



**UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
ASIAN CULTURES IN LATIN AMERICA PROGRAM**

**ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY OF ASIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES  
IN BUENOS AIRES AND LATIN AMERICAN CITIES**

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**COURSE INFORMATION**

Class Times: MON. and WED. 2 to 5 PM  
Class Location: School of Social Sciences  
Language of Instruction: English  
Course Duration (weeks): 6 weeks

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the intersections and divergences which make up the history of race, ethnicity, nationalism, nation-building process and migration in Latin American countries, where we will look into the influences of Asian immigrant communities to diverse racial and ethnic composition of a continent that is characterized by its mestizaje (miscegenation). We will analyze how the arrival of Asian immigrants along with the social and indigenous movements created a different set of challenges for the idea of race and of a unidirectional process of national integration in modern Latin America. We begin by analyzing the global historical contexts that triggered the different waves of Asian migration to Latin America, the modes of migration and settlements, focusing especially on the empirical researches of Argentina, Brazil and Peru, based on each country's varied experiences of different immigrant groups. We will examine the dynamics and demographics of Asian migration to Latin America, and migrants' integration processes or otherwise into the education system, the labor market, and social, political and cultural life more generally by incorporating very diverse readings from interdisciplinary approaches. Later, class discussions and readings will analyze the responses of host societies to Asian immigrant groups, whether in the shape of laws and public policies, literary, and media representations of migrants, or public attitudes and behavior towards newcomers and ethnic minorities, including racism, xenophobia and other forms of exclusion. It will end discussing transnational patterns of the members of the Asian immigrant communities and the impact of the economic factors on the identity of its younger generations.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

➤ Students will gain an understanding of the historical processes that triggered the different waves of Asian migration to Latin America and Argentina, the varied experiences of different immigrant groups, and the political and social response of local society to the changing ethnic and national composition of the population.

- Students will develop their awareness and understanding of the approaches of different disciplines- history, geography, migration studies, cultural studies, cultural theory, sociology, political science, anthropology - to a single object of study, and the advantages that a multidisciplinary approach brings to understanding phenomena as complex as immigration, ethnicity and national identities and nationalism.
- Students will have the opportunity to interact with representative individuals and organizations of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean communities in Buenos Aires.
- Students will develop their capacity for sociological and anthropological observation while integrating their formal classroom learning with their experience and observation of the everyday life of these communities in Buenos Aires city.

## **METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

This course is taught with a combination of class lectures, student presentations, discussions and field trips or site visits. The reading assignment for each session is listed below in the syllabus and it should be completed before the class meeting.

**Class lectures** in this course is conducted in English and the obligatory reading materials will be in English as well, while some of recommended and complementary reading materials are only available in Spanish. The professor may include some of their contents or use local news articles as reference to provide the students current tendencies and diverse cases of migration in Argentina. Also, the films, video clips and other multimedia materials can be used in the class lecture to show the students on-going political demonstrations of the immigrant groups or minority groups. All course readings materials will be compiled by the professor and the students will be able to access to them through a cloud drive or receive them via email.

**Field trips** will include site visits such as Korean Town (Barrio coreano), Okinawan Cultural Center, and other festivals organized by ethnic minority group in Buenos Aires and students will need to take ethnographic fieldnotes during the visits and one of the visits can be related to an assignment and the final evaluation. (Guest speaker during the class or visits)

## **COURSE SCHEDULES**

### **Week 1**

#### **Session 1: Introduction. Overview history of Asian migration in Latin America**

Readings:

- Glick Schiller, N. and Wimmer, A. (1995). From immigrant to transmigrant: theorizing transnational migration. *Anthropological Quarterly* 68: 48-63.
- Hu-DeHart and López (2008). "Asian Diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Historical Overview" *Afro-Hispanic Review*, 27(1): 9-21.

Complementary reading:

- Brettell, C. (2008). "Chapter 5: Theorizing migration in Anthropology, The social Construction of Networks, Identities, Communities and Globalscapes", in Brettell, C. and Hollifield, J. F. (eds.), *Migration Theory*, Routledge, 113-157.

#### **Session 2: Nationhood and ethnicity**

Readings:

- Eller, J. (2018). Ethnicity, Culture, and "The Past". *Michigan Quarterly Review*, XXXVI(4), 1–28.
- Ko, Chisu Teresa (2016) "Toward Asian Argentine Studies". *Latin American Research Review*, 51(4): 271–289.

Complementary readings:

- Wallerstein, I. and Balibar, E. (1988), "The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity", *Race, Nation, Class Ambiguous Identities*, London & New York: Verso, 71-85.

