

Immigration in American History

Professor Katie Benton-Cohen (Georgetown University)



Learning Goals:

Using both primary and secondary sources, this course will trace the rise of immigration to the United States, restrictions placed on it, and the changing notions of citizenship and meanings of race applied to immigrants of African, Asian, Latin American, and European background. Topics explored will include migration patterns and meanings, theories of migration, the history of the idea of the “illegal alien,” the relationship between race and citizenship status, the transformation of American life by immigrants, the class-based and gendered aspects of the immigration experience, and—finally—the way that historical context helps us understand current immigration issues.

Each student will do original research using both secondary and primary sources. The final paper for the course will be built around the original research of class participants on the historical context of a contemporary immigration issue. While you will conduct independent research, we will develop research plans cooperatively.

COURSE GOALS: To encourage critical thinking by gaining the ability to evaluate historians’ arguments and to sift, winnow, and interpret primary sources. To inquire critically about politically charged ideas about immigration using historical context. To

engage difference in a productive, intellectual, and ethical way. To produce an original piece of research.

The **learning goals** of this course dovetail with those of the department of history in general. I have excerpted here those with particular relevance to this course. “Students will gain a better appreciation of the nature and practice of history as a discipline, and as the study, based on evidence, of human experiences, interactions, and relationships as they change over time. **They will learn to appreciate that history does not consist of a simple succession of self-evident facts, and that evidence-based interpretation and analysis are central to all historical work....**Students will hone their reading, writing, and oral communication skills; they will develop their ability to think historically, **that is to situate events and developments in their historical context for the purpose of critical analysis**; and they will expand their ability to engage with complex causal analysis, and to articulate arguments that integrate supporting evidence and analytical commentary....**Students will better appreciate the differentness of the past...**

And, finally:

This course in no way offers a comprehensive history of immigration in the United States. Instead, it is intended to be a jumping-off point for thinking deeply about how native-born Americans have thought about immigrants, vice versa, and the ways that these thoughts have shaped national development and policy, as well as individual lives. We will cover a lot of ground, and jump great spans in time and subject matter. Be prepared to look things up, ask questions, or be slightly confused. Schedule changes may result.

Immigration history can be a controversial, touchy, and deeply personal topic. We all have experiences with immigration, but those exposures vary dramatically. Diverse views on its history and current policy are legitimate and must be respected. Respectful language is essential to courteous and productive classroom discussion and debate.

The major product of the course will be a 10-15 page brief on the historical context of a current immigration issue, along with an annotated bibliography of at least twelve sources, six primary and six secondary sources. You will produce a rough draft of this paper and undergo peer review. You will also give an oral presentation on your findings.

A few paper ideas:

- African Americans and Immigration
- Building Border Walls
- Refugees in Europe and US
- Mass Deportation
- Immigration Reform
- DACA
- Federal vs. Local Immigration Enforcement

Required Books:

Mae Ngai and Jon Gjerde, *Major Problems in American Immigration History* (Cengage, 2012) ISBN-10: 0547149077 ISBN-13: 9780547149073.

Sone, Monica. *Nisei Daughter*. Any edition.

Urrea, Luis Albert. *Devil's Highway*. Any edition.

Lac Su, *I Love You Are for White People*. Any edition.

A NOTE ON SUPPLEMENTS: The readings listed as supplements are encouraged to deepen your reading in topics of particular interest to you. They are not required.

Course and Reading Schedule: [MP=Major Problems]

Week 1 Introductions

Reading:

- The syllabus

Week 2 What is Migration? Is it voluntary or forced? MANDATORY BLOG

RESPONSE

Reading:

- MP Chp. 1
- MP Chp. 2

Supplement:

Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History*.

Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World*

Week 3 Irish and German Migration in the “first wave”

Reading:

- MP, pp. 77-78, 82-95, Chp. 4, Maria Monk, *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, as Exhibited in a Narrative of Her Sufferings During a Residence of Five Years as a Novice and Two Years as a Black Nun, in the Hotel Dieu Nunnery in Montreal* (1836) Chp. 2 (<http://www.reformation.org/maria-monk-ch2.html>)
- Hidetaka Hirota, “The Moment of Transition: State Officials, the Federal Government, and the Formation of an American Immigration Policy,” *The Journal of American History* 99, no. 4 (2013): 1092-1108.
<http://jah.oxfordjournals.org/content/99/4/1092.full>

Supplement:

Kathleen Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City*.

David Emmons, *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in An American Mining Town, 1875-1925*.

Hasia Diner, *Erin's Daughters: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century*

Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*

Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points, The 19th –Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections...*

Timothy Meagher, *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880-1928*

Week 4 The Southwest Borderlands—the other ‘48ers

Reading:

- MP, Chp. 5

Supplement:

Andres Resendez, *Changing National Identities at the Border: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge, 2004).

Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Harvard, 1981).

Maria Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict Over Land in the American West, 1840 to 1920*, University of California Press, 2002, Kansas, 2005)

Week 5 Asian Immigration and the Birth of Federal Enforcement

Reading:

- MP Chp. 6, 224-231.
- Anna Pegler-Gordon, “Chinese Exclusion, Photography, and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy,” *American Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (March 2006), pp. 51-77 (Project Muse).
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v058/58.1pegler-gordon.pdf
- Erika Lee, “Enforcing the Borders: Chinese Exclusion Along the U.S. Borders With Canada and Mexico, 1882-1924,” *Journal of American History* 89, no. 1 (June 2002): 54-86. [Available on J-Stor]
- Julian Ralph, “The Chinese Leak,” *Harper’s New Monthly* 82 (March 1891), 515-526. [Available at:
<http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=harp;cc=harp;rgn=full%20text;idno=harp0082-4;didno=harp0082-4;view=image;seq=0525;node=harp0082-4%3A2>

Supplement:

Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the making of Modern America*

Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown*

Week 6 Whiteness, “New Immigrants,” and Restriction

Reading:

- MP, pp. 212-220, 231-235, Chp. 9-10.

Supplement:

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diaspora Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States*

Tony Michels, *A Fire in their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York*

Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965*

Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White On Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*. New York: Oxford UP, 2004. 9780195178029

Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community, Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880-1930*.

Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation, The Making of Italy Abroad*.

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*.

Ron Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews, and Italians in New York City, 1929-1941*.

Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Week 7 Wartime Change: deportation, internment and *braceros*

Reading:

- MP, Chp. 11
- Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter*

Supplement:

Bracero Archive <http://braceroarchive.org>

Gordon Chang, *Morning Glory, Evening Shadow: Yamato Ichihashi and His Internment Writings, 1942-1945* (Stanford, 1999).

Deborah Cohen, *Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (UNC, 2011)

Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (UNC, 2001).

Week 8 The New "New Immigrants"

Reading:

- MP, Chps. 12-13
- Nina Bernstein, "An Irish Face on the Cause of Citizenship," *New York Times* 16 March 2006.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/16/nyregion/16irish.html?scp=1&sq=irish%20i/legal%20immigrants&st=cse#>

Supplement:

Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement* (UC Press, 2012).

Philip Kasinitz et al, *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age* (Harvard UP, 2008).

Mary C. Waters, *Black Identities, West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*.

Oneka LaBennett, *She's Mad Real: Popular Culture and West Indian Girls in Brooklyn* (NYU Press, 2011).

Susan F. Pearce et al., *Immigration and Women: Understanding the American Experience* (NYU Press, 2011).

Tamara M. Brown, *Raising Brooklyn: Nannies, Childcare, and Caribbeans Creating Community* (NYU Press, 2011).

Week 9 The Border

Reading:

- Luis Albert Urrea, *Devil's Highway*.

- <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/08/29/u-s-hispanic-population-by-county-1980-2011/>
- Postville Iowa: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/magazine/postville-iowa-is-up-for-grabs.html?pagewanted=1&r=1&hp>

Supplement:

Hernández, Kelly Lytle. *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2010). 9780520266414

Patrick Ettinger, *Border Enforcement and the Origins of Undocumented Immigration, 1882-1930*

Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*

Anthony Mora, *Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912.*

Week 10 Contemporary Issues

Reading:

- MP, Chp. 15 Immigration Challenges for the Next Century
- What Americans Want to do about Illegal Immigration, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/08/24/what-americans-want-to-do-about-illegal-immigration/>
- Immigration Federalism: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigration-federalism-which-policy-prevails>
- And: <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/perspectives/back-border-historical-comparison-us-border-politics>
- *Readings assigned by classmates*
- On Indian immigrants: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=962>

Week 11 Refugees and Immigration Law

Reading:

- MP, Chp. 14 pp. 524-530, 534-554.
- Lac Su, *I Love Yous Are for White People.*
- Jana K. Lipman, "A Refugee Camp in America: Fort Chaffee and Vietnamese and Cuban Refugees, 1975-1982," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33, no. 2, Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jamerethnhist.33.2.0057>

Week 12 DACA at home/Reflections/ORAL REPORTS

Reading:

- Shalina Chatlani, Students Beyond Borders: The Story of Undocumented Students at Georgetown, *Georgetown Voice*, January 30, 2014.
- Rio Djiwandana, Beyond Borders: Undocumented and Traveling the World, *Georgetown Voice*, March 26, 2015: <http://georgetownvoice.com/2015/03/26/undocumented-and-traveling-the-world/>