

W 2415: Immigrant New York
A Service-Learning Lecture Course
Spring 2018
M/W 2:40-3:55

Professor: Rebecca Kobrin
Rk2351@columbia.edu
Office: 412 Fayerweather
Office Hours: Monday: 1-2pm

Service Learning Assistant: Brianna Nofil:
BLN2109@Columbia.edu

Course Background:

For centuries, New York City has served as a primary gateway city for immigrants to the United States. In the early twentieth century, according to the 1910 Census, New York City's population was roughly 40% foreign born. The problems these immigrants presented to government officials, religious leaders, industrialists, and educators in New York City transformed not only the local debate on immigration but the national discussion of "Americanization" as well.

While few today use the term "Americanization," New York City and its innovative social welfare programs are still at the center of contemporary debates concerning immigration throughout the nation. According to the 2000 census, approximately 38% of the city's population is foreign-born. Like their predecessors at the turn of the twentieth century, new immigrants since the start of the new millennium, arriving from the Caribbean, Mexico, Asia, and Europe, have posed serious challenges to the civic, educational, and political institutions of New York City. Simultaneously, they have also rejuvenated old neighborhoods, replenished the city's labor force, and created new industries.

This lecture explores the intersection of immigration, race, and politics in New York City, both from the perspective of history and in relation to contemporary realities. In this course we will discuss the ways in which immigration has reshaped the cultural, economic, and political life of New York City both in the past as well as the present. Readings will focus on the divergent groups who have settled in New York City, paying close attention to issues of gender, class, race, the role of labor markets, the law, and urban development. At several points during the semester, the class will relocate to various locations in New York City, so that the class can meet those shaping the image of immigrant life in New York [in places such as the Tenement Museum] as well as leaders shaping immigrants' lived experience of the city today.

Service-Learning:

Service learning is an education methodology that integrates classroom curriculum with relevant, real-world volunteerism. This course uses service-learning to complement the academic study of

New York City immigration with face-to-face interactions with local immigrants. All students enrolled in this course are required to volunteer 1.5 hours per week at the Riverside Language Program, an organization devoted to teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to recent refugees.

I firmly believe that at an institution such as Columbia, whose undergraduate mission revolves around training its students to be good citizens through the engagement with texts in the Core Curriculum, service learning courses are essential, as such courses teach students through action how to engage the world around them as active citizens. I taught Contemporary Civilization for six semesters, but it was during my first time teaching this course that my students began to appreciate the power of the ideas they engaged. Through your activities this coming semester, you will see that the knowledge you acquired can serve not only your own goals but also those less fortunate in the community around you.

In particular, integrating our learning with active service will bring to life the very real and pressing issues surrounding the contemporary New York immigrant experience. Student's fieldwork at the Riverside Language Program or in the Catholic Charities legal program will be informed by our class discussions of the larger historical narrative concerning immigrants in American history, as well as an appreciation of the distinct ways in which New York fits into recent debates shaping the field of migration studies. However, the purpose of our service is not merely to enhance our own learning; rather, the goal is to genuinely contribute to the city's immigrant community and to recognize our civic responsibility to assist this growing and vulnerable sector of the population.

The Riverside Language Program:

The Riverside Language Program (RLP) is located conveniently at 91 Claremont Avenue and 120th Street, in rented space at Riverside Church. Since its inception in 1979, the RLP has taught English language skills to more than thirty thousand adult refugees from all over the world. Upon admittance, students at the RLP are placed into one of seven tracks, ranging from beginner to advanced, and commit to an intensive learning schedule of five hours a day for six consecutive weeks. Due to the rigor of the program, the RLP is highly effective and, thus, immensely popular. Though new sessions begin every three weeks, there are inevitably hundreds of more applicants than can be accommodated, and eligible students are selected through a mandatory lottery system.

You will be running a group discussion for students during their lunch hour: 12:30-1:30pm, Monday – Friday. You will run this group discussion in which students will practice their conversational English approximately once a week between February and the end of the semester.

