

Sociology 348: Constructing Immigrant Communities
Oberlin College

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Fall, 2010
Tues and Thurs. 1:30-2:45pm
Room: King 341

Course description: How and why do immigrant groups create their own communities? What kinds of jobs do they attain, with what impact on other immigrants and minorities? How are communities forming transnational ties? How does the second generation make sense of their immigrant and U.S. lives? Taking a comparative ethnic approach, 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.

Required texts:

Dreby, Joana. 2010. *Divided by Borders: Mexican Migrants and their Children*.
Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lee, Jennifer. 2002. *Civility in the City: Blacks, Jews, and Koreans in Urban America*.
Cambridge, MA: Harvard 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 Blackboard or on electronic reserve.

Office hours: I am available by appointment. I will have a sign-up sheet outside my office door for office hours. Priority will be given to those who have signed up. Office hours are Monday, 2-3pm; Tuesday, 2:45-3:15pm; and Thursday, 2:45-3:15pm. Email and phone also convenient ways to communicate.

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.
- 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 prepared questions are worth 16% of your final grade.

Shorter papers: There are two or three papers due during the semester, depending on whether you choose to write a research paper. If you write a research paper, you are to write two papers, and you get to choose which two. If you do not, then you must complete all three papers. Each of the short papers is about 6-7 pages. The purpose of the shorter 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. *If you write all three papers, each is worth 28% of your final grade. If you write two, each is worth 25%.*

Research Paper: You can write a research paper, about 10 pages, on a topic of your choice. You are to devise an original thesis on the group and topic you choose. The group can be historical or current, across the nation or in Northeast Ohio. It can be based on library material or primary research. You will have the opportunity to discuss your paper ideas in class. *The final paper is worth 34% of your final grade.*

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. 7 Introduction to the course and to one another.

Section I - Coming Over, Finding Work

Theories of Why People Migrate

Sept. 9

- “Who they are and why they come,” Portes and Rumbaut. 2006. *Immigrant America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- “Theoretical Approaches to Mexican Wage Labor Migration,” Wilson. 1997. *New American Destinies*, Hamamoto and Torres (eds.). New York: Routledge.

- “Social and Legal Barriers: Sexual Orientation and Asylum in the United States,” Randazzo. 2005. *Queer Migrations*, Lyibheid and Cantu (eds.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Negotiating the Labor Market

Sept. 14

- “Making it in America,” Portes and Rumbaut. 2006. *Immigrant America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- “‘Making it’ in America,” Bonacich. 1987. *Sociological Perspectives*, v. 30, 4:446-466.

Small Business and Racial Conflict: Employers’ Perspective on Work

Sept. 16

- *Civility in the City*, chapters 1, 2, 3

September 21

- *Civility in the City*, chapters 4, 5, 7

September 23

- *Civility in the City*, chapters 8, 9

Familial and Exploited: Employees’ Perspective on Work

September 28

- “Job Transitions in an Immigrant Metropolis,” Nee, Sanders, and Sernau. 1994. *American Sociological Review*, v. 59:849-872.
- “The Industrial Division of Labor among Immigrants and Internal Migrants to the Los Angeles Economy,” Ellis and Wright. 1999. *International Migration Review*, v.33, 1:26-54.
- “Exploitation and Abuse in the Garment Industry,” Su and Martorell. 2002. *Asian and Latino Immigrants in a Restructuring Economy*. López-Garza & David R. Diaz (eds.) Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

September 30

- *Sewing Women*. Chin 2005. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapter 3 “Getting from there to here,” p. 47-55; Chapter 4 “The attraction of cloth”; Chapter 7 “The bottom line.”
- “Upholding and Negotiating the Family Work Contract,” Song. 1999. *Helping Out*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- “Relative Merits: Family Culture and Kinship in Small Firms,” Ram and Holliday. 1993. *Sociology*, v. 27, 4:629-648.

October 5

- “Latino Employment and Black Violence: The Unintended Consequence of U.S. Immigration Policy,” Shihadeh and Barranco. 2010. *Social Forces*, v. 98, 3:1393-1420.

- “West Indians at Work,” Waters. 1999. *Black Identities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

October 7

- Professor Steven Gold, Michigan State University, will visit the class.
- “The Migrant Economy,” Gold. 2005. *Access Magazine*, issue 4. His talk is at 4:30pm. Place TBD.

Section II – Local and Transnational Community Formations

Social Networks and Ethnic Community Capital

October 12 and Oct. 14

- *Growing Up American* - Introduction, chapter 4, chapter 6, and skim chapters 1 and 3.

Oct. 19

- *Growing Up American* - Chapters 7 – 9.
- “The Culture of Poverty Reconsidered,” Steinberg. 1989. *The Ethnic Myth*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Oct. 21

- In class film: *AKA Don Bonus*.
- First paper due.

October 26 and 28 – Fall Break

Transnational Families, Labor, and Sexuality

Nov. 2 and Nov. 4

- *Divided by Borders* 1-3, 5

Nov. 9 and Nov. 11

- *Divided by Borders* 6-8

Nov. 16

No readings due to Gold and Zhou lectures. Min Zhou lecture, Nov. 8th at noon. Place TBD.

In class we will discuss final papers and topics you bring up.

November 18

- “Queer Intersections: Sexuality and Gender in Migration Studies,” Manalansan. 2006. *International Migration Review*, v.40, 1:224-249.
- “Visibility and Silence: Mariel and Cuban American Gay Male Experience and Representation,” Pena. 2005. *Queer Migrations*, Lyibheid and Cantu (eds.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

November 23

- *Second paper due*.

- In class film: *Miss India Georgia*.

November 25 – Thanksgiving Break

Section III Second Generation Boundaries

Ethnic Culture Retention and Reinvention

November 30

- “Lost in Translation,” Portes and Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- “Identities of the Second Generation,” Waters. 1999. *Black Identities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

December 2

- *Inheriting the City*. Chapter 5: “The School System as Sorting Mechanism.” Chapter 6: “The Second Generation Goes to Work.” Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, Holdaway. 2008. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Other Trajectories for the Second Generation: Pan-ethnicity and Transnationalism

December 7

- *Becoming Asian American*. Chapter 4 “College and Asian American Identity,” and chapter 6 “Ethnic Futures: Children and Intermarriage.” Kibria. 2004. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- “What Shall I Call Myself?: Hispanic Identity Formation in the Second Generation,” Portes and MacLeod. 1996. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, v. 19, 3:523-547.

December 9

- “Trans-nationalism and the Children of Immigrants in Contemporary New York,” Kasinitz, Waters, Mollenkopf, and Anil. 2002. *The Changing Face of Home*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- “Padre Jesus,” Smith 2006. *Mexican New York*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

December 14

- Presentations of final papers.
- *Third paper due*.

Research paper due during exam period.