

Department of History
University of Wisconsin -- Madison
Semester II, AY 2005-2006

History 403
Immigration and Assimilation in US History

Lectures:

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Sections:

301	W	9:55	2241 Humanities
302	W	11:00	2221 Humanities
303	T	2:25	2261 Humanities
304	T	12:05	2221 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://learnuw.wisc.edu>. Your user name 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 – Spring."

When you click on History 403, you will go to the home page for the course. Clicking on the various boxes on the picture will take you to various kinds of information, arranged by lecture. The upper left box, for example, will contain the Flash files with the narrated lectures, and the upper right one will hold the PDF files with the slides from those lectures.

You will also see a set of clickable words across the top of the black background to the page. If you click on **Content**, you will go to a page that will list all the lessons and all the elements contained under each of them. **Chat** will provide the framework for online discussions. You should regularly check the **News** page as well for information about the course and for newspaper items about current events relevant to 403.

The content and assignments for this semester will be similar but not exactly the same as those for last semester. Last semester's materials, however, will serve as a starting point. You will find them by clicking on Content.

If you click on Content, the heading "Syllabus" will appear at the top of the next page. Under it, you will find copies of the syllabus in Word, PDF (Portable Document Format), and RTF (Rich Text Format) versions. Below them, you will find the heading "Text." Below it are links to a set of a set of brief chapters that I have written as a text for those who feel the need for one. Those chapters, however, are not assigned for required reading.

The heading "Block 1" appears after the text chapters. The lessons for the first third of the course are listed below it. Following them come "Block 2" and "Block 3," organized in the same way.

You will find four subheadings under each lesson: *Slides*, *Assignments*, *QuizImage*, and *Supplemental*. *Slides* includes the PDFs for the lectures, and *Assignments*, the required readings and audio-visuials. *QuizImage* holds review materials for important pieces of visual materials. *Supplemental* provides material for further investigation; the work is not required, but some of it can prove helpful in writing your essay questions.

I have begun to link the items under Content with the boxes on the home page. Work on that will continue through the semester, but the connections should be made well in advance of your need to have access to particular materials. Right now, you can find the required materials for the first bloc of the course. The syllabus and the optional chapters are also under the PDF tab. The home page, therefore, provides another route – differently organized and more visually pleasing – to the various components of the course.

Examinations

There will be three examinations. Each will have two components: an objective section and a take-home essay question. The objective section will be an online quiz on conceptual and factual information drawn from the lectures. Approximately one week before each examination, you will receive two essay questions from which you must choose one to answer. Answering that question will require you to integrate information from individual lessons and from the assigned readings. You will also need to display an understanding of the broader themes connecting lessons. You should attempt to enhance your essay with information from the supplemental materials provided for the relevant lessons.

Students will hand in the essay portions of the respective examinations by Friday, 24 February, Friday, 7 April, and Wednesday, 12 May. The end-term will not be cumulative; it will cover the final third of the course and will have the same format as the two mid-terms. The three tests together will determine seventy-five percent of the final grades for undergraduates.

You must submit your essay answer, in printed, double-spaced format. Your essays should be no longer than 2,000 words. Your grade for the essay will derive from your demonstration of relevant knowledge and of the ability to think analytically as well as from the coherence and clarity of expression your presentation. Organization, proper grammar, and correct spelling count.

Because History 403 does not have a standard lecture time this semester, the teaching assistant and I shall attempt to work out with the class mutually convenient times for the objective portions of the examinations. They, however, will take place within approximately a day of the due dates for the essays. Students will take those exams in a specially equipped room in the College Library.

Performances in sections will determine the remaining twenty-five percent of the grades. 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 (overall) 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 is the other.

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 Tuesdays from 3:00 to 4:00 PM and on Wednesdays from 2:00 to 3:00 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 at those other times if pressing business is not pending.

To make appointments for times other than the scheduled office hours, see me at class, 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.

ADVISORIES

I attempt to respond sympathetically to the complications that arise as students take my courses. Although I hope I am demanding, I do not believe I am a harsh grader. Having offered those assurances however, I do want you to be aware of pitfalls so that we can have a productive semester together.

History 403 existed before the university imposed UW created the ethnic studies requirement, and I teach the subject matter because I care about it. The course was not designed to facilitate the completion of a general education requirement. If you chose 403 in the expectation of having to expend only minimal effort to fulfill a graduation mandate about which you do not care, you will want to consider other options. A list of all the courses satisfying the ethnic studies requirement is at <http://www.ls.wisc.edu/gened/courselists/ethniccourses.htm>.

History 403 is an intermediate course – not an elementary one. It is fast-paced and comprehensive. Understanding the basic facts, trends, and issues relating to the broad issues of the American past will be a great advantage. If your knowledge of general U.S. history is weak, 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 the lesson outlines made available for each lesson will facilitate your efforts to take notes from the narrated lectures. It 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 lesson fits with those preceding and following it.

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, the thresholds for cut-offs for various grades.

Learn@UW records all visits made to the course site as well as the time spent during each visit. It also maintains a log of all work done on the site. I do not usually check those statistics. If, however, questions arise related to the level of effort you have made in connection with the course, the data are available.

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.

Lessons

1. Exploration and Encounter
2. The Fate of the Indigenous Peoples
3. Early English Settlement
4. Regional Variations in English Settlement
5. Bound Labor
6. Migrant Groups, 1715-1815
7. American Nationalism
8. The Roots of International Migration
9. The Irish Famine
10. German Immigration
11. Scandinavian Immigration
12. Immigrants and Know-Nothings
13. Immigrants and Other Minorities
14. The Civil War Era
15. Non-Immigrant Minorities in the Gilded Age
16. Immigrants and American Labor
17. Americanization
18. Chinese Immigration
19. Early Controls on Immigration

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 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.

Lessons

20. The New Immigration
21. Immigration from Southern Europe
22. Jewish Immigration
23. Slavic Immigration

24. Japanese Immigration
25. Labor and the New Immigration
26. Eugenics and Immigration
27. Immigration and Naturalization Legislation
28. World War I
29. Contested Meanings of “Assimilation”
30. Immigrants and Radicalism
31. Restriction in the 1920s
32. Ethnics in the 1920s
33. African-Americans in the Postwar Era
34. Jews in the 1930s and 1940s
35. American Japanese in World War II
36. Mexicans in the U.S. until Mid-Century
37. African-Americans in World War II
38. Refugees and Immigrants in the Early Cold War

Block 3

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 quickly 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.

Lessons

39. Ethnic Gains by Mid-Century
40. Protestant, Catholic, Jew
41. Immigration Act Amendments
42. The Civil Rights Movement: To the March on Washington
43. Civil Rights Legislation
44. Black Power and White Backlash
45. Affirmative Action
46. Refugees
47. Undocumented Immigration

48. Managing Undocumented Immigration
49. Immigration Policy since 1990
50. Immigration and Economics
51. Immigration and Terrorism
52. Current American Population Statistics
53. Assimilation and Ethnic Identity