To learn more about the RLP please visit their website at <http://www.riversidelanguage.org>

Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities Community Services of New York (CCCS) offers free civil legal services to New York City's low-income residents. CCCS hosts legal clinics on a monthly basis to offer individuals immigration services in their own neighborhoods. CCCS' immigration clinic project

has the capacity to serve at least 90 clients per month on a variety of issues – General Immigration Relief Screenings, Naturalization, Temporary Protected Status, Unaccompanied Minors, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, to name a few. The project brings legal services directly into communities and offers comprehensive case follow up through full representation as well as for clients receiving pro se services. The Project is seeking several undergraduate interns to assist in a variety of important administrative tasks and to ensure success of the clinics. The intern will receive training and education enrichment in the areas of event planning, case related database maintenance, outreach and organizing, grant writing and submission, and immigration law screenings.

To complete this service learning option, you must participate in **two of these three full-day immigration clinics.**

- Friday, January 26 – Rockland County
- Saturday, March 3 – Yonkers
- Saturday, March 31 – Yonkers and/or Dutchess County

Generation Citizen

This program seeks to address the problem of the fact that young people are increasingly divorcing themselves from the political process. It believes that politics, and political participation is the best way to solve the pressing issues of our time, from the economy to immigration. The recent focus on STEM education and focus on standardized testing of core subjects, while necessary in some respects, has largely pushed the discipline of civics out of the classroom. Generation Citizen’s goal is to inspire civic participation through a proven state standards-aligned action civics class taught by college volunteers [that is YOU!] that gives students the opportunity to experience real-world democracy. Through student-driven projects led by you, students in NYC public high schools learn how to effect policy change by engaging with local government and leaders to solve community problems. You will be the teacher for a group of GC students and will teach them an action-oriented civics education that promotes long-term civic engagement and builds collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills. The result is passionate and responsible civic participation that will help create the more active citizenry and more responsive government of our future.

<https://generationcitizen.org/>

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings, attend all class trips, complete written work by the deadlines assigned, and spend at least 1.5 hours each week working in the RLP. **IF YOU DO NOT FULFILL YOUR WORK AT RLP OR WORK WITH THE CATHOLIC CHARITIES, OR WORK WITH GENERATION CITIZEN, YOU WILL FAIL THIS CLASS.**

Grade Breakdown:

35% Attendance at RLP/CATHOLIC CHARITIES/GENERATION CITIZEN and discussion postings

15% Your Story/Our Story Essay (due February 21 in class)

20% Midterm exam (April 2)

30% Final paper (due May 7 at 5pm)

All assignments must be turned in on time. Late papers will not be accepted.

Discussion Section

Discussion section for this course will be conducted virtually, via a class blog. The blog is hosted through Columbia's EdBlogs platform, and can be reached by going to edblogs.columbia.edu and logging in with your UNI. By the end of this week, you should have access to the 'Immigrant New York' blog. To create a post, simply go to the menu at the top of the screen that says '+ New' and then select 'Post.' (More complete directions, as well as troubleshooting tips, will be included on the blog itself.)

Each week you will be expected to post one to two paragraphs (approximately 250-500 words) responding to the course readings or your experiences at the Riverside Language Program. These responses are open ended, but *should avoid summarizing the readings*. In blogging about what you've read, you're encouraged to engage with the arguments each author is making, the evidence they use, the methodological approaches they take, etc., as well as to draw connections to topics discussed in lectures or other weeks' texts. Most importantly, write about what strikes you as particularly interesting or thought provoking about the readings. Each week we'll post at least one framing question that you can consider in your response. For weeks when you visit RLP, please write a bit about your experience as part of your blog entry. This is a great place to talk about any concerns that come up while working with our community partner, as well as to reflect on service learning and how community engagement relates to the topics we're discussing in class. Finally, please conclude each post with a question for further discussion. These should be questions that encourage conversation and solicit opinions, rather than questions with a simple answer. In addition to your weekly post, you're expected to offer a brief response (using the EdBlog's 'comment' function) to one of your classmates' posts.

