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 do individuals resist their own ethnic communities? 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:


Office hours: Tuesday, 3-4pm; Thursday, 3-4pm. Each student is encouraged to come by my office hours at least once during the semester. The point of office hours is to go over topics discussed in class, hear your thoughts/critiques of class, refer to assignments, and to give you an opportunity to discuss issues related to class generally. 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.

2) You should arrive on time for class and remain for the entire period unless you make arrangements with me prior to class.

3) 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. This class is a seminar, which makes student input essential to a worthwhile experience. You should draw off the readings to assist the class.

4) Completion of all required assignments. All assignments must be completed by the beginning of class, not during or after class. 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. Pop quizzes or 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.

Paper Proposal: In anticipation of your final research paper, you are to write a proposal of how you will analyze a particular group or groups. Answer such questions as what group(s) are you interested in, what question you want to understand about that group, why that is important to understand, and what background information and theories are relevant to pursuing this paper. You will need to turn in at least three outside references in an annotated bibliography with your proposal. You will be evaluated by how thorough your proposal is and how well it draws off the readings from the beginning weeks. Paper proposal 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 8-10 page research paper on a topic of your choice. As a research paper, you are required to analyze an immigrant community(ies) not read in class and do research to make an argument regarding its use of community. 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. You must tie your research to the class readings. You will have an opportunity to share your final paper with the rest of the class through in-class presentations. 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. This pertains to how you write papers, read
materials, talk with other students in and outside of the class, and other modes of behavior. 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
Feb. 10 Introduction to the course and to one another.

SECTION I  Context to understanding immigrant communities

Feb. 12 What unites ethnic groups?
· “We are a People.” Spickard, P. and W. J. Burroughs. 2000

Week of Feb. 17 Migration and Incorporation.
· “Migration flows, theories, and contexts.” Bean, F. and G. Stevens. 2003
· Recommended: “Background of contemporary immigration.” Alba, R. and V. Nee. 2003 (concentrate on Asian American communities)

Section II  Case studies on building communities

Week of Feb. 24 Resisting oppression through community spaces
· Chapters 1 and 2 in Locating Filipino Americans.

Week of March 2 Resisting oppression through community spaces (cont.)
· Chapters 3 – 5 in Locating Filipino Americans.

Note: Paper proposal due March 4th.

Week of March 9 Promoting ethnic solidarity, promoting assimilation
· Introduction, chapters 4 and 5, and skim chapters 1 and 3, in Growing Up American.

Week of March 16 Promoting ethnic solidarity, promoting assimilation (cont.)
· Chapters 6 – 9 in Growing Up American.

March 23 Getting by, in film.
Watch AKA Don Bonus in class.

March 25        Catch up

Note: 1st paper due March 25th

March 30        Spring Break

Section III      Resisting community constraints

Week of April 6          Dilemmas in forming pan-ethnic communities
·   Chapters 1, 4-7

Week of April 13        Resisting hierarchies of gender and sexuality
·   “We don't sleep around like White girls do: The politics of home and location.” Espiritu, Y. 2003
·   “Addressing domestic violence and the South Asian community in the United States.” Abraham, M. 2002
·   “Gay Asian men in Los Angeles before the 1980s.” Wat, E. 2002
·   “Sexuality, identity, and the uses of history.” Shah, N. 1995

Week of April 20        Constructing racial, ethnic and class divisions
·   “Class constraints and racial solidarity among Asian Americans.” Espiritu, Y. and P. Ong. 1994
·   “Compatriots or competitors?: Job competition between foreign- and U.S.-born Angelenos.” Valenzuela, A. 1997

Section IV      Immigrant communities and multiculturalism

Week of April 27        Does multiculturalism help immigrants?
·   “Multiculturalism's unfinished business.” Newfield, C. and A. Gordon. 1996
·   “From redistribution to recognition: Dilemmas of justice in a “Post-socialist” age.” Fraser, N. 1998
·   “Unruly categories: A critique of Nancy Fraser's dual-systems theory.” Young, I. 1998

Note: 2nd paper due April 29.

Week of May 4          Does multiculturalism help the nation?
·   “Multiculturalism: Battleground or meeting ground?” Takaki, R. 2000
·   “Multiculturalism and American liberal democracy.” Ceasar, J. 1998
·   “Boutique multiculturalism.” Fish, S. 1998
May 11    Catch up and wrap up
May 13    Final paper presentations

Note: Research paper due.