The Promised Land: U.S. Immigration History

“Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history.”

Oscar Handlin, Introduction to The Uprooted, 1951

This course takes the above quote seriously. It is designed to trace the story of American immigration through the chronological development of U.S. political, economic, and cultural history. In doing so, we will explore the three interwoven aspects of the U.S. immigration story: federal policy toward immigration and immigrants, the attitudes of various American interest groups toward immigrants, and the immigrant experience itself.

Conceptually, the course pivots on the ever-shifting tensions between American ideals of economic growth, human equality, voluntary citizenship, and e pluribus unum (“out of many, one”) versus fears that American prosperity and democracy must be protected from too many workers, much diversity, and the wrong kind of diversity. While grounding these tensions solidly in the historical record, we will study the evolution of political, economic, and racial assumptions that shaped American debates about freedom, independence, and “fitness” for citizenship. We will also look at how those assumptions and debates, in turn, shaped different immigrants’ experiences. Simultaneously, we will explore how immigrants have participated in the creation of American ideals and realities and how immigrants have influenced debates about inclusion of newcomers into the Promised Land.

The syllabus for this course does not pretend to cover all aspects of the “immigrant experience” because there was no single immigrant experience. Rather, the syllabus seeks to provide a coherent narrative on national immigration policy and to explore racial, ethnic, religious, and gender attitudes that aid in understanding the diversity of immigrant experiences. The syllabus aims to demonstrate that the story of immigration is entwined with every aspect of American history as well as to disrupt assumptions about immigrants as either helpless victims or self-determining agents.

Finally, the syllabus seeks to introduce students to the wealth of primary documents and secondary literature on U.S. immigration history, to sharpen students’ skills at reading, understanding, and interpreting both types of historical sources, and to develop students’ effectiveness at making well-supported historical arguments. These activities are intended to fulfill the final course goal: to enhance each participant’s ability to think historically, which means to treat any document or event as a product of its particular moment in time and place.
**Victoria Brown's Office:** Mears 317  
(top floor, southeast corner)

**Victoria Brown's Office Hours — Fall, 2011**  
Monday/Wednesday/Friday: 11:00 a.m.-noon; 1:00-1:45 p.m. & 3:15-4:30 p.m.  
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

You are welcome to drop by during office hours, but if you want to be assured of time with me, I advise making an office-hours appointment beforehand. If none of these times work for you, send an e-mail telling me your available times and we’ll work something out.

Office Phone: ext 3087  
Home Phone in Iowa City: 319-354-8867  
E-mail: brownv@grinnell.edu

*I live in Iowa City but I will be staying over in Grinnell on Monday and Wednesday nights this semester, and I am typically available by phone in my office those evenings until 10:00 p.m. I get my Grinnell e-mail at home and check it regularly, but if you really need to reach me immediately, don’t depend solely on e-mail; use the phone. I have an answering machine at home, as well as in my campus office. You may phone my home or my office in the evenings before 10:00 p.m. if you need to reach me and e-mail isn’t doing the job.*

Be warned: I will growl unattractively if you utter these words: "I couldn't reach you." Thanks to the wonders of modern technology you can ALWAYS reach me, if only to send/leave a message.

Attached you will find a copy of a **Class Contract**. If you decide to enroll in this course, you must sign the contract that will circulate in class next week. The purpose of this contract is twofold: (1) to make clear the expectations that each individual student must meet for successful completion of this course; (2) to emphasize that learning in a class setting is a community experience which bears community responsibilities. By enrolling in this course, you are not only making certain promises to yourself and to me about your performance, you are also promising your fellow students that you will contribute to their learning by giving them your time, your thoughts, your questions, your interest, and your attention.

**Required Texts**  
Roger Daniels, *Coming to America* (2nd edition, Harper’s Perennial)  
“BrownDocs” will be distributed in class  
Additional course readings will be on the History 228 Blackboard
Writing Assignments

1. Short writing assignments: There are 10 short writing assignments on this syllabus. Each is worth 10 points, for a total of 100 possible points. Your overall score on shorting writings will be computed from a base of 80, which allows you to skip a couple, or to simply drop a couple of low scores.

   Unless otherwise indicated on syllabus, your writing assignments are due in class on the day of the assignment. One purpose of these assignments is to focus your reading and facilitate the day’s discussion. Since you have the freedom to skip three of these assignments, I will not accept late assignments. Please do not ask for an exception to this rule.

