

HIST 4225: Ethnicity and Immigration in American History (CRN 19156)
Georgia State University / Spring 2009
Dr. Marni Davis

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Class Meets: T/TH 1:00-2:40 PM, Sparks 301
Office Hours: T/TH 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Students will learn to recognize and evaluate primary and secondary historical texts, in both written and verbal form.
- 2) Students will become familiar with the major interpretive problems and theoretical frameworks in the historiography of ethnicity and immigration in the American context.

This course will engage two separate but related issues: immigration, or the movement of an individual or group away from their land of birth in order to settle in another country; and ethnicity, a term used to define a group of people who share a national, religious, linguistic, and/or cultural heritage. The objective of this course is to think and read about both of these issues within the American context, from the colonial era to the present.

These issues are as current and as topical as can be. During the past several years, this country has been having a heated argument with itself over immigration policies and ethnic diversity. Among the questions that these debates have raised: Who should be permitted to settle and attain citizenship in the U.S. and who shouldn't, and by what standards are we to measure this? Does cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity strengthen or weaken the national fabric? What, exactly, does it mean to demand that immigrants "assimilate" into American culture? Are immigrants good for the American economy, or do they do harm to those native-born Americans with whom they compete for jobs? None of these questions are new – they are as old as the nation itself – but the ways in which Americans have answered them have changed dramatically. We will track these changes within their specific historical contexts, and investigate shifts in the national debate regarding cultural pluralism, political policy, and conflict between industrial employers, native-born laborers, and immigrant workers.

In addition, we will examine the immigrants themselves. Why did they make this traumatizing move? What resources and cultural practices did they bring with them, and what did they leave behind? Why did they choose to settle where they did and take up the occupations they did – was it because of the cultural affinities they brought with them, or the social and economic structures they encountered in the U.S.? And what kinds of ethnic self-identification did they maintain and nourish in their new country?

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. (Perennial/HarperCollins, 2nd ed., 2002)
- John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism*. (Rutgers University Press, 6th ed., 2004)
- Louis Mendoza and S. Shankar, ed.s. *Crossing Into America: The New Literature of Immigration*. (The New Press, 2005)

- David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. (Verso, 2nd ed., 2007)
- Reed Ueda, *Postwar Immigrant America: A Social History* (The Bedford Series in History and Culture, Bedford/St. Martins, 1994)

All of these texts are available for purchase at the Georgia State University Bookstore, and will also be on reserve at the library. Shorter required readings (scholarly essays and primary source materials) will be made available to students as handouts, or are to be downloaded from the class uLearn site.

In addition: bookmark Patrick Rael's Online History Writing Guide, as we will be using it often:

<http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS

Class sessions will be a mixture of lecture and discussion, with a heavy emphasis upon the latter. There will also be a fair amount of work in small groups, and on some days, a significant amount of class time will be spent writing.

It is important that all students come to class prepared to discuss the readings; everyone's opinions, comments, and questions are essential for a thoughtful, lively, and intelligent classroom discussion. ALWAYS BRING THAT DAY'S READING ASSIGNMENT TO CLASS! This will allow us to go over the text together, and to refer to specific passages as needed in our discussion.

With the exception of the class attendance policy (see below), all aspects of grade assessment will be based upon writing assignments. They are as follows:

1) You will write a book review of David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness*. Questions about the role of racial ideologies in immigrant acculturation and inclusion (or exclusion) have taken center stage in current scholarship on ethnicity and immigration. You will take part in this discussion by analyzing and critiquing Roediger's work.

- Length: 750 words
- Worth: 1/3 of final grade

2) For your final writing assignment, you will review two scholarly books that both engage a single topic related to the class. (Both of these books must come from a list I will distribute early in the semester.) This assignment will include a group-work component: you will share an early draft of this assignment with classmates, and have a chance to edit and be edited by your fellow book-reviewers.

- Length: 1500 words
- Worth: 1/3 of final grade

3) *Low-Stakes Writing*: Throughout the course of the semester, you will be assigned a dozen or so "low-stakes" writing tasks. Some of these will be done in class, some at home; some in groups, some solo; some will be based upon precise questions about the readings, and some will be open-ended. (You should expect some of these to come in the form of a "pop" writing exercise.) These assignments will not be graded. The feeling that someone is looking over your shoulder can hinder the writing process. So this course will give you many opportunities to write often, without being judged. Each low-stakes assignment you submit will be marked as either "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." If you do the assignment, and put in a reasonable amount of effort, you can count on a "satisfactory." Less than reasonable effort will be considered unsatisfactory. I must see evidence that you are doing the reading

and trying to understand it. If you satisfactorily complete all or all but one of the low-stakes assignments, you will earn a score of 95 (A) on this portion of your final grade. If you satisfactorily complete all but two, you'll receive a B (85); all but three, you'll receive a C (75); if you miss four or more of these assignments, you'll receive an F (65) for this part of the course.

