

CENTRE FOR CANADIAN, US & LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

Course No.	: AW 653
Course Title	: Society and Culture in the United States
Course level	: PhD
Course Teacher	: Dr. Saumyajit Ray
Credit Allotted	: 3
Instructional Method	: Classroom lectures and tutorials
Evaluation Method	: Term Paper (25%), Movie Review (25%), End Semester Exam (50%)
Semester	: Monsoon
Course Duration	: 1 Semester
Class hours	: 3 per week

Course Outline

This course intends to introduce students to American society and inculcate in them an understanding of the various factors that helped shape it over time.

Processes like immigration and assimilation and institutions like family, church, schools, political parties, the free market, and the media have firmly welded a “nation” like no other. At the same time, social conflict rooted in racial and ethnic prejudice can still only be resolved through federal intervention. The welfare state has grown in size and scope, taking up responsibilities and creating entitlements as never before. Immigrants, for the first time, have refused to learn English, forcing many states to declare English their official language through popular initiatives.

As Americans debate who they are and what it means to be an American, the United States continues to attract millions to its shores. Global terrorism has reopened the question as to who was welcome to America and who was not, and agencies struggle to find answers to guns, drugs, and illegal immigration.

It would be the aim of this course to explore how Americans of all hues, native and immigrant, rich and poor, White and colored, Protestant and Catholic, Asian and Latino, liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican, and straight and gay, plan and work to achieve their share of the American Dream.

Course Content

Unit 1: “A Shining City Upon a Hill”: The beginnings of American society

- a. The American Dream
- b. A “nation” of immigrants
- c. A Christian nation

Unit 2: From “immigrant” to “ethnic”: Issues in Immigration I

- a. Waves of Immigration: Old, New, Newest
- b. Select ethnic minorities: Irish, Italians, Latinos
- c. Reinforcing ethnic identity: Bilingual education and multilingual ballots

Unit 3: From “ethnic to “American”: Issues in Immigration II

- a. Theories of assimilation: Anglo-conformity, Melting Pot, Cultural Pluralism, Amero-conformity
- b. “Mainstream” Americans
- c. Nativism, Americanization, the “Official English” movement, New Nativism

Unit 4: “One nation under God”: Religion and Religions in America

- a. Faith, secularization, and the importance of religion
- b. Christian America: Churches (Protestants, Roman Catholics, churches of the Eastern Orthodoxy, Mormons), Christian fundamentalism, evangelicalism
- c. Jews in America: American Judaism, counter-missionary activity; *aliyah*
- d. Diasporic religions: Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism

Unit 5: From “Negro” to “African-American”: Blacks in America

- a. “White” supremacy: Slavery, segregation, the Ku Klux Klan, Confederate symbols
- b. Non-violent “Black” emancipation: Abolition, Civil Rights, desegregation, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Black churches
- c. Violent “Black” emancipation: Nation of Islam, Black Power, Black Lives Matter
- d. Black Conservatism: Black Republicans, BLEXIT

Unit 6: From “commitment” to “companionship”: Exploring family, marriage, and sexuality

- a. The American family: Extended, nuclear, single-parent, gay and lesbian
- b. American marriage: Traditional, inter-racial, inter-faith, inter-ethnic
- c. Decline in “family values”: Abortion, divorce, teenage-pregnancy, homosexuality, same-sex marriages

Learning outcomes

A modified version of a course with the same name taught earlier in the MPhil program, this course provides students with a wide choice of topics to work on for a doctoral degree in United States Studies. More importantly, it is meant to be an advanced level preparation in American culture and society for PhD students regardless of the profession they choose.

Reading list

Basic Texts

1. Andersen, Margaret L. and Howard F. Taylor. 2006. *Sociology: Understanding a Diverse Society*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
2. Ashbee, Edward. 2002. *American society today*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
3. Foner, Eric. 2005. *Give Me Liberty! An American History*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton Company, Inc.
4. Luedtke, Luther S., ed. 1992. *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
5. Singh, Robert. 2003. *Contemporary American Politics and Society: Issues and Controversies*. London: Sage Publications.

