

## AMERICAN IMMIGRATION HISTORY

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Office: Eaton 101, x6197  
Office Hours: office hours: M/F 10:15-11:30; W 1-2:15  
and by appointment  
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### Introduction

This course is designed to introduce students to the major themes, debates, and methods of American immigration history. Readings, discussions, and lectures will focus on identifying the issues in the field; developing the student's ability to analyze historical evidence and historical argument, and to pose critical questions of his/her own; and studying and using methods employed by historians to understand immigrants and the process of immigration. Thus, the emphasis is not on the transmission of knowledge of historical events ("what happened"), but on understanding how historians learn about and interpret immigration. Special attention will be given to the issue of race and how it has framed the experiences of the diverse immigrants to America, past and present.

American Immigration History has a **service learning** option. Students will have the opportunity to perform community service in order to understand better the immigrant experience and immigration issues, and better connect historical study to current social issues.

The texts for the course are the following:

- Roger Daniels & Otis Graham, Debating American Immigration
- Hasia Diner, Hungering for America
- Marie Rose Wong, Sweet Cakes, Long Journey
- David Roediger, Working Toward Whiteness
- Jerry Garcia & Gilberto Garcia, Memory, Community and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest
- Nancy Foner, In a New Land

Student evaluation will be based on two components:

#### 1. Reading and Discussion:

The assigned readings are essential to the course. They are one window through which you learn about the field of immigration history and about the experience of immigration. They will provide the common ground from which our discussions will flow.

Your careful reading of the texts will be assessed in two ways. First, every student is expected to participate in an informed way in classroom discussion and exercises. Participation will account for 25% of the class grade. Second, students will be expected to

respond to the reading in writing on a regular basis. Beginning with unit II, you are expected to write a brief paper responding to the reading each week, except those weeks when a formal paper is due. These written response to the reading (approximately 1 page in length) will be turned once a week, and will frequently be use to kick off discussion. Students are free to choose the style and content of their responses. A few suggestions are:

- a personal response to some issue raise in the text
- a critique of some aspect of the reading
- presentation of key questions raised by the reading
- connection of an issue raised in the text to themes already discussed in class
- connection of an issue raised in the text to the student's service experience

These short writing assignments will be worth 20% of the final grade.

## 2. Service Learning/Research Component

Because historians write history, as well as analyzing the work of other historians, you will be asked not only to read histories written by others, but also to write your own brief history on the topic of your choice. This project may be either a "traditional" research paper or, for those students who select the service-learning option, a paper informed by the service experience. In either case, students should begin selecting and narrowing their topics as soon as possible.

### a. Option One: Service Learning:

Students selecting the service-learning option will arrange a service assignment (with the help of the Community Outreach Office) based on their research interests. Service-learning placements offer a wide array of opportunities for learning about local immigrant communities, and may be issue focused (bilingual education, migrant labor, immigration law, refugees, the role of the church, the politics of immigration, etc.) or may focus broadly on the experiences of a particular group (Old Believers, Mexicans, Vietnamese, etc.). Early in the semester, students will be presented with some of the many options available. Twenty hours is the minimum service commitment required of students who select this option. The service experience is intended to give students personal insights into their research topic and to help shape their historical inquiry.

### b. Option Two: Traditional Research Option:

Students are free to choose any topic relevant to American immigration history, such as the study of a particular immigrant community, a theme or issue that spans several communities, immigration policy, or the response to immigration in a particular era. Students may also chose to pursue more personal projects, relating to their own (or their family's) immigration experience and putting these personal experiences into the context of a larger issue in immigration history.

Regardless of the option chosen, the focus should be **historical**. Papers will consist of several parts, and will develop gradually through the semester, as detailed below:

## **Paper Assignments:**

**-Preliminary Papers:** Students will write a paper proposal and two preliminary papers based on their service learning experience (option 1) or their research (option 2). The proposal will be worth 5% of the final grade, and each preliminary paper will be worth 10%. **Note: the 2 preliminary papers need not be written in the order indicated below.**

**Proposal:** Service students should complete the service learning proposal form. Traditional research student should submit a one-paragraph description of the topic/issue to be explored in the final paper and attach a brief preliminary bibliography (approximately 5-7 books and articles).

**Preliminary Paper #1: Primary Source Paper:** The first step of original historical research is the examination of sources. For this paper, students will select one primary source related to the research subject-- for service-learning students, this source will be the service experience. In this 4 to 6 page paper, the student should describe the source (or service experience), the way it illuminates the topic, and the questions for further research that it raises. Attention should be given to explaining the strengths, weaknesses and biases the historian encounters in using the source.

