

**History 600:
Migration and Me: Researching Family Stories**

Professor Kathryn Ciancia

Fall 2018

Class meetings: Wednesdays, 1:20-3:15pm

Room: Helen C. White 7121

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:30-5:00pm, and by appointment

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Course Description:

Many of us have heard stories about the movement of our parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents from place to place—and even from continent to continent. Such histories of migration, whether within or across international borders, are always personally dramatic: people flee persecution or move for economic advancement; they leave behind loved ones and attempt to make a new life in a new place; they miss home and then ask themselves what “home” even means. Stories of migration become lodged into family lore; they frequently act as myths about what families mean to their members, even if we are not entirely sure exactly how, why, or even if these events happened.

Blending genealogical and historical research, this class works on three levels. First, you’ll be researching a family character (or group of characters) who engaged in the processes of migration, and, in doing so, you will learn to use the tools of the genealogist. Second, you will carry out more traditional historical research in order to contextualize that person’s experiences within the broader history of migration. Third, we’ll discuss how we can learn about ourselves, as well as our current political moment, by gaining greater insights into the experiences of people from the past, including our own relatives.

Class Objectives

By the end of the class, you should be able to:

- Use genealogical tools and methodologies with confidence;
- Identify how primary sources (in a range of different forms) can help us to answer particular historical questions, as well as how their usefulness is limited;
- Access and navigate a range of secondary sources that allow you to place individuals in their broader historical contexts;
- Discuss the ways in which immigration history can be constructed through focusing on individuals in the United States and beyond;
- Write an effective research paper, showcasing your skills in conceptualizing historical questions and carrying out relevant research;
- Present your ideas clearly in both written and oral form;
- Reflect on your developing sense of personal, familial, and/or national identities.

Course Grading Criteria:

- **Discussion participation (30%).** To ensure clarity, I have included my grading rubric for class discussions at the end of this syllabus (Appendix B).
- **Short written assignments (20%):** The short assignments throughout the class (including two 200-word self-reflection posts) constitute the building blocks for the final research paper. Details about the written assignments can be found in the “Weekly Class Schedule” section on this syllabus.
- **Final Research Paper (40%).** The final research paper, in which you will trace the story of your character(s) and contextualize their journey and experiences, should be between 17 and 20 pages long (double-spaced). For the assignment to be considered complete, you must also submit a five-page reflective essay in which you discuss, among other things, the process of carrying out the research, the challenges that you faced (and how you attempted to overcome those challenges), and the ways in which the experience led you to develop new ideas about issues of family, identity, and/or migration. We will discuss the content of the final assignment in more detail over the course of the semester.
- **Final Presentation (10%):** To be delivered in Week 15.

An Important Note on the Nature of the Class:

This class necessitates a careful balancing act. On the one hand, we will cover a collective set of themes; on the other, you will be working independently on individual research projects.

This means several things:

1. For each week, you should do **all** of the assigned readings, even if they do not immediately seem relevant to your own character’s story. A critical part of the project involves contextualizing individuals in the broadest possible sense. Ensuring that you have completed all of the readings means that you will be prepared to fully participate in classroom discussions (see Appendix B).
2. The reading assignments for the class are a starting point. But you will also be required to do independent research in order to make sense of the experiences of your own character. Along with experts at the WHS and Memorial Library, I will guide you through these processes and suggest the resources that are available. Ultimately, however, the project will largely be what you make it.
3. Based on how the class is developing and the interests and needs of students, I may ask you to do some short supplementary readings that are not currently on the syllabus.

Credit Hours and Student Workload:

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Finding the Assigned Readings

All readings are marked with a symbol to help you to locate them:

UB/R: For purchase and on reserve in College Library
CR: Course Reader
C: Uploaded document or link provided at our Canvas site

The course reader for this class can be purchased from the Letters and Science Copy Center in the Social Science Building. A copy of the course reader will also be available on reserve at College Library. I will send out an email to the class once the reader is available.

Please note that some readings are available on the Canvas website (as links or pdfs) and in the course reader. While the online readings constitute a helpful backup, I request that you read them in hard copy, annotate the course reader by hand, and bring the course reader to class for our weekly discussions.

