

Sociology 150
Multicultural America: Immigration and Ethnicity in the US
Fall 2006

Mondays & Wednesdays
11 – 12:15
Bolton Hall, Rm. B84

Prof. Steven McKay
Office: Bolton 730
Office Phone: 229-4859
Home Phone: (608) 238-8443
Email: scmckay@uwm.edu
Office hours:
Mondays 1 - 2:30, Wednesdays 1 - 2:30, or by appointment

Course Description:

The United States has often and proudly been called a “Nation of Immigrants.” Over that last 300 years, fortune-seekers, refugees, slaves and adventurers from Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America have made their way to the US and have helped fashion a complex, vibrant and diverse American mosaic. Yet in part because immigration can be such a powerful force, flows of immigration into the country – including the current one – have led to often-contentious debates about immigrants and their impact on jobs, wages and the overall economy; neighborhoods and local social services; relations with other groups; and what it means to be “American.”

This course provides an introduction to the study of American multiculturalism by exploring immigration, race and ethnicity together through a sociological lens. In other words, the course stresses the historical, economic and political *contexts* of immigration, the *relations* between immigrants, existing ethnic/racial groups, and American political and economic institutions, and the changing *processes* of incorporation and ethnic/racial formation.

We approach the issues of immigration by tackling two basic sets of questions. First, why do migrants come in the first place? And why might they stop or continue to migrate? Here, besides the allure of “Gold Mountain” and the promise of upward mobility, we will explore global/historical factors affecting migration, tracing historical timing and key macro-level influences such as World War I and the American War in Vietnam, as well as contemporary global forces such as economic restructuring.

The second set of questions asks: What happens once migrants arrive? What are the economic, social, political and cultural consequences of their presence? Here, we will explore ways sociologists have approached the study of immigration and assimilation, comparing, for example, how different waves and groups of immigrants have experienced different “contexts of reception” and have contributed to a shifting “color line” in American race/ethnic relations. We pay particular attention to the children of immigrants, their patterns of acculturation, their chances for socioeconomic mobility, and the long-term prospects of immigrant communities.

Major emphasis will be given to the following ethnic/racial groups: African Americans & West Indians, Asian Americans (especially the Hmong), Irish Americans, and Latino/a Americans (especially Mexican Americans).

Course Goals:

1. Introduce students to a sociological approach to immigration and ethnic/race relations in the US.
2. Develop students' critical thinking and analytical skills to better evaluate contemporary social issues/debates (e.g. immigration)
3. Develop a critical awareness and understanding of immigrant contributions to American society and the need for improved inter-ethnic and race relations.

Student Learning Objectives:

After completing the course, students should be equipped to:

1. **describe** the immigration patterns to the US, the historical and contemporary contexts of immigrant reception, and the impact of immigration on social, economic, and racial stratification
2. **demonstrate** an understanding of the experiences of immigrant communities and historically marginalized groups, particularly African Americans, Latino/a Americans, and Asian Americans;
3. **define** and **analyze critically** the historical and social constructions of “race”, “ethnicity,” and “white privilege” in the context of group competition and inequality
4. **evaluate** competing theories and views on immigration, assimilation, and ethnic and immigrant identity formation
5. **participate** constructively in social and political debates on ethnic and race relations, multicultural issues, and immigration in the US.

General Education Requirements (GER)

Sociology 150 meets the university-wide General Education Requirements (GER) because it focuses on:

- a) the study of interpersonal and socio-cultural factors associated with individual behavior, collective action and societal development regarding immigration processes, race and ethnicity.
- b) The study of human collectivities – in this case various immigrant, racial and ethnic groups, and their organizations, institutions, cultures, infrastructures and interrelationships.
- c) The study of capacities for and techniques of creating behavioral and social change.
- d) The study of various methodologies used to in researching immigration, incorporation/assimilation, racial formation and various immigrant, racial and ethnic groups.
- e) various theoretical frameworks for studying (im)migration, incorporation and racial formation.

Readings and other course materials:

The reading will be a combination of articles and excerpts to provide an analytical framework for discussions of immigration and multiculturalism, in-depth studies of particular immigrant groups in historical context, and narrative accounts from immigrants and their families themselves about their own experiences of migration, reception, acculturation and incorporation.

