

*Department of History
University of Wisconsin -- Madison
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History 403

Immigration and Assimilation in US History

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Introduction

History 403 examines immigration to the part of North America now known as the United States, interactions among and within the various movements of people who have gone there, and the extent to which those waves have or have not formed a single, new nationality and culture. It treats those topics from the beginning of the Age of Exploration to the present day. History 403 focuses on the experiences of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans as well as on those of the Europeans who, until recently, have constituted the majority of the immigrant flow. The course covers the histories of those who came voluntarily, those who arrived in bondage, and those who migrated under other forms of duress.

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 reach North America, where did they land, and where did they go after landing here? How, across the eras, 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 unfamiliar 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 complicated problems of definition, measurement, and judgment lie beneath their appearance of simplicity.

Online Course

History 403 is fundamentally an online course. The online format enables me to organize materials more efficiently, to integrate diverse kinds of media more effectively, and to convey a greater amount of information in the time available. Although I continue to update the course and to make revisions to it, the online format saves me from having to devote the bulk of my time to repeating material that remains constant from semester to semester. I can devote that regained time to other interactions with students. Finally, the online format enables people to take the course who would not be able to fit it into their schedule due to other commitments or distance from Madison.

Undergraduates must take History 403 for four credits. Work directly associated with the lectures earns three of those; the fourth comes from participation in discussion. Those students who are in Madison – and most of you are – will meet face-to-face for your sections in the assigned rooms at the designated times for the first week. After that, the section meetings will take the form of participation in online discussion forums.

I intend to operate chat sessions as well as discussions. I shall be available for online chats as well as face-to-face meetings during office hours. Before each exam, I shall schedule one or more chat sessions during which you will be able to interact directly with the teaching assistant and myself.

Graduate students should enroll for three credits. They need not participate in the undergraduate discussions or chat sessions. Graduate students should consult with me about expectations for the course.

Advisories

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. 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 be very unhappy. For your sake and mine, please consider other options. You can find a list of offerings that meet the ethnic studies requirement at <http://www.ls.wisc.edu/gened/courselists/ethniccourses.htm>.

Online delivery of college-level instruction is still in the formative stages of development. It requires flexibility on the parts of instructors and students. Despite my

best efforts, some glitches will probably occur; I shall do my best immediately to correct them. If you are willing to engage actively with the material, online courses have great potential for enriching your learning experience. Serious online courses require at least as much work as regular offering. Do not allow the different form of contact involved in online teaching to fool you; online is neither a synonym for “blow-off” nor a signal that the instructor will be less able to tell how much work you are or are not doing.

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.

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. If you dislike subjects like economics and sociology, you will dislike this course.

The fifteen article-length readings are scholarly and serious. They are neither easy nor fun. My role, however, is not to amuse you; it is to enhance your ability to analyze difficult and complex matters. My hope is that the readings will help you think deeply about a set of issues that will probably affect American society for the next fifty years – the bulk of the remainder of your lives.

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 or to advocate a strongly held political ideology – of either the left or right, you will be disappointed.

Course Outline

Weeks 1 to 5

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.

Weeks 6 to 10

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 freshly arriving “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 later 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 to be 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. The impact of restriction helped shape labor recruitment policies during and after the Depression. It also affected the experiences of American racial minorities during World War II, even as that conflict began to undermine the ideology behind restriction.

Weeks 11 to 15

The restrictive immigration policies adopted in the 1920s remained in force until the 1960s. During that era, America's immigrant populations did without the reinforcement of continuing arrivals from abroad, and the nation's 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.

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 roughly 100,000 persons arrive annually as refugees. The criteria for admitting refugees differ from those for admitting immigrants, but the newcomers can usually quick adjust their legal status to that of permanent residents.

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 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.

Learn@UW

Learn@UW is the on-line courseware used to support History 403. The URL for the log-in page is <https://learnuw.wisc.edu>. Your “My UW” homepage also has a link to Learn@UW under the “Campus Resources” section of “Campus Quick Links.”

Your user name for Learn@UW is your UW-Madison NetID, and your password is your UW-Madison NetID password. Once you have logged in, you will see a list of the courses you are taking that are using Learn@UW. If you do not see that list, click on the “+” next to the heading “2006 – Fall.”

Click on “History 403” to go to the Learn@UW homepage for the course. That homepage is an enhanced version of the software’s typical “Content” tool. For that reason, the syllabus henceforth will refer to it as the Content page. At the top of the page you will also see links to several other tools, including News, Discussion, Chat, Quizzes, Grades, and Email. You will become familiar with those during the course.

The Content page lists, by week, the lessons to be presented during the course. Clicking on the title of a lesson will take you to a new homepage devoted to that lesson. The Content page also includes, after the listings for Week 15, a set of links to general resources you may find useful for studying immigration and ethnicity. A summary of the material on the Content page appears as Appendix I of this syllabus.