You're also welcome to incorporate links to other materials, news articles, websites, etc. that relate to the topics we're addressing in class. EdBlogs are able to host multimedia content, including embedded video, so you're also able to submit your posts via a video or audio file, if you prefer. Your posts are due by 7pm on Wednesday, and your response to a classmate's post is due by 7pm on Friday. Your first post is due on Weds., Jan. 31. The posts will be graded on a check plus/check/check minus scale.

Your Story/Our Story Assignment

Choose a material object either from your own family, or an object that reflects another family or community's immigration experience. This could be something that a family member brought

from another country when immigrating, something that reflects a connection to a homeland, or something that was important to immigrants as they began life in the United States.

The assignment has two components:

First, you will write a paragraph-long (1500 character max) discussion of your object to post on the Tenement Museum's "Your Story, Our Stories" public history website: yourstory.tenement.org

Since you have limited space, you need to convey the personal significance and story behind your object in a concise and accessible way. If you do not have a direct personal tie to the object, you should explain why you chose it and why it has meaning to you and to the community it represents. You will also need to include a photograph of the object and upload it to <http://yourstory.tenement.org/artifacts/new>.

Second, you will write a 5-page essay on your object that offers a more detailed historical context and analysis for the item. You can use secondary sources or conduct your own ethnography (oral history, observation, etc.) to think about how your object fits into immigration history. Some questions you might consider include:

- Who uses or used this item?
- How might the item's purpose or role have changed over time?
- What does this object tell us about the people who used it?
- What significance does this object hold for the bearer? Why do you think they held onto it?

Papers are due in class on **Wednesday, February 21st**.

Final Project:

To further supplement our classroom readings and discussions, each student will select a specific research topic related to the New York immigrant experience and their own volunteer work at the RLP (Option 1). A student who does not wish to write about their volunteer experience may select a creative project, see below (Option 2) or a student may choose to craft a digital mapping project (Option 3).

Final papers should be 3,000-5,000 words in length. **A one-page proposal for the final paper will be due in class on March 7.**

Option 1: Write a research paper based on primary sources and related to the course's main themes as you have encountered them in your volunteer work

Option 2: Using primary sources, explore a theme from the course through public history. The project should be academically grounded, combine primary and secondary sources, and develop an original argument. Students are encouraged to think creatively about how one could bring the history from their textbooks to the public.

For example, students may develop a new thematic exhibit for the Tenement Museum and write a proposal for the exhibit. Or you could create a walking tour that combines historical arguments with New York's landscape to develop one of the course's themes. You might make a video, create a website, or use any other medium with which you are familiar.

Option 3: Develop a map (or set of maps) and accompanying research paper where you explore themes from the course in relation to the spaces of historical New York City in which they occurred. Draw on historic maps, primary materials, available historic census data, and other sources to construct an argument, or narrate a series of events, spatially.

This might involve: tracking the locations mentioned in course readings and related primary sources and then overlaying these on historical maps from the period. It could also involve using historic census data from the National Historic GIS project (<https://www.nhgis.org>), or historic census micro data from the IPUMS project (https://usa.ipums.org/usa/complete_count.shtml) to investigate a course thematic in relation to a particular neighborhood or set of neighborhoods. Your project might investigate questions such as: how did successive immigrant waves co inhabit New York neighborhoods? What is the geography of key landmarks cited in primary texts?

Your task with this assignment is to investigate what new insights might be gleaned by considering space as an active agent in shaping historical trajectories.

You might craft a project where you annotate historic maps through a digital or physical collage, or, if you are interested in using a greater number of data sources, a project that requires the use of open source geographic information systems (GIS) software, QGIS (<https://www.qgis.org>).

A number of resources are available to you as you complete this work:

Online tutorials for QGIS:

- Center for Spatial Research: <http://c4sr.columbia.edu/tutorials>
- Programming Historian: <https://programminghistorian.org/lessons/?topic=mapping>

Workshops:

- Columbia Research Data Services: <http://library.columbia.edu/services/research-data-services/events.html>

Project examples and data resources:

- New York Public Library Labs, Emigrant City: <http://emigrantcity.nypl.org>
- New York Public Library Labs, Map Warper: <http://maps.nypl.org/warper/>
- David Rumsey Map Collection: <https://www.davidrumsey.com>
- Columbia Research Data Services, GIS and Spatial Data Resources Guide: <http://guides.library.columbia.edu/c.php?g=715646&p=5092264>
- NHGIS Historic Census data: <https://www.nhgis.org>
- IPUMS Full Count Census Microdata: https://usa.ipums.org/usa/complete_count.shtml

Statement on Academic Integrity:

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

Required Reading:

All required readings are available for purchase at Book Culture. If the book is available as an e-books the link is listed below.

