

Example of a Well-Designed Course in: HISTORY

1. Specific Context

- **The subject matter:** The immigrant experience in the United States of America.
- **The title of the course:** Formerly-HIS 322: Ethnic Minorities in American Urban History. Name change proposed: HIS 322: The Changing Face of a Nation: the Immigrant Experience in America
- **Typical class size:** 10-15 students
- **Level of the course:** 300 level-upper division
- **Mode of delivery:** Blended/hybrid, seminar-styled course
- **Type of institution:** a public university; one of the five HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) in the University of North Carolina system.

2. General Description of the Course

This is an upper division, hybrid history course that examines the immigration experience in the United States of America. The course analyzes the social, economic, and political forces which shape our ideas about the contributions and impact of immigrants to the development of the United States.

3. Big Purpose of the Course

I want students to understand that the decisions made and policies supported in regard to ethnic immigrant groups and immigration in general are influenced by our personal contexts, therefore, subject to constant change. Furthermore, I hope they will appreciate and feel comfortable engaging their ideas about immigrant groups from an analytical, as well as an empathetic place.

4. Important Situational Factors/Special Pedagogical Challenge

Specific Context of the Teaching and Learning Situation:

- Up to 25 students in a 3-credit hour course which meets once a week in the evenings.
- Upper division course with a U.S. History course prerequisites (HIS 211 and HIS 212)
- Classroom demographics: traditional, non-traditional, military, ethnically diverse, and gender balanced. There are a few on campus students, but most are commuter students with job and family responsibilities.

- The course is a hybrid course, utilizing Blackboard for some out-of class activities. It is a seminar-styled course with emphasis on in-class discussion and debate.
- Students come with varied preconceived notions about immigrants and their place in America.
- Instructor has taught the course for two years and possesses a competency of foundational knowledge required to teach the course, as well as a passion for the content.
- Inheriting an established course, syllabus and reading list has been a pedagogical challenge. (e. g. inappropriate course name, content, learning outcomes, etc.)

In relation to the last situational factor mentioned above, my teaching has been from a theoretical basis. However, I am open to whatever changes are necessary to achieve my big purpose for the course. Assessment data notes students are not “relating” to or understanding the impact of the immigrant experience from the course as it had been presented in past semesters.

The Special Pedagogical Challenge is to create a course which helps students understand the impact of the immigrant experience on America and realize the relevance of all this to their own development as human beings. Some students have profound anger towards and stereotypes about immigrants today; yet, they have no clue what these actions are based on. This course is challenged with changing these ideas about the immigrant experience.

5. 3-Column Table

Use this table below to provide information about these three aspects of your course design.

Learning Goals:	Assessment Activities:	Learning Activities:
<p><u>Foundational Knowledge</u></p> <p>1. a) Students will understand the patterns of attitudes between earlier immigrants and new immigrants and how common or variable those patterns are.</p> <p>1. b) Students will identify different scholarly perspectives of the immigrant experience in America and analyze how those perspectives were formed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature Review • Comparative essay. (Students will choose two perspectives from a list and will write a comparative essay) • In-class self-inventory discussion of their perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary data and sources • Oral Histories • Original sources analyzed (What Do You Know or What Have You
<p><u>Application</u></p> <p>2. Students will analyze the factors that create positive attitudes by earlier immigrants toward new immigrants, and that allow earlier immigrants to change their attitudes towards new immigrant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Analysis Worksheets • Film Reaction Papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet articles • Stories via film • Primary sources analyzed
<p><u>Integration</u></p> <p>3. Students will describe the impact of the evolving political, economic and social conditions in the U.S. on the national attitudes towards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class debates/discussions • Document Analysis Worksheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Blackboard site • Internet articles • Secondary data and sources (required books)

immigration.		
<p><u>Human Dimension</u></p> <p>4. a) Students will re-examine their own attitudes and the basis for those attitudes towards other immigrant groups.</p> <p>4. b) Students will use sensitivity, fairness and empathy in their interactions with people who are different from themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-and post-surveys • Short online reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role playing • Situational Observations in out-of-class activities (visit ethnic restaurants) • Debates
<p><u>Caring</u></p> <p>5. Students will value the cultures and contributions of other immigrant groups as vital to their own human experience (i.e. their own personal, social and national experience).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Reflections (private-online) • Group originated "Immigrant Reform Resolution" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal reflections (private-online) • Group originated "Immigrant Reform Resolution"
<p><u>How to Keep on Learning</u></p> <p>6. Students will create a plan for learning about the immigrant experience through active engagement with other immigrant groups during the next 1-3 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Diary, out-of-class activities • Learning Portfolio (end-of-course)

- **Rich Learning Experience:** (1) A role-playing activity that asks students to place themselves in a familiar situation--they are the "new" kid. (i.e. attending a new school, moving to a new city, taking on a new job, etc.) and recall the feelings they experienced in that situation. They will write these feelings down and we will discuss them in detail during a class session. (2) A second activity involves an out-of-class situation observation. Students are asked to go out to a restaurant together (one that is representative of the particular ethnic group we are studying at the time). They are to

experience the cuisine, note the ambiance, converse with the employees, etc. in an attempt to get to know the culture better. Students will reflect on their experiences in their online journals. (3) The final rich experience activity involves students participating in in-class debates concerning their attitudes about the immigrant experience and what value they place on same.

