Course Description

This course encompasses the study of racial/ethnic, gender and religious identity negotiations of Latina/o migrants both from theoretical literature as well as case studies. The many issues entailed to migratory patterns such as those of Latina/o migrants are examined through an interdisciplinary approach. The literature from the many disciplines involved in the study on these topics is vast, hence you are expected to be familiar with the main themes as viewed in class. The main goal of this course is to provide the student/s with the basic knowledge on the many issues present in the migratory pathways of Latina/o migrants to the U.S. and Japan.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

(1) Be familiar with the different conceptions of racial formations and ethnic relations in the U.S. and Japan that provide the wider social context where Latina/o migrants incorporate;

(2) Identify the pivotal theoretical concepts that allow us to understand broader Latina/o migration experiences according to different geographical, social and historical realities; and
(3) Examine the particular experiences of race/ethnicity; gender; and faith present in the daily life of Latina/o Im/Migrants within the context of the U.S. and Japan.

As aforementioned, the literature on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, and migration is extensive, especially when those themes are examined throughout varied disciplines such as ethnic studies, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, gender studies, migration studies, and religious studies. In this course we are able to just glimpse at the surface of the manyfold realities of the intersection of those axis. We will select representative authors from those various disciplines in order to understand the issues at best. By contrasting two cases of migration destinations, namely the United States and Japan, you will discover familiar trends as well as particularities that may guide you, either in further studies, research, fieldwork, or pastoral work, to understand the experiences of Latina/o migrants.

Japan and the United States share a relatively short history of modern Latina/o migration, around 30 years for Japan and around 150 years for the U.S. People from Latin American countries have intermittently migrated back-and-forth to and from them. In order to understand both situations, we will also pay attention to the of study historical migrations, especially in the Americas. However, the period studied in this class ranges mainly from the late 1800s to the present time in both cases.

The first section of the course will focus on general theoretical themes that cut across the course’s cases. It will provide you with tools to analyze the experiences of Latina/o migrants in general. The second section will focus first on the case of the United States and then on the case of Japan. We will also locate the particular understandings of race/ethnicity, gender and religion in every case in order to understand the nuances of identity negotiations of Latina/o migrants in both contexts. The third and last section of the course deals with commonalities and disparities among the two migration experiences as a way to provide for further reflection on glocal identity negotiations.
Course Materials

All the course materials will be available for access at the GTU Moodle’s course site. Due to GTU’s compliance with fair use regulations, you will not be able to download the reading materials. Audio-visual materials will be posted whenever technical means make this possible.

Course Requirements and Grading

In order to pass this course you are expected to fulfill the following requirements:

1. **Posting your comments** and interacting with the other students by responding to their interventions on the conversations on the Moodle’s course site. This is a way to engage in a collective processing of the topics by paying attention to what others think and to what you reflect on both the materials and your experiences. Although you are not require to always agree with your peers, respect and politeness are expected on these responses. Whenever possible, please use gender inclusive language. You are expected to interact a minimum of three times per week in the conversations in order to get your grade. You have the right to be absent three times from the class (equivalent to one week) throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, this assignment will count for thirty (30%) percent of the course grade

2. At the end of sections one and two, students will submit a three (3) pages reflection paper. This is due at the end of sections 1 and 2. It is a reflection paper and not a summary of class materials. In other words, this is the product of your analysis, intuitions, concerns, and/or «thirst» for knowing more on the class topics. The goal of the reflection is to encourage you to begin articulating your own discourse by expressing your own concerns, voicing your agreement or disagreement with the authors’ scholarly work, etc. Each of these assignments will count for fifteen (15%) percent of your final grade (30% total at the end of the semester).

3. During the last week of classes, you are required to **submit a final project**. The overall idea of the final project is show how you would communicate the topics studied and discussed in this class to an audience that is not academic (for example, by imagining how to present the class topics to your congregation, faith-based organization or place of activism). The project should make evident your own voice articulating a theological discourse by using the social science tools acquired in the course. This assignment will count for forty (40%) percent of your grade in the course.
Academic Conduct

Throughout the course you are expected and encouraged to maintain an academic spirit. Respect for the opinion and right of expression of your fellow classmates is mandatory. Inclusive and non-discriminatory language is expected in spoken and written formats whenever is possible.

Your ideas and work as well as others’ are valued in this class. Taking words, graphics, and/or ideas from any other sources without full attribution constitutes an academic offense. Proper citation must be given to all formats of production (written, visual, auditive). Many students cut-and-paste directly from the internet. Although there is no reason to dismiss citation from the internet —when authorship, URL address and date of accessing the website is properly given—, lack of these elements also constitute plagiarism. Whenever in doubt on how to proceed on this issue, please contact the instructor before you submit your materials through the discussion board. To learn the basis for appropriate academic conduct is an ongoing process, and as your instructor I will always be willing to assist you.

Reading Assignments and class schedule


Section I: Theoretical Tools and Intersections

Week 1 (Sep 2-7): Race and Ethnicity: Basic Concepts

Required materials


Optional materials


Week 2 (Sep 8-14): Race: Biological Fact or Social Construction?

Required materials


Optional materials


Week 3 (Sep 15-21): Constructing Ethnic Identities and Culture

Required materials


**Optional materials**


**Week 4 (Sep 21-28): Racial Formation, Ethnicity and Migration**

**Required materials**


**Optional materials**


**Week 5 (Sep 29-Oct 5): Promised Lands: Migrations and Religion**

**Required materials**


Optional materials


Week 6 (Oct 6-12): Ethnicity, Migrations, and Gender

Required materials


Optional materials


Required activity

✓ Submission of reflection paper #1.
Section II: Case Studies

(a) Case 1: Latinas/os in the United States

Week 7 (Oct 13-19): Migration and Ethnic/Racial Formations

Required materials


Optional materials


Week 8 (Oct 20-26): Reading Week

Week 9 (Oct 27-Nov 2): Faith and Ethnic Identities

Required materials


Córdova Quero - Promised Lands and Immigrants (Fall 2014) - Syllabus


Optional materials


Week 10 (Nov 3-9): Gender and Ethnic Identities

Required materials


Optional materials


(b) Case 2: Latinas/os in Japan

Week 11 (Nov 10-16): Migration and Ethnic/Racial Formations I: Japanese Brazilians

Required materials

✓ Maxwell, Roberto (dir. and prod.). 2006. Dekasegi. 8 minutes 43 seconds, Tokyo, DVD.


Optional materials


Required materials


Optional materials


Week 13 (Nov 24-30): Faith and Ethnic Identities

Required materials


Optional materials:


Week 14 (Dec 1-7): Gender and Ethnic Identities

Required materials


Optional materials


**Required activity**

✓ Submission of reflection paper #2.

**Week 15 (Dec 8-12): Wrapping-up**

**Required activity**

✓ Submission of final project.