

AMST 321 / HIST 396 – Nation and Immigration

American University, Fall 2012

Meeting times/ location: Mondays and Thursdays, 4 – 5:15 p, East Quad Building, Room 11
Course Facebook page: “Nation & Immigration (AU)”
Instructor: Monique Laney, laney@american.edu, 770-841-7947
Office hours/location: Mondays and Thursdays, 5:30 – 6:30 pm, Hamilton Hall, Room 302



Joseph Keppler, 1893

Description

The United States is renowned worldwide as a self-declared “immigrant nation,” where every child knows the words “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses...” by Emma Lazarus, inscribed on a plaque mounted on the statue of liberty. So, why is there so much controversy about immigration in the “land of opportunity”?

In this course, we will tackle this question by exploring how the American nation has been defined in the past and how both the native population and newcomers have negotiated the incorporation of immigrants as part of the nation. Then we will focus on how these negotiations have affected and have been affected by national laws and politics before we analyze more recent debates over who can, should, and does belong to the nation. At the end of this course, students should be better equipped to navigate current controversies about immigration with an understanding of the history of U.S. immigration and the relationship between changing definitions of national identity, public attitudes towards immigrants, and corresponding immigration policies.

Outcomes

At the end of this course, students should be able to

- discuss what it means to belong to a nation, other than citizenship
- describe links between definitions of nation and debates about immigration
- assess current/recent debates in relation to historical debates about immigration
- demonstrate knowledge of main U.S. immigration and citizenship laws
- identify nativist constructions of immigrants in U.S. media
- identify drivers/reasons for migration

Required Texts

Most of the readings for this class are available on blackboard. The following required books are on reserve at the AU library and available through the AU bookstore or via one of your favorite online vendors.

- Chavez, Leo R. *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- Bayoumi, Moustafa. 2008. *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America*. New York: Penguin Press.

You will also be watching one of the three movies outside of class, which are on reserve at AU's media services (lower level of AU library) from Oct 15-25.

Grades

I know how important grades are, and I will do my utmost to post them to Blackboard as soon as I can. You earn good grades by continuously submitting good work. You can earn an "A" for extraordinary efforts only. If you are concerned about your grades, come and see me in my office hours early in the semester, so we can talk about how you can strengthen your contributions. Don't wait for the last weeks to discuss your grades.

Your final grade is composed of:

- 10% - Participation (Facebook posts count as participation)
- 10% - Movie review
- 15% - Five smaller assignments (3 pts each)
- 30% - Answering questions on readings (respond to questions for 10 of the 12 reading assignments before class meeting, 3 pts each)
- 35% - Final paper
 - 5% - Hand in 3-4 page version (~1,000 words) with annotated bibliography by Friday, Nov. 16, 11:59 pm
 - 5% - Present your research in class

Attendance

You may miss 2 meetings unexcused, but for any additional absences you will lose 6 points of your overall grade. If you have to miss a class, you are still required to submit any assignments due for that meeting. If you have more than three unexcused absences you will fail this course. You can be excused only if you hand in a doctor's note or, if you let us know in advance, for the major religious holy days that are acknowledged by AU. For 2012-2013, see: <http://www.american.edu/ocl/kay/Major-Religious-Holy-Days.cfm>

Participation

We meet twice a week for one and a quarter hour each. In this time, we will discuss the topic of the week using your comments on the readings, film clips, lectures, and guest speakers. This course therefore relies on your participation – we will all have more fun discussing topics the better you are prepared and the more you contribute. If everybody joins in the conversations this will help clarify new information and raise important questions that not everyone, including myself, has thought of.

Participation includes attendance, punctuality, professional conduct, bringing the readings to class, participating in discussions and in-class projects, and posting on Facebook (see section on "Communication and Office Hours"). Coming in late or leaving early is disruptive for everyone, so be sure to arrive on time and do not leave early. Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off. That includes computers.

Movie Review (due Oct 25)

Watch one of the three movies listed under Week 9 on your own or as a group, write a review, and bring discussion questions to class. Length: 500 words, including brief synopsis + 2 discussion questions

Five Smaller Assignments (due Sep 6, Sep 13, Oct 4, Oct 11, Nov 1)

These assignments are due before our meetings on Thursdays. They are designed to get you involved in the course topic and should take no more than 1-2 hours of work each. We will discuss the details for each assignment in class the week before it is due.

