

HI 280: Immigrants and the Modern United States
Boston University, Spring 2014
Mondays 3-6pm, CAS 227

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11.30; Thursday 2.30-4.00



COURSE DESCRIPTION/FORMAT:

The United States prides itself on being a melting pot, a nation of immigrants and a country in which people of all ethnicities and races have sought new lives, new opportunities, and freedom from political or religious persecution. Present-day debates over illegal immigrants, terrorism, jobs, and border protection, are reminders, however, that this is also a nation that has always guarded its “golden door” fiercely. In this course students will encounter the immigrant experience in America from the great waves of European, Asian, and Mexican immigration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to more recent immigrant and refugee communities from Southeast Asia and Latin America. We will explore the personal experiences of immigrants from different societies, what drove them here, how they got here, what they sacrificed to get here, the roles they played in shaping American society, culture, politics, food culture, etc. Students will also encounter the American political, legal, and social response to

newcomers from different parts of the world, the power of nativism, and waves of aggressive anti-immigration policies.

REQUIRED READINGS:

James T. Patterson ed., *Debating American Immigration, 1882-Present*

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, And Jewish Immigrants in the United States.*

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

Hasira Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age Of Migration*

Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to National Identity*

Books are available the Barnes and Noble Bookstore. Additional assigned readings will be uploaded to the course Blackboard site. On the syllabus these are designated “**.”

COURSE WEBSITE:

The course’s Blackboard site is your location for readings, the course syllabus, and practical information regarding writing assignments and grading criteria.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

2 short in-class tests (10% each)

Analytical Paper (25%)

Participation and attendance (25%)

Final Exam: 48 hour Take-home (30%)

NOTE ON WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: For a detailed description of the proper format for historical essays, students should consult the BU History Department Writing Guide.

<http://www.bu.edu/history/undergraduate-program/resources/writing-guide/>

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM: **Remember that plagiarism is a serious offense.** The Boston University Code of Academic Conduct defines plagiarism as “any attempts by a student to represent the work of another as his or her own.” Plagiarism is subject to serious sanctions, including reprimand, suspension, and expulsion. For a detailed description of Boston University’s rules, consult the code of conduct at:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/policies/academic-conduct/>

Schedule of Lectures and Weekly Assignments

January 27

Introduction to the course:

Huntington, pp. 107-138

- February 3** **A Broad View of Immigration**
Daniels “Two Cheers for Immigration” in *Debating American Immigration*, pp. 5-88
Graham, “The Unfinished Reform: Regulating Immigration in the National Interest” in *Debating American Immigration*, pp. 89-185
Note: Readings divided among students.
- February 10** **Asian Immigrants in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century**
Jacobson, pp. 177-217
Ngai, 96-126
The Chinese Exclusion Act**
Articles and politicalcartoons on the CEA at:
<http://immigrants.harpweek.com/>
The Asiatic Exclusion League Argues That Asians Cannot Be Assimilated, 1911**
Analytic Paper Pointers (read the document attached to your syllabus)
- February 17** **No Class President’s Day**
- February 19** **BU on Monday schedule: Class cancelled**
- February 24** **Coming to America: The Irish, Italian, and Jewish Experience in the 19th Century**
Diner, pp. 1-20; 220-230
Diner, chapters 2-7 (divided among students)
Huntington, pp. 59-80
Documents on European Immigration**
First in-class test, 45mins.
- March 3** **Ellis Island: The Gateway**
John Richardson, “The Ellis Island Tests”**
Debating American Immigration, pp. 191-193
<http://www.theatlantic.com/past/unbound/flashbks/immigr/walke.htm>
Documentary in class
- March 10** **Spring Break: No Class**
- March 17** **Old World Nationalism in the New World**
Jacobson, 1-137, 217-244
The Personal Experience**
Second in-class test, 45 mins
- March 24** **Nativism in the 1920s: The Red Scare, the National Origins Act and U.S.- Japanese Diplomacy**
Ngai, pp. 21-90

Media coverage, 1924**
The National Origins Act (Johnson-Reed Act), 1924 **
Randolph Bourne Promotes Cultural Pluralism, 1916**
Thind v. United States, 1923**
Paper topic discussion

- March 31** **Wars and Hyphen-Americans: The Internment of the Japanese**
Ngai, pp. 175-201
Government documents on the internment** (incl. MP)
“Miné Okubo Illustrates Her Family's Internment,” 1942**
Hirabayashi v. United States, 1943**
Media coverage**
- April 7** **From “Operation Wetback” to the Reforms of 1965**
Ngai, 127-166; 225-264
Bracero Program Act, 1949**
Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter Act), 1952**
Immigration and Nationality Act (Hart-Celler Act) , 1965**
Immigration Reform and Control Act (Simpson-Mazzoli Act), 1986**
- April 14** **Refugees and Asylees since the 1970s**
Mae Ngai, “The Liberal Brief for Immigration Reform”**
Documenary on refugees
Analytical Paper due in class
- April 21** **No Class**
- April 24** **American identity and Immigrants**
(Monday schedule) Huntington, pp. 3-58; 141-220; 295-366
- April 28** **Illegals, Immigration and the Contemporary Debates**
Gutierrez, “The New Normal?”**
Recent debates**
Final Exam Review
- Exam Week:** **Take-home 72 Hour Final Exam**