**Preliminary Paper #2: Secondary Source Paper:** Historians are not required to work from the ground up on every research project. Often, they are able to benefit from studying the work of other historians who have written on their topic. For this 4 to 6 page paper, you will examine another historian's book-length work on your topic. This paper should be written in the form of a critical review, presenting the book's thesis, describing its strengths and weaknesses, and evaluating its interpretation.

### **Final Paper:**

**Service-Learning Option:** In this paper, students should reflect on their service experience, and draw conclusions about their historical topic/issue based on that experience. Then these conclusions should be compared to those of three other historians (including the one from the secondary source paper). How do your conclusions confirm or contrast with those of the other historians? How can you account for the differences? These papers should be 8 to 10 pages in length.

**Traditional Research Option:** Using at least two additional primary sources and four additional (book-length) secondary sources, write a 12 to 15 page research paper on your topic, presenting a clear argument and analysis of sources consulted.

The final paper will be worth 25% of the final grade and is due in class on the last day of class. Oral presentations will take place during the final three class sessions, and will be worth 5% of the grade.

While each student will produce an independent paper, one of the functions of this class is to provide the opportunity for exchange of information. Therefore, there will be time set aside in class at regular intervals and at the end of the semester for students to present and discuss their projects.

#### SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS:

##### **Unit I: Current Immigration Issues and their Connections to History**

Tues., 1/16 Introduction

Thurs., 1/18 Debating Immigration: Daniels' Policy History

READING: Daniels & Graham, pp. 1-48 and 73-88

Tues., 1/23 Debating Immigration: Graham's Policy History

READING: Daniels & Graham, 89-159 and 189-207

Thurs., 1/25 Debating Immigration

READING: Daniels & Graham, pp.48-69 and 159-185

Discussion of Service Learning:

Guest: Khela Singer-Adams, Director of Community Service Learning

##### **Unit II: European Immigrants: Cultural Transitions and Adaptations**

Tues., 1/30 Immigration Overview: Scope, Timing, and Historiography

READING: Diner, preface and chapter 1

Thurs., 2/1: Italian Traditions and American Encounters

READING: Diner, chapters 2 & 3

Tues., 2/6 : Irish Traditions and American Encounters

READING: Diner, chapters 4 & 5

Thurs., 2/8 : Jewish Traditions and American Encounters

READING: Diner, chapters 7 & 8

##### **Fri., 2/9: PROPOSALS DUE @ NOON**

Tues., 2/13: **Guest Speaker: Professor Roger Daniels**

In-class session—Reading: handout

**Lecture: "American Immigration Policy: Past, Present, and Possibilities for the Future"—4:00 p.m. Alumni Lounge**

##### **Unit III: Non-European Case Studies**

Thurs., 2/15: Chinese Migration to Oregon

READING: Wong, preface, introduction, chapters 1-2

Tues, 2/20: Chinese Exclusion

READING: Wong, chapters 3 & 4

Thurs., 2/22: Chinese Americans in Portland

READING: Wong, remainder

Tues., 2/27 Discussion of Projects

**FIRST PRELIMINARY PAPER DUE IN CLASS!**

Thurs., 3/1: Mexican Migration: Introduction & Overview  
READING: Garcia, introduction, chapter 1  
Tues., 3/6: Mexican Labor  
READING: Garcia, chapters 2-4

**Unit IV: Race and Immigration**

Thurs., 3/8: Seeing Race  
READING: Roediger, part I  
Tues., 3/13: "Inbetweenness"  
READING: Roediger, part II  
Thurs., 3/15: **Guest Speaker: Professor Gary Okihiro**  
**SECOND PRELIMINARY PAPERS DUE IN CLASS!**  
Tues., 3/21: Restriction and Whiteness  
READING: Roediger, chapters 5 & 6  
Thurs., 3/23: Immigrants and the White House  
READING: Roediger, remainder  
Week of 3/26: SPRING BREAK  
Tues., 4/2: Jews, Japanese & Whiteness in the West  
READING: Handout

**Unit V: Recent Issues, Historical Perspectives**

Thurs., 4/5: Mexican Labor: WWII and After  
READING: Garcia, chapters 5-6  
Tues., 4/10: Mexicans in the Pacific Northwest in Recent Times  
READING: Garcia, remainder  
Thurs., 4/12: Comparisons Across Time: New York  
READING: Foner, introduction, part III  
Tues., 4/17: Comparisons Across Space: West Indians  
READING: Foner, part II  
Thurs., 4/19: Comparisons Across Space: Urban and National  
READING: Foner, part III  
Tues., 4/24: Japanese Americans and the Issue of Whiteness  
In Australia: a comparative case—lecture  
Presentations???

Thurs., 4/26: Presentations  
Tues., 5/1: Presentations  
**FINAL PAPERS DUE IN CLASS!**