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 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. 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):
Hamalainen, Pekka, *The Comanche Empire* (Yale University Press, 2009)

LATTE:
Chiu, Monica, “Constructing Home in Mary Paik Lee’s Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America”

Cooper, Abigail, Lord, Until I Reach My Home: Inside the Refugee Camps of the American Civil War (manuscript)


Hahn, Steven, Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration (Belknap Press, 2003)

O’Brien, Jean, Firsting and Lasting, Chapter 1

Recommended Supplemental Reading:

Johnson, Walter, Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market (Harvard University Press, 2001)


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 Sunday at 5pm before each Monday’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)
  o 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 16th.**
• Final Paper (10-12 pages) (40%)
  o By the end of the term, students are to submit a paper on a topic of their choosing, in consultation with the instructor. A paper proposal is due on **October 26th.** The final paper is due on **December 15th.**

**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: [http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/rr/index.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/rr/index.html).

**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 Katharine Linehan, at GSAS, klinneha@brandeis.edu. Letters of accommodations should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

**Class Outline**

**Week 1—August 31: Introduction to the Course**

3:30 – Introduction to Sources, Vershbow Room, Goldfarb Library—with Laura Hibbert

**Week 2—September 7: NO CLASS –Labor Day Holiday**

**Thursday, September 10—BRANDEIS MONDAY: Colonial Encounters**

Witgen, Michael, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America*
Week 3—September 14: NO CLASS – Rosh Hashanah

Week 4—September 21: Forced Migration and Slavery: The Middle Passage

   Smallwood, Stephanie, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*

Week 5—September 28: NO CLASS

Tuesday, September 29—BRANDEIS MONDAY: Empire Building

   Hamalainen, Pekka, *The Comanche Empire*

Week 6—October 5: NO CLASS

Week 7—October 12: Forced Migration and Slavery: The Second Middle Passage

   Baptist, Edward E., *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*

Week 8—October 19: Removal, Race, and Rights

   Krauthamer, Barbara, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters: Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South*

Week 9—October 26: The Possibilities and Problematics of Oral History

   *PROPOSAL DUE*

   Library of Congress, *Voices from the Days of Slavery* [selection TBA]
   *WPA Questionnaire [LATTE]*
   *North Dakota Oral History Project [LATTE]*
   Immigrant tapes & transcriptions [selection TBA--LATTE]

Week 10—November 2: LTS Interactive & Source Interrogation

   Readings TBA
*Government documents and photographs [LATTE]

**Week 11—November 9: Reconstruction and Refugees**

*Cooper, Abigail, Lord, Until I Reach My Home: Inside the Refugee Camps of the American Civil War, Intro and Chap. 1

**Week 12—November 16: In Migration**

*DEADLINE FOR SOURCE COMPARISON EXERCISE*

Roediger, David, Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White
*O’Brien, Jean, Firsting and Lasting, (University of Minnesota Press, 2010), Chapter 1

**Week 13—November 23: Indians and Immigrants**

Hansen, Karen V., Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and the Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890-1930

**Week 14—November 30: Great Migration North**

Wilkerson, Isabel, The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration
*Hahn, Steven, Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration (Chapter 7)

**Week 15—December 7: Historically Informed Conversations with the Present**

Readings TBA

December 15: *DEADLINE FOR PAPER—5:00*