Assignment 1 (due by Sep 6 meeting): Join our Facebook group, introduce yourself and comment on "Define American" (<http://www.defineamerican.com/>)

Assignment 2 (due by Sep 13 meeting): Bring at least 2 examples (can be a picture, artwork, written story, film, music lyrics) of portrayals of immigrants and be prepared to explain how the immigrants are constructed as American or "different"/non-American in your examples.

Assignment 3 (due by Oct 4 meeting): Bring articles/news about different topics related to migration (religion, labor, multiculturalism, language, race, ethnicity, hybridity, climate change, etc.) and provide brief synopsis of article's argument/point of view in class.

Assignment 4 (due by Oct 11 meeting): Research an immigration law and post your findings on joint Wiki (choose from sign-up sheet, include source)

Assignment 5 (due by Nov 1 meeting): Bring 2-3 ideas for an exhibit on an exhibit about immigration at the National Museum of American History

Answering questions on readings (due before our Thursday meetings)

This assignment should not be difficult as long as you read the required texts. I will email you a few questions for the assigned readings each week, which you should answer in a reply email to me before our meeting that Thursday. This assignment is designed to prepare you to discuss the readings in class when they are due, which is why *I will not accept late submissions*. We have 12 readings for this 15-week course. In order to receive full points, you need to answer all questions for 10 of the 12 readings. I will subtract points for questions not answered.

Final Paper (due Nov 16 and Dec 10)

This assignment is designed to allow you to demonstrate that this course has enhanced your understanding of the link between nation and immigration.

It consists of three parts:

5% - 3-4 page version of your paper (~1,000 words) with annotated bibliography submitted by Friday, Nov. 16, 11:59 pm (you lose points for late submission)

5% - Presentation of your research in class during weeks 14 and 15 (Nov 26, 29, & Dec 3)

25% - The final paper, submitted by Monday, Dec. 10, 6 pm

Topic

Choose an immigrant group (ethnic group, national group, type of immigrant: asylum seekers, refugees, special skills, etc.) and research the following questions:

- What have been the main drivers for this group's migration?
- Which immigration laws have affected this group positively or negatively?
- What past and more recent images exist of this group?
- What, if any, debates have there been about the immigration of members of this group and/or their presence in the United States?
- How has this group affected U.S. national identity?

Your paper should address the above questions but you do not have to limit yourself to them. This research can be a starting point or provide a framework for the analysis of a primary source of your choosing.

Format

- Thesis-driven, research based essay, 3,000 words, double-spaced, with footnotes, MLA or Chicago Style
- Use of diverse sources encouraged, but minimum of 5 scholarly secondary sources required
- Alternative formats are encouraged (blogs, wikis, etc.)
- Feel free to use a novel or feature film as a primary source, keeping in mind as you write that these are fictional accounts. In addition, or alternatively, you may want to use contemporary and historical newspapers and archival material. I will provide suggestions for sources in mid-October

Extra Credit

There will be opportunities to attend panel discussions or guest lectures on or off campus this semester. If you are aware of an event that fits our course topic, please mention it in class or send me an email to make sure I agree the event is relevant. If you attend one or more of these events and write a review of the event, you can earn up to 2 points on your overall grade. Length: 500 words

Grading Scale

A = 90-100 pts. = Excellent! = Completes all requirements exceptionally well. Misses no more than two class sessions excused, none unexcused. Exceptional means: creative, original, inspired, extraordinary.

B = 80-89 pts. = Good! = Completes all requirements well. Misses no more than two class sessions excused, none unexcused. Well means: Good, solid work.

C = 70-79 pts. = Average = Completes all requirements. Misses no more than two class sessions excused, none unexcused. This means you have met all the basic requirements.

D = 60-69 pts. = Passing = Completes most requirements. Misses no more than two class sessions unexcused. This means you have met enough of the basic requirements to avoid failing the class.

F = below 60 pts. = Failing = Completes few requirements. Misses more than three class sessions unexcused. This means you must have had other, more urgent priorities than this class.

Work not handed in earns 0 points.