Weekly Class Schedule

Part I: Migration as History and Memory

Week 1 (09/05): Class Introductions: What are we doing? Why are we doing it?

Readings:

1. "A Journalist Seeks Out Her Roots, But Finds Few Answers In The Soil," NPR's *Fresh Air* (April 30, 2018) **C**
2. Eviatar Zerubavel, *Ancestors and Relatives: Genealogy, Identity, and Community* (New York, 2011) [electronic version] **C**
3. Jonathan Blitzer, "Your Grandma Was a Chain Migrant!" *The New Yorker*, February 5, 2018 **C**

Assignment:

Come to class prepared to talk about your initial ideas: Where are you with your initial sleuthing? What kinds of challenges do you anticipate? Why are you engaging in this project? There is no need to prepare a written assignment.

Week 2 (09/12): The Bigger Picture: America as a "Nation of Immigrants"?

Readings:

1. David A. Geber, *American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, 2011) **UB/R**
2. Gary Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North America* (Boston, 2015), 113-127. **CR**
3. Gunlög Fur, "Indians and Immigrants: Entangled Histories," *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 33, No. 3 (Spring 2014): 55-76. **CR/C**
4. Adam Goodman, "Nation of Migrants, Historians of Migration," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, no. 4 (Summer 2015): 7-16. **CR/C**
5. Tara Zahra, "America, the Not So Promised Land," *The New York Times*, November 14, 2015 (online) **CR/C**

6. Arica L. Coleman, "The Problem With Calling the U.S. a 'Nation of Immigrants,'" *Time*, March 17, 2017 (online) **CR/C**

Assignment:

No assignment due.

Week 3 (09/19): The ABCs of Genealogical Research

Class Location: Wisconsin Historical Society

We will meet at the WHS for a practical workshop with Lori Bessler, a specialist in genealogical research. In addition to listening to Lori's introduction, you will have time to use the various databases and facilities in order to move to the next level of detective work on your character(s). You will also have the opportunity to talk with Lori about your projects.

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment #1:

Come to the session with:

- a) The ancestry chart, filled out to the best of your ability (if this is helpful to you);
- b) A list of several key things that you would like to find out about your character(s);
- c) your laptops, if possible.

Assignment #2:

200-Word Self-Reflection Post #1, due on Canvas by 5pm on Friday, 09/21

Week 4 (09/26): The Tools of Historical Research: Secondary Sources

Class Location: Memorial Library, Room 231

Readings:

No assigned readings.

In-Class Assignment:

Please bring your laptops to this session. After completing the training, create a short bibliography of secondary sources that will help you to begin contextualizing your character(s). This should include at least two books and two articles. After each source, you should include several sentences describing why the source is relevant to your project and how you might use it. If you run out of time during the library session, you may continue to work on this assignment in your own time. **You should upload the completed assignment in the appropriate folder on Canvas by 5pm on Friday, September 28.**

Week 5 (10/03): Recreating Worlds from Primary Sources

Readings:

1. "Introduction to Oral History," (Baylor University) **C**
2. Daniela Blei, "Seeing the Lives of Immigrants in Objects and Images of Home," April 5, 2018, <https://hyperallergic.com/436074/testimony-eliza-gregory-asian-art-museum/> **C/CR**
3. Ed Jong, "How African Americans Use DNA Testing to Connect With Their Past," *The Atlantic*, June 27, 2017 (online) **CR/C**
4. "Who do You Think You Are" (Sarah Jessica Parker) **C**
5. Mark Mazower, *What You Did Not Tell: A Russian Past and the Journey Home* (New York, 2017), 165-185. **CR**

Assignment:

Bring a primary source from your research to class. It may be a photograph, an object, a letter, an official document, a transcript from an interview, or something else entirely.

Write a brief 200-word post about the significance of the primary source to the story that you would like to tell. You must upload the assignment **24 hours before the beginning of class** on the Canvas site (i.e. by 1:20pm on Tuesday, 10/02).