## Week 2

### Session 3: Asian migration in the XIXth Century. Indentured labor and Chinese coolies. Different experiences in Latin America

Readings:

- López (2008) "In Search of Legitimacy. Chinese Immigrants and Latin American Nation Building". In Foote, N. and Goebel M., *Immigration and National Identities in Latin America 1850-1950*. Gainesville: The University Press of Florida. 182-204.
- Evelyn Hu-Dehart (1994), "Chinese coolie labor in Cuba in the nineteenth century: free labor or neoslavery?", *Contributions in Black Studies*, 12(5). Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cibs/vol12/iss1/5>

\*A video clip about History of Chinese migration in Mexico:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuDcWjtiZ4g>.

### Session 4: The Japanese emigrants and Politics of emigration to Latin America in the early 20th Century.

Readings:

- Tigner, James L. (1981) "Japanese immigration into Latin America", *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 23(4), 457-482
- Endoh, T. (2009). *Exporting Japan, Politics of emigration to Latin America*. University of Illinois Press.
- Takenaka, A. (2004). The Japanese in Peru. *Latin American Perspectives*, 31(3), 77–98.

Complementary readings:

- "The Japanese-Argentine population segment". Document compiled by Students from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007

## Week 3 Asian immigrant communities

### Session 5: Korean diaspora in Latin America

Readings:

- Mera, Carolina (2012). Discovering the South through Korean Diaspora. Koreans in Argentina and Latin America. *VI World Korean Studies Congress. September 25-26, 2012. Transforming Korean Tradition: Past and Present. Seoul, Korea*. Available at: [http://congress.aks.ac.kr/korean/files/2\\_1357261404.pdf](http://congress.aks.ac.kr/korean/files/2_1357261404.pdf) (accessed October 27, 2018).
- Chi, Jung Yun (2016). "The role of Korean immigrants in the development of the wholesale hub for off-the-shelf womenswear in the district of bom retiro in São Paulo, Brazil." *Pós*, 23(41): 90-107.

### Session 6: China's economic reform and "opening-up", and their impact on migration

Readings:

- Mazza, J., Myers, M., & Orozco, M. (2016). "Chinese Migration to Latin America and the Caribbean". *2016 Inter-American Dialogue*. Available at:

[http://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Chinese\\_Migration\\_to\\_LAC\\_Mazza-1.pdf](http://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Chinese_Migration_to_LAC_Mazza-1.pdf)  
-Lausent-herrera, I. (2011). "The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Communities". *Journal of Chinese Overseas*, 7: 69–113.

#### **Week 4 Transnational networks in the Americas**

##### **Session 7: Ethnicity as social capital. Common values and solidarity of immigrant communities**

Readings:

- Park, Kyeyoung (2014). A Rhizomatic Diaspora: Transnational Passage and the Sense of Place among Koreans in Latin America *Dialectical Anthropology*, 38(1), 17–39.
- Yuan, Fang (2007). Interethnic Relations in the Buenos Aires Chinese Supermarket. Bachelor of Arts. Harvard College.
- Kim, J. & Koo, S. "From father to son: 1.5- and second-generation Korean Argentines and ethnic entrepreneurship in the Argentine garment industry", *The Review of Korean Studies*, 20(2), 175–201.

Complementary readings:

- Mera, Carolina (2007). Globalización e identidades migrantes. Corea y su diáspora en la Argentina

##### **Session 8: Presence or intervention of Asian National-states. Local and transnational co-ethnic organizations**

Readings:

- Deepening bonds - Chinese migrants in Argentina: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJtld\\_y0HfU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJtld_y0HfU)
- Barabantseva, E. (2012). "Who Are "Overseas Chinese Ethnic Minorities"? China's Search for Transnational Ethnic Unity". *Modern China*, 38(1) 78–102
- Denardi, L. (2016). "The anchorage of the diasporization process of the Chinese State in Buenos Aires: associations and ritual"
- Tsuda, Takeyuki (2001). "When identities become modern: Japanese emigration to Brazil and the global contextualization of identity", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24:3, 412-432.

#### **Week 5: Who are the "Orientales"? (from the 90's to the present day)**

**Session 9: Discrimination, prejudice, xenophobia.** Stereotypes; "Race" and physical appearance or skin color; racialized subjects: "exploitative Koreans", interethnic Relations, social classes and ethnic stratification.

