

History 232-01: Immigration and Ethnicity in US History
Macalester College
T/Th 1:00 – 2:30PM
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Old Main 011

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The United States is in the midst of its third substantial wave of immigration, with more than one million new arrivals each year since 1990. This new immigration is changing the composition of the working class, the contours of our cities, the nature of race relations, the fabric of popular culture, and the dynamics of our key institutions, from schools, hospitals, and churches to small businesses and social life. It is also becoming one of the defining political issues not only of the 2008 presidential election but also of our state and local governments. Immigration and ethnicity, at the borders, in our neighborhoods and schools, our workplaces and unions, in our music and poetry pose challenges to us as students, scholars, citizens, consumers, city dwellers, and human beings. Public policy, educational reforms, and cultural creativity struggle to cope with – and are inspired by – the consequences of immigration and ethnicity.

What can we – and our society – learn from the study of our own past? How have these experiences of immigrants and their descendants in the 19th and 20th centuries established patterns which serve as templates for life in the 21st century? How have immigrants and their children shaped US society? How has US society (re)shaped immigrants and their children?

Must we repeat the past, or can we learn “lessons” from it?

This course will concentrate on a selection of these past experiences with an eye towards their relevance for our present and future. We will spend most of our time in the 19th and 20th centuries, digging deeply into particular settings, experiences, conflicts, creations, and groups’ experiences. The deeper we dig, the more we learn to situate particular experiences within specific historical contexts, the more we learn useful questions to ask about the present and the more intelligently and effectively we can function in our own lifetimes.

This course will also expose you to a variety of ways of accessing, interrogating, investigating, and interpreting the experiences of immigrants and their children. We will learn how to learn through oral history, novels, drama, and music, as well as careful historical scholarship. We will learn about the questions historians ask and the sources they engage in order to answer them. And we will explore ways of thinking about the connections between past and present.

There will be considerable reading in this course, but it will be quite varied in style and format, and I hope that you will find most if not all of it to be stimulating and engaging. While I will lecture occasionally and show a film or two, most class sessions will be discussion-oriented. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that you come to class faithfully and that you come having done the reading, prepared to ask questions, respond to my questions, and talk to each other. Your grade will reflect your attendance and your participation in class discussions. We will also use email between classes as a way to frame questions ahead of time, continue discussions which feel unfinished, or call our attention to learning opportunities outside the classroom. Therefore, it is important that you check your email regularly. I will be asking you to write four papers, two of

which will involve engagement with course readings and class discussions, one of which will involve your attendance at the American Studies Conference February 29-March 1, and one of which will involve some research on your part, some use of the tools we will be developing in the course. I will expect you to turn in your papers on the due date unless some unforeseen crisis arises. I hope that you will use the paper assignments as a prompt to come visit me in my office and talk about your experiences, ideas, and interests.

There will be times when our class discussions will venture into territory that some of us might find uncomfortable. The longer I live and teach, the more convinced I am that the most important parts of our education emerge out of those moments of discomfort. We must not be afraid to go there, but we must treat each other with respect and civility as we explore together. I am committed to maintaining our classroom as a safe space for each and every one of us, even as I am willing to ask hard questions and push for complex answers.

I will assume that your registration for this course signals your acceptance of these terms.

Books (available at the college bookstore):

Spickard, *ALMOST ALL ALIENS*

Gomez, *EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS*

Diner, *ERIN'S DAUGHTERS IN AMERICA*

Bell, *OUT OF THIS FURNACE*

Pozzetta and Mormino, *THE IMMIGRANT WORLD OF YBOR CITY*

Cruz, *ANNA IN THE TROPICS*

Glasser, *MY MUSIC IS MY FLAG*

Roediger, *WORKING TOWARDS WHITENESS*

Mathew, *TAXI! CABS AND CAPITALISM IN NEW YORK CITY*

Daily syllabus (subject to change)

T 1/29 Introduction to the course

Th 1/31 Thinking and (Re)Thinking Immigration and Ethnic History

Handlin, "Immigration Portrayed as an Experience of Uprootedness"

Bodnar, "Immigration Portrayed as an Experience of Transplantation"

Higham, "The Problem of Assimilation in the U.S."

