

**Immigrant New York:
The Changing American City
The Graduate Center, Fall 2019**

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Course time: Tuesdays, 4:15 to 6:15 p.m.
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Website: <https://tinyurl.com/y4c2s272>

Course Description:

“There are roughly three New Yorks. There is, first, the New York of the man or woman who was born there, who takes the city for granted and accepts its size, its turbulence as natural and inevitable. Second, there is the New York of the commuter—the city that is devoured by locusts each day and spat out each night. Third, there is New York of the person who was born somewhere else and came to New York in quest of something.”
– from E.B. White’s *Here is New York* (1948:1)

Over the course of the twentieth century, New York City witnessed two major waves of immigration. From the Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrants who arrived at the turn of the twentieth century to the Chinese, Mexican and Caribbean immigrants who now constitute about half of the city’s immigrant population, New York City has a long tradition of integrating new immigrants. In 2017, approximately 38 percent of the city’s population of 8.4 million people was foreign-born with as many as 800 languages being spoken, making the city one of the most diverse metropolises in the world.

How has immigration transformed New York City, both in the past and in the present? What are the major ethnic groups in the city? How are immigrants and their U.S.-born children incorporated into the city’s schools, workplaces and neighborhoods? How will their integration reshape patterns of ethnic and racial inequality in the city? This course answers these questions by focusing on New York City as a case study to highlight how immigration has transformed the city’s demographic, political, socioeconomic and spatial landscape. On the one hand, the influx of immigrants has brought about economic revitalization of many neighborhoods from Sunset Park to Washington Heights, lowering the crime rate and stimulating business growth. On the other hand, immigration and diversity have raised concerns about social cohesion and national security.

And yet, this city of “eight million stories” is not only a major immigrant destination, but also the global capital for finance and commerce, arts and culture, higher education, medical innovations, and technological developments. Given time and space constraints, we will not be able to explore all these themes and will have to focus narrowly on the immigrant experience. One unique feature of this course is the opportunity for students to directly observe and study New York City’s diverse neighborhoods, immigrant communities and immigrant organizations. The course welcomes students from a range of disciplinary background, including sociology, urban studies, social anthropology, political science, and history.

Course Objectives:

1. Become familiar with the major immigrant and ethnic groups in New York City.
2. Understand how immigration has transformed New York City neighborhoods.
3. Explore key domains through which immigrants become incorporated into the city.
4. Apply these ideas and concepts to the study of neighborhoods in New York City.

Course Requirements:

1. Class participation (10% of final grade)
2. Leading discussion (10% of final grade)
3. 8 reading memos (20% of final grade)
4. 3 neighborhood memos (30% of final grade)
5. Final research paper (30% of final grade)

Class Participation

Your active participation in class is strongly encouraged. Complete assigned readings before each class and come prepared to discuss them. Everyone should join in, even those who are naturally shy. The quality of your comments is more important than the quantity.

Leading Discussion

One or two students will be responsible for leading the discussion each week by making a brief presentation (**about 10 minutes**) at the beginning of each class. This is *not* meant to be a summary of the readings, as everyone would have read the materials. Your responsibility will include: (1) providing a brief assessment of the readings; (2) highlighting the main themes from the reading memos; and (3) summarizing the remaining questions from the reading memos to be discussed.

Eight Reading Memos

These weekly reading memos will be based on the assigned readings. These memos should be about 400-500 words. In these memos, you could: (1) highlight the most important insight or idea from the readings; (2) share your assessments on both the strengths and/or weaknesses of the readings; and (3) raise questions that you particularly like to discuss in class. The memos will be due on **Sundays at 5 p.m.** via the course website. These reading memos also serve as the starting point for our in-class discussion. Recognizing that we all lead busy and complex lives, you will be required to submit eight reading memos out of the fourteen weeks. It is up to you to decide which of the ten weeks you would like to submit a memo.

