

National Identity and Multiculturalism (HOPR 010, Section 1703H)

Fall 2003; W 5:00-6:15 p.m.

LL222

Office Hours: MW 11:00-12:00; MW 1:00-3:00

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The course will examine two of the most important—and in the United States, particularly contentious—topics in the world today: national identity and multiculturalism. These topics are not only crucial to the United States, but their intersection also offers you the opportunity to consider rival views on identity, culture, and individual and group rights. The course will begin with a brief overview of the main schools of thought about national identity (constructivism, primordialism, perennialism, and modernism). There will be a particular focus on the tension between primordialism (with its emphasis on national identity differences as “natural”) and constructivism (the idea that identity is socially constructed).

We will then discuss the concepts of multiculturalism and diversity, and different ideas about what these terms mean in theory and practice. This section of the course will include a discussion of the tension between group rights and individual rights, and the difficulty that the intersection of diversity and intolerance poses for political and cultural rights. Specifically, the course discussions will encourage you to reflect on the way in which the use of individual rights as a means to protect minority groups and their cultures (the traditional American approach) breaks down in practice when people are seen first and foremost as members of groups. At the same time, it will ask you to consider how the application of group rights and other policies designed to advance one group at the expense of another reinforces the tendency to see individuals primarily as members of groups. You will seek solutions to this dilemma.

The final part of the course will allow you to explore the relationship between multiculturalism and national identity in the United States, along with a comparative analysis of a country facing similar tensions: Canada. The issue of whether multiculturalism and national identity conflict or complement one another is a central issue in both countries, but Canada has taken a much more accommodative, protective stance toward minority cultures and languages.

The course will provide you with at least three benefits that you will carry to other settings. First, it will bring to light schools of thought (e.g., constructivism) relevant to other issues in social science. Second, it will expose you to rival ideas about how governments relate to ethnic minorities—including arguments for and against group preferences. Finally, the course will provide you, particularly if you are an American student, an opportunity to consider your own identity: who are “Americans”?; is multiculturalism accordant with American identity?

Requirements: You will be expected to attend each seminar (except the first week when we will not meet) and to have completed the week’s readings prior to class. Each of you will sign up twice to turn in a set of discussion questions on a given week’s readings. These will be sent to me by e-mail on the Monday before the class for which you have signed up. There will also be two other short writing assignments, one due the second week of the class and the other due on the last session of the class.

Because this is a first-year honor’s program section, you will not receive a letter grade in the class. (Thankfully, this also means that I will not have to evaluate how you have performed based on the new fad of employing a “course specific learning objectives/outcomes-based assessment of student learning.”) I will, however, write up an evaluation of your strengths and weaknesses in the course that will be sent to the honors program.

Readings: The amount of reading varies from week to week. There are two required texts to purchase: Angela Glover Blackwell, Stewart Kwoh, and Manuel Pastor, *Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground* (WW Norton, 2002) and Mary Williams, ed., *Interracial America: Opposing Viewpoints* (Greenhaven Press, 2001). There are also numerous required readings on reserve. These are available electronically through the Raynor/Memorial Library website.

SEMINAR AND READING SCHEDULE; * = Reading on reserve

WEEK 1 (August 27): Introduction.

No class: Professor Barrington at the American Political Science Association convention.

Assignment 1 (to be turned in on September 3): Find a short passage in a work of literature or movie that discusses what it means to be an American. Write the passage down word for word; then tell me in another paragraph why you like or dislike this particular take on American identity.

WEEK 2 (September 3): Nation, Nationalism, and National Identity: Definitions and Types.

- *Ignatieff, Michael. "Nationalism and the Narcissism of Minor Differences," in Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Nationalism* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1999), pp. 91-102.
- *Lowell Barrington, "Introduction: Nationalism and Independence," chapter manuscript for Lowell Barrington, ed., *Nationalism after Independence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, forthcoming), pp. 9-19, 24-35 only.
- *Jusdanis, Gregory. *The Necessary Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), chapter 5 ("Political Nations"), pp. 134-165.