Conzen et al, "The Invention of Ethnicity in the U.S."

all are excerpts; all will be provided electronically

Spickard, "Immigration, Race, Ethnicity, Colonialism," in *ALMOST ALL ALIENS*, chapter 1, pp. 1-28

Th 1/31 evening outing History Theater: "The Meeting"

T 2/5 The Making of Black America: The Slave Trade

Gomez, *EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS*, 1 – 6, pp. 1-153

- Th 2/7 The Making of Black America: Agency and Language
Gomez, EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS, 7, pp. 154-185
Hand out assignment #1, due 2/26
- T 2/12 The Making of Black America: Agency, Identity, and Culture
Gomez, EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS, 8 – 10, pp. 186-292
- W 2/13 A conversation with Angela Davis, 5PM
- Th 2/14 Immigration and Ethnicity in Early North America
Spickard, ALMOST ALL ALIENS, chap. 2, pp. 29-78
- T 2/19 Immigration, Ethnicity, Race, and Whiteness in the Antebellum U.S.
Spickard, ALMOST ALL ALIENS, chap. 3, pp. 79-128
- Th 2/21 Gender and Immigration: Irish Women
Diner, ERIN'S DAUGHTERS IN AMERICA, Intro, 1-4, pp. 1-105
- T 2/26 Gender and Immigration: Irish Women
Diner, ERIN'S DAUGHTERS IN AMERICA, chaps. 5-7, pp. 106-154
Assignment #1 due
- Th 2/28 Immigration, Race, and Industrialization
Spickard, ALMOST ALL ALIENS, chap. 4, pp. 129-170
- F-Sat 2/29 – 3/1 American Studies Conference: "Racism in the Name of Science"
Attend some part(s) of this conference and write a 2-4 page paper, relating it
course themes and issues. This is Assignment #2. Due T 3/4
- T 3/4 The "New" Immigration and a Changing U.S.
Spickard, ALMOST ALL ALIENS, chaps. 5-6, pp. 171-290
Paper on American Studies Conference due
- Th 3/6 A "Novel" Approach to Immigration and Ethnic History
Bell, OUT OF THIS FURNACE, Part One
Hand out Assignment #3, due 3/13
- T 3/11 A "Novel" Approach to Immigration and Ethnic History
Bell, OUT OF THIS FURNACE, Parts Two and Three
- Th 3/13 A "Novel" Approach to Immigration and Ethnic History
Bell, OUT OF THIS FURNACE, Part Four
Assignment #3 due

- 3/15 – 3/23 Spring Break
Pozzetta and Mormino, THE IMMIGRANT WORLD OF YBOR CITY
- T 3/25 Immigration, Multiracialism, and Interactions
Pozzetta & Mormino, THE IMMIGRANT WORLD
- Th 3/27 Immigration, Multiracialism, and Interactions
Pozzetta & Mormino, THE IMMIGRANT WORLD
- T 4/1 The “Drama” of Immigration and Ethnicity
Cruz, ANNA IN THE TROPICS
- Th 4/3 Immigration and Ethnicity Through Music
Glasser, MY MUSIC IS MY FLAG, Intro, chaps. 1-2, pp. 1-83
- T 4/8 Immigration and Ethnicity Through Music
Glasser, MY MUSIC IS MY FLAG, chaps. 3-5 & Conclusion, pp. 84-204
Hand out Assignment #4, due 5/8
- Th 4/10 Immigration, Ethnicity, and Whiteness
Spickard, ALMOST ALL ALIENS, chap. 7, pp. 291-340
- T 4/15 Immigration, Ethnicity, and Whiteness
Roediger, WORKING TOWARDS WHITENESS, chaps. 1-2, pp. 3-56
- Th 4/17 Immigration, Ethnicity, and Whiteness
Roediger, WORKING TOWARDS WHITENESS, chaps. 3-4, pp. 57-132
- T 4/22 Immigration, Ethnicity, and Whiteness
Roediger, WORKING TOWARDS WHITENESS, chaps. 5-7, pp. 133-244
- Th 4/24 The New (Post-1965) Immigration
Spickard, ALMOST ALL ALIENS, chap. 8, pp. 341-390
- T 4/29 The New Immigration Within a Changing U.S.
Spickard, ALMOST ALL ALIENS, chaps. 9-10, pp. 391-464
- Th 5/1 The New Immigration: Agency and Redefinition
Mathew, TAXI! CABS AND CAPITALISM IN NEW YORK,
Prologue, chaps. 1-3, pp. 1-82
- T 5/6 The New Immigration: Agency and Redefinition
Mathew, TAXI!, chaps. 4-7, pp. 83-204
- Th 5/8 Assignment #4 due by 5PM