This seminar is concerned with the question of belonging in the modern world and the paradox of growing ethno-nationalism in an increasingly borderless, transnational world. We examine ethnicity and nation-ness, two of the most crucial markers of contemporary social identity. How do they come to be? How do they connect or interface with class, gender, sexuality, and other features of personhood and social belonging? How have scholars gone about analyzing and explaining ethnicity and nationalism? Are these forms of community adequate to meeting the needs of collective social life in our present, more interconnected global condition?

The course moves back and forth, in other words, between more circumscribed notions of belonging (ethnicity and nationalism) and more international or global ideas about belonging: brought on especially by the irreversible contemporary conditions sometimes described under rubrics like “transnationalism,” or “globalization.” With a focus primarily on the issue of collective consciousness, we will consider not only the economic and political imperatives of globalization and the controversies, pro and con, they generate, but also the prospects and possibilities for the development of a sense of global belonging and global culture. The course recognizes that “ethnicity,” “nation,” and “world community” are socially contingent, and it seeks to tease out the conditions and processes of their emergence and the ways in which they become imprinted on the individual and collective imagination.

Course organization and requirements

The seminar format places on all participants the responsibility to attend regularly and contribute fully to discussions and to the work of the group. Assigned readings need to be read, and sometimes re-read, carefully and thought given to how they relate to other texts and points raised in class. Grades will be based on:

- Class participation and oral presentations
- Two summary essays of assigned readings (approx. 3 pages each)
- One analytical book review of a book on nationalism chosen from a list of texts to be distributed in class (approx. 5-7 pages, due November 8)
- Take-home final exam
Books ordered

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities
George Baca, ed., Nationalism’s Bloody Terrain
Charles V. Carnegie, Postnationalism Prefigured: Caribbean Borderlands
Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace

Seminar Meetings

9/6 Introductions and overview of the course

9/11 The World Unified: The Fact and Experience of Globalization


George Lipsitz, “Kalfou Danjere,” chapter 1, pp. 1 – 21, in Lipsitz, Dangerous Crossroads (available on Lyceum)

9/13 View before class, Dirty Pretty Things (film/DVD on a/v library reserve)

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, “Organ Trade: The New Cannibalism,” in, The New Internationalist (I will send the link in an email to the class)

9/18 The Problem of Community in the Age of Globalization


9/20 The Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace
9/25  “Identity”

David Hollinger, “Identity in the United States,” in Keywords/Identity, pp 27-45


9/27  The Politics and Performance of Ethnicity

Mahmood Mamdani, “Race and Ethnicity as Political Identities in the African Context,” in, Keywords/Identity, pp 1-23

10/2  Judith Nagata, “What is Malay? Situational selection of ethnic identity in a plural society” (on Lyceum)


10/4  Student presentations on the performance of cyber identities

10/9  Nationalism and Its Contradictions

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, Introduction & chapters 1 & 2, pp 1-36

10/11 Anderson, Imagined Communities, chapters 3 & 4, pp 36-65

Charles Carnegie, Postnationalism Prefigured: Caribbean Borderlands Introduction and chapter 1, pp 1-39

10/16 Making Nations

Liisa Malkki, “National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees” (on Lyceum)

Anderson, Imagined Communities, chapter 10, pp 163-186

Fall Recess

10/23 Anderson, Imagined Communities, chapter 11, pp 187-206

Carnegie, Postnationalism Prefigured: Caribbean Borderlands, chapter 2, pp 40-60
10/25 **The Nation Raced, Engendered, & Embodied**

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapter 8, pp 141-154


10/30 **Anne McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven” (on Lyceum)**

11/1 **View before class, Black Is Black Ain’t (on a/v library reserve)**

Sander Gilman, “The Jewish Foot” (on Lyceum)

11/6 **Student presentations: analytical reviews of selected books on nationalism**

11/8 **Student presentations: analytical reviews of selected books on nationalism**

11/13 **Syllabus flex time**

11/15 **Further Reflections on Transnational Social Life and Global Community**

Carnegie, chapters, 3, 4, & 6, pp 63-111, and 144-175, in *Postnationalism Prefigured*

**Thanksgiving Recess**


Naomi Klein, “Reclaiming the Commons”


Carnegie, “World Community Imagined,” conclusion, pp. 177 – 199, in *Postnationalism Prefigured*

12/4 **Wrap-up**

Take-home final exam due Dec. 6 @ 2:00 p.m.