WEEK 3 (September 10): National Identity: Perennial and Primordial

- *Van den Berghe, Pierre. "A Socio-Biological Perspective," in Hutchinson and Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 97-103.
- *Smith, Anthony, Opening statement in the Smith v. Gellner "Warwick Debate":
<http://members.tripod.com/GellnerPage/Warwick.html>

WEEK 4 (September 17): National Identity: Modern and Constructed

- *Hobsbawm, Eric. "The Nation as Invented Tradition," *Nationalism*, pp. 76-83.
- *Anderson, Benedict. "Imagined Communities," *Nationalism*, pp. 89-96.
- *Gellner, Ernest. Reply to Smith in the Smith v. Gellner "Warwick Debate":
<http://members.tripod.com/GellnerPage/Warwick2.html>

WEEK 5 (September 24): Multiculturalism and Diversity: Definitions.

- Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground*, chapter 1.
- *Jusdanis, Gregory. *The Necessary Nation*, chapter 6 ("The End of Identities?"), pp. 166-196.
- *Schlesinger, Arthur. *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (WW Norton, 1998), chapter 6 ("Epilogue: Multiculturalism, Monoculturalism, and the Bill of Rights: Update on the Culture Wars"), pp. 149-165.

WEEK 6 (October 1): Individual Rights versus Group Rights.

- *"Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United Nations, available at:
<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>
- *Kymlicka, Will. *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), chapter 7 ("Liberalism in Culturally Plural Societies"), pp. 135-161.

WEEK 7 (October 8): American National Identity.

- *De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2000), pp. 201-286.
- Interracial America*, chapter 1.

WEEK 8 (October 15): Diversity and Multiculturalism in the United States, Part I.

- Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground*, chapter 2.
- Interracial America*, chapter 2.

WEEK 9 (October 22): Diversity and Multiculturalism in the United States, Part II.

Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground, chapters 4 and 6.

Interracial America, chapter 1.

*Schuck, Peter. *Diversity in America: Keeping Government at a Safe Distance* (Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2003), chapter 5 (“Affirmative Action: Defining and Certifying Diversity”), pp. 134-150 and 186-202 only.

WEEK 10 (October 29): National Identity and Multiculturalism in Canada.

*Mackey, Eva. *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (London: Routledge, 1999), chapter 1 (“Introduction: Unsettling Differences: Origins, Methods, Frameworks,” pp. 1-22) and chapter 3 (“Managing the House of Difference: Official Multiculturalism,” pp. 50-70).

WEEK 11 (November 5): Comparing the United States and Canada.

*Schmidt, Ronald. “The Politics of Language in Canada and the United States: Explaining the Differences,” in T. Ricento and B. Burnaby, eds., *Language and Politics in the United States and Canada* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998), pp. 37-70.

*Griffin, Ben. “Unhyphenated Canadians and Americans,” *Interracial Voice*, available at: <http://interracialvoice.com/griffin2.html>.

WEEK 12 (November 12): National Identity versus Multiculturalism or a Multicultural National Identity?

*Schlesinger, Arthur. *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (WW Norton, 1998), chapter 5 (“E Pluribus Unum?”), pp. 125-147.

*Kymlicka, Will. *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), chapter 9 (“Equality for Minority Cultures”), pp. 182-205.

Assignment #2 (to be turned in on November 19): In two pages (double-spaced) answer the following question: How can we solve the dilemma between, on the one hand, the need to protect individuals in a multicultural society from discrimination when they are seen first and foremost as members of groups and, on the other hand, the tendency for group rights policies to reinforce seeing each other as members of groups? In your answer consider the arguments we have read for and against group rights approaches, as well as the comparisons between policies in the United States and Canada.

WEEK 13 (November 19): Conclusion: What is To Be Done?

Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground, chapter 7.

*Mackey, Eva. *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (London: Routledge, 1999), chapter 7 (“The ‘Bottom Line’: ‘Canada First’ and the Limits of Liberalism”), pp. 141-167.

*Schuck, Peter. *Diversity in America: Keeping Government at a Safe Distance* (Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2003), chapter 8 (“Concluding Thoughts: Premises, Principles, Policies, and Punctilios”), pp. 309-337.