1. Alba, Richard D., and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2005)
<http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio8752838>
2. Foner, Nancy, and George M. Fredrickson, eds. *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States* (Russell Sage Foundation Publications, 2005)
3. Foner, Nancy, *One out of Three: Immigrant New York in the Twenty-First Century* (Columbia University Press, 2013)
4. Yee, Shirley *An Immigrant Neighborhood: Interethnic and Interracial Encounters in New York before 1930* (Temple University Press, 2011)
<http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio10230164>
5. Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005)
<http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?clio8863408>
6. Kasinitz, Philip, et al. *Inheriting the City: The Children of immigrants come of Age* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2009)
7. Peralta, Dan-el Padilla, *Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2015)
8. Waldinger, Roger. *Still the Promised City? African-Americans and New Immigrants in Post-*

Industrial New York (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999)

9. Hoffnung-Garskof, Jesse. *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York After 1950* (Princeton University Press, 2008)

10. Smith, Robert. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. (University of California Press, 2006)
<https://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/10923250>

Topics and Assigned Readings:

Readings marked with an asterisk symbol (*) are posted on Courseworks in the designated week. Please note: All posted book readings are formatted for double sided printing.

Week 1: Introduction

Jan. 17: Introduction to Immigration, New York City and Service Learning

Jan 22: Historiography of American Immigration and Service Learning Introduction

Oscar Handlin, [*The Uprooted*](#), 3-10, 94-116

*John Bodnar, *The Transplanted*; xv-xxi, 169-183

Jan. 24: **Session will be relocated to RLP, 91 Claremont Avenue and 120th Street, 3rd floor**

*Deborah Sontag; [“English as a Precious Language”](#);

Alba and Nee, [Remaking the American Mainstream](#), 1-66

*Brad Edmondson, *The Newest New Yorkers 2000*;

*Melanie Thernstrom, [“Becoming American 101”](#);

*Phyllis Berman, “Dying to Work.”

Week 2: New York as an Immigrant City

Jan 29: New York’s Immigrant History

Nancy Foner, *One Out of Three* 1-63

Shirley Yee, [An Immigrant Neighborhood](#), pp. 54-76

CW: *Remembering the Lower East Side*, 1-13, 179-225.

Jan 31: Students are required to attend 1 tour of the Tenement Museum, 97 Orchard St. by February 7. We have reserved tickets for three different time slots, and students may sign up in advance to attend a tour for free.

Option A: Jan 31: Tenement Museum, 2 pm

Option B: Sunday, Feb 4 “Meet the Residents” at 12pm

SUNDAY Feb 4: Option B: Sunday, Feb 4 “Meet the Residents” at 12pm

Week 3: The Golden Door?: America’s Immigration Policy

Feb 5: Immigration Policy to 1924

Mae Ngai, [Impossible Subjects](#), 1-90

Feb 7: Immigration Policy to 1965

Mae Ngai, [*Impossible Subjects*](#), 227-270

*David Stoll [*Which American Dream do you Mean?*](#)

Week 4: Contemporary City Policy and Immigrants

Feb 12: New York City Today

Guest Lecturer, , Commissioner of Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Nancy Foner, *One out of Three* 64-147

Kasinitz et al. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age, 1-94*

Feb 14: Contemporary Challenges: Detention & the Criminalization of Migration

Week 5: (tk)

Feb. 19: New Immigrant voters in a Tammany-run City

Kasinitz et al. *Inheriting the City*, 274-299

*Stefano Luconi, "From William C. Celentano to Barack Obama: Ethnic and Racial Identity in Italian-American Postwar Political Experience, 1945-2008," 7-15

Feb. 21: Socialism and New York City Politics

Week 6: Race

Feb. 26 : Race and Immigration in New York

*Robert Zeidel, *Immigrants, Progressives and Exclusion Politics*, 1-20, 86-100.

