

Department of History
University of Wisconsin -- Madison
Semester I, AY 2004-2005

History 403
Immigration and Assimilation in US History

Lectures:

TR 4:00-5:15 PM

1111 Humanities

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Sections:

301	F	9:55	4013 Vilas
302	F	11:00	4013 Vilas
303	M	12:05	2231 Humanities
304	M	1:20	2261 Humanities

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Introduction

History 403 examines American immigration and ethnicity from the arrival of the first English colonists to the present day. It treats the experiences of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans as well as those of the Europeans who have, until recently, constituted the majority of the immigrant flow. The course covers the histories of those who came as free immigrants and of those who arrived in bondage.

The goal of History 403 is to answer a series of basic questions. Who came, and why did they leave their native countries? When did various ethnic and racial groups arrive in North America, and where did they go after landing here? How did the residents whose families had come to America in earlier years, or decades, or centuries receive newcomers? How did the immigrants respond to the foreign environment in which they suddenly found themselves? To what extent did the immigrants and their offspring become part of the mainstream of American society? Which of their Old World practices and values – if any – survived in the New World? Of what importance is immigration in the present era, and how may it affect the future? The questions seem straightforward, but serious and complicated problems of definition, measurement, and judgment lie beneath their appearance of simplicity.

Courseware

Learn@UW is the principal on-line courseware used to support History 403. The URL for the log-in page is <https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu>. Your user name is your UW-Madison NetID, and your password is your UW-Madison NetID password. Under the folder for History 403, you will find subfolders for each Lecture. Those will include PDF (Portable Document Format) versions of the PowerPoint slides that I present during the lectures as well as a variety of supplemental materials, including this syllabus, certain readings, and links to other web sites.

The PowerPoint and other course content materials that you will find at the Learn@UW site at the beginning of the semester date from last semester's edition of the course. Those files serve as a good guide to the content of the course. Parts of some lessons, however, will change. I expect to have the updated versions of the lessons available before the date scheduled for each of the classes.

The PDF files are identical to the ones shown in class. Students in past years have found that printing and bringing the PDF files to class makes note taking easier. Before each lesson, I shall also email you an outline of the lecture notes in an RTF (Rich Text Format) file, which you should be able to open with any word processor. Some of you may find printing the RTFs adequate for note-taking purposes, but I am less careful about updating them.

Assignments

Three books constitute the required reading for History 403. They are:

J. Matthew Gallman, *Receiving Erin's Children: Philadelphia, Liverpool, and the Irish Famine Migration, 1845-1855*
Dominic A. Pacyga, *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago: Workers on the South Side, 1880-1922*
Jerald E. Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the OceanHill – Brownsville Crisis*

Please read the books in time for the section meetings at which they will be discussed. The teaching assistant will establish an exact timetable for those sessions. In this syllabus, I have listed each book under a lecture for which it is especially relevant.

For those desiring a textbook, I shall also make available, through Learn@UW, a set of nine chapters on which I have been working, a set of "encyclopedia" entries, and a timeline. I strongly encourage you to read these materials, especially when you are studying items noted as important for "identification and significance."

Examinations

There will be three examinations – two mid-terms and a final. The mid-terms will take place on 12 October and 11 November during the regularly scheduled lecture hours. The final will fall on Saturday, 18 May, at 5:05 PM. The exams, including the end-term, will each last approximately one hour and fifteen minutes; together they will determine seventy-five percent of the final grade for most students.

Each exam will have three components: an objective section, an identification and significance section, and an essay question. The objective section will be an online quiz on factual information drawn from the lectures. Questions on the identification and significance sections will be based on lists of persons, events, and terms provided to you at the beginning of each block of the course. You will receive the essay question approximately one week before each examination. Answering the essay question will require you to integrate information from individual lectures and from the readings and to display understanding of the broader themes connecting sets of lectures. You will submit your essay answer, in printed, double-spaced format, at the time scheduled for each examination.

Performances in sections will determine the remaining twenty-five percent of the grades. Attendance counts for half of the section grade. For serious reasons, reported to the teaching assistant before the sessions, you may be excused, without penalty, from up to two section meetings. Students will lose one point from their final grade for each unexcused absence and for every absence in excess of two. If one half of life is showing up, coming prepared and contributing effectively to discussions is the other.

Office Hours and Beyond

On weekdays, especially in the afternoons, I am usually in 4135 Humanities. My scheduled office hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:00 PM and on Wednesdays from 4:00 to 5:00 PM. I am often available at other times as well, and you are free to stop by whenever I am present. I shall be ready to talk with you if pressing business is not pending.

