

The Peopling of NYC*Mike Owen Benediktsson, 2015 Spring*

Syllabus

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- **Professor Mike Owen Benediktsson**
- mob201@gmail.com
- 917.749.2410 (mobile phone for emergencies)
- Class Schedule: Wednesday, 3:10pm – 5:40pm, Room C111 in Hunter North.
- Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:am – Noon, Room W1603, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In the second Honors College Seminar, students will investigate the role of immigration and migration in shaping the city's identity – past, present, and future. Topics to be considered include the social dynamics that affect the relations between racial and ethnic groups in diverse neighborhoods; the factors that have driven and drawn people to New York since the 17th century; the different ways that religion, race, gender, and ethnicity have shaped immigrant encounters with the city; the formation and social organization of immigrant communities in such neighborhoods as the Five Points, the Lower East Side, Harlem, El Barrio, Little Italy, and Chinatown; the impact of successive waves of newcomers on urban culture and politics; the continuing debates over assimilation and Americanization; and the role of food in all of this. Field trips will complement reading, writing, and research assignments. Students will work together in groups to study a “melting pot” neighborhood somewhere in the city, producing a short documentary film and a research paper about the neighborhood.

PLAGIARISM POLICY: If you draw on material written by someone else, you must acknowledge their work by enclosing any direct quotations in quotes and by citing all resources properly. When you draw upon a concept or a theory developed by an author, even when you do not quote or paraphrase that author, cite their work appropriately. When in doubt, refer to the “Writing from Sources” guide published by the Hunter College Reading and Writing Center and available both here (<http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/reading-writing/on-line/qpp.html>) and on our Blackboard site. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean's office.

READINGS:

There are no required books for this course! All of our readings will be accessible electronically, in the “Readings” section of our class website or through the Hunter College library website.

ASSIGNMENTS / EXPECTATIONS:

1. Contributions in Class and Participation in Tours (15%)
2. Weekly Reading Responses (25%)

3. Three Short Video Assignments (15%)
4. Three Short Writing Assignments (15%)
5. Group Research Paper Final Draft (12-15 pages) (15%)
6. Group Documentary Final Cut (15%)

Class Discussions, etc.: Most classes, we'll spend some time discussing the required readings. It is vital that you do the readings on time and come ready to talk about them. If some students are particularly quiet in class, I may ask them to share these questions or opinions from time to time. This is not meant to put people on the spot, but rather, to insure that we hear from everybody in the class and not just an outspoken minority. If you come to class on time and contribute frequently to class discussions and participate enthusiastically in workshops and tours, you can expect a very good participation grade.

Tours: There will be two or three tours or museum visits during the semester. Each one will be between two and three hours long. These will be scheduled either during class time or on the weekends. They are mandatory and an important part of the class. Bring some cash for lunch and/or coffee breaks, and dress warmly if it's cold! Like, really, really warmly. Trust me, if it's anywhere near or below freezing, you can't overdo it.

Weekly Reading Responses: Almost every week, you will be asked to post a 300-500 word response to the readings for that week no later than 10pm the night before class. These are a really important component of your grade in the class, because they are the only individual (as opposed to group) written assignments. The reading responses are your chance to engage with the class material on a direct, subjective and personal level. Most weeks, I will provide some questions to help you frame your responses, but feel free to ignore these if you would prefer to simply respond critically to the readings. All weekly assignments should be submitted as posts to our class website. Half of the credit for each reading response will be automatically awarded if it is submitted on time and meets the basic requirements. The other half will be based on my evaluation of your responses at the *end* of the semester. (This means you'll be able to go back and revise them before they are definitively graded.) Once or twice during the course of the semester, I may provide some feedback on your reading responses and give you a sense of how you are doing with them.

Group Research Papers: In groups of two or three, you will research and write a paper analyzing a problem or an issue facing the neighborhood that you filmed before spring break. Research papers may draw on scholarly literature, newspaper articles, websites, reports by government agencies or non-governmental organizations, personal interviews, and first-hand observations.

Documentary Films: In the same groups, you will create a short documentary film about a "melting pot" neighborhood (a community of especially high racial or socioeconomic diversity) somewhere in NYC. The final version of these films will be due before spring break, and will be posted on a public website at the end of the semester.

I. Introduction

■ Week 1: January 28: Introduction

- Readings:
 - [Mehta-The-Meltingest-Pot](#)

- Assignments:
 - [Neighborhood Description for Site](#)

Week 2: February 4: The Task at Hand

- Readings:
 - [Ellick, “Jackson Heights, a Closed Book”](#)
 - [Berger, “Melting Together in Ditmas Park”](#)
- Assignments:
 - [Post neighborhood description.](#)
 - [Online human subjects training and forms.](#)
 - [Choose partners and roles for group projects.](#)
 - [Post reading response.](#)

Week 3: February 11: The Melting Pot I

- Readings:
 - Gordon, pp. 60-63, 84-114, [“Assimilation” and “Anglo-Conformity”](#)
 - [Excerpt](#) from Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion and the Making of Americans”
 - [19th/Early 20th Century Assimilation Cartoons](#)
- Assignments:
 - [Post Reading Response](#)
 - [Zooming In](#)

FEBRUARY 18: NO CLASS!!!

Week 4: February 25: The Melting Pot II

Readings:

- [Orozco, “Everything About Assimilation You Were Afraid to Ask”](#)
- [Gabaccia, “Food Fights”](#)

Assignments:

- [Post Reading Response](#)
- [Post Research Topic / Sources Assignment](#)

Week 5: March 4: Tenement Museum Tour

II. The Mosaic

Week 6: March 11: The Mosaic I (a.k.a. The Enclave)

- Readings:
 - [Sullivan, “Ethnic Enclaves Sanctuary or Impediment”](#)
 - [Guest, Critique of Urban Enclaves](#)
 - [“A Dilapidated Tract of Queens”](#)
 - [“Concern for the Underclass as the City Progresses”](#)
- Assignments:
 - [Post Reading Response](#)
 - [Primary Source Analysis](#)

March 18: NO CLASS!!!

Week 7: March 25: Library Research Session?

Week 8: April 1: The Mosaic III

- L.E.S. WALKING TOUR BY YOURS TRULY
 - (meet on Park Row, right outside Brooklyn Bridge 4,5,6 stop.)
- Assignment: [Rough Draft](#) due by 10pm on Sunday, March 30.

APRIL 8: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!!

V. The Crazy Quilt

Week 9: April 15: The Crazy Quilt I

- Readings:
 - Excerpts from [Anbinder “Five Points”](#)
 - Watch Film: [Gangs of New York](#)
- Assignments:
 - [Post Reading Response](#)

Week 10: April 22: The Crazy Quilt II

- Do the Right Thing Screening

III. The Growth Machine

Week 11: April 29: Use vs. Exchange I

- Readings:
 - [Molotch, “The City as a Growth Machine”](#)
 - [Sharon Zukin Profile in New York Times](#)

- Watch Sharon Zukin interview [here](#).
- [Schwartz, “Gentrification and its Discontents”](#)

- Assignments:
 - [Post Reading Response](#)

Week 12: May 6: Use vs. Exchange II

- My Brooklyn Screening

Week 13: May 13: Last Class! Editorial Workshop and Presentations.