Urban Studies 326
Cities and Diasporas

Course Description:

This introductory course examines the historical and contemporary movements of peoples and the complex issues of identity and experience to which these processes give rise as well as the creative possibilities that flow from movement and being moved. It explores the effects of new modes of communication on the coherence of cultural and political boundaries and it analyzes the Diaspora experiences of dislocation, migration and resettlement that challenge modern assumptions about the capacity of a nation-state or country of origin to serve as a boundary or primary source of identification. This area of study is comparative and interdisciplinary, drawing from the social sciences. This course provides the background to understanding Diasporas, Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism from diverse perspectives and introduces students to a range of key debates in the field, with particular attention to questions of history, globalization, and cultural production.

Course Objectives:

1. Master theoretical approaches for analysis and understanding of diaspora typologies and be able to use these theoretical perspectives in written papers/oral presentations regarding the historical as well as current socio-economic and political functioning of various contemporary diasporas in American society.

2. Acquire familiarity with diaspora populations in US Cities and their relationships to the political, geographic spaces they inhabit.

3. Engage in Urban Studies data collection and assessment methods, from primary and multiple sources about selected diaspora groups.

4. Understand and analyze the processes that contribute to the production and reproduction of diaspora populations and spaces.

Required Reading

1. Course Package available from the Professor
2. Additional Handouts of relevant articles

Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>February 26, 2014</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Mid Term</td>
<td>March 19, 2014</td>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Presentations</td>
<td>May 5-14, 2014</td>
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Policies

I. Participation: This course is built around discussion. It is important that students attend and participate in class sessions. We expect it of all of you. If you have a problem with shyness or speaking in front of groups and you think that this will inhibit your performance in this class, please let us know. Participation means not only offering thoughts on subject matter but also thoughtful listening and a demonstration of respect for each others’ views.

II. Respect: The subject matter of this class can be controversial. Regardless of your personal convictions, we expect you to challenge yourselves intellectually and to demonstrate respect for each other. Respect does not mean withdrawing from discussion. On the contrary it implies a continuing sincere engagement with others in an effort to improve your own critical insight into the subject matter at hand. This can only be achieved when each of you feel comfortable expressing yourself, and comfort is maintained through continuing expression of tolerance and thoughtful consideration of each other. To also demonstrate respect for everyone else in the class, please be on time and turn off cell phones before you enter class.

III. Assignments: Due dates are provided as part of this course syllabus. As a result, on the first day of class, you already know what these dates are well in advance so that you can plan to have your assignments completed by the due date. Feel free to also hand assignments earlier if you wish.

IV. Late Assignments: Will be marked down 10% per day and will not be accepted after 7 late days (weekends included). If you have legitimate and documented reasons for not being able to complete your assignment in a timely manner, these penalties will not apply. If you feel that you have legitimate reasons for not completing the assignment on time, please get in touch with the professor well in advance of the due date (i.e., not the day before the assignment is due).

V. Plagiarism: DO NOT DO IT! Please read the following definition to inform yourselves about plagiarism and consult the website listed.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of using the ideas or work of another person as if it were one’s own. Plagiarism is grounds for dismissal from the Queens College, therefore, students are strongly cautioned to use all appropriate documentation to credit any sources used in compiling their own work. Plagiarism will result in the automatic failure of the assignment in question; a second occurrence will earn the offender an “F” for the course. Further discussion of plagiarism can be found at the Queens College website.

VI. Laptop use is only permitted in the front row of the classroom, so if you use your laptop to take notes, you should plan on arriving early for class to make sure that you will get a seat. If you need to use your cell phone, BlackBerry, I-Pod, Sidekick or any other electronic equipment, please do so outside of the classroom; using these devices during class may be distracting to your fellow classmates. The recording of lectures or class discussions is not permitted.

