

**DEOMI**  
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**STUDENT GUIDE**  
**EOA COURSE**  
April 2015

**EOA 4050**

**WHITE AMERICANS**



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**STUDENT STUDY GUIDE**

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*This lesson will provide the education needed to develop the occupational knowledge required to perform the duties of an Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA). The content of this lesson is designed to increase student knowledge while generating academic discussions and debate. The content of this lesson should not be taken out of context.*

**Lesson Overview**

The objective of the Ethnic Studies Series is to provide students with opportunities to increase their awareness of the history, socialization, values, religious beliefs, and contemporary issues of major American cultural subgroups that have significant impact on the military. In this lesson, students will learn about the White American racial category.

**Recommended Reading**

None

**References**

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### **Student Instructional Material**

DEOMI EOA Study Guide and online lesson material.

**Audiovisual Aids and Equipment**

Computer, screen, and audio speakers

**Terminal Learning Objective**

Given an online lesson module and a study guide, know the racial identity associated with the White American culture. After completing all Race and Ethnic study modules, students must achieve a minimum passing score of 70% on the Race and Ethnic studies comprehensive exam.

**Enabling Learning Objectives**

Enabling Learning Objectives	Level of Learning	Performance Measure
A. Describe the White American category according to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).	K	CRT
B. Recall historical experiences unique to White Americans.	K	CRT
C. Recall demographic facts associated with White Americans.	K	CRT
K = Knowledge C = Comprehension A = Application CRT = Criterion Referenced Test W = Written Assignment SGE = Small Group Experience PE = Presentation Evaluation		

## WHITE AMERICANS

### A. OMB and Census Definition

1. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) officially describes White Americans as “a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.”
2. In the 2010 Census, the White American population includes people who marked the “White” checkbox along with entries such as Caucasian or White; European entries such as Irish or German; Middle Eastern entries such as Arab, Lebanese, and Palestinian; and North African entries such as Algerian, Moroccan, and Egyptian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

### B. Historical Experiences

1. European American History
  - a. In 1620, English pilgrim men and women aboard the famous Mayflower, founded Plymouth colony in Massachusetts. Their encounters with American Indians were mutually respectful and bound by a six-point treaty outlining moral behavior toward each other. By 1627, 160 colonists lived in Plymouth colony. From 1629 to 1640, more than 20,000 English Puritans—men, women, and children—immigrated to the Massachusetts Bay colony when King Charles I shut down Parliament, silencing the Puritan voice. These immigrants, like their predecessors, migrated to the New World to obtain religious freedom even though it was an economic strain to leave England. They were predominately educated and middle class (Betlock, 2012).
  - b. William Penn, Quaker, and founder of the Province of Pennsylvania and the English North American colony, ventured to Germany several times between 1671 and 1677 on behalf of the Quaker religion and returned with a wave of religious German immigrants. Today, Pennsylvania is still the hub for Anabaptist religions, including Mennonites and Amish. Pennsylvania also became home to German Lutheran refugees from Catholic provinces, and German Catholics who were discriminated against overseas (Rippley, 2015).
  - c. More Irish immigrants arrived in the United States in the 1700s than the previous century. Most of these immigrants were Presbyterians who left because of religious persecution by the Protestants. The English also prompted Catholic Irish to seek refuge in the United States. Most Irish immigrants arrived in New England, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas. The Protestant Irish immigrants became acclimated and socially accepted quite easily (Rapple, 2015).
  - d. Similarly, there were a small number of French immigrants who arrived in the United States prior to the 1700s, but it wasn't until the French Revolution from 1787 to 1799 that political refugees sought a life in the United States. A wave of Roman Catholic refugees

immigrated to the United States, many of whom were wealthy aristocrats, as well as working class people. Approximately 100 priests also arrived at that time, which was significant because until then there were only about 25 Roman Catholic priests in the colonies. These new priests had a powerful influence on the growth of the Catholic Church in the United States (Hillstrom, 2015).

