

INTERNATIONAL Agenda

Schoolcraft College International Institute, Livonia, Michigan



The mission of the Schoolcraft College International Institute is to coordinate activities and offerings that promote cross-cultural understanding for the community, students, faculty, and staff. Internationalizing programs and activities will assist participants in acquiring appreciation for the diversities and commonalities of world cultures and global issues providing opportunities for success in an evolving world community.



Schoolcraft College has identified the need to prepare students as future workers, who understand the global economy and their role in it.

International education is the field of study that is concerned with development of teaching and learning discipline(s) to understand the culture of non U.S. societies and the interdependence of nations with respect to current global issues.

Such global issues may be included in, but not limited to: art, business, economics, foreign language, health, history, science, literature, music, politics, religion, and technology. This endeavor is a college-wide project including all the divisions of the institution.

This broad purpose will be administered by the Schoolcraft College International Institute (SCII) which will focus on training faculty, internationalizing relevant courses within the existing curricula, researching the need for a specific associate degree in International Business and providing international learning for both faculty and students. The Institute has defined international education as "the teaching and learning of world cultures

associated with the interdependence of nation as related to current global issues and practices."

The SCII has received an International Education Grant from the United States Department of Education to integrate global issues in current curricula. The Institute invites faculty to participate in this internationalization process.



Within the Circle

Thoughts on the Relation of "International" Studies to American Society

Evan Garrett, History

In most instances when one hears the term "international," the initial reaction is to assume this primarily concerns persons, events and circumstances "across the border" or "overseas," somehow detached from the ordinary circle of domestic American affairs and society. The United States exists as a nation today largely because the physical isolation endured by the colonists brought many of them to perceive themselves becoming a society and culture apart from the patterns and traditions perpetuated in their homelands. For millions of Africans involuntarily expatriated to the New World, of course, this process was most abrupt and overt, but the diaries of immigrants from diverse backgrounds frequently recorded the impression of being "baptized" or "born again" into a new experience by the passage from a former life. Even if their status in the new land actually improved little, the expectation of future opportunity that motivated so many made their present hardships relatively bearable.

This sense of isolation and effective security from the other "powers" of the contemporary world predominated in Americans' perception of their relationship to the world into the early twentieth century. Most immigrants who continued to flock to our shores during this time found their path to success by assimilating – and being assimilated by – the peculiar characteristics of "American culture." Peoples determined by the majority to be inassimilable, usually for racial or ethnic reasons, became marginalized and, for all intents and purposes, "invisible" in the mythological portrait of our national consciousness. While the process did not function completely, we did *believe* in the "melting pot" that would progressively eliminate the "un-American" features of disparate peoples and replace them with a common and superior "American" character. Such non-threatening curiosities as "Kris Kringle" or "pasta" eventually gained broad acceptance, but never any idea that might inspire a rift in our "domestic tranquility."

Americans' faith in their uniqueness and inherent superiority – a "Manifest Destiny" or right to expropriate everything in our chosen path, a doctrine whose truth [!] has not been as readily apparent to all other peoples – led us to assume dominion over a wide swath of North America "from sea to shining sea," generally oblivious to the claims and interests of peoples excluded from our commonwealth. Native Americans, French, Hispanics, and always Africans discovered they had become "strangers" in what they considered their "native land." If "international" is regarded in *cultural* terms rather than strictly political, then a survey of *American* history necessarily becomes "international studies."

PBS recently aired a four-hour exploration of the "U.S. Mexican War," a brief conflict in 1846-1848 that remains for most Americans a rather obscure episode. It occurred during a period from which few people can recall the unmemorable presidents and just prior to the Civil War, which attracts far greater attention. Since the conclusion of that war, we seem to have assumed that the considerable spoils should naturally have fallen into our possession at any rate, so the costs of the conflict are of little consequence. Secure possession of Texas, the acquisition of California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico, and the big pay-off, the discovery of gold in the Sierras, simply mark successive steps along America's path of progress.