Readings:

- Courtis, Corina (2004). Korean migrants text and talk: A Discourse-centered approach to the Social Processing of Korean Immigration in Argentina, *Korean Social Science Journal*, pp.113 - 136
- Kim, J. (2014). Looking at the Other through the Eye of a Needle: Korean Garment Businesses and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Argentina *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies*, 27(1). pp. 1-19

##### **Session 10: The place of "Asians" in national discourses and the historical 'others'. Debates between "multiculturalism" and "interculturality".**

Readings:

- Quijano, A. (2000). "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America", *Nepantla: Views from South* Vol. 1, Issue 3: 533-580.
- Ko, Chisu Teresa. (2014), From whiteness to diversity: crossing the racial threshold in bicentennial Argentina, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37(14), 2529-2546.
- Kim, J. V. (2016). Disrupting the White Myth. In *Imagining Asia in the Americas* (pp. 34–55). Rutgers University press.

## **Week 6 : Struggles for identification and demand for recognition**

### **Session 11: The second generation, re-emigration and hybrid identity**

Readings:

- Trejos, B. & Chiang, L. N. (2012). Young Taiwanese Immigration To Argentina: The Challenges Of Adaptation, Self Identity and Returning, *IJAPS*, 8(2), 113–143.
- Sasaki, K. (2008) “Between Emigration and Immigration: Japanese Emigrants to Brazil and Their Descendants in Japan”, *Transnational Migration in East Asia Series Ethnological Reports*, 77: 53–66.
- Zhou, M. and Xiong, Y. S. (2005). “The Multifaceted American Experience of the Children of Asian Immigrants: Lessons for Segmented Assimilation”. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (6): 1119-1152.

Recommending reading:

- Lesser, J. (2000), “Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil” *Working Paper 8 April, The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies*, University of California, San Diego.

### **Session 12: Asian Latino?**

Identity Politics; Public affirmations of the equal dignity in the multicultural society and the same legal, ethnic, racial, religious, or cultural right as member group in modern liberal democracies.

Readings:

- Clifford, J. (2000). Taking Identity Politics Seriously: “The Contradictory, Stony Ground.” Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall.
- Chiu-Rinaldi, F. (2002). “China Latina” in Lee, J., Lim, I. L. and Matsukawa, Y (eds.), *Re/collecting early Asian America: essays in cultural history*, Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 174-186.

**Discussions:**

## **7. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA**

The course will be graded on a 10-point scale, and the final grade will be determined as follows:

**Grading: Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:**

### **Assignment based on site visit (25%)**

Mapping immigrant space + reflection

- Create a visual map of an immigrant space in Buenos Aires

### **Midterm Exam (20%)**

### **Individual Research Paper (30%)**

A basic structure for a research paper is outlined below. Please review and adapt as necessary.

Essays will be 10-12 pages long and will include an introduction, main body, and conclusion. Essays must be typed, double-spaced in Times New Roman (12pt), and 2.5cm/1-inch margins on all four sides. The essay will be submitted in class on Week 12. Late submissions will not be graded for credit.

**\*\* Plagiarism is unacceptable.** If someone else’s ideas or words are used in a paper, for example, the author must state where and from whom those words or ideas came. Failure to cite a source, even unintentionally, is considered plagiarism and could severely affect a student’s academic standing. Please familiarise the rules of citation:

### **Class Participation and Attendance (25%)**

Students are expected to do the readings assigned for each class meeting beforehand, and to actively participate in class discussions. Participation is strongly encouraged in the classroom. Feel comfortable speaking up and give them room in the class as well.

Mobile phones may not be used during class time and must be set so that they are completely inaudible. Laptops and tablets are only to be used for reading and notetaking in class.

## 8. Further and complementary readings

-Anzaldúa, Gloria (2012). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute.

-Lesser, Jeffrey (2007). *A Discontented Diaspora: Japanese Brazilians and the Meanings of Ethnic Militancy, 1960–1980*.

-Ngai, Mae M. (2003). *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

-Ong, Aihwa (1999). *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Duke University Press

## 9. Online Resources (useful sites)

National institute of Statistics and Census

[https://www.indec.gov.ar/nivel2\\_default.asp?seccion=T&id\\_tema=1](https://www.indec.gov.ar/nivel2_default.asp?seccion=T&id_tema=1)

The Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) of ECLAC (Economic Committee of Latin America and Caribbean)

<https://www.cepal.org/en/work-areas/population-and-development>

Festival of Cine Migrante

[http://cinemigrante.org/en/inicio-2?noredirect=en\\_US](http://cinemigrante.org/en/inicio-2?noredirect=en_US)

Tusanaje: chinese-peruvian

<http://www.tusanaje.org/biblioteca/>

## Video clips:

-First Chinese-Spanish public school thrives in Argentina:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxkTAGiC9dE>