Unit 1

1. Ashabanner, Brent K. 1993. *Still a Nation of Immigrants*. New York, NY: Cobblehill Books.
2. Brooks, Charles A. 1919. *Christian Americanization: A Task for the Churches*. New York, NY: Council of Women for Home Missions & Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada.
3. Cullen, Jim. 2003. *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea That Shaped a Nation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
4. Frost, Bryan-Paul and Jeffrey Sikkenga. 2003. *History of American Political Thought*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
5. Gavit, John P. 1922. *Americans by Choice*. New York, NY: Harper & Bros.
6. Heimart, Alan and Andrew Delbanco, eds. 1985. *The Puritans in America: A Narrative Anthology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
7. Kennedy, John F. 2008. *A Nation of Immigrants*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.
8. Levinson, David and Melvin Ember, eds. 1997. *American Immigrant Cultures*.

9. Portes, Alejandro and Ruben Rumbaut. 1990. *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
10. Samuel, Lawrence R. 2012. *The American Dream: A Cultural History*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
11. Turner, Frederick Jackson. 2008. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. London: Penguin Books.
12. Walker, Paul Robert. 2012. *A Nation of Immigrants*. New York, NY: Kingfisher Press.

Unit 2

1. Bennett, William J. 1988. *Our Children and Our Country: Improving America's Schools and Affirming the Common Culture*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
2. Crawford, James. 1991. *Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory and Practice*. Second Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Bilingual Education Services.
3. Daniels, Roger. 1992. *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd.
4. Duignan, Peter. 1998. *Bilingual Education: A Critique*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution.
5. Edmonston, Barry and Jeffrey S. Passel, eds. 1994. *Immigration and Ethnicity: The Integration of America's Newest Arrivals*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.
6. Fishman, Joshua A., et al. 1985. *The Rise and Fall of the Ethnic Revival: Perspectives on Language and Ethnicity*. Berlin: Mouton Press.
7. Glazer, Nathan and Daniel P. Moynihan. 1970. *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. Revised Second Edition. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
8. Lamm, Richard D. and Gary Imhoff. 1985. *The Immigration Time-Bomb: The Fragmenting of America*. New York, NY: Truman Talley Books & E.P. Dutton.
9. Martinez, Ruben. 2004. *The New Americans*. New York, NY: The New Press.
10. Reimers, David. 1985. *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
11. Sowell, Thomas. 1981. *Ethnic America: A History*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
12. Tucker, James Thomas. 2009. *The Battle Over Bilingual Ballots: Language Minorities and Political Access under the Voting Rights Act*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Unit 3

1. Adams, Karen L. and Daniel T. Brinks, eds. 1990. *Perspectives on Official English: The Campaign for English as the Official Language of the USA*. (New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.
2. Baron, Dennis E. 1990. *The English-Only Question: An Official Language for Americans?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
3. Gordon, Milton M. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

4. Hartmann, Edward G. 1948. *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
5. Higham, John. 1988. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
6. Huntington, Samuel P. 2004. *Who are We? America's Great Debate*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
7. Kallen, Horace. 1956. *Cultural Pluralism and the American Idea*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
8. Knobel, Dale T. 1996. "*America for the Americans*": *The Nativist Movement in the United States*. New York, NY: Twayne Publishers.
9. Miller, John J. 1998. *The Unmaking of Americans: How Multiculturalism Has Undermined America's Assimilation Ethic*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
10. Murray, Charles 2011. *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*. New York, NY: Crown Forum.
11. Ray, Saumyajit. 2010. *America's Common Bond: Why English should be the official language of the United States*. Delhi: Reference Press.
12. Walzer, Michael. 1994. *What It Means To Be An American: Essays on the American Experience*. New Delhi: Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd.

