Class time and location:
TR 9:30-10:50
King 341
4SS, CD, WR

Professor office hours and location:
TR 11-12 and 1-2 (or by appointment)
King 141-F
shelee@oberlin.edu

Writing associate contact info:
ehartnel@oberlin.edu
(ofﬁce hours tba)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
It is a common observation that the United States is a “nation of immigrants.” The phrase invokes images like the “melting pot” and Ellis Island, and celebrates America as a beacon of freedom and opportunity for all. Bringing a critical approach to these perceptions, this course explores major developments, frameworks, and debates in U.S. immigration history, with a chronological emphasis on the nineteenth to early twenty-ﬁrst centuries. We will consider the international context of migration, newcomers’ encounters in American society, nativism, immigration policy, and representations of immigration in American culture. While another aim of the course is to explore the significance of the movement and migration of people with respect to issues of national identity and belonging, it also seeks to interrogate and unsettle unidirectional, U.S.-centric understandings of migration, by considering phenomena such as internal and return migrations and immigrant transnationalism. In challenging the idea that there is a standard or typical immigrant experience, we will take a comparative approach that explores the experiences of Asians, blacks, Europeans, and Latinos, and also considers the varied circumstances under which migration occurred. Given ongoing debates about immigration and immigrants in the United States today, the course will also give students a historicized understanding of an important contemporary issue.

In terms of methodological objectives, the course provides students with an introduction to the craft of history, with particular attention on reading secondary and primary sources and using biographies and oral histories. Life
histories, with their richness of detail from people’s daily lives, have become an indispensable part of doing immigration history, and students will have an opportunity to write about immigrant biographies and narratives in reconstructing immigration history as well as produce their own oral histories based on interviews. The course also seeks to hone students’ skills in critical reading and thinking, writing with clarity and purpose, and debating in an informed and courteous manner. In addition to completing assigned readings for class, you are expected to stay on top of course deadlines and requirements and conduct yourself in a respectful and non-disruptive manner.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the course expectations or requirements, do speak with me as soon as possible.

**REQUIREMENTS**
These books are available at Oberlin Bookstore and on reserve at Mudd Library. Other required readings will be available on Blackboard or distributed in class.

Mae Ngai and Jon Gjerde, Eds., Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History (Wadsworth, 2013)
Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African, Written by Himself (Dodo Press, 2007)
Deborah Cohen, Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico (University of North Carolina, 2011)

Course grades will be calculated from a possible total of 200 points.

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Final grades will be based on the following:

**Attendance and participation (10%).** Attendance and participation are required. Do show your respect for the class by being on time, prepared, and attentive. Punctuality is also important, as I will start class promptly at 9:30. Also at the start of each class, I will circulate a sheet that you will sign as a record of your attendance. Because this is a larger class, I will not remember everyone who attended a given session, so will rely on these sheets to keep track of attendance. Missed classes must be made up with an extra assignment(s). It is your responsibility to arrange these with me, before or immediately after an absence, otherwise each unexcused absence will result in a deduction of three points from your final grade. Excessive tardiness and disruptiveness will also negatively affect your grade.

On participation, you should be a thoughtful discussant, active contributor, and attentive listener. Though this is a lecture-based class, I approach lecturing in a way that invites dialogue, and there will also be regular opportunities to engage in discussion with classmates (in pairs, small groups, and as a class).

**Blackboard/Start of class conversation (5%).** A small group of you will begin each class with an informal conversation about the day's reading and issues. You will sign up for your dates ahead of time, and over the semester, you will have participated in these twice. Prior to the meeting for which you are signed up, you must post a Blackboard posting on the assigned reading by 11:00 PM the day before class. Your posts need not follow a particular format or address a particular set of questions, but you should demonstrate that you
have done a close, thoughtful reading of the material and can relate them to the course's broader themes. What did you find interesting, helpful, and/or problematic about the reading? What additional questions do they raise? Your classmates will read these, and I will draw on them for our start of class conversations. This requirement is not graded, but posts and comments fail to demonstrate substance, thoughtfulness, and engagement will not receive credit.

Three reading and lecture quizzes (30%). These in-class exams will test you on content from readings and lectures, and each constitutes 10% of your final grade. These will be on September 27, October 18, and November 15 and will be given in the last 30 minutes of class.

Paper #1: Memoir (15%). For this 5-6 page paper, you will write about a published memoir or book-length primary source detailing an immigrant experience told from the first or second generation point of view. Recalling the themes introduced in the Major Problems essays in Chapter 1, how does your book illustrate or otherwise comment on immigration as an experience defined by uprooting, transplantation, assimilation, and/or ethnicity? In what ways (if any) does the book transcend the themes? How do the details of an individual's life story add to the study of U.S. immigration? Do they complicate dominant ideas about immigration in American history? You may draw from the list provided, and if you would like to read something else, you must let me know in advance. Further instructions will be given in class. Due Thursday, October 11 in class.

