

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

HIST-210.001 & 210.001G
Spring 2004
TF 12:45-2:00 PM
T.A. Parminder Parmar

Professor Alan M. Kraut
Office: Battelle 143, x2410
Hrs.: M 3:00- 5:00 PM
TF 2:00-4:00 PM & by appt.
akraut@american.edu

ETHNICITY IN AMERICA

Since September 11, 2001 some Muslim-Americans have been blamed for the terrorist attacks and beaten up. Others have been profiled at airports and removed from airline flights. Some in Congress call for new immigration restrictions even as Mexican President Vincente-Fox and President Bush try to revive their negotiations over policies at the border. In national, state, and local elections politicians scramble for votes from Latino or Asian ethnic blocs. Every day restaurant critics writing about a new Afghan or Vietnamese eatery refer to the food as ethnic cuisine. Fashion designers call a peasant blouse, long skirt, and boots the "ethnic" look. University officials discuss affirmative action policies with great care. Culture critics laud or disparage the influence of America's ethnic diversity upon our language, literature, and music. Who listens to Rickey Martin and Jennifer Lopez? But what is ethnicity? Who in our society is and who is not an ethnic? And who is an American?

An ethnic group is a reference group invoked by people who share a common historical style based on overt features and values, and who, through the process of interaction with others, identify themselves as sharing that style. Because the United States has been a nation of immigrants, its ethnic groups reflect the racial, religious, and national characteristics of peoples who have migrated here, whether voluntarily or as slaves. The values, attitudes, and beliefs of these foreign groups have shaped American society and culture even as individual immigrants and their children have been changed by life in the United States.

This course is an interdisciplinary overview of the ethnic experience in American society. Through literature, history, anthropology, and other disciplines, we will endeavor to understand how ethnic diversity has shaped America even as America has re-shaped the lives of those who came from other countries and cultures.

"Ethnicity in America" (HIST-210) is a second-level course in Curricular Area 4: Social Institutions and Behavior. It should be preceded by either of three Area 4 Foundation Courses: ANTH -150G "Anthropology of American Life," PSYC 105G "Psychology: Understanding Human Behavior," or SOCY-100G "American Society."

READINGS: Many of the following texts are on reserve at the library in addition to being

available in the bookstore. There will also be several items of required reading in the History Department Lounge (first floor of Battelle) only. This material is not available in the bookstore and is marked with an asterisk (*).

TEXTS:

Alvarez, Julia	<u>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</u>
Nash, Gary	<u>Red, White, and Black</u>
Diner, Hasia	<u>Erin's Daughter</u>
Ignatiev, Noel	<u>How the Irish Became White</u>
Kraut, Alan M.	<u>Huddled Masses</u> (2nd edition)
Riordan, William L., ed.	<u>Plunkitt of Tammany Hall</u>
Ellison, Ralph	<u>The Invisible Man</u>
Orsi, Robert	<u>The Madonna of 115th Street</u>
Thomas, Piri	<u>Down These Mean Streets</u>
Jones, James	<u>Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment</u>
Halter, Marilyn	<u>Shopping for Identity, the Marketing of Ethnicity</u>

Requirements:

(A) Each student will be required to do an ethnic survey of his or her family. The technique for this survey will be discussed in class (8-10 pages). The paper will be due on **Tuesday, April 13th**.

(B) There will be a mid-term examination on **Tuesday, March 2nd** and a final examination on **Friday, April 30th** (11:20 am-1:50 PM). The final examination will cover the entire semester's work.

C) Grades

Mid-term examination	approx. 25%
Ethnic survey	approx. 30%
Class participation	approx. 5%
Final Examination	approx. 40%

All late papers will be penalized ½ grade for each day after the deadline that they are submitted. No extensions, incompletes, or make-up exams will be given except for medical reasons or other extraordinary circumstances (as defined by the instructor). All medical excuses must be documented with an appropriate physician's note.

Schedule of Readings

All students are responsible for having read the assigned material on schedule. This should maximize the amount of informal discussion. Class participation will be a factor in the calculation of final grades.

Week (beginning on Tuesday) of

January 13: Introduction

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents (entire book due 1/21)
Sei Met Ko (instructor's personal copy)

January 20: Importance of Ethnicity in America: The Formative Period

Nash, Red, White and Black (entire book due 1/27)

January 27: The First Great Wave of Immigration and Assimilation in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Diner, Erin's Daughters (entire book)

See Out of Ireland , VHS 3028, 111 mins. at Media Center.

February 3: The Nativist Backlash

Start Ignatiev, How the Irish Became White

* Joan B. Trauner, "The Chinese as Medical Scapegoats in San Francisco,"
Bulletin of the Chinese Historical Society of America (April, 1974).

February 10: The Second Great Wave: Southern and Eastern Europeans Come to America I

Kraut, The Huddled Masses, pp. 1-172

* Selected letters to the editor of the Jewish Daily Forward from Isaac Metzker.
ed. A Bintel Brief ("a bundle of letters").

* Alan M. Kraut, "The Significance of Food in the Designation of Boundaries
Between Immigrant Groups in the U.S., 1840-1921," Journal of American
Culture 2(Fall 1979): 409-420.

Movies: The Immigrant (1917), VHS 30, 29 mins. in class

Journey to America (1989), VHS 1039, 58 mins. at Media Center

February 17: The Second Great Wave II

Kraut, The Huddled Masses, (finish book)

Begin Orsi, Madonna of 115th Street

Movie: Hester Street (1975), VHS 38, 90 mins. at Media Center.

Nobody's Business (1996), VHS 4914 at Media Center

February 24: Ethnic Politics

Complete Orsi, Madonna of 115th Street

Riordan, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall

Movie: The Free Voice of Labor (1980) VIC 551, 55 mins. at

Media Center.

March 2: **Mid-term Exam**

March 9: **SPRING BREAK**

March 16: The Black Experience: The Great Migration

Begin Ellison, The Invisible Man

March 23: The Black Experience: The City

Complete Ellison

Begin Jones, Bad Blood
See Deadly Deception, VHS 2040, 60 mins. at Media Center.

March 30: Race and Biology in America
Complete Jones

April 6: World War II Refugee Policy and Post-war Migration
*Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut, American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945, pp. 1-27, 52-166, and 222-249.
Begin Thomas, Down These Mean Streets
Movie: Tales From Arab Detroit, VHS 4690.

**** FAMILY ETHNIC SURVEYS ARE DUE ON APRIL 13 ****

April 13: Theories of Incorporation
Halter, Shopping for Identity
Movie: One on Every Corner (1984), VIC 523, 45 mins. in class.

April 20: The New Immigrants and Refugees
Thomas, Down These Mean Streets
Understanding Islam and the Muslims (Publication of the Islamic Affairs Department, Embassy of Saudi Arabia) handout
Movie: The Americans: Latin American and Caribbean Presence in the U.S. (1993) VHS 2130 no.10

April 30: **FINAL EXAMINATION** (11:20 AM-1:50 PM).