Neighborhood Visits and Memos (due on Thursdays: Sep. 26, Oct. 24 and Nov. 21)

One of the main assignments for the course is that you must go out and visit immigrant neighborhoods in New York City and provide a descriptive account of your experiences and observations. You must complete a total of three neighborhood memos throughout the semester. You can visit these neighborhoods at your leisure, but you will be responsible for handing in the memos for each neighborhood by the paper deadline. You might want to plan a visit with a classmate or a friend, as that could be a fun trip and provide extra security/safety especially when visiting an unfamiliar area.

In this assignment you will be making observations at both the individual and neighborhood levels. At the individual level, you should observe, catalog and interpret the ways individuals interact, or

avoid interactions, in public (i.e. streets, parks, etc.) and semi-public (i.e. restaurants, stores, etc.) settings and, if possible, changes in these patterns of interactions. Also observe the ways that you are reacting inwardly to the events you observe. What do you find attractive? From what do you recoil? How do you manage your reactions and cope with the unfamiliar? At the neighborhood level, you will observe signs of change at the borders of the different neighborhoods you cross on a single street. Observe changes in ethnic composition, shops, sounds, facilities, cleanliness of the streets, etc. Pay close attention to the border and the things that immediately signify that you have moved from one zone to the next.

The expectation for these neighborhood memos is that you provide a thick, detailed, and interesting description and reflection of your visit in the neighborhood. Bring a small notebook to write down your observations, and, if possible, a camera to take photos of the neighborhoods you visit. You may also use an unobtrusive tape recorder to voice your observations or record notes from any conversations you might have with local residents. Or you use your smart phone for these purposes. Try to listen in on public conversations. Write a report on your observations (5 to 6 pages, double-spaced). Submit a paper copy to my mailbox and an electronic copy to the course website.

One in-class exercise will involve you reading your classmate's first neighborhood visit memo and giving feedback to him/her. What do you like about the memo? What other information do you wish to have been included? How can the memo be improved? Completion of this exercise will count towards your in-class participation grade. More importantly, it will provide an opportunity to learn about what constitutes a good neighborhood memo for everyone involved.

Major Research Paper (due on Thursday, December 12 at 5 p.m.)

You will be expected to submit a final research paper based on your own research. It should not exceed 14 to 16 pages (double-spaced), plus appendices and bibliography. You will have two options.

The first option is to do a research paper focusing on one immigrant community/neighborhood in New York City. This paper will be based largely on your own observations of the neighborhood, two to three in-depth interviews of local residents and/or businesses from the neighborhood and demographic data available from the census or other administrative sources. For example, you might want to focus on Bushwick, Crown Heights, Jackson Heights or Sunset Park. The possibilities are endless, but the strongest paper should provide a well-rounded description and in-depth analysis of one or more major substantive issues within the community. For example, you might want to provide a thick description of the neighborhood in terms of its ethnic/racial composition, socioeconomic status, levels of amenities and resources, crime and safety concerns, and physical and social (dis)order, etc. The goal here is to provide readers with a detailed description of the neighborhoods and how it might feel like to live there. At the same time, the paper should also focus on one or more major issues that are most salient to the specific immigrant community you study: gentrification, education, crime, ethnic conflicts, etc. Think of your audience as someone who have no prior experience with or knowledge of these neighborhoods, how would you describe these neighborhoods to them? What neighborhood features would you emphasize (i.e. diversity, amenities, restaurant scene, waterfront access, public parks, etc.)? Which neighborhood features could use some improvements (i.e. crime and safety, amenities, cleanliness, etc.)? Which challenges are on the mind of the local residents, local businesses or community activists, etc.?

The second option is to do a research paper that focuses on an ethnic organization or a non-profit organization that serves a particular immigrant community in the city. This paper will be based on your ethnographic observations of the organization, two to three in-depth interviews with staff members and/or clients of the organization, archival materials or administrative data from the organization. The goal here is to provide readers with a clear sense of the mission of the organization, the services that it provides, the opportunities and challenges that it faces in providing support for the immigrant community, etc. Why is its work important? How does it serve a particular need? What could use some improvements? You might consider presenting your final report from the research project to the organization, which could lead to real recommendations for improvements.

