

**Department of History
University of Wisconsin – Madison
Semester II, 2001-2002**

**History 403
Immigration and Assimilation in U.S. History**

Lectures:

MW 4:00-5:15
1641 Humanities

Thomas J. Archdeacon, Professor
4135 Humanities
263-1778
tjarchde@facstaff.wisc.edu

Sections:

301, W 9:55, 2241 Humanities
302, W 11:00, 2637 Humanities
303, T 2:25, 2231 Humanities
304, T 3:30, 2221 Humanities

Nicole Ingrid Kvale, TA
5620 Humanities
263-2386
nikvale@facstaff.wisc.edu

Introduction

History 403 examines American immigration and ethnicity from the arrival of the first English colonists to the present day. It treats the experiences of Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans as well as those of the Europeans who have, until recently, constituted the majority of the immigrant flow. The course covers the histories of both those who came as free immigrants and of those who arrived in bondage.

History 403 is an intermediate course, not an elementary one. It will be fast-paced and comprehensive. The assumption must be that you already know the basic facts, trends, and issues relating to the broad issues of the American past. If your knowledge of U.S. history is weak, you should not take History 403, or you should be ready to do supplemental reading in a college-level textbook such as those used in History 101 and 102.

The goal of History 403 is to answer a series of basic questions. Who came, and why did they leave their native countries? When did various ethnic and racial groups arrive in North America, and where did they go after landing here? How did the residents whose families had come to America in earlier years, or decades, or centuries receive newcomers? How did the immigrants respond to the foreign environment in which they suddenly found themselves? To what extent did the immigrants and their offspring become part of the mainstream of American society? Which of their Old World practices and values – if any – survived in the New World? Of what importance is immigration in the present era and how may it affect the future? The questions seem straightforward, but beneath their appearance of simplicity lies a reality that involves serious and complicated problems of definition, measurement, and judgment.

WebCT

WebCT is on-line courseware used to support History 403 and other courses. The address for the WebCT home page for History 403 is uwmad.courses.wisc.edu/public/history403_001_sp02. The address webct.wisc.edu/public/history403_001_sp02 will also work. Once there, you can log in using your email userid (the part before @students.wisc.edu) and a password, which is your date of birth in the form mmddyy. If you were born on January 2, 1983, your initial password will be 010283. After you log in, you can change your password, if you desire to do so.

WebCT has many useful components. You will find a copy of this syllabus as well as a calendar containing useful information and links to materials for each lesson. Those materials will include web-compatible copies of the PowerPoint slides that I present during the lectures and Rich Text Format (RTF) versions of them. You will also find subprograms that allow you to take on-line quizzes, to keep track of your grades, and to engage in question and answer sessions when they are scheduled. You will receive more information about WebCT during the first class.

The PowerPoint, RTF, and other course content materials that you will find at the WebCT site at the beginning of the semester date from last year's edition of the course. Those files serve as a good guide to the content of the course. Parts of some lessons, however, will change. I expect to have the updated versions of the lessons available before the date scheduled for each of the classes.

PowerPoint is a Microsoft product, and last year students who used the Internet Explorer as their web browser had a better experience manipulating the files than did those who used Netscape. Try the latest version of whatever browser you use. If you encounter difficulties, ask a staff member at a computing lab for assistance.

Before each lesson, you should receive, via email, an outline of the scheduled lecture in RTF format. You should be able to open RTF files with any word processor. Students in past years have found that bringing printed version of the RTF files to class makes note taking easier.

Assignments and Examinations

Four books constitute the required reading for History 403. They are:

Marianne Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America*

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*

Peter Levine, *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience*

David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*

Please read them in time for the discussion sections covering the lectures under which they are listed. For those desiring a textbook, I shall also make available, through WebCT, *Becoming American*, which I wrote some time ago.

There will be two examinations – a mid-term and a final. The mid-term will take place during a regularly scheduled lecture hour; the final will be Friday, 17 May, at 10:05 AM. Both exams will last approximately 1.25 hours, and will carry equal weight in determining 70 percent of the final grade for each student.

