

Fall 2005
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Office Hours:
3 pm -4:30 pm
Wednesday and Thursday
or by appointment

SOC348 Constructing Immigrant Communities

1:30-2:45 pm, Tuesday and Thursday, Fall 2005
AJLC (Environmental Studies) 104

How and why do immigrant groups create communities? What effects do such communities have on their mobility? How do they impact other minorities and nation? How do individuals resist oppression within their own communities? Taking a comparative ethnic approach, we will examine these issues. We will pay special attention to how race and class shape community formation, and how communities affect others in terms of gender, sexuality, class, and multiculturalism.

Goals:

1. Mastery of such basic sociological concepts as immigration, community, race, and ethnicity.
2. Development of critical thinking about nation, citizenship, diaspora, multiculturalism, class, gender, and sexuality from the perspectives of immigrant communities
3. Ability to conduct ethnographic research and write ethnographic research paper on immigrant communities
4. Ability to pursue sociological inquiry of community formation and transformation through community-based learning
5. Development of community activism through class activities and community-based learning

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to appropriately define and use those basic sociological concepts in an essay exam and in the final paper
2. Students will be able to adequately evaluate an academic book or article on immigrant communities.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate appropriate procedure and methods in conducting interview and in analyzing interview data
4. Students will become a reflexive participant of a program or organization that serves immigrant communities or advocates racial justice
5. Students will understand the importance and know basic techniques of community activism.

Activities:

1. Lectures, assigned readings, presentations, peer review, and class discussion on basic concepts and immigrant related issues
2. Workshops on ethnographic research and mock interviews

3. Field trips to sites of immigrant history and activities
4. Guest speakers
5. Documentaries and feature films on immigrant communities
6. 20 hours of community-based learning and research with a program or organization that serves immigrant communities

Readings:

Aihua Ong Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America (Univ. of California Press, 2003)

Rick Bonus, Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity & the Cultural Politics of Space (Temple Univ. Press, 2000)

Lon Kurashige, Japanese American Celebration and Conflict: A History of Ethnic Identity and festival in Los Angeles, 1934-1990 (Univ. of California Press, 2002)

Steven Gregory, Black Corona: Race and the Politics of Place in an Urban Community (Princeton Univ. Press, 1998)

Assignments:

Class Presentation (20%)

Please choose EITHER the Presentation OR the Peer Review assignment. Please inform me TWO DAYS in advance if you need extra audio/visual equipment for class presentation.

Presentation

In teams of two or three, students will prepare and present in class a 15- to 20-minute talk on one of the four assigned textbooks. First, the talk should summarize the book's research question, main argument, theoretical framework, and major research methods. Second, the talk should evaluate and critique the strength and weakness of the book's development of argument and analysis. Finally, the talk should address how the book enhances or challenges your ideas and perspectives on immigration and immigrant communities. Students can choose their own partners for this assignment.

The presentation will be graded and commented on in an evaluation form by the whole class. 33% of the grade will be provided by me and 66% by the rest of the class (A class discussion at the beginning of this semester will decide what the form should be like and what criteria should be used for the evaluation). After each presentation, the team will receive all the feedback that the students and I wrote about in their evaluation forms. Please bear in mind that your presentation will cover the whole book instead of the reading of that book for a particular day or week. This means that you need to start reading the book and preparing for the presentation at least two weeks before your presentation date.

Peer Review of Presentation

In teams of two or three, students will prepare and present in class a 15- to 20-minute critique of the presentation that the other team has made on the same textbook. The critique of the peer review team should summarize the presentation of the previous team, evaluate the previous team's performance, and comment on the personal reflection

of that team. To read the book and prepare for the peer review, the review team will follow the same three steps as required for the presentation team. But instead of commenting directly on the book, the review team will comment on the reading of the book and the performance of the presentation team.

Students can choose their own partners for this assignment. The presentation again will be graded and evaluated 66% by the rest of the class and 33% by me. There'll be another discussion on the format and criteria of the evaluation form for the peer review. The filled out forms will again be given to the review team to keep afterwards. Again please set aside sufficient time for preparation and take detailed notes of the presentation team you will comment on.

Book Review (20%) 5 double-spaced pages

This is a written version of your oral presentation. However, it should be about ANOTHER textbook of your choice, not the one you will present in class. Again, there are three sections in the book review: 1) a summary of the book's research question, main argument, theoretical framework, and major research methods; 2) an evaluation and critique of the strength and weakness of the book's development of argument and analysis; 3) a reflection on how the book enhances or challenges your ideas and perspectives on immigration and immigrant communities.

Different from the oral assignment, this is an individual project that will be solely graded by me.

The book review is DUE a week after we finish the class discussion of that book.

Mid-term (20%)

It will be an in-class, close-book essay examination on basic sociological concepts of race, ethnicity, immigration, and community formation in the United States. There will be two parts in the exam: shorter essays of one page each and longer essays of two pages each.

Please inform and arrange with me in advance if you need extra time to prepare or take the exam due to learning or other disabilities.

There will be no make-up exam for the mid-term if you miss it.

Community-based Learning (20%)

As a major goal of this class is to enable the students to explore issues on immigrant communities through community-based learning and to develop community activism, each student will have hands-on experience helping a program or organization that serves and interacts directly with immigrant communities in the region of Northeast Ohio.