Doing the fieldwork in the neighborhoods, gaining access to an organization and scheduling interviews will take some time, so I will want you to get started on the research earlier rather than later. If you aren't sure about a possible topic, I encourage you to look over the syllabus and look at what we will cover. Is there a topic that stands out as interesting to you? Is there anything missing that you might want to explore on your own? If you are thinking of focusing on an immigrant neighborhood, visit the area early and often during the semester. If you are thinking of writing about an organization, develop relationships and contacts early on in the semester. You will need to make your initial visit to the neighborhood or organization by **Thursday, Oct. 17** at the latest, so that you can move the research project forward. You will need to submit a brief proposal (1-3 pages) by **Thursday, Nov. 7 at 5 p.m.** and then we will set up a time to meet and discuss the feasibility and potential content of your paper. The final paper will be due on **Thursday, Dec. 12 at 5 p.m.** Submit a paper copy to my mailbox and one electronic copy to the course website.

Course Policies:

1. Our weekly seminar will be mostly discussion-based. We will begin with the discussion leader(s), who will provide the starting point for our discussion. I will also try to place the readings in context or to provide background information that will help frame the materials.
2. Doing the reading is essential for your understanding of the topics. Some questions to ponder for each reading assignment include: What data and methodology is employed by the author? What is the main argument or thesis? What claims are being made by the author? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument? Do you agree or disagree with the author? If so, why? How does the reading relate to your research? How does it relate to current events or public opinion? Thinking about and answering these questions will help prepare you for class discussions and assignments.
3. I am happy to meet with you and to answer any questions about the course. To that end, feel free to come to my office hours. I will try to stay a few minutes after each class. If you have any "small" questions, then this will be an excellent time to approach me. I would like you to do as well as you can in my course, so do ask questions and get feedback on your work.
4. Technology in the classroom can be both a blessing and a distraction. If you would like to use your laptop during class, you should turn off your internet browsers and email clients. Laptops and electronic devices should be used strictly for note-taking purposes only. We will rely on

the honor code for reinforcement, so please help me to create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning and sharing.

5. If you have a visible or invisible disability and need accommodations, let me know. To request accommodations, you must be registered with Student Disability Services [here](#).

Course Readings:

Books to purchase

Binder, Frederick M., David M. Reimers, and Robert W. Snyder. 2019. *All the Nations Under Heaven: Immigrants, Migrants and the Making of New York*. Revised Edition. New York: Columbia University Press.

Castañeda, Ernesto. 2018. *A Place to Call Home: Immigrant Exclusion and Urban Belonging in New York, Paris and Barcelona*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Chin, Margaret. 2015. *Sewing Women: Immigrants and the New York City Garment Industry*. Second Edition. New York: Columbia University Press.

Foner, Nancy. 2013. *One Out of Three: Immigrant New York in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Columbia University Press

Foner, Nancy. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hum, Tarry. 2014. *Making a Global Immigrant Neighborhood: Brooklyn's Sunset Park*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Opie, Frederick Douglass. 2014. *Upsetting the Apple Cart: Black-Latino Coalitions in New York City from Protest to Public Office*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Padilla Peralta, Dan-el. 2015. *Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League*. New York: Penguin Press.

Smith, Robert C. 2005. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Tonnelat, Stéphane and William Kornblum. 2017. *International Express: New Yorkers on the 7 Train*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Warikoo, Natasha. 2011. *Balancing Acts: Youth Culture in the Global City*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Outline of the Course:

Part I: Overview of Immigrant New York

- Aug. 27: Introduction
Sep. 3: The Making of Immigrant New York
Sep. 10: Immigrant New York, Then and Now
Sep. 17: The Ethnic Mosaic of New York City

Part II: Immigrant Assimilation and Domains of Incorporation

- Sep. 24: Assimilation of Immigrants and Their Children
Oct. 15: The New Second Generation
Oct. 22: Employment and Mobility
Oct. 29: Culture and Education
Nov. 5: Neighborhoods and Communities
Nov. 12: Politics and Coalition Building
Nov. 19: Diversity and Intergroup Relations
Nov. 26: The Undocumented Experience
Dec. 3: The Transnational Connections
Dec. 10: Comparison across Cities

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

PART I: OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRANT NEW YORK

August 27: Introduction

Foner, Nancy. 2007. "How Exceptional is New York? Migration and Multiculturalism in the Empire City." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30: 999-1023.