Nancy Foner and George M. Fredrickson, *Not Just Black and White*, 1-18, 167-188

Feb. 28: The Great Migration and Immigrant-Black Conflict

Foner, *Not Just Black and White*, 82-99

Waldinger, *Still the Promised City?* 1-56, 94-136

Week 8: Transnational Identity

March 5: Italians and Jews and the Making of Transnational New York

*Donna R. Gabaccia, "Transnationalism as a way of working-class life," 81-105.

*Stefano Luconi, [*Forging an Ethnic Identity*](#) 89-98.

March 7: Contemporary Transnational Migrant Communities

Jesse Hoffnug-Garskof, *A Tale of Two Cities* 18-75, 94-122

Robert Smith, *Mexican New York*, 1-14, 97-131

Spring Break, March 12-16

Week 9: Education

Mar 19: Guest Lecturer, Stephan Brumberg

*Stephan Brumberg, *Going to America, Going to School*; 71-94 ("Teaching America: East European Jewish Immigrants and the Public School Curriculum")

Kasinitz, et al. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age* (133-172)

Mar 21: Guest Lecturer, Van C. Tran

*Van C. Tran et al. "Second-Generation Attainment and Inequality: Primary and Secondary Effects on Educational Outcomes in Britain and the U.S.," 120-160

Week 10: Labor

Mar 26: Gender and Labor

*Guglielmo "Italian Women's Proletarian Feminism in the New York City Garment Trades, 1890s-1940s"

*Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 145-226

- Immanuel Ness *Immigrant Unions and the New U.S. Labor Market*, 1-33, 55-98
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**Final paper proposals due in class March 26

Mar 28: **Health Reform**

*Judith Walzer Leavitt, "['Typhoid Mary' Strikes Back](#): Bacterial Theory and Practice in Early Twentieth-Century Public Health," p. 608-629

*K. Buhler-Wilkerson, "Bringing Care to the People: Lillian Wald's Legacy in Public Health Nursing" p. 1778-1785. Shirley Yee, [An Immigrant Neighborhood](#), 77-103

Midterm Review

Apr 2: **MIDTERM EXAM**

April 4: Guest Lecturer, Annie Polland, Former Vice President of Programming at the Tenement Museum

*Polland, "Ivory Towers and Tenements: American Jewish History, Scholars and the Public," *American Jewish History*, Volume 98:2, April 2014, pp. 31-47

Week 12: Philanthropy and New York City's Immigrants

April 9: Philanthropy and Gilded Age New York Immigrants

April 11: Robin Hood Foundation/Kevin Catholic Charities

Week 13: Immigrants New York's Literary World

Apr 16: Excerpts of Abraham Cahan, Yekl, Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* and Gary Shtyngart, *Little Failure*

**Apr 17: 7pm, Screening, 'Hungry Hearts' [1925, Paramount]; film adaptation of Anzia Yezierska's novels

Syllabus Developed as part of *Mapping for the Urban Humanities* summer institute, Center for Spatial Research, Columbia University

Apr 18: **Dan-el Padilla Peralta**, *Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League*

Week 14: New York Exceptionalism

Apr 23: Was New York Exceptional in the Early-Twentieth Century?

*Rischin, *The Promised City*, 236-267

Apr 25: Is New York Exceptional today? Part II

*Foner, Nancy, [*How Exceptional is New York?*](#) *Migration and Multiculturalism in the Empire City*, 278-299

*Michael Lichter and Roger Waldinger, *Producing Conflict: Immigration and the Management of Diversity in the Multiethnic Metropolis*, 147-167.

Alba and Nee. [*Remaking the American Mainstream*](#) 215-295

Foner, *Not Just Black and White*, 99-1023.

Week 15: Conclusions

Apr 30: Conclusion: The Century-Long Dialectic of Immigrants and New York

Presentations of Final Paper Topics

Final Paper Due May 7 by 5pm