Part II: Contextualizing Your Characters

Week 6 (10/10): Origins

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment:

This week we will be discussing why people migrate. You should try and find out where your character(s) came from and what the context for their migration was. To complete the latter task, you will need to collect a selection of secondary sources (books, articles, and so on). These may or may not be the same ones that you located in Week 4.

Write a short essay (at least 300 words, with proper footnotes), which you must upload **24 hours before the beginning of class** on the Canvas site (i.e. by 1:20pm on Tuesday, 10/09).

In the essay, you should consider some of the following questions:

- Where was your character born? Where did they live prior to migrating?
- What was the political, economic, and/or social climate like there during this period?
- What were their personal circumstances? What do you think accounted for their migration? How much power did they have over their own lives (specifically, their mobility)?
- Do you think that they left voluntarily? Why/why not?
- Were they part of a mass movement of people?
- Did they move directly to the United States or did they go via other places?

Week 7 (10/17): Experiencing International Borders

Readings:

- Ronald H. Bayor, *Encountering Ellis Island: How European Immigrants Entered America* (Baltimore, 2014), 6-38 **CR**
- Erika Lee and Judy Yung, *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York, 2010), 29-67 **CR**
- “Insiders/Outsiders: Managing Immigration at the Border,” in Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico border* (Princeton, 2011), 174-198. **CR**
- “For a child migrant, days feel like a lifetime when you’re imprisoned and alone” (interview with Professor Beth Lew-Williams on PRI’s The World, June 20, 2018) **C**

Assignment:

Write a short essay (at least 300 words, with proper footnotes) in which you describe and contextualize the arrival of your character(s). You must upload the essay **24 hours before the beginning of class** on the Canvas site (i.e. by 1:20pm on Tuesday, 10/16).

Questions to think about include:

- Do you know how your character(s) entered the United States?
- What might this experience have been like for them? How did their experience compare to that of other people who have arrived in the United States over time?
- Where did they move to after arriving? How did they get there? Why did they choose that place?

Week 8 (10/24): Everyday Life after Arrival

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment:

Write a short essay (at least 300 words, with proper footnotes about your character’s life in the United States. You must upload the essay **24 hours before the beginning of class** on the Canvas site (i.e. by 1:20pm on Tuesday, 10/23).

You may choose to engage with some of the following questions:

- Where did your character(s) live? What was their life like once they arrived? Did they move around or stay in one place?
- Is there any evidence that they considered themselves to be part of a Diaspora? What kinds of contacts did they keep up with people in their place of origin?
- Did they ever return to their place of origin? When, how, and why?
- What did they do as an occupation? Was it the same job that they did before they moved?
- Did they become citizens of the United States?
- How might your character have been treated by American society more broadly? Would they have faced discrimination based on aspects of their identity?

Part III: Drafting and Revising

Week 9 (10/31): Planning the First Draft

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment #1:

- Upload the plan of your paper in the appropriate folder on Canvas **24 hours before the beginning of class** (i.e. by 1:20pm on Tuesday, 10/30).
- Bring the plan of your paper to class. Be prepared to discuss what you have so far, what you still have to do, the direction in which you see your paper going, and the challenges ahead.

Assignment #2:

200-Word Self-Reflection Post #2, due on Canvas by 5pm on Friday, 11/02

Week 10 (11/07): Partial Draft

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment:

- Upload at least 10 pages of writing in the appropriate folder on Canvas **24 hours before the beginning of class** (i.e. by 1:20pm on Tuesday, 11/06).
- Bring the 10 pages to class.

Week 11 (11/14): First Draft

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment:

- Write a complete first draft (you should aim for 17-20 pages, but it can be longer or shorter than this).
- Upload the first draft in the appropriate folder on Canvas **before the beginning of class** (i.e. by 1:20pm on Wednesday, 11/14).
- Bring a copy to class.

Week 12 (11/21): No Class Meeting

Sign up for required individual consultations about the first draft. I will return your papers with my comments no later than Monday, November 19. You will be required to read all of the feedback and come to the meeting prepared to discuss areas for improvement.

Week 13 (11/28): Final Discussion

Readings:

Articles and commentaries posted by your fellow students (see below).