VII. Incompletes: Incompletes will not be granted, except in extraordinary circumstances and with proper documentation. After-the-fact requests for extensions and incompletes will not be considered.
Course Schedule

Part I - Foundations and Historical Perspectives

Week I - Jan 27 & Jan 29 - What is Diaspora?
Required Reading
1. Robin Cohen, “Introduction” and “Conclusion: Diasporas, Their Types, and Their Futures,” Global Diasporas: An Introduction, pp. ix-xii and pp. 177-196

Supplementary Readings:
- William B. Ackah, Pan-Africanism, Exploring the Contradictions: Politics, Identity, and Development in Africa and the African Diaspora

Week II - Feb. 3 & 5, - What Is Diaspora? - ....continued
Required Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
- Joseph E. Harris, ed. Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora
- James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century

Week III - Feb. 10 & 12
No classes on Monday, Feb. 12—Lincoln’s Birthday.
Feb. 10 - The Influence of Black Diaspora Experiences in the Western Hemisphere
Assignment:
1. Library Viewing of “Black in Latin America,” by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. This is a set of 4 DVDs that may also be available for viewing on the internet.

Assignment # I. This work by Skip Gates from Harvard focuses on six countries and examines what it is like to be Black in Latin America. Write a 4 – 5 page paper in which you describe the history and experiences of Africans in Cuba or the Dominican Republic (choose one) and conduct a comparative analysis to any one of the other six countries in the documentary on: effects of the legacy of racism, the role of religion, the treatment of women and the identification of African ancestry people with blackness. This paper is due on February 26, 2014.

Week IV & V. - No classes on Feb. 17 – President’s Day.
Required Reading:
Supplementary Readings:

**Part II Social and Cultural components**

**Week VI March 3 & 5 Transnationality**

Required Reading:
1. Jhumpa Lahiri, “The Third and Final Continent,” *The Interpreter of Maladies*

Supplementary Readings:

**Week VII. - March 10 & 12 The Economics of Diaspora -**

Required Readings:

Supplementary Readings:
  a. Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Sidney Weintraub, eds., *Migration, Remittances and Small Business Development: Mexico and Caribbean Basin Countries*
  b. Rodolfo O. De La Garza and Briant Lindsay Lowell, eds., *Sending Money Home: Hispanic Remittances and Community Development*
  c. Makeda Silvera, *Makeda Silvera Talks with Working Class Caribbean Women about their lives and Struggles as Domestic Workers in Canada.*
  e. Maristella Botticini, From Farmers to Merchants, Conversions and Diaspora: Human Capital and Jewish History, September 2007, Vol. 5, No. 5, Pages 885-926

**Week VIII. March 17 & 19, Review and Midterm**

**Week IX March 24th & 26th Multiculturalism**

Required Readings
1. Kundnani, Arun, “The Death of Multiculturalism Race Class, 43/4, pp. 67-72
Supplementary Readings

b. Will Kymlicka, Politics in the Vernacular, pp. 1-11, 177-199
d. Courtney Jung, Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka, eds., Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies
e. The Moral Force of Indigenous Politics, Will Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship

Week X & XI March 31 & April, 2 - Cities and Urban Citizenship

Required Readings:
1. *Vijay Prashad, Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity

Supplementary Readings:

a. Seyla Benhabib, Another Cosmopolitanism
b. David Bezmozgis, Natasha and Other Stories

Week XII April 7 & 9 - Cities, Diasporas and Dilemmas of Integration

April 7 Community Observations
April 9 In class discussions

Required Readings:
2. Wendy Brown, Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the age of Identity & Empire, pp. 1-47

Supplementary Readings:

a. Sam Selvon, The Lonely Londoners
c. Zadie Smith, White Teeth

April 14 – 22, 2014 - Spring Recess

Part III Homelands, Gender and Technology

Week XIII and XIV. April 23, 28, and 30. Authenticity and Homelands

Required Readings:

Supplementary Readings:


