimal requirement for effective sharing of this response is comprehensible images and audio.

b. Having students do this activity in small groups and giving them a short time limit (e.g. 1-2 minutes) for the final video response is ideal, since a fun engaging way to conclude this activity is to view all the video responses together as a class. When students do this activity in small groups and know their video is going to have a live viewing audience of their peers, they tend to get more excited about and invested in this activity. Even giving students a short time in class to make the video response can be effective because students see it as fun challenge to see what they can all produce within that time.

c. Encourage students to go beyond static “talking head” videos. Encourage them to find interesting settings/props/audio (many students know how to sync up music to video, for instance) to incorporate into their responses, as well as creative, dynamic ways to respond (e.g. composing and performing a song, parody, spoken word; finding interesting people to interview for a “man on the street” style response, etc).

d. Giving students some basic guidelines on shooting good video with smartphones/tablets is helpful. There are many free Youtube tutorials and online resources for this, such as:

<http://desktopvideo.about.com/od/homevideotips/tp/Phone-Video.htm>

e. This is an activity that is ideal for engaging student creativity and kinesthetic and collaborative learning styles, which are all generally underutilized in traditional classrooms. As more classrooms become technologically equipped (e.g. computers with projectors, internet connection, etc), this activity is more feasible.

### **B. Research essay:**

Topic could be drawn from any of the Discussion questions generated in Section III. or Statements from Four Corners Extension Activity.

Primary Research Sources could include:

1. Trade magazine, newspaper, and academic journal articles and books on media representations of Asians and Asian Americans.
2. Blogposts and websites on representations of Asian and Asian Americans, including the Asian Women United website (<http://www.asianwomenunited.org/>)
3. Student research: conduct a survey or interview a few people on their impressions of media representation of Asians and Asian Americans.

## V. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

### A. Four Corners: Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

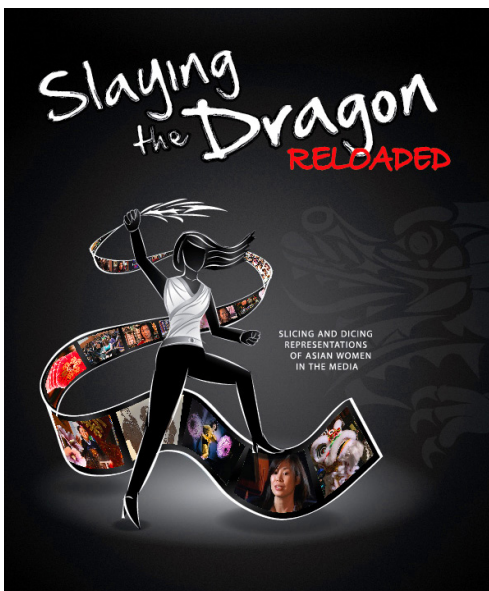
Instructions:

- Materials: 4 pieces of paper; tape
- write "Agree" "Strongly Agree" "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" on each piece of paper
- Tape each paper to a corner in the room.
- Read one of the statements below; then have students disperse to one of the agree/disagree corners. Once they've congregated, give them time to discuss the following:
  - Why did they choose this corner?
  - Why do they think others chose their corners?
- Have each 'corner' share their responses. Sometimes a healthy debate can ensue when students hear others' responses and sometimes, students change their minds. You can give them the opportunity to move to another corner and explain why.
- Repeat steps d - e for each consecutive statement.

Some suggested statements are:

*Though there are some stereotypical representations of AAPIs in the media, I don't feel they affect me personally, nor do they affect my community.*

*I am proud of the increased exposure and representation of AAPIs in various mainstream media and TV shows.*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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