- **Educative Assessment:** “Critical Film Review”. Students often take what they see in the media as factual and sometimes make value judgments based on this information. Having students do the work involved in a critical film review while in college will give them guidelines or a foundation for those same processes in their day-to-day lives. A grading rubric will be utilized to assess these reviews.
- **Self-Assessment:** In terms of facilitating self-assessment, I will distribute the rubric before we screen the “second” film. There will be at least three films shown in the class. I will not require the review on the first film because one of the criteria asks them to compare the film under review with other films screened in the course. We will, as a group, discuss the first film and begin to do some brainstorming about what to look for in these films as they relate to the course. After that session, I will amend the rubric to include their best ideas. In addition to this activity, there is a place on the completed rubric for one peer score. I will not score the reviews until I have had another student score it first. Both scores will appear on the rubric handed back to the student with their papers. This will give students practice working with the rubric and hopefully engender confidence in assessing their own papers.
- **Feedback:** In terms of feedback, there are several areas I would like to explore in this course. 1). Provide space on the back of the rubric for peers to write “loving” comments. 2). I will highlight specific areas on their reviews to explain why they received the points on the rubric and to point out (if any) mechanical issues. I am not grading for mechanics on the reviews; however, I believe it would benefit the students to have feedback in that area. 3). I will have specific office hours set aside for students to have face-to-face feedback regarding their reviews. The face-to-face sessions will be mandatory for the second review. After that review it will be their choice for the face-to-face session on this type of assignment.

6. Weekly Schedule

Week: Themes and **Questions**

WEDNESDAYS (6:00-8:45 p.m.)

In-Class

Between-Class

<p>1. Perceptions and Scholarly Patterns: Why do we have negative perceptions of immigrants and where do they come from?</p>	<p>Course Introductions Completes pre-survey instrument and discuss Examination of oral accounts from Asian and Jewish immigrants Identify all assessment rubrics on Blackboard Assign Literature Review</p>	<p>Do research for a Literature Review on American Immigration. Read <i>Americans in Waiting</i></p>
<p>2. Perceptions and Scholarly Patterns: Why are we quick to trust scholarly treatments on the issue of immigrants?</p>	<p>Guest speaker on Chinese immigration: Dr. Ma Class discussions comparing the presentation to <i>Americans in Waiting</i> and Motomura's concepts of immigration.</p>	<p>Students will be assigned a partner to work on a Situational Observation activity: Asian Cuisine Restaurant. Write a 1 page response in your online the online Reflection Journal. Guidelines for these responses posted to Blackboard. Finish <i>Americans in Waiting</i>. Submit Literature Review via Blackboard.</p>
<p>3. Perceptions and Scholarly Patterns and Impact of Immigration: Why are we quick to trust scholarly treatments on the issue of immigrants?</p>	<p>Screen the film: "Hester Street". Class will view, discuss and complete a Document Analysis Worksheet on "Rosenberg" website.</p>	<p>Read <i>How Jews Became White Folks</i>. Students will view a film/video that has Jewish immigration as a topic and write a critical film review based on the rubric's criteria</p>

			and submit to Blackboard link.
4. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What do we really know about the contributions of immigrants to American political, economic and social structures?		In-class debate: Asian immigrant experience vs. Jewish immigrant experience. Class participates in an online Jeopardy game: Asian/Immigrant contributions!	Students will choose two "perspectives" on the immigrant experience in America and write a comparative essay. Bring essays to next class sessions. Read: <i>Are Italians White?</i>
5. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What do we really know about the contributions of immigrants to American political, economic and social structures?		Class will Peer review the Comparative Essays in group format. Instructor will collect the peer-reviewed essays for assessment. Class will screen: "Sacco and Vanzetti"	Continue reading <i>Are Italians White?</i> Situational Observation #2: Italian Restaurant. Upload commentary to Reflection Journal.
6. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What do we really know about the contributions of immigrants to American political, economic and social structures?		Discussion of Situational Observation #2 and the edited treatment of the Italian immigrant by Guglielmo and Salerno.	Read: <i>How the Irish Became White</i> . Do Internet research and find stereotypical cartoons of Irish immigrants.
7. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What factors can be catalytic in the way we view immigrants and their contributions?		Online viewing of stereotypes of the Irish immigrant and the African American. Discussion of Ignatiev's treatment of the Irish immigrant.	Continue reading: <i>How the Irish Became White</i> . Situational Observation #3: Visit an Irish Pub or another St. Patrick's Day celebration with your partner and reflect on the experience in the online Journal