Glazer, Nathan and Daniel P. Moynihan. 1970. *Beyond the Melting Pot, Second Edition: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2nd edition. Introduction.

September 3: The Making of Immigrant New York

Binder, Frederick M., David M. Reimers, and Robert W. Snyder. 2019. *All the Nations Under Heaven: Immigrants, Migrants and the Making of New York*. Revised Edition. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapters 1-7.

Recommended:

Glazer, Nathan and Daniel P. Moynihan. 1970. *Beyond the Melting Pot, Second Edition: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2nd edition.

September 10: Immigrant New York, Then and Now

Foner, Nancy. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

September 17: The Ethnic Mosaic of New York City

Foner, Nancy. 2013. *One Out of Three: Immigrant New York in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapters 1-8.

PART II: ASSIMILATION AND DOMAINS OF INCORPORATION

September 24: Assimilation of Immigrants and Their Children

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1-2.

Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1-4.

Recommended:

Alba, Richard, Philip Kasinitz and Mary C. Waters. 2011. "The Kids are (mostly) All Right: Second Generation Assimilation." *Social Forces* 89(3): 763-774.

Neighborhood memo 1 will be due on Thursday, September 26

October 1: Academic Holiday – no class scheduled.

October 8: Academic Holiday – no class scheduled.

October 15: The New Second Generation

Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 5-11.

Recommended:

Luthra, Renee Reichl, Thomas Soehl and Roger Waldinger. 2018. *Origins and Destinations: The Making of the Second Generation*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Make initial visit to neighborhood or organization by Thursday, October 17

October 22: Employment and Mobility

Chin, Margaret. 2005. *Sewing Women: Immigrants and the New York City Garment Industry*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Recommended:

Waldinger, Roger. 1999. *Still the Promised City? African-Americans and New Immigrants in Postindustrial New York*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Neighborhood memo 2 will be due on Thursday, October 24

October 29: Culture and Education

Warikoo, Natasha. 2011. *Balancing Acts: Youth Culture in the Global City*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Recommended:

Louie, Vivian S. M. 2004. *Compelled to Excel: Immigration, Education and Opportunity among Chinese Americans*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

November 5: Neighborhoods and Communities

Hum, Tarry. 2014. *Making a Global Immigrant Neighborhood: Brooklyn's Sunset Park*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Recommended:

Zukin, Sharon, Philip Kasinitz, and Xiangming Chen. 2015. *Global Cities, Local Streets: Everyday Diversity from New York to Shanghai*. New York: Routledge.

Research proposal will be due on Thursday, November 7 at 5 p.m.

November 12: Politics and Coalition Building

Opie, Frederick Douglass. 2014. *Upsetting the Apple Cart: Black-Latino Coalitions in New York City from Protest to Public Office*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Recommended:

Kasinitz, Philip. 1992. *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race*. Cornell University Press.

November 19: Diversity and Intergroup Relations

Tonnelat, Stéphane and William Kornblum. 2017. *International Express: New Yorkers on the 7 Train*. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapters 1-5 and 8-9.

Recommended:

Waters, Mary C. 1999. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Neighborhood memo 3 will be due on Thursday, November 21

November 26: The Undocumented Experience

Padilla Peralta, Dan-el. 2015. *Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League*. New York: Penguin Press.

December 3: The Transnational Connections

Smith, Robert C. 2005. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapters 1-3, 5-6, and 8-9.

December 10: Comparison across Cities

Castañeda, Ernesto. 2018. *A Place to Call Home: Immigrant Exclusion and Urban Belonging in New York, Paris and Barcelona*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Recommended:

Foner, Nancy. 2005. *In A New Land: A Comparative View of Immigration*. New York: New York University Press. Introduction.

Final research paper due on Thursday, December 12 at 5 p.m.

A Final Note on Academic Integrity:

The intellectual endeavor 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 completing assignments; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent. If you have any questions about what constitutes a primary source to be cited, do come to see me during my office hours and we can talk in more details.