- Length: Variable
- Worth: 1/3 of final grade

FYI: Writing Assignments

- The policy regarding late papers is simple: they drop one letter grade per day. If a burdensome schedule requires negotiating the due date, please see me in advance. I'm open to reasonable requests. But I'm not open to negotiation after the deadline.
- Low-stakes writing exercises may not be made up or submitted late. No exceptions. If you are going to be absent from class, you may email a take-home assignment to me by the time class has begun and receive full credit. (However, you will still be penalized for your absence; see attendance policy below.)
- You are free to contest grades you feel are unjust. But you must do so in accordance with the following policy. All complaints must be registered in writing. Complaints must be typewritten and may not exceed 250 words. They must take the form of an argument designed to persuade the teacher that her evaluation of your work is mistaken. Please attach a photocopy of the graded assignment to your complaint. I will respond either in writing or by discussing the grade directly with you. Under no circumstances will I discuss grades before the above procedure has been followed.
- You can rewrite the first graded assignment if you are unsatisfied with your original grade. However, please take note of the following stipulations:
 - You must come see me for a consultation, so that we can discuss your rewrite strategy. I will not accept rewrites from students who have not met with me.
 - The rewrite grade will entirely replace your original grade, and I will evaluate the rewrites by more vigorous standards. So: if you are going to rewrite, make sure that you're writing a much better paper.

Attendance policy:

- You will be allowed three absences without any penalty. (Please note that I do not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences.)
- If you miss four or more classes, your final grade automatically drops one full letter grade. (An A becomes a B, a B- becomes a C-, etc.)
- You will be allowed two tardy arrivals to class without penalty. (Tardy = arriving after attendance has been taken.)
- After two tardy arrivals, every tardy arrival will count as an absence.

Please take note ...

- Access to the class's uLearn site is absolutely necessary! Reading and writing assignments and changes to the schedule (if and when necessary) will be posted there.
- I am more than happy to help students who need extra assistance, or who would like to work harder on their writing or discuss further a topic we've touched on in class. Do not hesitate to come see me during my office hours.
- If you email me, please be patient: expect a 24-hour turnaround for a response, and more

than that on weekends.

- ALSO ... When you email me, please do so with some formality. Use a proper greeting and closing (“Dear Professor” / “Sincerely”), and employ correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. You shouldn’t send emails to your professors in the same style as you IM your friends. (“hey prof wotz up 4 hmwrk 2nite kthxbai”)
- All cell phones, blackberries, computers, ipods, and other electronic devices must be turned off for the entirety of the class meeting. The penalty for failing to adhere to this policy is as follows: every time your device rings or vibrates, or I see you texting, I WILL SUBTRACT A POINT FROM YOUR FINAL GRADE.
- Do not eat in class.
- Please treat the professor and your fellow students with the same respect with which you’d hope to be treated. Inappropriate or disrespectful behavior will be penalized, and, if severe and consistent, will be grounds for dismissal from the course.
- All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, are strictly prohibited. All incidents of academic dishonesty will be considered grounds for serious penalty, which may include anything from an “F” on an assignment to an “F” for a final grade. For Georgia State University’s Policy on Academic Honesty, which includes definitions of “plagiarism” and “cheating,” look to the following website:
http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/codeofconduct_conpol.html
I expect you to take this policy as seriously as I do. If you have any questions about a particular case, see me before it is too late – that is, *before* submitting any written work.
- The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. The professor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus, if needed. It is the professor’s responsibility to inform the class of such changes in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to be attentive to these changes, when and if they happen.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

January 6 Introduction to Course

January 8 Defining Our Terms

READ FOR TODAY:

- Michael Novak, “Pluralism: A Humanistic Perspective” from *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980)

LISTEN TO FOR TODAY:

- <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/radiolab/episodes/2008/11/28>

January 13 Immigration and Colonization

READ FOR TODAY:

- Daniels, *Coming to America*, chs. 2-4 (pp. 30-100)

January 15 Immigration and Identity in the New Nation

READ FOR TODAY:

- Daniels, *Coming to America*, ch. 5 (pp. 101-118)
- PRIMARY SOURCE: 1790 Naturalization Act
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Selections from J. Hector St John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*
- Rael’s Online History Writing Guide, 2.b: “How to Read a Primary Source”