2. Less-short writing assignments. In weeks 9, and 10, you will turn in 2-page writings in response to prompts, and in week 13, you will turn in a revision of one of these writings. Each of these writings is worth 30 points, for a total of 90 possible.

3. Oral Presentations: You will have three “formal” opportunities to present a position in class: in the origins of slavery discussion (Week Two); during the Chinese Exclusion Debate (Week Five); and in the Progressive era Roundtable (Week Eight). There are 10 points possible for each presentation; your score will be computed from a base of 20, so be sure to speak up loud and clear on at least two of these three occasions.

4. Take-home exams: You will have two take-home essay exams, due on Monday, September 26; and Thursday, December 15. You will receive the questions for each of these exams the week before they are due. You will write two essays, selecting from three prompts. See Class Contract for the extension policy on these exams. 100 points possible on each exam.

   In all the writing you do for this class, you will be evaluated on the clarity of your argument, the logical organization of your points, the precision of your language, the effectiveness and accuracy of your use of evidence, and the “correctness” of your grammar and punctuation.

Evaluation Policy

Short writing assignments = 80 points
Less-short writings = 90 points
Oral presentations = 20 points
2 take-home essay exams = 200 points (100 points each)
Participation/contribution = .100 points (21% of your grade)
Total points possible = 480 total points possible

In my experience, those who earn 90% or more of these points will receive an A or A-; those who earn between 80% and 89% will receive some sort of B grade; and those who earn between 70% and 79% will receive a C grade. I do not mention the grades of D or F here because I do not expect anyone in this class to get into that situation. If I see you headed there, we will talk about how you can change direction.
Also, in my experience, students often focus on their points on exams and fail to appreciate the importance of the points they can continually amass with short writings and consistent contributions to class discussion.

If you do the math, you’ll realize it’s silly to fret over getting an “80” instead of an “85” on an exam and then miss the opportunity to get a “7” or an “8” on a short writing by simply not turning it in. If your final grade is important to you, then I strongly advise that you do the short writings and be a regular contributor to class discussion and debates. Attending to that part of the work will both prepare you to do well on exams and will give you a solid base of course points.

**Take note: “class participation” amounts to over 20% of your grade.** That’s a hefty chunk of my assessment of your performance. What questions do I ask to evaluate your participation?

1. Did you adhere to the SIX points on the Class Contract, which you signed?

2. Did your presence in the class, over the course of the semester, improve the quality of our collective experience? Did you, on a weekly basis, raise a question, add a bit of information, make an observation, engage with a class member on a point, venture an idea? At the end of the term, can I look back and say, “yes, that student contributed to the value of the class”???

3. Participation involves questions, answers, theories, speculations, connections to other classes or earlier readings, jokes, expressions of amazement or anger or curiosity or confusion or dismay or delight. It means bringing your reactions to this material to the room and contributing those reactions in a way that enhances everyone’s learning.

   **An observation:** students are sometimes shy about floating speculative theories in class. They are quiet in class and then float the speculative theory in an essay exam. *This is a poor strategy!* Class is the place to put forth a new idea and see what we all make of it. Exams are the place to develop those ideas that you feel confident are sustainable.

4. “C” in participation (105-119 pts.) = you attended regularly and were reliable about assignments but seldom if ever spoke. In short, you did not *demonstrate* engagement with the day’s readings.

   “B” (120 -134 pts.) = you were regular & reliable about attendance and assignments, and you sometimes contributed in class . . . or you contributed regularly when you were in class, but you were not reliable about attendance and assignments.

   “A” (135-150 pts.) = you were regular & reliable writings about attendance and assignments, and you were a regular, reliable participant in discussion. You demonstrated (every week if not every day) an engagement with the readings and a commitment to making the classroom a lively, interesting place to be.
SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS ACTIVITIES

**Week One: Charting Our Course**
August 26: Syllabus, BrownDocs, and relevant charts & tables will be distributed in class

**Week Two**
August 29: Challenging and Revising the Colonial Immigration Canon
   Reading: Roger Daniels, *Coming to America*, Chapters 1-4; Blackboard: McDaniel, “How to Read History”; BrownDocs: Frethorn, Pond, Williams, Pastorius; Fogelman demographic tables, American colonies map

August 31: Race and Coerced Migration to Colonial North America
   Writing assignment: 2-3 sentences summarizing YOUR historian’s argument.
   Oral assignment: Briefly present, in class, the argument of the historian assigned to you.

