

LIBERAL STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAM

Course Syllabus

**Becoming Americans: Immigration in Historical Perspective  
(LSHV-709-30)**

Summer 2008  
Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30 pm

Kazuko Uchimura, PhD  
Uchimurk@georgetown.edu

**Course Description:**

Over the past decade, one million foreigners migrated each year to the United States legally and perhaps another half million have entered the country illegally. The resultant public alarm and increasingly politicized debates on immigration reforms and border enforcement underscore the Americans' ambivalence toward immigration. While acknowledging the immigrant workers' contributions to the U.S. economy, many native-born Americans view the presence of immigrant communities in their midst as a threat to their national identity and core cultural values. There is a perception that the diversity of recent immigrants, drawn overwhelmingly from Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia, are changing the fabric of American society.

The course is intended to bring a much needed historical perspective to this complex national debate. It will bring together writings of eminent historians and sociologists to consider the social and political impacts of immigration in the United States from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. The students will focus on topics such as nativism, the changing patterns of immigrant flows and assimilation, the immigrants' racial and ethnic identities, and the evolution of today's immigration restrictions and legal regimes.

**Class Format**

Classes will combine lectures with student-led discussions of assigned reading materials. Each student is expected to come to class fully prepared and contribute actively to the discussion.

**Required Readings**

Students will be asked to purchase the following six books (all available in paperback)

Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 1990.

John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New

Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1983.  
Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.  
Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street: Faith and Communities in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.  
George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Students will be able to download excerpts from the following works available on the electronic reserve at Georgetown University's Lauinger Library.

Richard D. Alba, Chapter 3 "The Period of Settlement: 1880-1930," *Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicity*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985, 44-73.  
Elliott R. Barkan, "Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity—From Contact to Assimilation," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Winter 1995: 38-75.  
James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality and the "New Immigrant" Working Class," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Spring 1997: 3-44.  
David G. Gutiérrez, "*Sin Fronteras?: Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Mexican Immigration Debate, 1868-1973*," in David G. Gutiérrez (ed.) *Between Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1996, 175-209.  
John Higham, "The Amplitude of Ethnic History: An American Story," in Nancy Foner and George M. Frederickson (eds.) *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004, 61-81.  
Irving Howe, Chapter 3 "The Early Years, 1881-1900," *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*. New York: New York University Press, 2005, 67-118.  
Kerby A. Miller, Chapter 7 "Revenge for Skibbereen: The Great Famine and Irish Emigration, 1845-1855," *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, 280-344.  
Aristide R. Zolberg, "Immigration Control Policy: Law and Implementation," Mary C. Waters & Reed Ueda. *The New Americans: A Guide to Immigration Since 1965*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007, 29-42.

### **Course Requirements**

Each student will be expected to lead the class discussion on one or more of the required readings, prepare and submit a short book review (5 to 6 pages) of John Higham's book *Strangers in the Land* on June 10, and write a survey essay (20-30 pages) on the existing literature for one of the weekly topics.

## Grading

The grades will be based on class attendance and participation (30 percent), a book review (25 percent) and 15-20 page research paper (45 percent).

### Course Schedule, Topics and Readings

- May 27                    **Introduction**  
**Peopling of pre-revolutionary America**  
Students are asked to come to the first class having read John Higham's essay, "The Amplitude of Ethnic History" in Nancy Foner and George M. Frederickson (eds.) *Not Just Black and White* (electronic reserve.)
- June 3                    **Irish immigration, 1845-1855**  
Kerby A. Miller, "'Revenge for Skibbereen': The Great Famine and Irish Emigration, 1845-1855" (electronic reserve)  
Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White*
- June 10                   **Jewish immigration, 1880-1910's**  
Irving Howe, Chapter 3 "The Early Years, 1881-1900." *World of Our Fathers*. (electronic reserve)  
Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*
- June 17                   **Italian immigration, 1880-1930**  
Richard D. Alba, Chapter 3 "The Period of Settlement: 1880-1930," *Italian Americans* (electronic reserve).  
Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street*
- June 24                   **Nativism, race and ethnicity**  
John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*  
James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality and the New Immigrant Working Class" (electronic reserve).  
Essay topic and tentative bibliography due
- July 1                     **Immigration policy and shaping of the American Society**  
Richard Alba and Victor Nee, Chapter 5, "The Background to Contemporary Immigration," in *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 167-214.  
Aristide R. Zolberg, "Immigration Control Policy: Law and Implementation," Mary C. Waters & Reed Ueda. *The New Americans* (electronic reserve).

- July 8                    **Mexican immigration and the politicization of the Southwest border**  
George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*  
David G. Gutiérrez, “*Sin Fronteras?: Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Mexican Immigration Debate, 1868-1973*” (electronic reserve)
- July 15                   **Becoming American in the multicultural age**  
Elliott R. Barkan, “Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity—From Contact to Assimilation” (electronic reserve).  
Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*
- July 22                   **Class presentation of essays and student course evaluation**

### **Disability Statement**

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center ([arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.