The homepages devoted to each lesson follow a standard format. Each will provide a brief description of the lesson. It will also provide a link to the lecture and assignment page. The lectures will take the form of narrated PowerPoint presentations. To add variety and a personal touch, nine of the lectures also incorporate video of me. The assignment section of the lecture and assignment page provides copies of the lecture slides and of the narrations. For one lesson each week, that page will also include a link to an assigned reading. The course, therefore, has fifteen assigned readings.

The assigned readings are usually journal articles. The next to last, however, is an unpublished paper summarizing the findings of the writer’s book. The final reading comes from an article published in the *New York Times Magazine*. A list of the readings appears as Appendix II to this syllabus.

The homepage for each lesson also has a link to Supplemental Resources. Those include QuizImages, which highlight aspects of pictures shown on some of the slides, Glossary terms, which further discuss various topics raised in the lecture, and Optional Readings, which provide links to resources that may be of interest to you. Not every lesson will have entries under all three elements.

The final element on the homepage for each lesson is a link to topics for discussion. Those items will relate to the lecture and to the reading for the week. Expectations for the discussions appear later in the syllabus.

Examinations

Three examinations, including two mid-terms and a final, will determine seventy-five percent of each student's grade. The first mid-term will cover Lessons 1 to 17, which take up the first five weeks of instruction. The second mid-term will cover Lessons 18 to 34, which take up the middle five weeks. The final exam will cover Lessons 35 to 52, which take up the final five weeks of the term.

The first exam will take place on Wednesday, October 11. The second will take place on Wednesday, November 15. The date assigned by the university for the final exam is Sunday, December 17.

Each examination will have two components: a set of short essays to be answered online and a take-home essay question. Approximately one week before each exam, you will receive lists of potential short essay questions. Those will be drawn from the lectures and from the readings. When you take online portion of the exam, you will encounter a set of five questions taken randomly from that list. You will need to answer three of them. To prevent cheating, you will be held to strict time limits in submitting your answers.

Approximately two weeks before each examination, you will receive two long essay questions, one of which you must answer. Answering that question will require you to integrate information from the lectures and the assigned readings and to display an understanding of the broader themes connecting lessons. Organization, proper grammar, and correct spelling are also important. Your answer must be in the form of a printed essay of not more than 2,000 words to be submitted by 4 PM on the day of the test at a place to be specified. Persons away from Madison may submit their essays electronically.

Discussions

Performances in discussions will determine the remaining twenty-five percent of the grades. Learn@UW maintains a record of participation in discussion forums and chat sessions. Failure to take part and lack of preparation will be obvious.

Each week you will find, by clicking the Discussion tool at the top of the Content page, lists of topics relating to the lectures and to the reading. You must respond as directed. To prevent the discussion from becoming unwieldy, you will see, in addition to

your own comments, only those contributions made by the other students in your section. The topics will be the same for all sections, and the teaching assistant and I shall monitor – and intervene in – the discussions in all four groups.

The discussion for each week will be open from 12:01 AM Thursday to 11:59 PM Saturday. You must make your contributions for each week within that time frame. Do not just post your own remarks; engage and respond to the comments made by others in your section. Even when you disagree strongly with something another writes, treat his or her opinions with respect.

You will receive scores each week for your participation in the discussion section. Those scores will reflect the quality of your postings (3 point maximum), the level of engagement with the discussed topics (3 point maximum), and the timeliness (earlier is better) of your first posting (1 point maximum). Persons who fail to post will receive 0 in all three categories; persons who do not respond both to the topics concerning the lecture and to those concerning the reading can score no more than three of the possible total of seven points.

Grading

Each examination will be scored on a 100-point scale. The participation grade will also be scored on a 100-point scale, determined by percentage of the total of 105 possible points earned over the fifteen weeks. For each student, an equally weighted combination of those four marks will generate a final average.

Each student will receive a letter grade reflecting his or her standing in the distribution of final averages. In recognition of grade inflation, the curve for the class will reflect the overall distribution of undergraduate grades in the History Department during the first semester of the previous academic year, 2005-2006. The top 25 percent will receive "A"; the next 32 percent, "AB"; and the next 26 percent, "B." After that, I make no promises.

The requirements for the course are contained in the lectures and the assignments. Students who take advantage of at least some of the supplemental resources, however, 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, their final grades.

Office Hours and Beyond

Electronic mail is 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.

My scheduled office hours are on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:30 PM. I am often available at 4135 Humanities 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, email me or call me at 263-1778 (4135 Humanities) or at 251-7264 (home). Both phones have answering machines; leave a message if necessary.