Assignment:

- You should come to class ready to discuss some of the following questions: What have you learned about the nature of historical and genealogical research? What have you learned about your character(s)? What have you learned about your family and yourself?
- To stimulate discussion, 24 hours before our class meeting (i.e. 1:20pm on 11/27), each of you should post a link to an article about migration (e.g. a contemporary news story) and write a 150-word commentary on how the article intersects with areas of your own research.

Week 14 (12/05): Final Workshopping/Practicing Oral Presentations

Readings:

No assigned readings.

Assignment:

- Bring your final draft to class so that you can engage in last-minute peer review.
- Bring a plan of your oral presentation to practice during class time.

Week 15 (12/12): Research Presentations

Class Location: Curti Lounge

These final presentations provide an exciting opportunity to showcase your research to a broader audience. More details will be provided closer to the time.

Final Papers are due on Canvas before the beginning of the final class—i.e. by 1:20pm on 12/12

APPENDIX A: Class Policies and Further Resources

Office Hours

My office hours are posted at the top of the syllabus. Please come by! These hours are set-aside specifically for students, and I would be happy to discuss any aspect of the class with you. If you are unable to make these times, please send me an email so that we can set up a mutually convenient appointment time.

Class Etiquette

There is no laptop use in class (unless otherwise specified) and you must make sure that all devices with a screen are switched off or put on silent. Come and speak with me if you are concerned about this policy.

We will begin meetings on time, so please make sure that you arrive a few minutes early. Persistent tardiness leads to a lower participation grade. If you are going to be absent from any class meeting, please let me know so that we can discuss potential make-up work.

Papers and Assignments

Assignments should be turned in on time to avoid a grade penalty. If there is a problem, it is important that you speak to me in plenty of time prior to the deadline. I will not be grading each short assignment with a letter grade, but will instead provide feedback and let you know if your assignments are providing a good basis for the final paper. You can come and speak with me at any time during the semester about your progress in the class and areas for improvement.

You should upload electronic versions of assignments as Word documents (NOT as Pdfs or in other formats) onto the course's Canvas site. Unless otherwise agreed, email submissions will not be accepted.

You should clearly post the word count on each assignment.

Historians use the Chicago Manual of Style, which can be found online at:
www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.

Academic Honesty

There is information about what constitutes plagiarism here:
(http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html).

Please come and speak with me during office hours if you have questions or concerns.

Disabilities

Disability guidelines for course accommodations may be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Please come and see me if you would like to talk further.

Religious Observance Policy

You must notify me within the first two weeks of class about the specific days or dates on which you request relief.

Writing Resources and Guidelines

The **University's Writing Center** allows you to work with a consultant to improve your written work. Take a look at their website (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/index.html>) for more information.

The **History Lab** is a resource center where experts (PhD students) will assist you with your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process, History Lab staff will help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. In addition to helping you with the specifics of writing in the discipline of history, the experts at the lab will also help in terms of your writing style (including for non-native speakers of English). See: <https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>

Email protocol

If you have questions for me, you should first read the information on this syllabus carefully to see if the answer you're looking for is included. If you still cannot find an answer, you may ask the question in an email. Please be courteous and professional and allow 24 hours for an email response.

APPENDIX B: Participation Grading Scale

- A:** You participate enthusiastically and regularly in classroom discussions and small group-work, listening to your peers and articulating your own ideas as clearly as possible. Your comments demonstrate that you have done the reading carefully, considered your own approach, and/or articulated how it fits with the general themes of the class
- B:** Your contributions show that you have done the reading, but they show a less thoughtful response than that of a student achieving an "A" grade. You have thought about how the reading fits into wider themes that we have been discussing, but on a more superficial level. You participate in classroom discussions and small group-work, listening to your peers and articulating your own ideas, although not with the regularity or depth of a student achieving an "A."
- C:** Your comments in class do not show that you have done the reading in any depth and/or are poorly or vaguely articulated. You include your own thoughts, but do not raise relevant questions or link the materials to the themes of the class. You contribute only rarely to class discussions and/or make comments that do not demonstrate that you have completed the readings or are engaged fully with your classmates.
- D:** Your comments in class are very irregular. You show no evidence that you have completed and understood the reading.
- F:** You do not attend discussions regularly.