

### **Kimberly McKee, Project Statement**

As part of my ten-month teaching Fulbright at Sogang University, I have been invited to teach two graduate courses and two undergraduate courses that demonstrate my skills as an interdisciplinary teacher-scholar. Trained in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies with expertise in Asian American Studies and Adoption Studies, I have taught a breadth of courses supporting students' ability to situate contemporary events and issues within a broader socio-political context. This includes supporting students' ability to engage concepts related to diversity and multiculturalism. Underscoring my scholarly expertise is my publication record, which includes two monographs—one forthcoming, the other published in 2019, six single-authored peer reviewed journal articles, two co-authored peer reviewed journal articles, and eight single-authored peer-reviewed book chapters, alongside encyclopedia entries, book reviews, and conference presentations.

I am in regular communication with Professor Jae-ho Roe, chair of the Department of American Culture, about the courses I would teach to ensure that these courses fulfill departmental needs. The undergraduate courses that I plan to teach are part of the American Culture curriculum—AMC 2028: Intercultural Communications and AMC 4155: Asian American Studies. Teaching AMC 2028: Intercultural Communications will draw on my experience at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) working on curriculum and assessment planning for the Intercultural Communications Certificate and teaching ITC 100: Introduction to Intercultural Competence. Teaching AMC 4155: Asian American Studies will draw on my experience teaching EAS 351: Asian American Experiences and scholarly investments in Asian American Studies, evidenced by my publication record. I am familiar with the Department of American Culture at Sogang and with colleagues there, having guest lectured in AMC 4155: Asian American Studies in May 2022 as a result of an invitation from Professor Kyung-Sook Boo to share my expertise on Korean adoption. This opportunity allowed me to join the Sogang undergraduate intellectual community.

I have the support of the department to develop two new special-topics graduate courses. Those courses, “Transnational Korean Adoption” and “History of Transracial Adoption in the United States,” reflect my deep commitment to interrogating the ways transnational and transracial adoptions call attention to and intervene in discourses concerning citizenship, kinship, multiculturalism. These graduate-level courses will support students' in-depth study of how adoption is a useful analytical tool to explore notions of citizenship, belonging, and race, paying attention to the role economic precarity has in facilitating the creation and dissolution of kinship ties. Significantly, graduate students will have the rare opportunity to be taught by a leading expert in Adoption Studies who is also a Korean adoptee, as the majority of instructors teaching Asian Adoption Studies are non-adopted people.

“Transnational Korean Adoption” offers a transpacific lens to consider the histories of South Korea's participation in transnational adoption since the end of the Korean War and centers the

voices of Korean adoptees who grew up in the United States. An estimated two-thirds of 200,000 Korean adoptees were sent to the U.S. to be raised by American families. Students will explore the origins of Korean international adoption and the rise of adult adoptee communities and activism in both the United States and Korea. We will examine the networks and advocacy of US-raised adoptees who have returned to South Korea including their engagement with the global Korean adoptee community and partnerships with Korean single mothers. The course documents the rise in adult adoptee-creative output (e.g., memoirs, documentaries) and emphasizes the importance of listening to adult adoptee voices.

“History of Transracial Adoption in the United States” offers an overview of domestic, international, and transracial adoptions in the United States, foregrounding the experiences of birth families and adoptees. Emerging in the mid-twentieth century, transracial adoption was seen as one method to engage in the multicultural project as children of color and Indigenous children entered white families. Students will interrogate the connections of the modern carceral state with histories of child removal to understand how kinship of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous families has been curtailed across space and time.

In addition to these teaching responsibilities, I have been in email communication with Professor Roe about how I can best support the Department of American Culture. This may include supporting curriculum development or advising students. I am excited about sharing my scholarly knowledge of Adoption Studies with colleagues interested in thinking about broader questions of kinship and belonging and how to incorporate adoption within their courses. My chapter, “Adoption and Asian North American Literature” in *Teaching Asian North American Texts* (MLA Teaching Option Series, 2022), and 2022 article in *Journal of Asian American Studies* offers some of my pedagogical insights concerning the incorporation of adoption outside of an Adoption Studies course. I am also interested in discussing my work supporting college textbook affordability initiatives. Additionally, as someone who has developed and taught courses in a variety of formats—face-to-face, hybrid, online—I look forward to connecting with colleagues around best practices to support a range of teaching methods.