1 HANDOUT - Not in Course Pak
Week XIII  Week XIV  May 5 - 7 Engendered Diasporas Begin Presentations

Required Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Final Term paper due on Monday, May 5\textsuperscript{th}, 2014  See description below

Week XIV - May 12 - 14  Virtual Diaspora  - Complete Presentations

Required Reading

Supplementary Reading
   a. Howard Rheingold, The Virtual Community

Last Day of Classes on May 15, 2014

About Methods of Evaluation
Two short papers are due on February 26, and May 5\textsuperscript{th}. These assignments will be discussed in Class. Please note that late assignments submissions are not accepted. Details on the two short papers for which you are independently responsible are outlined below.

I. For the first paper, you will view documentary on Blacks in six countries – Haiti, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Brazil, Mexico and Peru – that are featured in the PBS production “Black in Latin America” by Henry Gates. Then you will choose two countries, (one of them must be Cuba or the Dominican Republic) and compare that country to one of the remaining five countries in the gates film. Your comparative analysis should first describe and compare both groups in terms of how they are doing (educational and economic attainment, level of poverty, and health status) in the respective countries they live in. Also explore to what extent they have been able to preserve any aspects of their original culture and how is it practiced today. Then as you compare the DR or Cuba to your chosen groups, please also focus on: effects of the legacy of racism, the role of religion, the treatment of women and the identification of African ancestry people with blackness. Finally, consider how well both groups have been integrated or excluded from the social, political and economic structures in their country. This paper is due on Feb. 26, 2014.

I. The second paper is your term paper. It should consist of 8-10 pages, and will require that you choose one of the large diaspora groups that are well represented in NYC: Jewish, Italian, Asian, Indian, Caribbean, Irish, African American or another of your choosing. The objective of the paper is to provide evidence if the group you chose is
truly a diaspora and what type of diaspora. Do the necessary research to demonstrate either of three situations: a. does this diaspora group currently live in NYC as a distinct, separate diaspora people, or, b. Are they a group that engage in transnational living and what evidence can you provide of this or, c. Is this a group that is no longer a diaspora but has achieved high levels of integration for which you will demonstrate how that integration has been achieved. Your comprehensive analysis of your chosen group, must be presented in an organized manner that includes the following:

a. The main theories and analytic perspectives that most effectively explains the type of diaspora, that best fits your chosen group and explain why. In this section of the paper also explain the extent to which the group lives transnationally or have integrated and what characteristics can be taken into consideration as evidence of their cosmopolitanism.

b. If your group is truly a diaspora, then use the next section of the paper to describe the processes by which the group maintains their distinctiveness as a diaspora population and how much of that separation is imposed from the outside or of their own choosing and why. Have they created spaces of their own? How do they practice and maintain their cultural distinctiveness? Has separateness improved or hindered their social, economic and political participation in NYC? As you seek to answer these questions in your paper, you must provide evidence from the literature, newspapers, etc. of how that group is functioning or NOT in current times.

c. This assignment is due on May 5th, 2014. Late papers lose one letter grade for every day they are late.

Exams:
The mid-term test will cover the materials studied up to Week VIII.
Information regarding the Final Exam will be made available by the week of May 5th, 2014.

All assignments are to be typed and submitted at the beginning of the class period for which they are due. Short assignments can not be submitted late. Assignment due dates are provided in this syllabus. You now know these dates well in advance, plan to have your assignments completed accordingly. If you would like feedback on your work-in-progress, make use of our office hours or email. Of course, assignments may be submitted earlier if you would like. A description of grades can be found on the Colleges website. As you complete your assignments, please be aware that credit will be given to those who can show that they have thought about what they have studied and are able to draw from other experience (whether personal or additional research) to discuss the texts, issues, and concepts in question. Credit will also be given to students who, in their assignments, are able to incorporate and demonstrate the relevance of the theoretical material covered in different segments of the course.

Where to Get the Materials: All readings are provided in a Course Pak that you will be able to purchase.