Unit 4

1. Ahlstrom, Sydney. 1975. *A Religious History of the American People*. New York, NY: Image Books.
2. Albanese, Catherine L. 1999. *America: Religions and Religion*. Third Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishers.
3. Allitt, Patrick. 2003. *Religion in America since 1945: A History*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
4. Butler, Jon. 1992. *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
5. Dershowitz, Alan M. 1997. *The Vanishing American Jew: In Search of Jewish Identity for the Next Century*. New York, NY: Little, Brown & Company
6. Dimont, Max I. 1978. *The Jews in America: The Roots, History, and Destiny of American Jews*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster
7. Hudson, Winthrop S. 1961. *American Protestantism*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
8. Hudson, Winthrop S. 1987. *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*. Fourth Edition. New York, NY: Macmillan.
9. Hulsether, Mark. 2007. *Religion, Culture and Politics in the Twentieth-Century United States*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
10. Neusner, Jacob. 2009. *World Religions in America: An Introduction*. Fourth Edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
11. O'Toole, James M. 2008. *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

12. Sachar, Howard M. 1992. *A History of the Jews in America*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
13. Sarna, Jonathan D. 2019. *American Judaism: A History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
14. Segers, Mary C. and Ted G. Jelen. 1998. *A Wall of Separation? Debating the Public Role of Religion*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
15. Wald, Kenneth D. and Allison Calhoun-Brown. 2011. *Religion and Politics in the United States*. Sixth Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
16. Williams, Peter W. 1998. *America's Religions: Traditions and Cultures*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Unit 5

1. Arsenault, Raymond. 2006. *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
2. Chalmers, David M. 2000. *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*. Third Edition. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
3. Foner, Eric and Joshua Brown. 2005. *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf
4. Handlin, Oscar. 1957. *Race and Nationality in American Life*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
5. Joseph, Peniel E. 2006. *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company.
6. McVeigh, Rory. 2009. *The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan: Right Wing Movements and National Politics*. Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press.
7. Morris, Aldon D. 1984. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
8. Sales, Jr., William W. 1994. *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
9. Sitkoff, Harvard. 2008. *The Struggle for Black Equality*. 25th Anniversary Edition. New York, NY: Hill and Wang.
10. Stamp, Kenneth M. 1956. *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South*. Reprint 1989. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
11. Van DeBurg, William L. 1992. *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
12. Williams, Hettie V. 2009. *We Shall Overcome to We Shall Overrun: The Collapse of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Revolt (1962-1968)*. Lanham, MA: The University Press of America.

Unit 6

1. Amato, Paul R. et al. 2007. *Alone Together: How Marriage in America Is Changing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
2. Celello, Kristin. 2009. *Making Marriage Work: A History of Marriage and Divorce in the Twentieth-Century United States*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
3. Chauncey, George. 2004. *Why Marriage? The History Shaping Today's Debate over Gay Equality*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
4. Farrell, Betty G. 1999. *Family: The Making of an Idea, an Institution, and a Controversy in American Culture*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
5. Gillis, John R. 1997. *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual and the Quest for Family Values*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
6. Pinello, Daniel R. 2006. *America's Struggle for Same-Sex Marriage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. Riley, Naomi Schaefer. 2013. *'Til Faith Do Us Apart: How Interfaith Marriage is Transforming America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
8. Romano, Renee C. 2003. *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
9. Schuh, Thomas J. 2004. *In Support of Same-Sex Marriage & Gay Rights in America*. Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing.
10. Stacey, Judith 1996. *In the Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
11. Wiseman, Dennis G., ed. 2008. *The American Family: Understanding its Changing Dynamics and Place in Society*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher.
12. Wolfson, Evan. 2004. *Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality, and Gay People's Right to Marry*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

[N.B.: Journal articles and book chapters will be made available on request to the Course Teacher.]