

LIBERAL STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAM

Course Syllabus

Becoming Americans: Immigration in Historical Perspective (LSHV-709-30)

Summer 2009
Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30 pm
May 26-July 21
ICC 213

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Course Description:

Over the past decade, one million foreigners migrated each year to the United States legally and perhaps another half million have entered the country illegally. The resultant public alarm and increasingly politicized debates on immigration reforms and border enforcement underscore the Americans' ambivalence toward immigration. While acknowledging the immigrant workers' contributions to the U.S. economy, many native-born Americans view the presence of immigrant communities in their midst as a threat to their national identity and core cultural values. There is a perception that the diversity of recent immigrants, drawn overwhelmingly from Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia, is changing the fabric of American society.

The course is intended to bring a much needed historical perspective to this complex national debate. It will bring together writings of eminent historians and sociologists to consider the social and political impacts of immigration in the United States from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. The students will focus on topics such as nativism, the changing patterns of immigrant flows, the immigrants' racial and ethnic identities, assimilation and transnationalism, and the evolution of today's immigration restrictions and legal regimes.

Class Format

Classes will combine lectures with student-led discussions of assigned reading materials. Each student is expected to come to class fully prepared and contribute actively to the discussion.

Required Readings

Students will be asked to purchase the following six books (all available in paperback)

Donna R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984

- Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 1990.
- John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2002.
- Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995..
- George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Robert Courtney Smith, *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006.

Students will be able to download excerpts from the following works available on the electronic reserve at Georgetown University's Lauinger Library.

- Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "The Background to Contemporary Immigration," *Remaking the American Mainstream*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003, 167-214, 327-333.
- Elliott R. Barkan, "Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity—From Contact to Assimilation," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Winter 1995: 38-75.
- Donna R. Gabaccia, Chapter 4 "Transnationalism as a Way of Working-Class Life," *Italy's Many Diasporas*, London: Routledge, 2003, 81-105, 216-225.
- John Higham, "The Amplitude of Ethnic History: An American Story," in Nancy Foner and George M. Frederickson (eds.) *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004, 61-81.
- Irving Howe, Chapter 3 "The Early Years, 1881-1900," *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*. New York: New York University Press, 2005, 67-118, 654-657.
- Kerby A. Miller, Chapter 7 "Revenge for Skibbereen: The Great Famine and Irish Emigration, 1845-1855," *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, 280-344, 616-624.
- Vicki L. Ruiz, Chapter 2 "Confronting 'America,'" *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 33-50, 169-175.
- Karen Young, "'A Distinct and Antagonistic Race': Constructions of Chinese Manhood in the Exclusionist Debates, 1869-78" from Donna R. Gabaccia and Vicki L. Ruiz (eds.) *American Dreaming, Global Realities: Rethinking U.S. Immigration History*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006, 141-157.
- Aristide R. Zolberg, Chapter 8 "A Nation Like the Others," in *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006, 243-292, 554-572.

Course Requirements

Each student will be expected to lead the class discussion on one or more of the required readings, prepare and submit a short **book review** (5 to 6 pages) of John Higham's book *Strangers in the Land* on **June 16**, and write a survey essay on any aspect of immigration **or** a research paper (15-20 pages) on a topic related to immigration. The **survey/research paper** is due on **July 31**.

Grading

The grades will be based on class attendance and participation (30 percent), a book review (25 percent) and a 15-20 page survey/research paper (45 percent).

Course Schedule, Topics and Readings

- May 26 **Introduction**
Peopling of Pre-revolutionary America
Students are asked to come to the first class having read John Higham's essay, "The Amplitude of Ethnic History" in Nancy Foner and George M. Frederickson (eds.) *Not Just Black and White* (electronic reserve).
- June 2 **Irish Immigration, 1845-1855**
Kerby A. Miller, "Revenge for Skibbereen': The Great Famine and Irish Emigration, 1845-1855" from *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (electronic reserve).
Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White*
- June 9 **Jewish Immigration, 1880-1910's**
Irving Howe, Chapter 3 "The Early Years, 1881-1900." *World of Our Fathers*. (electronic reserve)
Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*.
- June 16 **Italian Immigration, 1880-1930**
Donna R. Gabaccia, Chapter 4 "Transnationalism as a Way of Working-Class Life," *Italy's Many Diasporas* (electronic reserve)
Donna R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street*.
- June 23 **Nativism**
Karen Young, "'A Distinct and Antagonistic Race': Constructions of Chinese Manhood in the Exclusionist Debates, 1869-78" from Donna R. Gabaccia and Vicki L. Ruiz (eds.) *American Dreaming, Global Realities* (electronic reserve).
John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*

Essay area/research topic is due together with a tentative bibliography

- June 30 **Fashioning America through Immigration Policy**
Richard Alba and Victor Nee, Chapter 5, “The Background to Contemporary Immigration,” in *Remaking the American Mainstream* (electronic reserve)
Aristide R. Zolberg, Chapter 8 “A Nation Like the Others,” in *A Nation by Design* (electronic reserve).
- July 7 **Twentieth-Century Mexican Immigration**
Vicki L. Ruiz, Chapter 2 “Confronting ‘America,’” *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (electronic reserve)
George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*
- July 14 **Becoming American in the Multicultural age**
Elliott R. Barkan, “Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity—From Contact to Assimilation” (electronic reserve).
Robert Courtney Smith, *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*
- July 21 **Student Course Evaluation and General Discussion**

Disability Statement

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.