Sept. 2: The Transatlantic 18th Century
   Writing assignment: Locate one place where Beiler states her thesis in the essay and one place she states her thesis in the chapter. E-mail the quote/paragraph/page number for each to brownv@grinnell.edu on Thursday by 7:00 p.m.

**Week Three**
Sept. 5: Immigration, Revolution, and “Historiography”
   Reading: Blackboard: Fogleman, “From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants”
   Writing assignment: Locate Fogleman’s thesis in intro and conclusion. Write one paragraph summarizing his argument. Summary may include a cited quote from Fogleman. Due in class on Monday. See Discussion Guide and Thesis Statement Guidelines.

Sept. 7: What Is an American? What is Americanability?
   Writing Assignment: Fill out Data Analysis Chart in BrownDocs.
Sept. 9: Immigration, Naturalization, and the Politics of the 1790’s
Reading: Blackboard: Baseler, “Asylum for Mankind,” Chapter 7 & 8 excerpts; BrownDocs: Naturalization Debate excerpt and Naturalization laws, 1790-1802

**Week Four**

Sept. 12: Immigrant Letters from Brits and Germans, 1827-1863
Reading: Daniels, pp. 121-126, &145-184; Blackboard: Gerber, Authors of Their Lives, Intro and Chapter 4 excerpts; BrownDocs: Hollingworth and Seyffardt letters

Sept. 14: The Irish and the Know-Nothings
Reading: Daniels, pp. 126-145 & 265-271; Blackboard: Jensen, “‘No Irish Need Apply’: a Myth of Victimization”; Kenny, “Race, Violence, and Anti-Irish Sentiment”; BrownDocs: Population figures and Electoral results; Know-Nothing Party documents & “America for the Americans”

Sept. 16: The Irish and the Whiteness Debate
Writing assignment: One paragraph/half-page, double-spaced articulating Roediger’s argument and one paragraph/half-page articulating Kolchin’s critique of Roediger.

*Packet of materials for Sept. 24 Chinese Exclusion Debate will be handed out in class.*

**Week Five**

Sept. 19: In-class film: Ancestors in the Americas, Part 2, “Pioneers to the American West,” 60 minutes long.
Reading: Daniels, pp. 238-250 & 271-272
*Prompts for take-home exam will be e-mailed on Sun., Sept. 18. Due in class on Monday, Sept. 26.*

Sept. 21: Lecture: Why a Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882?
Reading: Daniels, pp. 238-250 & 271-272; BrownDocs: Introduction to Gyory, Closing the Gate, Chinese Exclusion Act Timeline, Chinese Immigration Figures, Presidential elections, 1872-1880 (bring Daniels and the documents to class).

Sept. 23: In-class Debate: Chinese Exclusion Renewal, 1893
Reading: Chinese Exclusion Debate Packet–distributed in class on Sept. 16.
Week Six

Sept. 26: Lecture: Uprooted or Transplanted?
   Reading: Blackboard: Zeidel, “An Immigrant’s Anguish: The Americanization of
   Johannes Johansen”
   Writing assignment: TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE AT THE START OF CLASS

Sept. 28: Lecture: Designing the Nation: Immigration in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920
   Bring to class: Daniels, Coming to America; Immigration History Overview &
   Demographics of U.S./charts from Day 1 and BrownDocs: set of charts, lists, and tables
   marked as Progressive Era Data

Sept. 30: Growing Up Immigrant in Progressive America, 1880-1920
   Reading: Blackboard: Berrol, “Ethnicity and American Children,” Chinn, Inventing
   Modern Adolescence, Chapters 1 & 3; BrownDocs: Jane Addams, “Immigrants
   and Their Children” & “What Should the Worker’s Child Become?”
   Viewing: http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/ (Lewis Hine photos)

Weekend film viewing: “Hester Street” (90 minutes). On Reserve in A-V. We will organize a
   couple of group viewing times. This film is optional but highly recommended.

