

## INTERFAITH, INTERETHNIC, INTERRACIAL AMERICA

AMST 123b Spring 2013

Block F: 1:00-1:50 M, W, Th., Pearlman 202

Keren R. McGinity

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*E Pluribus Unum* (Out of many, one)

### COURSE NARRATIVE

This course focuses on how religion, ethnicity, and race contributed to maintaining group separatism at some early points in American history and intersected to create a unified national identity at others. It will also explore the relationship between group continuity and individual identity development. Romantic relationships and marriage between people with different ethno-religious backgrounds will be the main vehicle for examining religion, race, and ethnicity. Love and marriage between people of different faith traditions, between whites and people of color, and between people with different ethnic backgrounds will be explored.

The course incorporates popular culture by considering how interfaith, interethnic, and interracial relationships were portrayed on television and in films during the rising ethos of individualism in America. The course is designed to explain how large social issues such as antisemitism, segregation, sexism and identity politics influence life on both national and personal levels. How contextual factors such as immigration trends, World Wars, and the civil rights, feminist, and fatherhood movements influenced the meaning of love across religious, ethnic, and racial lines will be considered.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the similarities and differences between models of citizenry from the “melting pot” to the “mosaic” and prompting students to define their own interpretations;
- Developing appreciation for the role of love and marriage in forming a “more perfect union” by connecting the personal with the political;
- Cultivating students’ critical reading, viewing, and writing skills through research, papers, and film reviews;
- Inspiring class participation by relating family history to issues raised in the course;
- Strengthening students’ appreciation for the inherent complexities of being a nation of immigrants.

### REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Regular attendance at lectures, active participation in discussions, co-leading at least one class discussion, and presenting your research topic are required (20%). More than two absences from class without prior permission will affect your grade.

Writing assignments include 2 short (5-6 pages for each paper) essays that react to the reading and viewing assignments by answering a question distributed in advance (20% each) and one long (10-12 pages) research paper (40%), which will substitute for a final examination. No extensions will be granted on any paper. Late response essays will be downgraded a fraction of a grade for every day late.

Discussions and written work are expected to be in accordance with the Brandeis Academic Integrity guidelines: <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/ai/index.html>

Special Needs: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in the class, please see me immediately.

### **READING:**

David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel, editors. *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*. University of California Press, 1998. (Several chapters.)

Carolyn Chen and Russell Jeung, eds., *Sustaining Faith Traditions: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion among the Latino and Asian American Second Generations* (New York: NYU Press, 2012).

Lawrence Fuchs. *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity and the Civic Culture*. University Press of New England, 1990.

Wendy F. Katkin, Ned Landsman, and Andrea Tyree, editors. *Beyond Pluralism: The Conception of Groups and Group Identities in America*. University of Illinois Press, 1998. (Several chapters.)

Keren McGinity. *Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America*. NYU Press, 2012 [2009].

Renee Romano. *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America*. Harvard University Press, 2003. (Several chapters)

Rebecca Walker, *Black, White, and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2001).

**Articles and book chapters, designated with an asterick(\*) below, available on LATTE.**

### **FILMS:**

*The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933)

*Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* (1967)

*Annie Hall* (1977)

*Keeping the Faith* (2000)

### **SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Class time will consist of two weekly lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays followed by a discussion on Thursdays. Sign-up sheets will be distributed in advance for students to co-lead future discussions. Co-leading discussions involves devising at least three original questions about the reading for that day and facilitating the dialogue they generate. **All** students should come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignments, lectures, and films for that week.

Week 1      **Jan. 14**      **Course Description and Introduction**  
**Jan. 16**      **The Melting Pot?: Models and Methods**

## **I. FIGHTING TO BECOME AMERICANS**

Week 2      **Jan. 21**      **MLK Day: No Classes**  
**Jan. 23**      **Nativism and its Discontents**

Film:            *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933)

Reading:        \*Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (Yale, 1990), pp. 1-30  
Biale, "The Melting Pot and Beyond," in *Insider/Outsider* (pp. 17-33)  
"True Americanism: The Foundations of Civic Culture" Fuchs (Ch. 1)  
\*Sollors, "Americans All"

Week 3      **Jan. 28**      **Strangers to this Land**  
**Jan. 30**      **Interracial Sex, Love, and Boxing**

Reading:        "Immigrant Jewesses Who Married 'Out'" and "Intermarriage in an Age of Domesticity," in *Still Jewish* (Ch. 1 & 2)  
"Reinforcements to Republicanism: Irish Catholic Response to Civic Culture" and "More Slovenian and More American: How the Hyphen Unites" Fuchs (Ch. 2 & 3)

## **II. ONE NATION UNDER GOD**

Week 4      **Feb. 4**      **The Miscegenous Body and the National Body**  
**Feb. 6**      **A 'Cure' for Antisemitism?**