For all undergraduate students, History 403 is a four-credit course. You must be enrolled in and attend one of the four sections. Those are: 301, meeting at 9:55 AM on Wednesdays in 2241 Humanities; 302, meeting at 11:00 AM on Wednesdays in 2637 Humanities; 303, meeting at 2:25 PM on Tuesdays in 2231 Humanities; and 304, meeting at 3:30 PM on Tuesdays in 2221 Humanities.

Performances in sections will determine the remaining 30 percent of the grades. To contribute effectively, students must come prepared for those sections. Therefore, students will be expected, by dates before specific meetings, to provide answers to simple quizzes based on the pertinent lectures and readings. Those quizzes will be found on the Web CT page created for the course and will generate 15 percent of the grades. The Teaching Assistant will directly control the remaining 15 points.

Office Hours and Beyond

On weekdays, especially in the afternoons, I am usually in 4135 Humanities. My scheduled office hours are on Mondays from 2:30 to 3:30 PM and on Wednesdays from noon to 1:00 PM. I am often available at other times as well, and you are free to stop by whenever I am present. I shall be ready to talk with you if pressing business is not pending.

You may make appointments to see me at times other than the scheduled office hours. Please call me at 263-1778 (4135 Humanities) or at 251-7264 (home). Both phones have answering machines; leave a message if necessary.

Electronic mail is probably the most reliable medium for reaching me on short notice. My email address is tjarchde@facstaff.wisc.edu. I monitor it throughout the day and usually in the evening as well.

Nicole Ingrid Kvale is the teaching assistant for History 403. Ms. Kvale's email address is nikvale@students.wisc.edu. Her office is 5620 Humanities, and her phone number is 263-2386.

Schedule of Lectures, Assignments, and Examinations

Block 1

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sizable numbers of Europeans migrated to the region that later became the United States. The coming of the Europeans had disastrous demographic consequences for the existing native population. Although the English composed a plurality of the colonial immigrants to settlements along the East Coast of North America, large numbers of men and women from the outlying districts of the British Isles and from the nations of the continent joined them in the New World. So too did many involuntary Black migrants from Africa.

For a variety of reasons, immigration to the United States remained at a modest level for approximately a half century after the War of Independence. Between the 1830s and the Civil War, however, hordes of Irish and German immigrants arrived. Substantial numbers of Canadians, Scandinavians, and other Britons joined the influx after that conflict. We shall discuss the general reasons behind this surge in immigration and the specific causes for the emigration from the “donor” countries.

The arrival of the immigrants posed a series of serious challenges to American society and to the self-image that the United States was articulating in the middle of the nineteenth century. The newcomers helped transform the urban environment physically, and the visible poverty of some of them raised among Americans fears of declining economic opportunities. Likewise, the presence of a high percentage of Roman Catholics among the new arrivals threatened the inclination in American Protestantism to identify the U.S. with the land of the millennium. Nevertheless, the immigrants of the pre-war era and of the following decades survived “nativist” resistance, and adapted to their new lives in the United States.

Those Europeans who came to America before 1890 became known as the “Old Immigrants” after an exceptionally heavy stream of immigration began flowing to the United States from other source countries late in the nineteenth century. European peoples, such as Italians, Jews, and Slavs, whose cultures were unfamiliar to the population of the United States, formed the largest and most visible “New Immigrant” communities. Natives of Japan and several other Asian nations also arrived, and their experiences will be treated in this block, as will those of the Chinese who came to the United States during the era of the Old Immigration.

The fresh arrivals seemed “new” not only as cultural groups but also in terms of the economic and social roles they played as the U.S. entered an age of heavy industry. Contemporary commentators found the demographic characteristics and socioeconomic conditions associated with this second phase of nineteenth century immigration undesirable, and many blamed those features on the newcomers themselves. Historians, however, have rejected that judgment.

