SOCIOLOGY 310

ENCOUNTERING THE OTHER:

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

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We live in a world of constant motion. Each year, approximately 5 million people cross a national border to settle in a new land. Objects, money, diseases, images, and ideas also circulate regularly. Yet most people take rootedness and stasis as the natural social condition and mobility and flux as the exception to the rule. We take for granted that the world is automatically and logically organized into nation-state containers when, in fact, many aspects of social experience cross national borders every day. How would our assumptions about democracy, identity, and participation change if we took mobility as central to the contemporary human condition? How would our understanding of the social contract between state and citizen change if we acknowledged that health, income-generation, family life, and education often occur outside the nation-state box?

This course looks comparatively and historically at the social and cultural aspects of migration and mobility. We will study different kinds of movement, involving different levels and intensity of contact between residents and newcomers. How does the “effect of the encounter” differ when it is a tourist who arrives as opposed to a permanent settler? How does the migration of ideas and practices enable the migration of people? How is ethnic, racial, and religious diversity managed in different contexts? What do we learn about the nation by looking at how it "encounters the other?" We will also focus on how national cultural institutions represent the immigrant experience by looking at novels, films, art exhibitions, the media, and museums. Class projects will include oral histories, media and literary analyses, and a major independent research paper on the management of diversity in a country of the student’s choice. Students will also attend at least 2 talks on or off campus on related topics and write a 1-2 page response paper (some suggestions of possible events are included below). Some class time will be devoted to how we design and carry out qualitative research. Some regular class meetings have been cancelled to make room for several additional class meetings on and of campus including a visit to the MFA, movie night, a session at the Special Collections section of the Clapp Library, and student presentations at the end of the semester.

This course also has a larger, intellectual goal. I would like students to
understand that there are many ways to ask and answer questions. I also want students to strengthen their analytical and critical thinking skills so they can evaluate different intellectual positions in a rigorous way. Many of our discussions will focus on the same set of questions - what is the question the author is trying to answer? What is the argument? What are his or her underlying assumptions? What is the evidence he or she brings to bear? What are the argument’s strengths and weaknesses?

I place great emphasis on students’ ability to write clearly and convincingly. We also work on public speaking. Organization, grammar and logic in writing and speaking count. In addition to students’ independent project, there will be two short 3-5 page writing assignments -- more in-depth descriptions and guidelines will follow. I ask that everyone attend class, complete the readings, come prepared to contribute to class discussion, and produce high-quality, well-written responses to the assignments. Please bring a copy of the readings with you to class. I also want to meet with all students at least once (if not more) during my office hours before the middle of the term.

REQUIRED BOOKS

The following books are available for purchase at the WC bookstore and are on reserve at the library:

**Immigrant America** – Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut.

**The Age of Migration** – Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller.

**The Devil's Highway** – Luis Urrea

**The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America** – Nicolas Lemann

**Transnational Villagers** – Peggy Levitt

**The House at Sugar Beach** – Helene Cooper

**WEEK ONE – SEPTEMBER 13TH**

INTRODUCTION, MOVIE, AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLE DISCUSSION

**WEEK TWO – SEPTEMBER 20TH  A BROAD OVERVIEW**

THE AGE OF MIGRATION CASTLES AND MILLER, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11.

Film – Chinese Restaurants

Lahiri, Jhumpa. “A Third and Final Continent”
Discussion of individual projects

**ASSIGNMENT ONE DISTRIBUTED – IMMIGRANT PROFILE/LIFE HISTORY**
**DUE OCTOBER 4**

**WEEK THREE – NO CLASS**

**OCTOBER 2ND (SATURDAY) VISIT TO MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 10-12.**
**MEET THERE AT 9:45.**

**WEEK FOUR – OCTOBER 4**

*The Devil’s Highway* by Luis Urrea.


Library Visit with Laura Reiner

**ASSIGNMENT TWO DISTRIBUTED – IMAGES OF TOURISM FROM SPECIAL COLLECTIONS – DUE NOVEMBER 10**

**WEEK FIVE – OCTOBER 12**

**WEEK SIX – OCTOBER 18**

Hirschman and Massey, “People and Places: The New American Mosaic”

Film - A little Salsa on the Prairie.

Policy Exercise: Tourism or Not?

Visit to Davis Museum

**WEEK SEVEN – OCTOBER 25**

- PILGRIMAGES, TRAVELERS, AND GUEST WORKERS

Articles on pilgrimages (to be distributed).

Kibria, Nazli. Draft chapter from her book on Bangladeshi migration to the Gulf and Malaysia.


Policy Exercise: The Costs and Benefits of Permanent Guests
WEEK EIGHT - NOVEMBER 1ST IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

IMMIGRANT AMERICA, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10.

Movie – Farmingville

NOVEMBER 3RD 6:00 pm. PIZZA AND MOVIE NIGHT

WEEK NINE – NOVEMBER 8TH INTERNAL MIGRATION HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America – Nicolas Lemann

SPECIAL CLASS MEETING - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH 12:30-2 AT SPECIAL COLLECTIONS IN LIBRARY TO PRESENT STUDENT PROJECTS

WEEK TEN – NOVEMBER 15TH TRANSMATIONAL MIGRATION

Transnational Villagers

Movie about arts and culture

Guest Lecture by Deepak Lamba-Nieves.

WEEK ELEVEN – NOVEMBER 22ND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Favell, Adrian. Philosophies of Integration. Chapters 3 and 4.


Excerpts from The Tate Britain Project.


WEEK TWELVE – NOVEMBER 29TH TRAFFICKING

Selections from Mobile Africa and Human Cargo

Listen to The New Middle Passage: Barcelona or Die Ndiaga Seck, Free Speech Radio News, 1 January 2007

Articles by Nicolas Kristof

Guest Lecture by Joe Swingle. Reading TBA

**WEEK TWELVE – DECEMBER 6TH REFUGEES**

**FINAL PROJECT DISTRIBUTED (WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING ON DURING THE SEMESTER). DUE ON DECEMBER 13TH**

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS – DECEMBER 8TH 12:30-2.**

**POSSIBLE TALKS TO ATTEND AT THE NEWHOUSE CENTER**

**September**

Tues 28 September / 4:30pm  
Distinguished Writers Series—Peter Carey

**October**

Tues 12 October / 4:30pm  
Distinguished Writers Series—Tomaz Salamun & Meena Alexander

Tues 26 October / 4:30 pm  
Distinguished Writers Series—Russell Banks

**November**

Tues 9 November / 4:30pm  
Distinguished Writers Series—Maryse Conde

**December**

Weds. 1 December / 12:30  
Cornille Lecture – Deborah Klimberg-Salter (Library Lecture Room)