- e. A large wave of French immigrants came to the United States after Napoleon's defeat in 1815. This influx lasted until the 1860s.
- f. About 30,000 French arrived between 1849 and 1851 to make a fortune during the California Gold Rush, but unfortunately few of these immigrants' wealthy goals succeeded (Hillstrom, 2015).
- g. In 1800, Ireland and England became the United Kingdom, but discontent among the Irish prevailed and many came to the United States for a new start. The majority of the Irish immigrants were skilled laborers, while others were political dissenters. In the 1820s and 1830s most Irish immigrants were unskilled Catholic peasants fleeing their country to find opportunity. The Potato Famine of 1845-1851 led to the largest influx of Irish immigrants to the United States. Most went to large urban cities mainly in the Northeast and in New Orleans, Chicago, and San Francisco. Longstanding English stereotypes of Irish being lazy, drunk scoundrels spread to the United States making it difficult for Irish to assimilate into mainstream society. Despite the negative stereotypes, prejudice, and poverty, they had some advantages over other immigrants. Most spoke English, had come from a country similar to the United States, and arrived in great numbers so they had a support system, an ethnic enclave (Rapple, 2015).
- h. English migration to the United States rose dramatically toward the end of the 1800s due to England's economic problems, cheaper steamship fares, the building of the transcontinental railroad, and the expansion of industrialization, which lured skilled and semiskilled English laborers. The sharp incline in English immigration reached its peak in 1882 and 1888 as annual migration hit 80,000 (Hanft, 2015).
- i. The first wave of Finnish migration to the United States was from 1864 to 1894. The immigrants, who were from northern Finland and Norway, made their way to the States to find better work. From a largely agricultural background, they labored on farms in Minnesota, and in copper mines in Michigan (Wargelin, 2015).
- j. The biggest Norwegian immigration period lasted 14 years from 1880 to 1893 when approximately 18,290 migrated annually due to a slow economy and industrial slowdowns while the United States greatly needed people who could develop their resources. Most of these immigrants were young men with technical skills and education. Many settled in the Midwest and their descendants are still there today (Lovoll, 2015).
- k. An unprecedented amount of Italian immigrants reached the shores of the United States beginning in the 1880s. Many Italian immigrants made trips back and forth between the

two countries; their mobility caused other Americans to label them “birds of passage,” until women and families arrived permanently after 1910. Like other immigrants, Italians felt comfortable in their ethnic enclaves. They did not view themselves as Italians, but instead, by the regions and villages from where they had come, limiting their fellowship to those of the geographical same area. These networks and ethnic enclaves were nestled in the Northeast, Midwest, Louisiana, and California (Pozzetta, 2015).

- l. Over 3.2 million Russian immigrants migrated to the United States between 1881 and 1914 to find better economic success. Nearly half of them were Russian Jews, 65,000 were ethnically Russian, and the others were Ukrainians and Belarusians. Many of the Jews fled because of physical violence to their person and attacks on their property during the Russian Empire in the 1880s to the early 1900s (Magocsi, 2015).
  - m. More than two million Italians immigrated to the United States between 1901 and 1910. Assimilation into American society in the late 1800s and early to mid-1900s was difficult because stereotypes depicted Italians as poor, illiterate, low class, or even criminals (Bromberg, 2012).
  - n. The second wave of Russian migration consisted of 2 million immigrants fleeing the new Bolshevik communist regime between 1920 and 1922 (Magocsi, 2015).
  - o. When Czechoslovakia crumbled during World War II approximately 20,000 Czechs fled from the Nazis. After the war, Czechoslovakia experienced a communist takeover in 1948. Between 1946 and 1975, there were 27,048 more Czech immigrants. By 1990, the U.S. Census recorded nearly 1.3 million Americans with Czech ancestry (Molinari, 2015).
  - p. Also after World War II, 80,000 Dutch migrated to the United States. The Dutch economy was in shambles from the war and housing was scarce. Most migrated to California, Iowa, Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, and Washington (Brinks, 2015).
  - q. Since the 1980s, there has been an unusually large inpouring of undocumented Irish immigrants to Irish-enclave cities, such as Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Boston. These men and women are predominately young and well educated who work illegally, sometimes for Irish-owned businesses, as nannies, food servers, bartenders, and construction workers. They left economically-troubled Ireland, a country with a high unemployment rate (Rapple, 2015).
2. Modern European American Life

European Americans have overcome many of the ethnocentric challenges they faced in their early history as U.S. citizens. Urban ethnic neighborhoods still exist, but most claiming European ancestries are fully assimilated into American society and view themselves more as a homogenized group than as ethnics (Parillo, 2014).