The United States took the first serious steps toward severely restricting the right of people to enter this nation when, in 1882, it “temporarily” blocked further immigration by unskilled Chinese laborers. Over the next four decades, a formidable restrictionist movement developed and sought political mechanisms to identify and exclude undesirable immigrants. For some activists, the search gradually shifted from efforts to ferret out individually unfit applicants for admission to attempts to establish “scientifically” the unworthiness of whole nationalities and races.

General reading:

Archdeacon, *Becoming American*, chapters 1-6

23 January	Introduction
28 January	Peopling the American Colonies
30 January	Immigration in the Eighteenth Century Marianne Wokeck, <i>Trade in Strangers</i>
4 February	The Causes of Mass Migration
6 February	The Irish Famine

11 February	German & Scandinavian Immigration
13 February	America Meets Its Immigrants
18 February	Nativism
20 February	Adaptation Matthew Jacobson, <i>Whiteness of a Different Color</i>
25 February	The “New” Immigration
27 February	Chinese and Japanese Immigration
4 March	Mediterranean, Jewish, and Slavic Immigration
6 March	Roots of Immigration Control
11 March	Restriction before World War I
13 March	World War I and the Immigrants
18 March	Mid-Term Examination

Block 2

A policy of sharply limited immigration, with access to entry tied to ethnic background, emerged as the law of the land after World War I, and the underlying ideology of the restriction movement helped shape American policies during the next four decades. Restrictive immigration policies adopted in the 1920s remained in force until the 1960s. The passage of time deprived America's immigrant populations of continuing reinforcements in the form of new arrivals from abroad, and the nations ethnic groups became increasingly composed of persons whose families had been in the United States for at least two generations. Those people spoke English, shed many of the outward styles that had underlined the alien status of their forebears, and increasingly shared in mainstream experiences. The socioeconomic and other gaps separating groups of white Americans from each other grew less wide, and the importance of ethnic and even of religious divisions in the population seemed to wane.

Due, in part, to the high level of "Americanization" that had been achieved, important shifts in American attitudes took place by the mid-1960s. Legislation removed the patently discriminatory ethnic features of immigration policy. Partly because of the Civil Rights Movement's effort to reduce prejudice and partly as a concession to the intractability of racial issues, commentators likewise came to accept the idea that demographic and cultural diversity was an inevitable and perhaps even desirable feature of American life. That assumption became stronger when, contrary to the prediction of the experts, immigration surged yet again, with Asia and Latin America becoming principal sources.

Contemporary immigration to the United States has several components. Approximately 700,000 legal immigrants constitute the largest part of the permanent influx. Twice that number of people may enter the United States each year without proper documents, but probably only one out of five of them will stay indefinitely in the country. The number fluctuates with world conditions, but perhaps 100,000 more persons arrive annually as refugees. The criteria for admitting refugees differ from those for admitting immigrants, but the newcomers effectively become legal immigrants with the passage of time.

Scholars remain divided both on the actual nature of the "new ethnicity" celebrated by pluralists and multiculturalists and on its implications for the future. Some see it as a permanent stop of the road to the complete assimilation of all groups, but others deem it a transient phenomenon that will end similarly to previous episodes in the integration of newcomers. Events of recent months, of course, have added considerable tension to the argument.

General Reading: Archdeacon, *Becoming American*, chapters 7-8

20 March	Restriction
23-31 March	Spring Break
1 April	Minority Groups after Restriction
3 April	Ethnic Issues during World War II
8 April	The "Triple Melting Pot" Peter Levine, <i>From Ellis Island to Ebbets Field</i>
10 April	Ethnic Politics

15 April	Civil Rights Movement
17 April	Immigration, 1950-2000
22 April	Undocumented Immigration
24 April	Refugees
29 April	The Impacts of Immigration
1 May	The Contested Meanings of “Pluralism” David Hollinger, <i>Postethnic America</i>
6 May	The 2000 Census
8 May	Recent Legislation
17 May	Final Examination (10:05 AM; Room to be announced)