Paper #2: Oral history (25%). Building on the memoir paper, you will produce an 8-10 page oral history essay based on an interview with a first or second-generation immigrant. You will get a primer as well as additional materials in class on how to conduct interviews for oral histories. Because the paper you will produce will be relatively short, you should present a brief overview of the subject's life while focusing on and developing a particular theme that stands out in the subject's experience. Stepping back, relate your subject's life to the broader narrative of U.S. immigration history. How are the themes we are studying in the course highlighted by your subject's life history? In what ways, if any, does your oral history suggest new frameworks of understanding? Due Tuesday, December 4 in class.

Final exam (15%). Cumulative, in-class exam consisting of short answer and essay questions. December 20 9:00 – 11:00 AM, location TBD.

Grades for coursework are based on displayed intellectual content, originality of thought, mastery of materials, and quality of expression. For all written assignments, you must turn in hard copies. I do not give extensions on papers, and any late assignments will be graded down 1/3 of a grade for each day late.

WRITING ASSOCIATE
This semester Eliot Hart-Nelson will serve as the writing associate for this class. The main role of a writing associate is to provide one-on-one tutoring for papers in progress, and students should feel free to consult with Mr. Hart-Nelson at any stage of their papers. He will be available during his regular office hours (TBA) or by appointment. I strongly encourage you to meet with him at least once during the semester. As Mr. Hart-Nelson has previously taken HIST/CAST 256, you may also speak with him about other questions or concerns pertaining to the class.

HONOR SYSTEM
By enrolling in this class, you are agreeing to abide by Oberlin's Honor System. This means that you will refrain from plagiarizing and cheating, and that on all assignments you will write and sign the honor pledge ("I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in the assignment"). For papers, you must cite all written sources that you consulted, whether you quote directly or paraphrase. This is true whether you are using electronic or printed materials. Incomplete or improper citations are a form of plagiarism. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation formats, or have questions please consult me, a reference librarian, a writing tutor and/or a style manual. Failure
to adhere to the Honor Code will result in a grade penalty, withholding of a grade, and/or reporting to the Student Honor Committee. Oberlin's honor policy can be viewed at http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/2011-2012/11-Policies-Honor.pdf.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
We will conduct class in a spirit of mutual respect and intellectual inquiry. We may have differing opinions on the topics of discussion, and I encourage you to question and debate with one another and me. However, disruptive or disrespectful conduct that includes interrupting others, badgering, and making ad hominem attacks will not be tolerated. It is also distracting and rude to engage in personal conversation or other diversions unrelated to class activity. Students who persist in such behavior may be asked to leave the class and penalized.

Leaving the room during class is distracting to the instructor and your classmates so please take care of your needs before class to avoid this disruption. I understand that compelling personal needs may force you to leave the room, so if this is the case, do inform me of any concerns, being as discreet as possible. Otherwise, habitually leaving the room without explanation will be counted as absences.

The use of cell phones or other mobile devices is disruptive, and therefore prohibited during class, except in emergencies. Turn off your devices or place them on silent mode while in class. Students are permitted to use computers for note-taking purposes only. If the use of computers for non-class purposes becomes a distraction, all laptops will be banned.

ACADEMIC INCOMPLETES
Incompletes at the end of the semester must receive approval from me at least 48 hours before the deadline.

DISABILITY SERVICES
The college will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services located in Peters G-27/G-28 and their instructor of any disability related needs.
## SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1

#### APPROACHES AND INTERPRETATIONS
- **Sept. 4** Class introduction and expectations
- **Sept. 6** Major frameworks of U.S. immigration history
  Reading: *Major Problems*, Chapter 1, essays by Handlin, Bodnar, Gabaccia, Sanchez, and Jacobson (i.e., all BUT Conzen, et. al.)

### WEEK 2

#### PRE-NINETEENTH CENTURY MIGRATIONS
- **Sept. 11** Economic and involuntary migration in the re-peopling of North America
  Reading: Equiano, Chapters 1-6; *Major Problems* Chapter 2 document 2 (38-40) and essay by Games (65-71)
- **Sept. 13** Race and citizenship in early America
  Reading: Equiano, Chapters 7-12; *Major Problems* Chapter 3 documents 3-4 (78-79) and essay by Neuman (82-88)

### WEEK 3

#### EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS
- **Sept. 18** Anglo-Saxons and “others”: migration from Europe in the 19th to early 20th centuries
  Reading: *Major Problems* Chapter 4 document 2 (106-110) and essay by Conzen (134-145); Guglielmo, Introduction and Chapter 1
- **Sept. 20** Ethnicity, becoming American, and the limits of inclusion
  Reading: *Major Problems* Chapter 7 document 2 (223-224); Guglielmo, Chapters 2-3