- January 20 “New Immigration,” Part I: Northern and Western Europeans
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Daniels, *Coming to America*, ch. 6 (pp. 121-184)
- January 22 Writing Seminar: The Book Review as a Genre
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Selected book reviews from *The New Yorker*, *New York Review of Books*, H-Net Online
- January 27 Race, Ethnicity, and Labor
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, chs. 1-3 (pp. 3-64)
 ▪ Rael’s Online History Writing Guide, 2.a: “How to Read a Secondary Source”
- January 29 Race, Ethnicity, and Labor
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, chs. 4-6 (pp. 65-131)
 ▪ Rael’s Online History Writing Guide, 2.c: “Predatory Reading”; and 2.d: “Some Keys to Good Reading”
- February 3 Race, Ethnicity, and Labor
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, chs. 7-8 (pp. 133-184)
- February 5 “Whiteness Studies” and Immigration History
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Peter Kolchin, “Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America,” *Journal of American History*, June 2002
- February 10 Nativism Emerges
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, chs. 1-3 (pp. 3-67)
 ▪ PRIMARY SOURCE: Selections from *The Know-Nothing: And American Crusader* (1854-55)
- February 12 Chinese Immigration in the Nineteenth Century
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850*, ch 3 (pp.67-99)
 ▪ PRIMARY SOURCE: Political cartoons depicting Chinese immigration
- February 17 In-class viewing: Selections, *Gangs of New York* (2002)
“WAGES OF WHITENESS” BOOK REVIEW DUE
- February 19 “New Immigration,” Part II: Southern and Eastern Europeans
 READ FOR TODAY:
 ▪ Daniels, *Coming to America*, chs. 7-8 (pp. 185-238)
 ▪ PRIMARY SOURCE: “The Italian in New York,” “Chinatown,” and “Jewtown” from Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)

February 24 Race, Ethnicity, and Work

READ FOR TODAY:

- Peter Levine, “‘Oy Such a Fighter!’: Boxing and the American Jewish Experience,” from *From Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience*, pp.144-169
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Statistical materials from 1900 U.S. Census

February 26 Race, Ethnicity, and Work: Underground Economies

READ FOR TODAY:

- Ivan Light, “The Ethnic Vice Industry, 1880-1944.” *American Sociological Review*, 42.3 (1977)

March 3 & 5 SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

March 10 In-class viewing: *The Jazz Singer* (1927)

FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

March 12 Exclusion, Assimilation, Pluralism

READ FOR TODAY:

- Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, ch. 6 (pp. 131-157)
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Selection from Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot* (1908)
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Theodore Roosevelt on “Hyphenated Americanism” (1915)
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Horace Kallen, “Democracy Versus the Melting Pot: A Study of American Nationality” (1915)

March 17 Nativism Triumphs: Guest lecture on Eugenics by Dr. Paul Lombardo, Georgia State University College of Law

READ FOR TODAY:

- Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, chs. 8-9 (pp. 194-263)
- FIRST BOOK REVIEW REWRITE DUE (OPTIONAL)**

March 19 The End of Open Immigration

READ FOR TODAY:

- Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, chs. 10-11 (pp. 264-330)

March 24 Mexican Americans in the Early Twentieth Century

READ FOR TODAY:

- Daniels, *Coming to America*, ch. 12 (pp. 307-327)
- 2-PAGE SUMMARY OF FINAL PAPER DUE**

March 26 Mexican Americans in the Early Twentieth Century

READ FOR TODAY:

- George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles*, Intro - ch. 2 (pp. 3-62)

March 31 Japanese Americans, Before and During World War II

READ FOR TODAY:

- Eiichiro Azuma, “The Politics of Transnational History Making: Japanese Immigrants on the Western ‘Frontier,’ 1927-1941,” *Journal of American History*, March 2003

- website: <http://www.sfmuseum.org/war/evactxt.html>
 - Rael's Online History Writing Guide, 5.b: "The Three Parts of a History Paper"
- April 2 A Few Thoughts on Ethnic Identity and Assimilation
 READ FOR TODAY:
- Marcus Lee Hansen, "The Third Generation in America," *Commentary*, November 1952 (orig. 1938)
 - Jane Kramer, "Letter from Europe," *The New Yorker*, April 3, 2006
- April 7 "New Immigration," Part III: Asians and Latin Americans
 READ FOR TODAY:
- Ueda, *Postwar Immigrant America*, Intro - ch. 3 (pp.1-82)
- April 9 "New Immigration," Part III: Asians and Latin Americans
 READ FOR TODAY:
- Ueda, *Postwar Immigrant America*, chs. 4-6 (pp. 83-155)
- April 14 Pluralism, Diversity, and the American University
 READ FOR TODAY:
- Diversity materials from GSU Website
 - Rael's Online History Writing Guide, 8.a: "Paper Writing Checklist"
- DISTRIBUTE DRAFTS OF FINAL BOOK REVIEW TO YOUR PAPER GROUPS**
- April 16 Paper groups: Discuss Drafts
 READ FOR TODAY:
- Your classmates' drafts
 - Rael's Online History Writing Guide, 8.b: "Peer Evaluations"
- April 21 The Immigrant Experience in the Twenty-first Century
 READ FOR TODAY:
- Mendoza and Shankar, *Crossing Into America*, pp. TBA
- April 23 The Immigrant Experience in the Twenty-first Century
 READ FOR TODAY:
- Mendoza and Shankar, *Crossing Into America*, pp. TBA
- FINAL PAPER DUE**