Appendix I: Lessons

Week 1 (Sept. 3-9)

1. Exploration and Encounter
2. The Fate of the Indigenous Peoples
3. Early English Settlement

Week 2 (Sept. 10-16)

4. Regional Variations in English Settlement
5. Bound Labor
6. Migrant Groups, 1715-1815
7. American Nationalism

Week 3 (Sept. 17-23)

8. The Roots of International Migration
9. The Irish Famine
10. German Immigration
11. Scandinavian Immigration

Week 4 (Sept. 24-30)

12. Immigrants and Know-Nothings
13. Immigrants and Other Minorities
14. The Civil War Era
15. Non-Immigrant Minorities in the Gilded Age

Week 5 (Oct. 1-7)

16. Immigrants and American Labor
17. Americanization

Week 6 (Oct. 8-14)

18. Chinese
19. Early Controls on Immigration
20. The New Immigration

Week 7 (Oct. 15-21)

21. Southern European
22. Jewish Immigration
23. Slavic Immigration

Week 8 (Oct. 22-28)

24. Japanese Immigration
25. Labor's Concerns about the New Immigration
26. Eugenics and Immigration
27. Immigration and Naturalization Legislation

Week 9 (Oct. 29 – Nov. 4)

28. World War I
29. Contested Meanings of "American"
30. Immigrants and Radicalism
31. Restriction in the 1920s

Week 10 (Nov. 5-11)

32. American Ethnics in the 1920s
33. African-Americans in the Post-war Era
34. The Jewish Issue: 1930s through World War II

Week 11 (Nov. 12-18)

35. American Japanese in World War II
36. Mexicans in the U.S. before Mid-Century
37. African-Americans in World War II

Week 12 (Nov. 19-25)

38. Refugees and Immigrants in the Early Cold War
39. Ethnic Gains by Mid-Century
40. Protestant, Catholics, Jew
41. Immigration Act Amendments, 1965

Week 13 (Nov. 26 – Dec. 2)

42. The Civil Rights Movement: to the March on Washington
43. Civil Rights Legislation
44. Black Power and White Backlash
45. Affirmative Action

Week 14 (Dec. 3-9)

46. Refugees
47. Undocumented Immigration
48. Managing Undocumented Immigration

Week 15 (Dec. 10-16)

49. Immigration Policy since 1990
50. Immigration and Economics
51. Current American Population Statistics
52. Assimilation and Ethnic Identity

Appendix II: Readings

Lesson 2

Dinesh D'Souza. "The Crimes of Christopher Columbus." *First Things* 57 (November, 1995): 26-33.

Lesson 5

Galenson, David W. "The Rise and Fall of Indentured Servitude in the Americas: An Economic Analysis." *Journal of Economic History* 44, no. 1 (March 1984): 1-26.

Lesson 9

Way, Peter. "Evil Humors and Ardent Spirits: The Rough Culture of Canal Construction Laborers." *Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (March 1993): 1397-428.

Lesson 15

Gjerde, Jon. "'Here in America There is Neither King Nor Tyrant': European Encounters with Race, 'Freedom,' and Their European Pasts." *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (Winter 1999): 673-90.

Lesson 16

Weir, Rob. "Blind in One Eye Only: Western and Eastern Knights of Labor View the Chinese Question." *Labor History* 41, no. 4 (2000): 421-36.

Lesson 19

Markel, Howard. "'The Eyes Have It': Trachoma, the Perception of Disease, the United States Public Health Service, and the American Jewish Immigration Experience, 1897-1924." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74, no. 3 (2000): 525-60.

Lesson 22

Green, Nancy L. "Women and Immigrants in the Sweatshop: Categories of Labor Segmentation Revisited." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 3 (1996): 411-33.

Lesson 25

Shumsky, Neil Larry. "'Let No Man Stop to Plunder!'" *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11, no. 2 (1992): 56-75.

Lesson 31

Ngai, Mae M. "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924." *Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (1999): 67-92.

Lesson 32

Zimmerman, Jonathan. "Ethnics Against Ethnicity: European Immigrants and Foreign-Language Instruction, 1890-1940." *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (2002): 1383-404.

Lesson 36

Grove, Wayne A. "The Mexican Farm Labor Program, 1942-1964 Government-Administered Labor Market Insurance for Farmers." *Agricultural History* 70, no. 2 (1996): 302-20.

Lesson 40

Gleason, Philip. "Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity." *Review of Politics* 43, no. 4 (1981): 483-518.

Lesson 44

Jerald E. Podair, "The Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis: New York's *Antigone*" (unpublished paper, Gotham History Festival, October 2001). [The paper summarizes the findings in Podair's book, *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 2002].

Lesson 46

Parish, T. David. "Membership in a Particular Social Group under the Refugee Act of 1980: Social Identity and the Legal Concept of the Refugee," *Columbia Law Review* 92 (1992), 923-953.

Lesson 50

Roger Lowenstein, "The Immigration Equation," *New York Times Magazine*, July 9, 2006.