We will also make extensive use of films that document the immigrant experience and use many web-based materials to better understand contemporary immigrant community formation and collective activity.

Course readings include the following 4 required books and additional articles, which have been placed on electronic reserve at the UWM Library with links posted on the course's D2L web site. Books will also be put on reserve in the library.

These core course books will be available for purchase through the University Bookstore:

Portes, Alejandro and Rubén G. Rumbaut. **2006.** *Immigrant America: A Portrait* **Third edition.** Revised, Expanded, and Updated. University of California Press 0-520-25041-9 (please make sure you get the new edition)

Faderman, Lillian and Ghia Xiong. 1998. *I Begin my Life All Over: The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience.* Boston: Beacon Press: 0-807-07235-4

Martinez, Ruben. 2001. *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail.* NY: Picador Press: 0805049088

Waters, Mary. 2001. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities.* New York: Russell Sage and Harvard University Press (paperback edition): 0674007247

Course Format:

The course will try to draw on the experiences and diversity of the class through discussion and collaborative projects with both the instructor and with other class participants. We will meet twice a week, with discussions focused primarily on the week's readings and students' comments. We will also watch several films related to the course material. Active discussion is thus key to understanding the course material and participation will be graded.

There will also be an important **service learning** component to the course, which will be discussed further below.

Requirements and expectations:

Students must attend class, do the assigned reading, participate in class discussions and work collaboratively with fellow students. Your final grade will be based on your progress in several areas throughout the semester (see below). You will earn points for each assignment, though for your final grade, I will take into account such things as improvement, enthusiasm and active participation in discussions.

Here is how your final grade breaks down:

Response Posting, Quizzes and in-class writing (20%)

Each week, students will either take a pop quiz, post short reading responses (200 words max) on the course's website, or do a short in-class writing assignment that will set both the tone and agenda for the week's in-class discussions.

Participation and attendance (5%)

You will be graded on the quality of your participation, as well as attendance. It is important to learn to speak comfortably and confidently in classroom settings, and to learn to take charge of your own learning environment. A goal of this class is to be as interactive as possible.

Mid-term Exam (20%)

The midterm will be an in-class blue book essay exam. No make-up exam will be given, unless you have a legitimate *and* documented reason. You must notify me *prior* to the exam.

Non-cumulative Final Exam (15%)

The final will cover only material from the second half of the semester. Like the midterm, it will be an in-class blue book essay exam. No make-up exam will be given, unless you have a legitimate *and* documented reason. You must notify me *prior* to the exam.

Service Learning and Community Engagement (40%)

This course requires each student to engage his/her wider community in a substantive way to take advantage of the rich, non-traditional learning opportunities that the diverse city provides.

This portion of the course is also designed to allow students to “cross borders” themselves: venturing beyond their own communities, encouraging cross-cultural interactions, challenging their own biases, and promoting critical self-reflection about their own cultural identities.

This service-learning component to the course requires all students to spend 15 hours of non-classroom time with a community organization or non-profit group.

You will keep a service learning journal (5% of grade) to reflect informally on your on-going experiences. A mid-evaluation paper (4-5 double-spaced pages – 15% of grade) will focus on an extended interview with a first or second-generation migrant you have met through your service learning and their experiences of migration/immigration. A final paper (8-9 doubled-spaced pages – 20% of grade) will be required, linking course materials and analytical concepts about race and processes of (im)migration to your interview and your service learning experience.

The Institute for Service Learning, in conjunction with the instructor, will help develop a list of community organizations that specialize in immigrant services (health, education, language instruction, job placement, training, etc...) from which students can then choose for their service learning component.