I am also eager to support student mentoring and advising. The Integrative Studies major at GVSU is a self-designed, student initiative major. This means that I work with individual students to shape their core courses composing their area of focus. Additionally, I have worked with undergraduate and graduate students formally and informally. I have served as the outside doctoral thesis examiner for a PhD candidate at the University of Auckland and a MA candidate at Chicago Theological Seminary. My work with undergraduate students ranges from supervision of honors theses focused on international adoption, mentoring a Ronald E. McNair scholar whose work focused on Black mothers with disabilities and the experiences of their children, and supporting students working in the field of public history. The latter efforts stemmed from my directorship of the Kutsche Office of Local History, where we received

Michigan Humanities and National Endowment for Humanities grants to support our projects with local history organizations and historians. My investment in mentoring resulted in the publication of the co-edited volume, *Degrees of Difference: Reflections of Women of Color on Graduate School* (University of Illinois Press, 2020) and co-editorship of a special section (2019) of *Feminist Teacher* on women of color feminist pedagogies.

I look forward to opportunities to disseminate my research with faculty colleagues and students. From my experience participating in the American Studies Association Korea conferences, I have witnessed the benefits of presenting my work to colleagues in Korea and receiving their feedback. Moreover, as a Critical Language Scholarship Korea alumnae, I recognize the value in representing the U.S. and engaging in international exchange. Completing a year-long Fulbright in Korea will allow me to create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning between Sogang and Grand Valley students. I also look forward to exploring possibilities for a co-authored publication on teaching Asian American Studies outside of a North American context.

**Teaching Philosophy and Experience:** The two proposed courses build on my experience teaching at a range of institutions from a regional master's comprehensive university to a small liberal arts college and a research, land-grant university. In the last eight years at Grand Valley State University, I have taught a range of courses serving an array of majors and programs: Integrative Studies, Human Rights, East Asian Studies, Digital Studies, the Intercultural Communications Certificate, and the General Education curriculum, broadly. These courses include: INT 201: Diversity in the United States; INT 311: Meaning; INT/HRT/HST 319: Human Traffic and Trafficking; INT 323: Design Thinking to Meet Real World Needs; INT 401: Visionary Thinkers, Yuri Kochiyama and Grace Lee Boggs; EAS 351: Asian American Experiences; DS 350: Social Media in Culture; ITC 100: Introduction to Intercultural Competence and Communication. Prior to arriving at Grand Valley, my teaching was rooted in my training in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I taught introductory courses to women's studies as well as upper division courses such as Racialized Masculinities in the United States and Rethinking the American Family.

My courses are rigorous, and students engage with materials on multiple levels through readings, in-class activities, and multimedia. I integrate pedagogical methods and practices from the fields of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Asian American Studies, American Studies, and Cultural Studies. I draw course materials from a variety of (inter)disciplines (e.g., History, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Women's Studies) and sources (oral histories, films/documentaries, texts). My approach generates lively lectures and class discussions as well as the growth of students' critical thinking and writing skills. For example, while teaching "Asian American Experiences" I integrate multiple genres of literature (e.g., graphic novels, memoirs, essays) alongside documentaries, and podcasts to support student learning. Asian American Studies scholarly articles were paired with those materials to bolster students' understanding of the

impact World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, and the War on Terror had on the lives of Asian Americans, immigrants, and refugees. This approach resulted in students re-examining their understandings of US imperialism and militarism. Students also interrogated how notions of multiculturalism, citizenship, immigration, assimilation, kinship, and diaspora impact Asian American experiences and the formation of diverse communities.

All of the courses I teach encourage students' self-reflection on how their lived realities affect their world interactions. I deploy an intersectional approach to foster students' intellectual engagement with concepts including implicit bias, meritocracy, health disparities, and racial profiling. Intersectionality accounts for the macro- and micro-levels of oppression and privilege that result from one's location at the nexus of race, gender, class, nation, ability, and sexuality. For example, in "Design Thinking to Meet Real World Needs" we focused on the school-to-prison pipeline. Students explored how a more inclusive, social justice-oriented design thinking model accounts for existing and current work completed by communities of color, indigenous communities, and LGBT communities. This intersectional approach is also evident when I teach students about the interconnected nature between environmental justice, health, and housing in "Diversity in the United States."