You can choose to work either with the Vietnamese Community in Greater Cleveland, the National Puerto Rican Forum, or the Arab American Community Center. But once you pick the organization, you are expected to commit yourself to its immigrant program(s) for altogether 20 hours throughout the Fall semester. You are also expected to keep a reflection journal on your experience and turn it in to me by the end of your service learning. Your reflection journal is due the last day of instruction of Fall 2005 and should be no less than 10 pages.

Transportation to and from the service site(s) will be arranged for you by Oberlin College's Center for Service and Learning. The Center will also designate a service learning coordinator to facilitate our communication with those community organizations and to keep track of your learning process.

Final Project (20%) 8-10 double-spaced pages

For the final research paper, you are expected to analyze an immigrant community or organization based on your own ethnographic research (interview and observation). The group can be the organization for your service learning or a historical one. It can be in Northeast Ohio or across the nation. You should talk to me about your paper ideas before you start writing. Since the paper best reflects your mastery of sociological concepts and research methods, you will present your research in class at the end of the semester.

Grading Policy: I use the following system of letter-grading –

C= Satisfactory. Work that fulfills all the basic requirements but goes no further.

B= Good. Work that goes beyond the basic requirements by demonstrating genuine understanding of the material, seriousness of purpose, and skill in execution.

A= Excellent. Work that is not only good, but shows a creative, imaginative incorporation of the material, a genuine investment in the subject-matter, and uncommon expertise in presentation.

Requirements:

Attend each class, arriving on time. Students who arrive more than ten minutes late will be noted as absent. Notify me in advance via e-mail if you will miss class. The first time you come back to class, you need to provide me a legitimate documentation (e.g. doctor's note). More than two unexplained or unexcused absences will result automatically in the loss of credit (NE or F) for the entire course.

Complete reading and Participate in class discussion. It is imperative that each student come to class fully prepared with the reading and share equal responsibility for keeping a lively and quality discussion. You should budget a *minimum* of three hours per week for class preparation, even when it is not your turn to present or do peer review in class.

Work with others. You will discover that you can teach each other far more than the instructor can teach you. What's more, learning in groups is fun. Each student in a team is expected to carry his or her share of the workload and make a contribution equal to that of every other participant.

Complete all required assignment. If you anticipate that you may miss a deadline because of illness or a personal emergency, notify me in advance via e-mail or in person. I expect you to turn in a doctor's note or some other documentation before the assignment is due. Or your assignment will be graded one level lower for every calendar day past the due date (e.g. an A will slip to an A-, a B+ to a B)

Seek advice and help. I won't be able to help you much unless you make an appointment to see me during my office hours (as shown on the front page of the syllabus). Please come to see me regarding any questions or difficulties you may be having. If you cannot see me during my office hours, please send me an e-mail (Jinzhao.Li@oberlin.edu) or call me (775-8378) so that we can set up another time.

If you have a learning or other disability, seek assistance and accommodation through Jane Boomer, Coordinator of services for Students with Disabilities, in Room G27 Peters Hall, 775-8467. She will help you develop a plan to address your academic needs. Please see her in the first three weeks of the semester and notify me as soon as possible.

Follow the Honors code. Please consult your student handbook, the web page: http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html, or see me for details. Remember that at the end of each written assignment, you shall write in full and sign the HONOR PLEDGE: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment."

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1&2 (Sept. 6, 8, 13 & 15)

Conceptualizing Immigration, Race, Ethnicity, Identity, and Community First Workshop on Research Methods

Reading:

Loni Ding, "Ancestors in the Americas" (documentary screening in class)

Audrey Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways" (on BlackBoard)

Curtis Roseman, "The Changing Ethnic Map of the United States" (on BlackBoard)

Paul Ong and John Liu, "U.S. immigration Policies and Asian Migration" (on Blackboard)

Michael Omi and H Winant, "Ethnicity" and "Racial Formation" (on BlackBoard)

Week 3&4 (Sept. 20, 22, 27 & 29)

Immigration, Settlement, and Citizenship

Reading:

"AKA Don Bonus" (documentary screening in class)

Aihua Ong [Buddha is Hiding](#)

Presentation Team:

Review Team:

Week 5&6 (Oct. 4, 6, & 11)
The Making of Ethnic Community

Reading:
“Manong” (documentary screening in class)
Rick Bonus, Locating Filipino Americans

Presentation Team:

Review Team:

Week 7 (Oct. 18 & 20)
Mid-term and Review

Week 8 (Oct. 22-30)
Fall Recess – No class

Week 9 (Nov. 1 & 3)
Second Workshop on Research Methods

Reading:
Steven Gregory, Black Corona (Intro.)

Class Exercise:
Mock Interviews

Week 10&11 (Nov. 8, 10, 15 & 17)
The Survival and Conflicts of Ethnic Community

Reading:
Lon Kurashige, Japanese American Celebration and Conflict

Presentation Team:

Review Team:

Week 12&13 (Nov. 22, 29 & Dec.1)
Community Activism

Reading:
Guest Speaker: TBA
Steven Gregory, Black Corona

Presentation Team:

Review Team:

Week 14&15 (Dec. 6, 8 & 13)
Student Presentations of Final Projects

Week 16 (Dec. 19-22)
Final Exam Period
FINAL PAPER DUE _____