To make appointments for times other than the scheduled office hours, see me at class, or call me at 263-1778 (4135 Humanities) or at 251-7264 (home). Both phones have answering machines; leave a message if necessary. Alternatively, electronic mail is probably the most reliable medium for reaching me on short notice. My email address is tjarchde@wisc.edu. I monitor it throughout the day and usually in the evening as well.

ADVISORIES

For undergraduate students, History 403 is a four-credit course. You must be enrolled in and attend one of the four sections. The places and times for the sessions are listed at the front of the syllabus. Graduate students should enroll for three credits and should not attend sections.

History 403 is not designed for students enrolled primarily to complete their ethnic studies requirement. The course existed before the university imposed that requirement, and I teach the subject matter because I care about it – a lot. If you chose 403 only for convenience, or in the expectation of having to expend only minimal effort on a general education offering, you will want to consider other options. Two web sites may prove useful in your search for alternatives. UW – Madison provides a full list of the courses satisfying the ethnic studies requirement at <http://www.ls.wisc.edu/gened/courselists/ethniccourses.htm>. Likewise, the Registrar's Office, at http://registrar.wisc.edu/students/acadrecords/enrollment_reports/distrib.php, reports the grade distributions in every course.

History 403 is an intermediate course – not an elementary one. It will be fast-paced and comprehensive. Those enrolled should already know the basic facts, trends, and issues relating to the broad issues of the American past. If your knowledge of U.S. history is weak, you should not take History 403, or you should be ready to do supplemental reading in a college-level textbook such as those used in History 101 and 102.

The approach in History 403 is analytical rather than narrative, more social scientific than humanistic. You will frequently encounter evidence in the form of numbers and graphs. My goal is to encourage you to recognize complexities and ambiguities rather than to provide simple answers or to promote a particular point of view. If you come to the course looking to reinforce a strongly held political ideology – of either the left or right, you will be disappointed.

Printing out and bringing to lecture the lesson outlines made available before each class will facilitate your efforts to take notes. They will save you the burden of copying down key pieces of factual information. You, therefore, should have more time to write down thoughts about how those facts relate to the larger theme being examined and how the particular lecture fits with those preceding and following it.

The lesson outlines cover only the basics, and absence from lectures is probably not a wise choice. I do not take off points for absences, but experience has shown that persons who miss class frequently tend to do less well than most on the examinations. On occasion, I may pass around an attendance sheet. Students who couple poor performances with frequent absences do not get the “benefit of the doubt” when I assign grades.

The requirements for the course are contained in the lectures, the nine chapters, the encyclopedia entries, and the three assigned readings. I, however, have tried to supply for most lectures a variety of supplemental materials. Students who take advantage of at least some of those resources will probably learn more than those who do the minimum amount of work. Differing levels of effort may affect the relative performances of students and, consequently, the thresholds for cut-offs for various grades.

Schedule of Lectures, Assignments, and Examinations

Block 1

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sizable numbers of Europeans migrated to the region that later became the United States. The coming of the Europeans had disastrous demographic consequences for the existing native population. Although the English composed a plurality of the colonial immigrants to settlements along the East Coast of North America, large numbers of men and women from the outlying districts of the British Isles and from the nations of the continent joined them in the New World. So too did many involuntary Black migrants from Africa.

For a variety of reasons, immigration to the United States remained at a modest level for approximately a half century after the War of Independence. Between the 1830s and the Civil War, however, hordes of Irish and German immigrants arrived. Substantial numbers of Canadians, Scandinavians, and other Britons joined the influx after that conflict. We shall discuss the general reasons behind this surge in immigration and the specific causes for the emigration from the “donor” countries.

The arrival of the immigrants posed a series of serious challenges to American society and to the self-image that the United States was articulating in the middle of the nineteenth century. The newcomers helped transform the urban environment physically, and the visible poverty of some of them raised among Americans fears of declining economic opportunities. Likewise, the presence of a high percentage of Roman Catholics among the new arrivals threatened the inclination in American Protestantism to identify the U.S. with the land of the millennium. Nevertheless, the immigrants of the pre-war era and of the following decades survived “nativist” resistance, and adapted to their new lives in the United States.