### WEEK 4

#### LABOR, ALIEN BODIES, AND THE RACIALIZED BOUNDARIES OF INCLUSION
- **Sept. 25** Shifting borders and the shadows of empire: Migration in the Southwest borderlands
  Reading: *Major Problems*, Chapter 5 documents 2 (152-154), 4-5 (155-156) and essays by Brooks and Montejano (159-174)
- **Sept. 27** Yellow perils and cheap labor: Asians in industrializing America
  Reading: *Major Problems*, Chapter 7 essay by Lui (251-260), Chapter 8 documents 6 and 7 (275-278), essay by Glenn (292-299)
  **TEST #1**

### WEEK 5

#### XENOPHOBIA AND AMERICANIZATION IN PROGRESSIVE AMERICA
- **Oct. 2** Urban and labor politics
  Reading: *Major Problems*, Chapter 7 documents 2 (221-223) and 6 (242-244); Guglielmo, Chapters 4-6
- **Oct. 4** The contradictions of Progressivism
  Reading: *Major Problems*, Chapter 9 documents 3-5 (317-324) and essay by Higham (346-354); Guglielmo, Chapters 7-conclusion

### WEEK 6

#### CLOSING THE GATES, 1882-1924
- **Oct. 9** The qualities of a citizen: race, gender, and ethnicity in the formulation of immigration policy
  Reading: *Major Problems*, Chapter 6 essays by Zolberg and Bosniak (194-207);
- **Oct. 11** The Johnson-Reed Act and the triumph of nativism
  Reading: *Major Problems* Chapter 10 document 1 (367-370) and essay by Ngai (387-393)
  **PAPER #1 DUE**

### WEEK 7

#### SHORING UP THE SOUTHERN BORDER
- **Oct. 16** The transformation of Mexican immigration in the early 20th century
  Reading: *Major Problems*, Chapter 10 documents 3-5 (373-386) and Gutierrez essay (393-399)
- **Oct. 18** Introduction to doing oral history session
Reading: TBA  
TEST #2

WEEK 8

**FALL RECESS**

WEEK 9

MIGRATION AND IMMIGRANT LIFE DURING THE ERA OF EXCLUSION

Oct. 30  
Shoring up the borders and Illegal Immigration  
Reading: Lee, “The Crooked Path” (Blackboard)

Nov. 1  
Ethnic institutions and repatriation during the 1930s  
Reading: Major Problems, Chapter 11 document 3 (412-414), essay by Cohen (423-431)

WEEK 10

THE SOUTHERN DIASPORA AND INTERNAL MIGRATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Nov. 6  
African Americans and the Great Migration  
Reading: Grossman, “Tell Me About the Place” and “Bound for the Promised Land” (Blackboard)

Nov. 8  
White Southerners and the Dust Bowl Migration  
Reading: Gregory, “Out of the Heartland” and “The Okie Problem” (Blackboard)

WEEK 11

NEW AND OLD DISCOURSES IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

Nov. 13  
Wartime nativism  
Reading: Cohen, Chapters 1-3

Nov. 15  
Re-opening the gates during World War II  
Reading: Cohen, Chapters 4-6; Major Problems, Chapter 11 document 9 (422)  
TEST #3

WEEK 12

REFORM AND RESURGENCE

Nov. 20  
Dismantling exclusion and the 1965 Immigration Act  
Reading: Cohen, Chapters 7-8; Major Problems, Chapter 12 essay by Ngai (464-471)

Nov. 22  
**THANKSGIVING RECESS**

WEEK 13

MIGRATION SINCE 1965

Nov. 27  
Globalization, deindustrialization, and the post-65ers  
Reading: Major Problems, Chapter 11 document 2 (451-454), Chapter 12 essay by Thomas (471-477)

Nov. 29  
Well-founded fear: refugees in the late twentieth century  
Reading: Major Problems, Chapter 14 documents 3-5 (528-534) and essay by Bon Tempo (554-560)

WEEK 14

THE NEW NATIVISM AND RECENT REFORM

Dec. 4  
Recent discontents in immigration politics  
Reading: Major Problems, Chapter 13 document 2 (486-488) and essay by Wong (509-517)  
PAPER #2 DUE

Dec. 6  
Immigration and national security  
Reading: Major Problems, Chapter 15 essay by Volpp (603-608)

WEEK 15

IMMIGRATION AND THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Dec. 11  
New DREAMs and objectives: immigrant rights and activism today  
Reading: Major Problems, Chapter 15 essay by Hondagneu-Sotelo (597-603); Jose Antonio Vargas, “My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant” (Blackboard)

Dec. 13  
Final thoughts and review

***CLASSES END DECEMBER 14***
Final exam Thursday, December 20, 9:00 – 11:00 AM

The contents on this syllabus are subject to change. I will notify you in class or email of any changes.