

Sociology 348: Constructing Immigrant Communities
Oberlin College

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Fall, 2004
Tues and Thurs. 9:35-10:50am
Room: King 335

Course description: How and why do immigrant groups create their own communities? What effects do such communities have on their relationship with the majority and other minorities? How does the second generation make sense of their immigrant and U.S. lives? In an era of multiculturalism, these issues take on increasing importance. Taking a comparative ethnic approach, with emphasis on Asian Americans, we will examine the kinds of communities immigrants and their descendants form in response to their local environments and the effects of such formations on their own group members, other races and the nation in the process. We will pay special attention to the roles of race, gender, culture, and class in shaping community dynamics.

Required texts:

- Bonus, R. 2000. *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and Cultural Politics of Space*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Kibria, N. 2002. *Becoming Asian American: Second Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Zhou, M. and C. Bankston III. 1998. *Growing up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

All other readings are on electronic reserve or on Blackboard.

Office hours: Tuesday, 4:30-5:30; Wednesday, 4:30-5:30. Each student is encouraged to come by my office hours at least once during the semester. If you cannot make it to my office hours because of a class, work, or athletic requirement, we can set up another time. Email is also a convenient way to ask me questions.

Course Requirements:

Student responsibilities:

(Note: By enrolling and remaining in this class, you have agreed to these responsibilities.)

- 1) Regular attendance to all classes and outside events. Students anticipating lengthy absences should contact me in advance. You should arrive on time for class and remain for the entire period unless you make arrangements with me prior to class.
- 2) Completion of each week's readings by the beginning of class. You will not be able to successfully complete this class without reading the assignments on time. Readings for the week are due on the Tuesday unless otherwise noted.

3) Completion of all required assignments. If you anticipate that you may miss a due date because of illness or a personal emergency, I require a doctor's note or some other documentation *before the assignment is due*. If you do not supply this documentation, your assignments will be penalized one third of a grade (for example, an A will slip to an A-, a B+ to a B, etc.) starting the day of the assignment and for every calendar date past the due date.

Required assignments:

Attendance, and class participation: This class depends on class discussion. You are expected to attend class regularly and to participate in group discussion so that we all learn from one another. Short essay questions on the readings may be conducted to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings and to assess comprehension. *Participation and pop quizzes are worth 10% of your final grade.*

Short papers: There are 2 papers due during the semester, each five pages. The purpose of the paper is to give you an opportunity to expand on a topic tied to class themes. The format and specifics of each paper will be discussed in class. The papers may require a little outside research, but not much. The papers will draw from course readings and discussion. You are encouraged to see me and/or the writing center for assistance on the papers. *Each paper is worth 20% of your final grade.*

Methods Investigation: In anticipation of your final research paper, you will have an opportunity to explore various methods used in the social sciences and cultural studies. You will investigate a similar question using one of the four methods, in order to get experience with how to conduct primary research. You will turn in a write-up of your methods, findings, and a discussion of the pros and cons of your chosen method. We will explain this process in detail beforehand. *Methods investigation is worth 15% of your final grade.*

Research Paper: The ultimate goal of the course is to provide you with the tools to help you in your own research. You will write a 10-12 page research paper on a topic of your choice. As a research paper, you are required to analyze an immigrant community(ies) or topic not read in class and devise an original thesis. The group can be historical or current, across the nation or in Northeast Ohio. You should talk to me about your paper ideas. Since the paper is the ultimate goal of the course, you will have opportunities to talk about in class. *The final paper is worth 35% of your final grade.*

Instructor responsibilities:

- 1) To present lecture and discussion material in clearly understandable language and presentation.
- 2) To assist students in thinking critically about concepts and ideas. This often entails challenging students.

- 3) To respect student opinion and value each student's contributions equally.
- 4) To give feedback on student progress; to be accessible during office hours, and to return all course materials, graded, in a timely fashion.

Other notes:

- 1) You are assumed to follow the Honors Code. Please consult your student handbook or see me for details. You will need to attest to your compliance to the honors code with each written assignment you turn in.
- 2) If you have a learning disability or other disability, you are entitled to assistance and accommodations through the university. Please register with the Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, in Room G 27 Peters Hall, ext. 5-8467, for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. Please do this *at the beginning of the semester*. Please notify me as well.

Tentative Course Outline

Sept. 2 Introduction to the course and to one another.

Section I Immigrants as Embodying Ethnicity vs. Race

Week of Sept. 7 How Ethnicity and Race Shape a People

- "We are a People." In *We are a People*. Spickard, P. and W. J. Burroughs. 2000
- "The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and its variants," Portes, A. and M. Zhou. 1993. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 530: 74-96.
- "Ethnicity" and "Racial Formation," in *Racial Formation in the United States*. Omi, M. and H. Winant. 1994.