2 September	Introduction
7 September	The Encounter
9 September	Immigration in the Eighteenth Century
14 September	The Causes of Mass Migration
16 September	The Irish Famine <i>Gallman, Receiving Erin's Immigrants</i>
21 September	German & Scandinavian Immigration
23 September	America Meets Its Immigrants
28 September	Nativism
30 September	Adaptation
12 October	First Mid-Term Examination

Block 2

Those Europeans who came to America before 1890 became known as the “Old Immigrants” after an exceptionally heavy stream of immigration began flowing to the United States from other source countries late in the nineteenth century. European peoples, such as Italians, Jews, and Slavs, whose cultures were unfamiliar to the population of the United States, formed the largest and most visible “New Immigrant” communities. Natives of Japan and several other Asian nations also arrived, and their experiences will be treated in this block, as will those of the Chinese who came to the United States during the era of the Old Immigration.

The fresh arrivals seemed “new” not only as cultural groups but also in terms of the economic and social roles they played as the U.S. entered an age of heavy industry. Contemporary commentators found the demographic characteristics and socioeconomic conditions associated with this second phase of nineteenth century immigration undesirable, and many blamed those features on the newcomers themselves. Historians, however, have rejected that judgment.

The United States took the first serious steps toward severely restricting the right of people to enter this nation when, in 1882, it “temporarily” blocked further immigration by unskilled Chinese laborers. Over the next four decades, a formidable restrictionist movement developed and sought political mechanisms to identify and exclude undesirable immigrants. For some activists, the search gradually shifted from efforts to ferret out individually unfit applicants for admission to attempts to establish “scientifically” the unworthiness of whole nationalities and races.

A policy of sharply limited immigration, with access to entry tied to ethnic background, emerged as the law of the land after World War I, and the underlying ideology of the restriction movement helped shape American policies during the next four decades. Restrictive immigration policies adopted in the 1920s remained in force until the 1960s. The passage of time deprived America’s immigrant populations of continuing reinforcements in the form of new arrivals from abroad, and the nations ethnic groups became increasingly composed of persons whose families had been in the United States for at least two generations. Those people spoke English, shed many of the outward styles that had underlined the alien status of their forebears, and increasingly shared in mainstream experiences. The socioeconomic and other gaps separating groups of white Americans from each other grew less wide, and the importance of ethnic and even of religious divisions in the population seemed to wane.

5 October	The “New” Immigration
7 October	Chinese and Japanese Immigration
[12 October	First Mid-Term Examination]
14 October	Mediterranean, Jewish, and Slavic Immigration <i>Pacyga, Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago</i>
19 October	Roots of Immigration Control
21 October	Restriction before World War I

26 October	World War I and Immigration Restriction
28 October	The 1920s and American Ethnic Groups
2 November	Restriction and Minorities in the 1930s
4 November	Ethnic Issues during World War II
11 November	Second Mid-Term Examination

Block 3

Due, in part, to the high level of “Americanization” that had been achieved, important shifts in American attitudes took place by the mid-1960s. Legislation removed the patently discriminatory ethnic features of immigration policy. Contrary to the prediction of the experts, immigration subsequently again, with nations in Asia and Latin America becoming the principal sources of the new influx.

Contemporary immigration to the United States has several components. Approximately 700,000 legal immigrants constitute the largest part of the permanent influx. Twice that number of people may enter the United States each year without proper documents, but probably only one out of five of them will stay indefinitely in the country. The number fluctuates with world conditions, but perhaps 100,000 more persons arrive annually as refugees. The criteria for admitting refugees differ from those for admitting immigrants, but the newcomers effectively become legal immigrants with the passage of time.

Partly because of the Civil Rights Movement’s effort to reduce prejudice and partly as a concession to the intractability of racial issues, commentators in the post-1965 era came to accept the idea that demographic and cultural diversity was an inevitable and perhaps even desirable feature of American life. Scholars, however, remain divided both on the actual nature of the “new ethnicity” celebrated by pluralists and multiculturalists and on its implications for the future. Some see it as a permanent stop of the road to the complete assimilation of all groups, but others deem it a transient phenomenon that will end similarly to previous episodes in the integration of newcomers.

9 November	European Ethnics between the Wars
[11 November	Second Mid-Term Examination]
16 November	The End of Restriction, 1945-1965
18 November	The Early Civil Rights Movement
23 November	The Later Civil Rights Movement <i>Podair, The Strike That Changed New York</i>
25 November	Thanksgiving
30 November	Assimilation and Diversity

1 December	Immigration since 1965
6 December	Undocumented Immigration
6 December	Refugees
8 December	Census 2000 & Recent Legislation
18 December	End-Term Examination 5:05 PM; Location TBA