Course Description

This course will be a seminar for graduate students and, with instructors’ permission, advanced undergraduates on the topic of human migration and immigration and its revolutionary potential in the North American context. Building on scholarly trends in diasporic studies that have sought to transcend the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis, this course examines the topic of migrating peoples within the North American continent. It therefore stretches beyond fixed academic assumptions of “the U.S. as a state” toward conceptions of “America as a space.” Building on scholarly trends in transnationalism that have sought to critique American parochialism, this course explores borders and belonging within the American context. We not only follow immigrant journeys from home countries to American shores, we also track movements within contested spaces of sovereignty in the American interior. Dominant themes include land and property, mobility and dispossession, patterns of settlement and senses of home. We will consider the conceptual slippage between “settler,” “vagrant,” and “migrant” over time. We will analyze the experiences of migrants as they navigated legal, social, and economic boundaries within the United States.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this course brings together sociology and history in a collaborative enterprise. It tackles some of the most contentious debates surrounding the topics...
of immigration and migration—from exclusion to deportation, from racialization to acculturation, from conditions on plains reservations to the creation of urban ghettos, from nineteenth-century reformers’ public education initiatives to the Dream Act of 2014 and its current challenges. Hansen’s scholarly work on Native Americans and Cooper’s work on African Americans will facilitate productive exchanges in both a comparative and a connective vein as we wade into the churning controversies of these social groups’ tenuous relationship with citizenship and belonging in both local encounters and greater America.

Structurally, this course will be a seminar incorporating current historiography, sociological texts, photographs, mapping and spatial analysis. It will engage students in discussion of methodological approaches in history and sociology, looking at carefully selected primary sources and their potential uses for the scholar. We will analyze oral histories and the process of conducting them. We will delve into topics on historical ethnography and listen to audio of former slaves speaking for themselves and indigenous people talking about their history. We will make use of the library’s recently opened digital humanities lab, exposing students to new technologies in spatial analysis. Chronologically, we span the early American revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century into the late twentieth century’s period of immigration reform, gesturing toward the present as an epilogue to the course. Prominent events on the timeline of this course include American national independence in 1776, the Civil War of 1861-1865, the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, Chinese Exclusion of 1882, the Great Migrations of the 1910s and 1940s, the Immigration Act of 1924 (which established strict quotas and virtually shut out immigrants from Africa, India, Arab states, and East Asia), and the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 (which abolished the quota system and opened immigration beyond the West).

**Required Readings**

**Books (available at Brandeis bookstore):**

- Field, Kendra Taira, *Growing Up with the Country: Family, Race, and Nation after the Civil War* (Yale University Press, 2018)
- Hämäläinen, Pekka, *The Comanche Empire* (Yale University Press, 2009)
- Sweet, James H., *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World*
- Weisenfeld, Judith, *New World A-Comin’: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration*

**LATTE:** There is a Latte page for the course, which hosts all of the articles and book excerpts listed below. Other readings will be posted and assigned, at professors’ discretion.
Course Requirements

- **Participation:** (10% of course grade) Your full, committed participation is our starting point. It lays the solid foundation for this course. Please inform us in advance if you are unable to make it to class. The expectation for this graduate course is that one absence is understandable. Two absences, we start to really miss you. More than that, we inquire with heartfelt concern what we can do as a class to help you dedicate as much precious quality time as possible to the monastic life of the advanced scholar.

In class we will also discuss reading forms, strategies, and interests. We come to the table with the understanding that we will all be taking in the readings from different perspectives, different subfields, and perhaps even different disciplinary backgrounds. We will also discuss the practical and intellectual implications of reading digital and print books, as well as “reading” media such as photographs, maps, sounds, archaeological artifacts, and material culture.

We expect you to come to each class having done the reading, having posted to the LATTE forum, and having prepared ways to engage across the table.

- **LATTE Forum:** (10% of course grade) Post a question by **Monday at 12:00 noon** before each Tuesday’s class. Try to keep your question in the 100-200-words-or-less range.