Section II First Generation Builds Communities

Week of Sept. 14 Resisting oppression through community spaces

- Chapters 1 and 2 in *Locating Filipino Americans*.

Week of Sept. 21 Resisting oppression through community spaces (cont.)

- Chapters 3 – 5 in *Locating Filipino Americans*.

Week of Sept. 28 Promoting ethnic solidarity, promoting assimilation

- Introduction, chapters 4 and 5, and skim chapters 1 and 3, in *Growing Up American*.

Week of Oct. 5th Promoting ethnic solidarity, promoting assimilation (cont.)

- Chapters 6 - 9 in *Growing Up American*.

Oct. 12 Methodology Readings

- “Operationalization,” “Field Research,” and “Unobtrusive Research” in *The Practice of Social Research*. Babbie, E. 1992.

Oct. 14 Getting by in LA.

- Watch *AKA Don Bonus* in class.

Note: 1st paper due Oct. 14.

Week of Oct. 19 Fall Break

Section III Second Generation

Week of Oct. 26 Accepting and Resisting Assimilation

- “Lost in Translation,” Portes, A. and R. Rumbaut, 2001. *Legacies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- “ ‘We are Better Hindus Here’: Religion and Ethnicity among Indian Americans,” Kurien, P. 2002. *Religions in Asian America*. (Min, P. and J. Kim, eds.) Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- “Living in Two Worlds: Guatemalan Transnationalism for the second generation,” Menjivar, C. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, v. 28, n.3:531-552. 2002.

NOTE: Methods results due Oct. 28th.

Week of Nov. 2 Resisting hierarchies of gender and sexuality

- “Life as a Maid’s Daughter,” Romero, M. 1997. *Challenging Fronteras*. (Romero, M., Hondagneu-Sotelo, P, and V. Oritz, eds.) New York: Routledge.
- “ ‘We don’t sleep around like White girls do: The politics of home and location.” Espiritu, Y. 2003. *Homeland*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- “The Habit of Ex-Nomination,” Bhattacharjee, A. 1998. *A Patchwork Shawl*. (DasGupta, S. ed.) New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- “Coalition Politics,” Miao, V. 1998. *Queer and Asian America*. (Eng. D. and Hom, A., eds.) Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- “Sexuality, identity, and the uses of history.” Shah, N. 1998. *Queer and Asian America*. (Eng. D. and Hom, A., eds.) Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Nov. 9 Race, Class, and Identity

- “The Racialization of Latinos,” Flores-Gonzalez, N. 1999. *Latino Studies Journal*, v.10, 3:3-31.
- “Identities of the Second Generation,” Waters, M. 1998. *Black Identities*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Nov. 11 Does Asian America Exist?

- Kibria, chapters 1, 2

Week of Nov. 16 Does Asian America Exist? (cont.)

- Kibria, chapters 4 - 7

Nov. 23 Second Generation Beauties

- Watch *Miss India Georgia* in class.

NOTE: 2nd paper due Nov. 23.

Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Break

Section IV Immigrant communities and multiculturalism

Week of Nov 30 Does multiculturalism help minorities?

- “From redistribution to recognition: Dilemmas of justice in a “Post-socialist” age,” in. Fraser, N. 1998. *Theorizing Multiculturalism* (Willet, C. ed.). Malden, Mass. : Blackwell
- “Unruly categories: A critique of Nancy Fraser’s dual-systems theory,” Young, I. 1998. *Theorizing Multiculturalism* (Willet, C. ed.). Malden, Mass.: Blackwell
- “Multiculturalism: Battleground or meeting ground?” Takaki, R. 2000. *Multiculturalism in the United States*. (P. Kavisito and G. Rundblad, eds.) Thousand Oaks, Pine Forge Press.
- “Gender, class and multiculturalism: Rethinking ‘race’ politics,” Davis, A. 1996. *Mapping Multiculturalism*. (Gordon A. and C. Newfield, eds.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- “Making Americans: Immigration Meets Race,” King, D. 2001. *E Pluribus Unum*. (Gerstle and Mollenkopf, eds.) New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Week of Dec. 7 Does multiculturalism help the nation?

- “Boutique multiculturalism.” Fish, S. 1998. *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*. Lawrence : University Press of Kansas.
- “The Virtues of multiculturalism,” Norton, A. 1998. *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*. Lawrence : University Press of Kansas.
- ““Multiculturalism: Commodifying Diversity through Institutionalized Lamp Black-ness,” by Zinser, D. <http://www.canopyweb.com/racism/zinser1.htm>

Dec. 14 Final paper presentations

Note: Research paper due Dec. 14.