<p>8. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What factors can be catalytic in the way we view immigrants and their contributions?</p>		<p>Role-playing: Panel Discussion on West Indian Immigrants. Students will act on behalf of I.C.E., the UN Ambassadors, International Healthcare Workers, Religious Representatives and Human Rights Workers</p>	<p>Read <i>Black Identities</i>.</p>
<p>9. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What factors can be catalytic in the way we view immigrants and their contributions?</p>		<p>SPRING BREAK</p>	<p>SPRING BREAK</p>
<p>10. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What role should empathy and human concern play in immigration policy decisions?</p>		<p>Screening of "Life and Debt" While partaking of West Indian cuisine brought by members of the class.</p>	<p>Continue Reading <i>Black Identities</i>. Try to interview a West Indian immigrant about their experiences in the U.S. Write down your notes from this interview in your Reflection Journal online.</p>
<p>11. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives: What role should empathy and human concern play in immigration policy decisions?</p>		<p>Discussion of Guidelines for the Immigration Reform Resolution Activity. How can information in last documentary assist in this project?</p>	<p>Watch video clips on Mexican immigration and comment on the discussion board. Read <i>Coyotes</i>. Do research on current state initiatives regarding immigration (i.e. Arizona, California, Texas, etc.)</p>
<p>12. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives and Developing Lifelong</p>		<p>Debate: Do Mexican Immigrants take American Jobs!</p>	<p>Continue reading <i>Coyotes</i>. Research the Obama's</p>

Interest: What role should empathy and human concern play in immigration policy decisions?			Administration policy on immigration.
13. Perceptions, Impact and Changing Perspectives and developing Lifelong Interest: How do we stay engaged and interested in this topic?		Roundtable Discussion of all ethnic groups and perspectives studied during the semester.	Identify a specific cultural contribution of the immigrant from Latin America and bring a depiction to class (PowerPoint, CD, DVD, artifact, etc.) Begin brainstorming within your group about your resolution for immigration reform.
14. Developing Lifelong Interest: How do we stay engaged and interested in this topic?		Administer a post-survey. Discussion of students' changed perceptions based on experiences in the course.	Engage in preparation work for Group Resolution presentation and your Learning Journal.
15. Creating Lifelong Interest: How do we stay engaged and interested in this topic?		Group Presentation: Immigration Reform Resolutions.	Submission of Learning Journal.

- **Teaching Strategy:**

The problem-posing strategy would seem to engage students more. Pose a problem and we all try to find information to resolve it or change our perception of the so-called problem. By starting the course with a problem that all Americans must grapple with "immigration reform", the students might become interested in looking at the content material, much of which is historical. It places them in a proactive position for learning and not just retaining material to get a grade. Each student has some idea about the impact of immigration on their ability to find work? In order to get them to value the contribution of the immigrant, I have to remove the blinders from their eyes in regard to the immigrant being a "problem".

The problem-posing strategy will involve the class dealing with a specific set of questions throughout the semester. These questions should influence their in-class and out-of-class activities and will serve as themes for the syllabus.

- **Potential Problems and Resolutions**

I identified three potential problems I might face with the initial design of the course:

1. Enrollment size. Because this is an upper division course, I typically have no more than 10 students in this course. This will sorely limit the size and scope of the Group activity.
2. Accuracy of Peer Evaluations. Peer evaluations can be tricky if some clear stipulations are not initially presented.
3. Time Allotment for Out-of-Class Activities. I'm not sure if there will be enough time-management discipline in the students to effectively engage in the Situational Observations and gain the desired learning outcomes.

In order to deal with these potential problems I plan to aggressively advertise the redesigned course as a drawing point for students to enroll. In addition, I will construct a Peer Evaluation form for the students to use in their assessment of group members. In terms of time allotment, I have to see how things develop and adjust as problems arise throughout the semester.

7. Evidence of Impact (optional)

I do not have evidentiary data as yet to determine the impact of the redesigned course because the redesigned course will not be put into operation until Spring 2012.

8. Most Exciting Aspect of the Re-Designed Course for Me

The most exciting aspect of the re-designed course was the opportunity to create more integrative and interactive learning and assessment activities which make the content matter and entire learning process come alive for the student and instructor.

9. My Contact Information

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