3. Middle Eastern American History

- a. It is difficult to trace immigration to the United States from the region known today as the Middle East because of the way immigration officials have kept records. Prior to 1900, the destination of all those leaving the Ottoman Empire was officially Egypt, as the West was considered off-limits. In the United States, these immigrants were indiscriminately labeled as Arabs. After 1900 and as late as 1930, all Middle Eastern immigrants were designated as Syrians. It is only recently that Middle Eastern immigrants have been correctly documented (Gillis, 2015).
- b. (1870s) Christian Lebanese was the first Arabic-speaking people to come to the Americas in large numbers. Their earliest immigration to the United States began in the late 1870s.
- c. Early Middle Eastern immigration to the United States began as a result of hunger, disease, harsh living, and religious strife between Christians and Turks. As the Turks' grip of oppression grew stronger, emigration to the United States grew larger. (Parillo, 2014). Most immigrants were poor, unskilled, young men, who—like other immigrants—came to the United States to find a better life. Approximately 25 percent were sojourners who saved enough money to return to their villages and live easily for the rest of their lives. They set examples for others to immigrate to the United States. Some of the new immigrants found work and remained in their new country (Ciment, 2014).
- d. Even though many had an agricultural background, most Syrian- and Lebanese-Americans became peddlers selling goods on the street and door-to-door, which was a valuable way to assimilate into American culture because they quickly learned English (Parillo, 2014).
- e. The years 1880–1924 are commonly referred to as the Great Migration and mark the first wave of large numbers of Middle Eastern immigrants to the United States. About 80% of the Middle Eastern immigrants during the Great Migration were Lebanese or Syrian. Palestinians also immigrated in large numbers, but not to the extent of the Lebanese and Syrians. The Great Migration ended when the United States instituted the quota system defined in the 1924 National Origins Act (Benson, 2004)
- f. In 1936, the number of Palestinian immigrants exceeded the number of Lebanese and Syrian immigrants for the first time when Palestinians began to feel tension stemming from the British government's distribution of land to Zionist Jews looking to establish a Jewish state in Palestine (Benson, 2004).
- g. (Post WWII) Saudi men began immigrating to the United States for higher education following WWII. Saudi Arabia sponsored these students with money from the country's oil wealth. This sponsorship included money for tuition, room and board, clothing, and medical care. Those who studied scientific or technical fields were given additional bonuses (Schryer, 2015).



- h. In 1953, the United States passed the Refugee Relief Act. This legislation was the first in America to include refugees as a type of immigrant. Two thousand Palestinian refugees immigrated to the United States under that categorization in that year (Benson, 2004).
- i. The 1924 quota system was eliminated with the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act. Middle Easterners found it easier to obtain entrance and work visas. This change in immigration legislation brought about the first large scale influx of Yemeni immigrants alone (Walker, 2015).
- j. The vast majority of Iran's immigrants came to the United States before or just after the 1979 revolution in Iran. These Iranian Americans are de facto political refugees even though they are not officially designated as refugees (Gillis, 2015).
- k. After the Gulf War of 1991 resulted in a loss of jobs, the number of Yemenis in the United States tripled during that decade. There was also a noticeable increase in the number of Iraqi immigrants in 1992 as a result of the post-Gulf War economic sanctions on Iraq (Benson, 2004).