Week Seven

Oct. 3: Female Immigrants in Progressive America: Patriarchy, Protection, and Power
   Reading: Blackboard: Gardner, Chapters 3-5, The Qualities of a Citizen; BrownDocs:
   Jane Addams, excerpts from A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil

Oct. 5: Interpreting Two Progressive Era Documents
   Reading: BrownDocs: Bisno, Union Pioneer; Council of Jewish Women, Report to the
   Senate Immigration Commission, 1910
   Writing assignment: 2-paragraph response to prompt

Oct. 7: Work, Culture, Immigrant Choices & Immigrant Memories
   Reading: Blackboard: Barrett, “Americanization from the Bottom Up”; BrownDocs:
   Warne, “Real Causes of the Miners’ Strike”; “New World Lessons for Old World
   Peoples”; “What America Means,” and “How It Feels to be a Problem”

   Guidelines for October 10 ‘roundtable’ available on Blackboard Assignments.
**Week Eight**

Oct. 10: Roundtable: Immigration Regulation in Progressive Era  
Reading: Daniels, pp. 271-281/top; BrownDocs: “Race Chart No. 1” & “Types and Development of Man”  
Oral assignment: Each of you will represent one document from the 1897-1918 era in our circa-1916 debate of immigration regulation.  
Writing assignment: 1-page summary of your document author’s position.

Oct. 12: Lecture: Ethnicity, International Politics, and World War I  
Reading: Blackboard: Sterba, “‘They Were Good Americans: Survival and Victory on the Western Front’” & Epilogue from *Good Americans*

Oct. 14: Ethnic Soldiers in the U.S. Army: Victims or Agents?  

**FALL BREAK**  -- *I am a great believer in taking a break, but we need to land running with The Lucky Ones, which I happily read while on a vacation this summer. Note that there is a short homework assignment due on Monday.*

**Week Nine**

Oct. 24: The Lucky Ones: A Look Back  
Reading: Ngai, *The Lucky Ones*, Author’s Note thru Chapter 5  
Writing assignment: Complete endnote exercise attached to Study Guide

Oct. 26: The Lucky Ones: 1895-1917  
Reading: Ngai, *The Lucky Ones*, Chapters 6-11

Oct. 28: The Lucky Ones, 1917-1950  
Reading: Ngai, *The Lucky Ones*, Chapters 12-Epilogue  
Writing assignment: 2-page comment on *The Lucky Ones* in response to prompt.

**Week Ten**

Oct. 31: The 1924 Congressional Debate on Immigration Restriction  
Reading: Daniels, pp. 281-284; “1924 Immigration Act” documents and guidelines on Blackboard/Assignments.

Nov. 2: What Factors Determined Passage of 1924 Immigration Act?  
Reading: Same as Monday; BrownDocs: “Who Was Shut Out” through “A Nation of None and All of the Above”  
Writing assignment: 2-page comment in response to prompt.

Nov. 4: European Ethnics and Popular Culture in the 1920’s & 1930’s

**Week Eleven**

Nov. 7: Mexican Immigrants and Popular Culture in the 1920’s and 1930’s
   Reading: Blackboard: Reisler, “Always the Laborer, Never the Citizen”; Brown, “Singing of Struggle: Mexican Workers in the American Southwest”

Nov. 9: The Great Depression and Mexican Deportation
   Reading: Blackboard: Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, Chapters 9 & 10; BrownDocs: Gamio, “Legal and Illegal Entry of Mexicans” and Herrera-Sobek, “Reptriation and Deportation”

*Wednesday evening film viewing, 8:30-10:00 p.m.: “America and the Holocaust” (90 minutes). Will be on reserve in A-V. all week. Required for Friday discussion. An optional film, but very interesting re: World War II and ethnicity, is “Rabbit in the Moon” re: Japanese internment. On reserve.*

Nov. 11: Discussion: Documentary film as history.
   Viewing: “America and the Holocaust”

**Week Twelve: Each of you will meet with me to discuss revision of one writing.**


Nov. 16: The U.S. Bracero Program: The New Back Door
   Writing assignment: One-paragraph/half-page statement of Ngai’s thesis.

Nov. 18: The Cold War and Non-Divisive Diversity
   Viewing: Study Guide will point to the YouTube sites for viewing Frank Sinatra and Gertrude Berg
Week Thirteen:

Nov. 21: Immigration Reform and Cold War Politics

Nov. 23: Immigration Reform and Liberal Nationalism
Reading: Blackboard: Ngai, “The Liberal Critique and Reform of Immigration Policy”
Writing assignment: Revision of one short writing due in class.

Nov. 25: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fourteen


Monday evening film viewing, 8:00-10:00 p.m.: “A Well-Founded Fear” (120 minutes) Film will be on reserve in A-V all week. Required viewing for Wednesday discussion.