Late Policies

All deadlines are stated on the syllabus. There will be no extensions in this class save for extraordinary circumstances or a doctor's note stating you could not finish your work. You lose 5 points from your grade for the assignment if you don't make the deadline and then 10 points for every succeeding day you fail to hand in your work.

Academic Dishonesty

In accordance with American University policies, no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated in this class. This includes: plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, work done for one course and submitted for another, deliberate falsification of data, interference with other students' work, and copyright violations. For a full explanation of the rules and procedures related to academic integrity violations, visit the Academic Integrity link on the AU website: <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>

Communication and Office Hours

Outside of class, I will communicate with you regularly via email, Facebook, and Blackboard, so you need to make sure that you have access to these tools and that your AU email address is set up correctly, so that you receive my emails. Be sure to check your email regularly, and I will do the same!

Office Hours are the right time and place to give and receive additional feedback. I am happy to discuss questions concerning the class, your grades, the readings, or the assignments. If you cannot meet me during office hours, let me know what your availability is (at least 2 suggestions) and I'll try to meet you at a different time.

My official office hours are Mondays + Thursdays, 5:30 – 6:30 pm, at Hamilton Hall, Room 302.

To join our [Facebook group](#), search for “Nation & Immigration (AU)” on Facebook and ask to join (the group is “closed,” which means that others can only see the group and who is in it, but not what we post).

Other Sources for Support

American University is committed to providing educational opportunities to a broad range of students, including those with special educational needs. Once students have registered with the university's Academic Support Center (202-885-3360), they have access to a variety of support mechanisms. I will comply with arrangements a student may need for assignment deadlines. Students must be registered with ASC to receive this support: Please notify me as early as possible.

If you have trouble with the material assigned for this class or are unclear about the written assignments or the papers you need to write, you are invited to come to my office hours to discuss them. However, you might encounter problems during the semester which affect your class performance but with which I cannot help. In this case, the following institutions might be helpful:

- Academic Support Center 202-885-3360, Mary Graydon 243
- The Writing Center 202-885-2991, Battelle-Tompkins 228
- Counseling Center 202-885-3500, Mary Graydon 214
- Disability Support Center 202-885-3315, Mary Graydon 206

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.

SCHEDULE

Who Belongs to the Nation?

Week 1 + 2 – Aug 27 & Aug30 & Sep 6: Nation + Identity (U.S. + other nations)

What is a nation? This week we will study different definitions of nation and how these definitions have affected human relations within and across nations.

Readings:

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983), *Nations and Identities*, 309-315
- Joshua Searle-White, "Identity-The Consistent Feature," *The Psychology of Nationalism* (2001), 47-66

Assignment 1 (due by Sep 6 meeting):

Introduce yourself and comment on "Define American" (<http://www.defineamerican.com/>) on Facebook

Week 3 – Sep 10 & 13: Being American (U.S.)

What does it mean to be American? How do people "prove" their Americanness? This week we will continue to talk about national identity, but this week with a focus on its relationship with history and memory.

Readings:

- Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, "I Pledge Allegiance...:Mobilizing the Nation's Youth" and
- "The Great Fusing Furnace: Americanization in the Public Schools," *To Die For* (1999), 150-193

Assignment 2 (due by Sep 13 meeting):

Bring at least 2 examples (can be a picture, artwork, written story, film, music lyrics) of portrayals of immigrants and be prepared to explain how the immigrants are constructed as American or "different"/ non-American in your examples.

Guest Lecture: Sarah Gould, Univ. of Texas at San Antonio, on ethnic toys at the turn of the 20th century (Sep 10, different location!)

Week 4 – Sep 17 & 20: Becoming American

How do immigrants become Americans? What strategies do they use to make the U.S. their home? How do they navigate this country that is new to them?

Readings:

- Akst, Daniel. "New Americans: Fresh Off the Presses," *Journalism's Crisis of Confidence: A Challenge for the Next Generation* (2006), 30-41

No extra assignment this week

Guest Lecture: Lia Kindiger from Bochum University, Germany, "Homeland Desire: The Greek Diaspora in the United States" (Sep 17, with students from Germany and other AMST students, different location!)

Week 5 – Sep 24 & 27: Immigrants facing U.S. race relations

How have immigrants dealt with race relations in the United States? This week we will explore how immigrants have navigated the racial landscape of the United States in the past and more recently.