Supporting a variety of students' learning styles is a core component to my pedagogy. Learning occurs in multiple ways, which is why I integrate course readings and multimedia to create a distinctive and dynamic classroom. This is why I continue to engage in professional development opportunities offered by the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) to ensure my pedagogy aids students' academic success related to rubrics, interactive syllabi, engagement with students in online spaces, and asynchronous problem-based learning. Other recent professional development offered by my institution has focused on how to maximize interactive and student engagement in synchronous teaching and best practices for accelerated delivery.

My curriculum development experiences range from working collaboratively with colleagues across the university to build the Digital Studies minor and developing courses from the ground up (EAS 351 Asian American Experiences) to revising course proposals and program-wide assignments for Integrative Studies core courses and electives. These roles complement my experience serving on the university curriculum committee and university general education committee. This seemingly disparate work offers me both a macro- and micro-level view, which also helps me in my role as chair of the Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies departments. In this position, I supervise three program coordinators who lead our certificate programs (Intercultural Communication; Leadership) and Religious Studies minor as well as two course coordinators. I work closely with the Center for Adult and Continuing Studies to support students enrolled in the adult degree completion program called LEADS (Lifelong Educational Achievement for Diverse Students), who are Integrative Studies majors or completing certificates in Intercultural Communication or Leadership Studies. The various ways the

Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies department serves a range of Grand Valley students requires the department to be nimble to balance student interest with course offerings to ensure our courses remain innovative and reflect the changing needs of our student population. These administrative responsibilities also include staffing 22 full-time faculty and 10+ adjunct faculty on courses across three programs.

**Pedagogical Significance:** As someone who has participated in an American Studies program in England, I recognize the value in teaching and learning American Studies outside of North America. An international classroom provides new perspectives on questions related to understanding U.S. cultures and communities. I look forward to honing my pedagogical strategies for students in the Korean classroom and considering new techniques to support student learning. I look forward to learning from Sogang colleagues as I continue to participate in professional development and consider best practices for teaching in Korea. This opportunity will enable me to gain an increased understanding of similarities and differences in pedagogy across nations—United States and Korea, as well as offer the opportunity for intellectual exchange. Regarding the latter, I look forward to contributing to the dynamic intellectual community of Sogang’s Department of American Culture. This Fulbright opportunity will allow me to deepen relationships with colleagues that I have met through participating in the American Studies Association Korea conference and to forge new connections with colleagues.

**Benefits of Proposed Teaching Activities:** The completion of a year-long teaching Fulbright will afford me the opportunity to share my expertise with Korean and international students enrolled in American Culture courses at Sogang at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I will teach one undergraduate and one graduate course per semester. Teaching in Korea also supports my broader interest in exploring ways to use Asian American Studies curricula to confront anti-Asian racism. These efforts are best reflected in my accepted co-authored essay, “Confronting Anti-Asian Bias in the Classroom,” in *Media Narratives During the Corona Pandemic: The Asian Experience*. Written in conjunction with my white woman colleague trained in Chinese Studies, this essay explores our positions in the classroom and the tools we employ teaching students in West Michigan in our respective courses. I look forward to writing scholarship of teaching and learning articles on teaching Korean adoption in Korea to a Korean and international student audience, as well as teaching Asian American Studies outside of North America. The Fulbright award will also support my ability to raise the profile of Korean Adoption Studies in Korea. I will draw on my own experience co-organizing the Korean Adoption Studies International Symposia that historically occurs as part of the triennial International Korean Adoptee Association Gathering. That Gathering was paused in 2022 due to COVID and is being planned for 2023. Upon my return to Grand Valley, I look forward to creating virtual exchange opportunities for undergraduate students enrolled at Sogang and Grand Valley. I also am interested in pursuing opportunities for faculty-led study abroad in Korea.