#### 4. North African American History

- a. Like the Middle Eastern Americans, most North African immigrants migrated to the United States after the 1965 Immigration Act was implemented. The factors driving North African migration included limited socioeconomic opportunities, political instability, ethnoviolence in their home countries, the allure of more economic and education opportunities and the increased personal freedom the United States had to offer (Parillo, 2014).
- b. (Early Immigration) From 1821 until 1830, less than 20 immigrants from all of Africa arrived in the United States; only 55 more immigrated from 1841 to 1850. Until the 1960s, North African Arabs were counted as "other African," and mass immigration of North African Muslims into the United States did not occur because they feared they would not be allowed to continue their traditions in the United States. This fear of prejudice was a larger limiting factor of North African immigration than the 1924 quota system that so heavily affected Middle Eastern immigration numbers (Miller, 2015).
- c. (Post WWII) Although the vast majority of Sephardic Jews who left Morocco after World War II went to Israel, sporadic waves entered the United States after WWII. These immigrants sought to escape difficult social and economic conditions in North Africa. They had a tendency to settle where earlier Sephardic immigrants from Spain, Turkey, and the Balkans had established communities. These represented a small percentage of the out migration from North Africa due to the proximity of Europe and countries such as Spain and France's welcoming of unskilled laborers from North Africa (Shostak, 2015).
- d. (1960s & 1970s) Between 1960 and 1976, unemployment in Egypt rose from less than 200,000 to 850,000 as a result of government policies and overpopulation

(EconomyWatch, 2010). Many Jews and Coptic Christians left Egypt because of the political temperature. Approximately 15,000 Egyptians migrated to the United States between 1967 and 1977 after their defeat in the Arab-Israeli War (Parillo, 2014). Most were educated, skilled workers, and those seeking an education to pursue fields of medicine, law, science, engineering, education, and accounting (Mikhail, 2015).

- e. In the past 30 years, close to 200,000 Egyptian immigrants have arrived—more than 100,000 since 2000 (Parillo, 2014). Their assimilation into American culture has been relatively easy because of their high education and skill level, marriage to other ethnicities, and strong Egyptian bonds. For example, Egyptian Americans have created many organizations, such as the Egyptian Physicians' Association, Egyptian Businessmen's Association, and the Egyptian American Professional Society. Many Egyptian Americans are active in the Arab American University Graduates, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, and the Arab American Relations Committee—all Arab American institutions (Mikail, 2015). New immigrants tend to reside in urban Egyptian American communities, whereas those who have lived longer in the United States and American-born Egyptian Americans tend to live in non-ethnic areas (Parillo, 2014).

## 5. Modern Middle Eastern and North African Life

Middle Eastern and North African immigrants to the United States had encounters similar to those of earlier racial groups. The nature of their acceptance and assimilation has varied based on their job skills and education levels. Some have had limited skills and education while others have come to the United States as managerial or technical workers. As with other racial groups, there is a gap between first and second generation Middle Eastern and North African Americans as the natives assimilate more quickly into mainstream American culture and experience tension between themselves and their traditional first generation family members (Parillo, 2014).

### C. White American Demographic Facts

1. The 2010 Census reports that the median income for White Americans is \$30,477, 9.2% of White American families live below the poverty line, and 70.2% own the house they live in.
2. Among White Americans, 18.6 percent have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, 84.8% have a household computer, and 75.1% have a broadband internet subscription (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).
3. Professionally, 37% work in management, business, science, and art occupations; 25% work in sales and other office occupations; and 16% work in service occupations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).
4. White Americans make up 71.5% of Department of the Defense (DoD) total military force and 71.6% of DoD civilians (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2013);

Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Services, 2014). Also to note, 79% of Marine Corp active duty personnel are White. This is the highest percentage of White Americans across all the military branches (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2013).

5. At 75 percent of the total United States population, White Americans are the largest racial group discussed in these lessons. The majority, 35.7 percent, of White Americans are located in the South (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).
6. The 10 leading causes of death for the white population are:
  - a. Heart disease
  - b. Cancer
  - c. Chronic lower respiratory disease
  - d. Stroke
  - e. Unintentional injuries
  - f. Alzheimer's Disease
  - g. Diabetes
  - h. Influenza and pneumonia
  - i. Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome and Nephrosis (Kidney Disease)
  - j. Suicide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

### **SUMMARY**

Having completed this lesson, you are now able to:

- A. Describe the Office of Management and Budget category White Americans.
- B. Recall historical experiences unique to White Americans.
- C. Recall demographic facts associated with White Americans.

### **END OF LESSON**