Assignments

- Discussion Leading (20% of course grade)
  - Class participants will lead discussion for two of the week’s readings. Participants may lead discussion as partners or individually, as is appropriate.
- Source Comparison Assignment (5-6 pages) (20% of course grade)
  - This assignment gives students the opportunity to perform a close reading of two or more primary source texts, selected in consultation with the course instructors. **Deadline November 6.**
- Final Paper (10-12 pages) (40%)
  - By the end of the term, students are to submit a paper on a topic of their choosing, in consultation with the instructors. A paper proposal is due on **November 13.** The final paper is due on Monday, **December 17th.**

Intellectual Responsibility

Academic integrity is the ground of trust that sustains a scholarly community. Please honor the words and thoughts of others and credit them faithfully. Whether you are submitting written work or speaking in class, take care to acknowledge your sources not only for the words you cite but for the ideas you advance. Sources include not only print but also web materials, ideas you learned in other classes, and ideas gleaned from other students. Please read Section 4 on academic integrity of *Rights and Responsibilities*, which you can find at:
Accommodations for Disabilities

If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability you should contact us, and present your letter of accommodation, as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, graduate students should contact Jessica Basile, Director of Graduate Student Affairs: basile@brandeis.edu. Letters of accommodations should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

Fall 2018 Class Outline

Week 1—September 4: Introduction to the Course

Alex Lichtenstein, “Decolonizing the AHR”
David Armitage and Jo Guldi, “History Manifesto”

LATTE FORUM ASSIGNMENT: Please post to the LATTE forum this week in advance of our first class on Sept. 4. (LATTE post should be up by Sept. 3rd at noon). In this initial post, we would like you to respond to the readings we assigned, reflecting on this particular moment in the fields of HISTORY and SOCIOLOGY. Consider the kinds of approaches and inquiries scholars can make now and the implications and obligations for scholars of migration, displacement, and dispossession.

Week 2—September 11: NO CLASS

Week 3—September 18: Empire Building [KVH]

Hämäläinen, Pekka, The Comanche Empire

Week 4—September 25: BRANDEIS MONDAY – NO CLASS

Week 5—October 2: Forced Migration and Slavery: The Middle Passage [AC]
Smallwood, Stephanie, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*

**Week 6—October 9: Colonial Encounters [KVH]**

Witgen, Michael, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America*

**Week 7—October 16: Migration and Knowledge Dissemination in the Atlantic World [AC]**


**Week 8—October 23: Oral Histories and Source Interrogations with Karen V. Hansen**

*North Dakota Oral History Project*
*HistoryMakers Digital Archive*
*American Indian Research Project, tapes & transcriptions*
*Government documents and photographs*

**Week 9—October 30: Oral Histories and Source Interrogations with Abby Cooper**

*Library of Congress, Voices from the Days of Slavery [selection TBA]*
*WPA Questionnaire*
*History-Makers Interviews*
*Government documents*

**Come to class prepared to discuss the primary sources you intend to use in the SOURCE COMPARISON exercise. Please hand in to Profs. Cooper and Hansen two hard copies of the sources you are choosing with a brief sentence or two about their significance and/or scholarly queries they could address.**

**Week 10—November 6: Reconstruction and Refugees [AC]**

Cooper, Abigail, Selection from book manuscript *Conjuring Emancipation*

*SOURCE COMPARISON EXERCISE DUE*

**Week 11—November 13: Removal, Race, and Rights [AC]**

Guest Speaker: Professor Kendra Field

Field, Kendra Taira, *Growing Up with the Country: Family, Race, and Nation after the*
Civil War

*PAPER PROPOSAL DUE*

Week 12—November 20: In Migration and Exclusion [KVH]

*O’Brien, Jean, *Firsting and Lasting*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), Chapter 1

Week 13—November 27: Indians and Immigrants [KVH]


Week 14—December 4: Great Migration North [AC]

*Weisenfeld, Judith, *New World A-Comin’: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration*

Week 15—December 4: Family, Kinship, Race and Nation [KVH]


Week 16—December 11: Historically Informed Conversations with the Present [KVH…with AC]

Readings TBA

***December 17: DEADLINE FOR PAPER—5:00***