Nov. 30: Wednesday, Nov. 24: U.S. Refugee Policy, 1980-2010


Week Fifteen

Dec. 5: Immigration Economics, 2000-2010

Monday evening film viewing, 8:00-9:30 p.m.: “Crossing Arizona” (80 minutes) On Reserve in A-V)
Dec. 7: Immigration Politics, 2000-2010
  Reading: Blackboard: Tancredo, In Mortal Danger excerpts; Krikorian, The New Case Against Immigration excerpts; Isbister, “Are Immigration Controls Ethical?”
  BrownDocs: “I’m an American. And You?”; “Breathing While Undocumented”; “My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant”

Dec. 9: The Dream Act
  Reading: BrownDocs: “Coming Out Illegal” and recent news articles & editorials

Prompts for take-home final exam will be distributed in class; essays due on Thursday, Dec. 15 at 4:00 p.m. either via e-mail or in Mears Cottage.
Memo to: V. Brown Students
From: V. Brown
Re: Class Contract

On the back of this sheet you will find a copy of a Class Contract. If you decide to enroll in this course, you must sign the copy of the contract that will circulate in class next week. The purpose of this contract is twofold: (1) to make clear the expectations that each individual student must meet for successful completion of this course; (2) to emphasize that learning in a class setting is a community experience which bears community responsibilities. By enrolling in this course, you are not only making certain promises to yourself and to me about your performance, you are also — just as importantly — promising your fellow students that you will contribute to their learning by giving them your time, your thoughts, your questions, your interest, and your attention.

Implicit in this contract is my promise that I will come to class prepared and ready to focus solely on the material for this course, AND that I will:

— provide, at the appropriate time, hand-outs noted on syllabus
— make assignments clear and (cheerfully) repeat instructions if they are not clear
— hand out exam questions or paper guidelines when noted on syllabus
— return written work within 14 days or explain any delay to the class
— be available to students during office hours and when special appointments are made
— return phone calls when students leave messages on either one of my phone answering machines and return e-mails ASAP.
CLASS CONTRACT: HISTORY 228

As a class member, I agree to:

1. Regular attendance at class meetings and at any special meetings held outside of class to prepare for class activities. In addition, I understand that it is my responsibility to get hold of any hand-outs, assignments, and/or notes missed due to absence from class.

2. Completion of the day’s readings and sufficient review of those readings to allow for my active participation in discussion.

3. Consistent, responsible participation in class discussion.
   
   I understand that successful class discussion depends on my participation, my willingness to jump in early, and my responsiveness to what others in the room are saying. I agree to play an active role in the classroom by asking as well as answering questions, by sharing thoughts I had while preparing for class, and by interacting with the readings/authors, Prof. Brown, and my fellow students — even if that means respectfully disagreeing in order to enhance our deliberations.

4. Respectful regard for others’ viewpoints.
   
   Out of respect for all those in the past who have been labeled, dismissed, and denigrated because of their opinions, I promise to listen to each member of the class, to work at understanding their views, and to practice ways of responding which invite dialogue.

5. Completion of written work by the due date.
   
   I understand that short writing assignments are meant to enhance class discussion and that I have the freedom to skip three of them. I understand that handing them in for points, after class discussion, constitutes “getting the answers” from my classmates. I agree not to ask for “extensions” on daily assignments.
   
   I understand that I have the unconditional right to ask for one 48-hour extension on either of my 2-page commentaries, my revision of one commentary, or on one of the two take-home exams. No reason for the extension need be offered, but if I wish to invoke my 48-hour extension, I must inform Prof. Brown of that fact, via e-mail, at least 24 hours before the due date. Failure to declare ahead of time that I am “invoking my extension option” will cost me 10 points for every day the work is late.

6. Careful attention to the quality and appearance of my written work.
   
   Understanding that Prof. Brown will be devoting significant time and energy to addressing students’ genuine writing problems, I realize it is crucial that she not waste any time correcting grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors that I know how to correct myself. Therefore, I agree to proofread my written work so that I do no misrepresent my command of mechanics. I understand that these types of errors will definitely lower my grades on written work.

7. Complete honesty in presenting only my work as my work. I understand that the purpose of writing assignments is for Prof. Brown to work with me on my writing, so if I turn in others’ writing as my own, I am subverting the entire purpose of the student-professor relationship in addition to violating the college’s standards of academic honesty.