Readings:

- Matthew Jacobson, "Immigration and Conceptions of 'Fit' Citizenship, 1790-1924" (3- part podcast)
- Chacko, Elizabeth. "Identity and Assimilation among Young Ethiopian Immigrants in Metropolitan Washington." *Geographical Review* 93, no. 4 (2003): 491-506

No extra assignment this week

Week 6 – Oct 1 & 4: Strangers in the Land

How have Americans in the past responded to new immigrants? How have Americans tried to wrestle with the meaning of being an “immigrant nation”?

Readings:

- Gjerde, Jon. *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History: Documents and Essays* (1998), 70-73, 144-150
- Takaki, Ronald. "Multiculturalism: Battleground or Meeting Ground?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, (1993): 109-21

Assignment 3 (due by Oct 4 meeting): Bring articles/news about different topics related to migration (religion, labor, multiculturalism, language, race, ethnicity, hybridity, climate change, etc.) and provide brief synopsis of article’s argument/point of view in class.

Technical Aspects of Belonging

Week 7 – Oct 8 & 11: Immigration laws (U.S.)

How did the U.S. legal system respond to immigration in the past? This week we will continue to explore beliefs about who should belong to the nation and who should not and how those beliefs were expressed in U.S. immigration laws.

Readings:

- Mae M. Ngai, “The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924,” *Journal of American History* (1999), 67-92

Assignment 4 (due by Oct 11 meeting): Research one immigration law and post your findings on joint Wiki (choose from sign-up sheet, include source, minimum 1 source from AU’s library)

Week 8 – Oct 15 & 18: Citizenship (U.S. + other nations)

What does it mean to be a U.S. citizen? This week we will study how U.S. citizenship laws have evolved and how people become citizens in the U.S. compared to other countries.

Readings:

- Kerber, Linda K., “The Meanings of Citizenship,” *Journal of American History* (1997), 833-854

No extra assignment this week

Week 9 – Oct 22 & 25: Creating Migration (U.S. + other nations)

Why do people move to another nation? This week we will discuss the many reasons people migrate to the United States (and other nations) and how political and economic decisions affect this migration.

Readings:

- *Life & Debt, Welcome to Shelbyville, or Daughter from Danang* (films)

Movie Review (due Oct 25): Write a review of one of these movies + bring discussion questions to class

Recent Debates over Belonging

Focusing on two immigrant groups that have received a lot of attention in the recent past, Latinos/as and Arab Muslims, we will take the coming weeks to study how current debates about immigration reflect beliefs about who should and should not be part of the nation and how newcomers navigate these beliefs.

Week 10 – Oct 29 & Nov 1: Imagining Immigrants

How do Americans respond to immigration today? This week we will use our knowledge about past expressions of nativism to explore how contemporary immigrants are constructed in public discourse using Latinos/as as an example.

Readings:

- Chavez, Leo R. *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (2008), Ch. 1/2, 21-69
- Ngai, Mae M. "No Human Being Is Illegal." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 3/4 (2006): 291-95.

Assignment 5 (due by Nov 1 meeting): Bring 3 ideas for an exhibit on an exhibit about immigration at the National Museum of American History

Week 11 – Nov 5 & 8: Fearing for the national body

Readings:

- Chavez, Leo R. *The Latino Threat*, Ch. 3-5, 70-131

No extra assignment this week

Short version of Final Paper due Friday, Nov 16, 11:59 pm

Week 12 – Nov 12 & 15: Struggling over in- and exclusion

Readings: Chavez, Leo R. *The Latino Threat*, Ch. 6 + 7 + Epilogue, 132-186

No extra assignment this week

Week 13 – Nov 19 (No Class on Nov. 22, Thanksgiving): Immigrants in times of national crisis

Readings:

- Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?* - Preface," 1-12 + one chapter
- *Edward Said on Orientalism* (AU streaming video, 40 min)

No extra assignment this week

Week 14 – Nov 26 & 29: Student Presentations

Week 15 - Dec 3 & 6: Student Presentations, Wrap-Up, Evaluations

Final Paper due Dec. 10 by 6 pm!

Syllabus is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and on blackboard!