Course Schedule

***Please note: this schedule is provisional and may change over the course of the semester. Please make note of all changes announced in class and posted on the course web site.**

D a y	Date	Topic	Assignments & Exams	W e e k
M O N	Sept. 4	Labor Day – no class		1
W E D	Sept. 6	Introduction to Course	readings: P&R: Ch.1: “Nine Stories”	

M O N	Sept. 11	Sociological Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity	readings: Feagin & Feagin <i>Racial & Ethnic Relations</i> Ch 1, "Basic Concepts in the Study of Racial and Ethnic Relations"	2
W E D	Sept. 13	<i>Service learning introduction and training</i>	Ch 2, "Adaptation and Conflict: Racial and Ethnic Relations in Theoretical Perspectives."	
M O N	Sept. 18	White Privilege <i>Video: Angry Eyes</i>	readings: Conley, Dalton. "Universal Freckle, or How I Learned to Be White"	
W E D	Sept. 20	Sociological Perspectives on Immigration	readings: P&R Ch. 2; "Who are They and Why Do They Come" pp.12-36 <i>recommended:</i> <i>P&R Ch 3: for geographic portrait of today's immigrants</i>	3
M O N	Sept. 25		reading: P&R Ch. 4 "Making it in America" pay particular attention to p. 91-102	
W E D	Sept. 27		P&R Ch. 8 "Growing up American" <i>recommended:</i> <i>Suarez-Orozco "Everything you ever wanted to know about assimilation but were afraid to ask"</i>	4
M O N	Oct. 2	Irish Americans: Becoming White Ethnicity and Class within White America: late 19 th and early 20 th Century The Irish "Ethnic" Strategy	readings: Takaki, R. Ch.6: "Emigrants from Erin" in <i>A Different Mirror</i>	5
W E D	Oct. 4		Service learning journals due (for comments only)	
M O N	Oct. 9	African-Americans and the Great Migration Economic competition and racial discrimination in Northern cities Residential and occupational segregation De-industrialization	readings: Geib. 1998. "From Mississippi to Milwaukee: a Case Study of the Southern Black Migration to Milwaukee, 1940-1970"	6
W E D	Oct. 11		Paper 1 due	
M O N	Oct. 16	Black Immigrants, Black Identities? Racial, ethnic and/or immigrant identity Acculturation, class and assimilation	readings: Waters, Mary. <i>Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities</i> Chs 1 & 3	7
W E D	Oct. 18	Black Immigrants, Black Identities? segmented labor markets	Waters, Ch. 4	

M O N	Oct. 23	Black Immigrants, Black Identities? The continuing significance of race The second generation	Waters, Chs 5 & 8	8
W E D	Oct. 25	exam review	Waters, Ch 9	
M O N	Oct. 30		Midterm Exam	9
W E D	Nov. 1	Latinos: an Overview	reading: Pew Hispanic Center Report: “Hispanics: A People in Motion”	
M O N	Nov. 6	Mexicans, Mexican Americans	readings: Martinez, Ruben. 2001. <i>Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail</i> Prologue & Ch 1	10
W E D	Nov. 8	<i>video: A Day Without a Mexican</i>	readings: Martinez, Chs 4, 7	
M O N	Nov. 13		Martinez, Chs 8, 9	11
W E D	Nov. 15		readings: Martinez, Chs 11, Epilogue Service learning journals due (for comments)	
M O N	Nov. 20	Asian-Americans – An Overview Socioeconomic “success” and the Myth of the “model minority” National and Class diversity Selective Acculturation	readings: Ronald Takaki 1989. <i>A Different Mirror</i> Ch 8. “Searching for Gold Mountain”	12
W E D	Nov. 22		Moo Hurh & Chung Kim, “The ‘Success’ Image of Asian Americans”	
M O N	Nov. 27	The Hmong and the U.S. war in Southeast Asia War and political refugees The Relocation Camps in Thailand	reading: Faderman, Lillian. 1998. <i>I Begin my Life All Over: The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience</i> Intro & “Part I: The End of a Way of Life.”	13
W E D	Nov. 29	<i>video: Pha Dong, Hmong in WI</i>		
M O N	Dec. 4	Hmong Resettlement in the Midwest Being American Generational Conflicts	reading: Faderman, Lillian. 1998. “Part II: Becoming an American.”	14
W E D	Dec. 6	<i>guest speaker from Hmong American Studies Initiative</i>	Second Paper Due	
M O N	Dec. 11	Contemporary Immigration Debate	readings: P&R Ch. 10 Service Learning Journals Due	15
W E D		Non-cumulative Final: Wed Dec 20th: 10-12		