What of the view from the other side of the border? And where, rightfully, should that border be located? At this present time, there is no thought among Americans of going back to rectify such inequities as may have occurred during the Mexican War. We stand secure in our righteous self-preoccupation, buoyed by the myths inherited from our "glorious" – and generally successful –

past. But this is only one view of the situation, and if history is to be realistic rather than merely a tool of socialization and indoctrination, we need to look at the other angles as well.

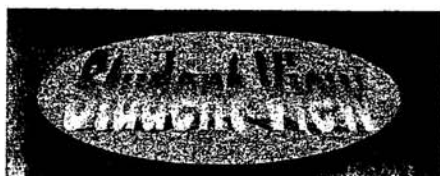
Consider, for example, that defeat at the hands of invading American forces cost Mexico one half of its prewar territory. Admittedly, *El Norte* (our "Southwest") received less regard than it deserved from Mexican governments focused on the needs of larger populations in the South. [Residents of the Upper Peninsula frequently voice similar complaints about the government way down in Lansing!] On the other hand, should this neglect justify a forfeiture of national rights that contributed subsequently to denigration of thousands of people's cultural identity and social equity? Their struggle has not drawn attention comparable to that of African-Americans, for example, but Hispanics too have suffered from and fought discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream of American society. "Anglo" tourists and residents crowd the streets of Santa Fe and San Diego to absorb the "Spanish atmosphere," while descendents of generations of Hispanic inhabitants find themselves priced out of their traditional neighborhoods.

Yes, these are *American* social problems. What does this have to do with "internationalism"? Consider that the business of defining a border and thereby, the rules that will govern the society behind that border, can be determined as simply as a greedy, expanding nation taking advantage of a neighbor momentarily distracted by internal dissention. The Mexican War was not the first instance of this, nor the last. This certainly is not a uniquely American situation. This episode demonstrates what may result, as one of the Mexican historians interviewed for the PBS program indicated, how we are all affected by "accidents of geography."

The United States and Mexico lie side-by-side, sharing some mutual attraction and much mutual distrust. The "border" is an artificial construct, a politically defined line that has changed – and may well change again – over time. Cultural influences, like radio and TV signals, do not respect such limits. Altogether, do not expect our society to resemble its present appearance a century from now; we are different from

the American society found a century ago.

There are a number of concerns raised about our country's inability to control its southern border, to stanch the flood of Mexicans and other Hispanics crossing into the U.S. Perhaps we should add another perspective to this discussion: Hispanics are merely coming "home"!



^ Student's Point of View Martin Knecht

I am a full-time student at Schoolcraft College. I will be receiving my Associates Degree in General Business in the spring of 1999. Within the next couple of weeks I will be applying to Universities all over the United States. My goal is to graduate with a Bachelor Degree in International Business.

I was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, but my parents escaped in 1984 because they were against the communist government. I have lived in the United States for the past 14 years. In the summer of 1996 I got my first chance to visit my family and friends in the free and independent Czech Republic, and continued to spend my summers there in 1997 and 1998. For those not familiar with the history: The communist government was overthrown in November 1989 after a week of demonstrations known as the Velvet Revolution, and at the end of 1992 Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. Because of my experience overseas, along with my continuing interest in travel and business, I am pursuing the field of International Business.

Before my goal as a student could be achieved I needed to reach a level of maturity. Maturity is one of the most important aspects that helped me become a successful college student. Only then I started to benefit from services provided by the school.

These are exciting times for me. For the first time in my life I realize that getting my Bachelor Degree is no longer just a dream. With the right attitude and the services provided by Schoolcraft College, I can turn this ongoing dream of becoming a successful businessman into reality.

Editorial Staff

Editor: Don Ryktarsyk
Associate Editors: Chuck Gibbons and La Vonda Ramey

Contributing Writers
Evan Garrett

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