Film:            *Annie Hall* (1977)

Reading:        \* Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America." *Journal of American History* vol. 83, no. 1 (June 1996): 44-69  
"Explaining a Taboo" in Romano, *Race Mixing* (Prologue)  
"Outside the Civic Culture: The Coercive Pluralisms," Fuchs (Section Two)

Week 5      **Feb. 11**      **Catholic-Protestant Jew or "What Did Your Parents Say?"**  
**Feb. 13**      **A Film History of Interfaith Marriage PART I**  
**FIRST ESSAY DUE at the beginning of class**

Reading: "Intermarriage was A-Changin'" *Still Jewish* (Ch. 3)  
"Islam is to Catholicism as Teflon is to Velcro," in *Sustaining Faith Traditions* (Ch. 3)  
\*Greenblum, "Does Hollywood Still Glorify Jewish Intermarriage? The Case of *The Jazz Singer*," *American Jewish History* vol. 83, no. 4 (December 1995): 445-469  
"The Outsiders Move In: The Triumph of Civic Culture," Fuchs (Section Three)

Week 6      **Feb. 18 & 20 Midterm Recess: No classes**

Reading: Walker, *Black White and Jewish*

### III. BRIDGING THE ETHNO-RACIAL DIVIDE

Week 7      **Feb. 25      Paper Feedback**

**Feb. 27      Brown v. Board of Education**

Week 8      **March 4      Loving v. Virginia**

**March 6      Consequences of Liberalism and Ecumenism**

Film: *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* (1967)

Reading: "The Dangers of Race Mixing," in Romano, *Race Mixing* (Ch. 2)  
"The American Kaleidoscope: The Ethnic Landscape," Fuchs (Section Four)

Week 9      **March 11      Multiculturalism, Baseball, and the "New Ethnicity"**

**March 13      Prime Time Intermarriage**

Reading: "Revitalization from Within," in *Still Jewish* (Ch. 4)  
"Racial Insularity and Ethnic Faith: The Emerging Korean American Religious Elite," *Sustaining Faith Traditions* (Ch. 7)  
"Pluralism, Public Policy, & the Civic Culture, 1970-1989" Fuchs (Section Five)

Week 10      **March 18      Individualism, Dualism, and Inter-Divorce**

**March 20      The Holiday Dilemma: How Separate *Are* Church and State?**

**SECOND ESSAY DUE at the beginning of class**

Reading: \*McGinity, "Gender Matters: Jewish Identity, Intermarriage, and Parenthood" in *Contact: Steinhardt Journal*  
\*Gupta, "What Is Indian about You?": A Gendered, Transnational Approach to Ethnicity," *Gender and Society*, vol. 11, no. 5 (Oct. 1997): pp. 572-596  
Walzer, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest," in *Insider/Outsider* pp. 88-98  
Wirth-Nesher, "Language as Homeland in Jewish-American Literature," in *Insider/Outsider* pp. 212-230

Week 11      **March 25-April 1      Spring Recess: No class**

Reading:      \*Waters, "Multiple Ethnic Identity Choices," in *Beyond Pluralism* (pp. 28-46)  
Sollors, "The Multiculturalism Debate as Cultural Text," in *Beyond Pluralism* (pp. 63-104)  
Seidman, "Fag-Hags and Bu-Jew: Toward a (Jewish) Politics of Vicarious Identity," in *Insider/Outsider* (pp. 254-268)  
\*Moore, "Sex, Miscegenation, and the Intermarriage Debate," *newvoices* (Nov. 1997), p. 4

Week 12      **Apr. 3 Identity Politics and the Politics of Parenthood**

Reading:      Katz, "The Legal Framework of American Pluralism: Liberal Constitutionalism and the Protection of Groups," in *Beyond Pluralism* (pp. 11-27)  
Hollinger, "Postethnic America," in *Beyond Pluralism* (pp. 47-62)

#### **IV. FROM CRISIS TO COMMITMENT**

Week 13      **April 8              The So-Called Shiksa**

**April 10          Real "Other" Women**

#### **RESEARCH TOPIC AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

Film:            *Keeping the Faith* (2000)

Reading:      \*Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital"  
"Talking Black and Sleeping White" in Romano, *Race Mixing* (Ch. 7)

Week 14      **April 15          Men's Migrating Identities**

**April 17          Jewpanese**

Reading:      "Second-Generation Asian Americans and Judaism," in *Sustaining Faith....*(Ch. 4)  
"Eroded But Not Erased" in Romano, *Race Mixing* (Ch. 8)

Week 15      **April 22          Student Paper Presentations**

**April 24          Student Paper Presentations**

Week 16      **May 1              FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE!**

\*\*\*\*\***HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER**\*\*\*\*\*