Course Description

Why is immigration so politically contentious and complicated in the United States (which is, after all, a “nation of immigrants”)? Whereas we often hear romanticized ideas of the nation’s immigrant past, the country’s immigration history, laws, and policies are more contested, more nuanced, and more complicated than many assume. Politicians, public commentators, critics, and media organizations have traditionally influenced our understanding of immigration and the role that immigrants play in U.S. society. This class aims to provide context to current immigration debates by immersing students in a (mainly) sociological point of view. We start by taking a historical overview of U.S. immigration history, but the bulk of the course will focus on salient issues in the immigrant discourse today such as incorporation, deportation policy, racism, and border policing. We will pay particular attention to immigration reform, integration, and citizenship all within social, political, and economic contexts and the relationships between migrants and existing institutions and identities.

There are many ways of teaching immigration and the topics included below are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, I have selected readings that directly offer a sociological context for understanding contemporary immigration policy and politics. Whenever possible I have listed additional primary sources and multimedia to assist in teaching and learning.

Required Course Materials

We will be reading policy reports, government records, social science articles, newspaper and magazine pieces, op-eds, and book chapters throughout the semester. All of them are available on BlackBoard and, when applicable, through links to websites or the library.

I reserve the right to assign additional or alternative readings throughout the semester whether to complement your learning, fill learning gaps, incorporate students’ suggestions, or adapt to changes in immigration policies or other current events.

Learning Outcomes
The goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the different social, political, and economic influences on and consequences of immigration. At the end of the course, students will be able to have a working knowledge of:

- The main past and current immigration laws and policies and how they relate to current immigrant narratives
- How the contemporary deportation regime came into being, how it operates, what functions it serves and for whom
- How immigration, citizenship, and removal laws impact the lives of migrants, their families, and their communities in the U.S. and abroad
- The ways civil society organizes around immigration and (il)legality

Throughout the course, students will practice the following thinking and communication skills:

- Working independently and collaboratively in small groups
- Reading, synthesizing, and evaluating immigration literature
- Engaging in a respectful debate on controversial issues
- Presenting and leading a group discussion

**Course Format**

Most class sessions will include a short lecture by the professor followed by student-led discussion. There will some guest speakers and the course may incorporate multi-media materials, such as film and news clips. We will be covering topics that may be socially sensitive; therefore, it is crucial that we remain respectful of one another’s points of view during the course.

**Keeping up with the changing nature of Immigration Policy**

Please keep in mind that this class is working with a ‘moving target.’ For that reason, I request that everyone remains open-minded and flexible. We might want to change some weeks’ topics as outlined above. I am open to changes, and I hope you are too.

You will also want to spend a few minutes each week browsing a few of these websites. There are several websites that might be of interest to you as we progress through the course:

- **Bender’s Immigration Bulletin**: A mix of immigration news, opinions, and case law updates
- **Center for Immigration Studies**: Information about the social, economic, environmental, security, and fiscal consequences of immigration into United States.
  - [https://cis.org/ImmigrationBlog](https://cis.org/ImmigrationBlog)
- **Congressional Budget Office (CBO)**: Trends in immigration and policy proposals that would affect immigration—in particular, by estimating the budgetary and economic effects of those proposals.
  - [https://www.cbo.gov/topics/immigration](https://www.cbo.gov/topics/immigration)
- **Crimmigration Blog**: Practical analysis about the immigration consequences of criminal violations
  - [http://crimmigration.com/](http://crimmigration.com/)
- **GovTrack.us**: A project of Civic Impulse, LLC to browse bills in the U.S. Congress related to immigration, as determined by the Library of Congress
  - [https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/subjects/immigration/6206](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/subjects/immigration/6206)
- **Immigration Blog**: Information on legal developments in immigration, policy developments affecting immigrants and immigrant communities, and immigration humor
• The Law Offices of Norton Tooby: collection of information on the intersection of criminal and immigration law.
  o http://nortontooby.com/resources
• The Migration Policy Institute: Useful reports on immigration.
  o http://www.migrationpolicy.org
• Pew Research Hispanic Center: Nonpartisan source of data and analysis on issues affecting Latinos such as immigration, citizenship, and education.
  o http://www.pewhispanic.org/
## PART 1: IMMIGRATION BASICS

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<tr>
<th>Week 1: Aug. 30</th>
<th>Welcome and course goals</th>
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**Post class required reading:**

**Recommended reading:**

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<tr>
<th>Week 2: Sept. 6</th>
<th>Brief US History of Immigration and Immigrants</th>
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**Required readings:**

**For additional perspectives:**

**Recommended readings:**

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<th>Week 3: Sept. 13</th>
<th>The Immigration System(s) and Immigration in Numbers</th>
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**Everyone writes memos and at engages at least 3 times*** due 8pm

**Required readings:**
Also try to take a look at:


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**PART 2: THE PERENNIAL ISSUES**

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<th>Week 4: Sept. 20</th>
<th>Economic Impacts of Immigration</th>
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**Required readings:**


For an additional take on the economy:


**Recommended readings:**


| Week 5: Sept. 27 | Enforcement |
**Required readings:**


**Recommended reading:**


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<th>Week 6: Oct. 4</th>
<th>Legal Violence, Crime, and Race</th>
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**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**

Week 7: Oct. 11

**Immigrant Integration (Assimilation, Acculturation)**

**Everyone writes memos and engages at least 3 times*** due 8pm

**We might have a guest speaker—to be confirmed at a later date**

Required readings:


For a global perspective:


**Recommended readings:**


Week 8: Oct. 18

**Organizing and Advocacy at the Local and State Levels**

*Guest Speaker:* Samuel Chu

Required readings:


Week 9: Oct. 25

**Immigration, Citizenship, and the Courts**

Required readings:


**Recommended readings:**


**PART 3: IMMIGRATION POLICY IN 2018**

**Week 10: Nov. 1**  Immigration Policy in the last few months

**Required readings:**
1. Read the 5 latest news releases by USCIS: [https://www.uscis.gov/news-releases](https://www.uscis.gov/news-releases)
4. Anything else relevant published between August 30 and Nov. 1 as previously discussed in class.

**Recommended reading:**

**Week 11: Nov. 8**  Undocumented Migration and forms of relief: DACA and DAPA

**Required readings:**
3. American Immigration Council (nd). *The Dream Act, DACA, and Other Policies Designed to Protect Dreamers*.

**Recommended readings:**


**Week 12: Nov. 15**

**Humanitarian protection: Asylum, Refugee Status and TPS**

**Required readings:**

4. Additional readings TBA

**Recommended readings:**


**Thanksgiving: Nov. 22**

No class

**Week 13: Nov. 29**

**Family-based migration and Separation**

**Required readings and watching:**

4. “Separated: Children at the Border”
   b. [https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/we-have-to-control-our-border-thomas-homan-former-acting-ice-director/](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/we-have-to-control-our-border-thomas-homan-former-acting-ice-director/)
Recommended readings:

| Week 14: Dec. 6 | Student Presentations |

Your turn to shine!

By the end of the class, I anticipate that you will become expert on either one of the main immigration policy areas or on one of the interest groups that shape the legislative debates on immigration reform. I envision forming groups in the following policy areas or interests groups (adapted from L. DeSipio):*

**Policy areas:**
- Immigration enforcement
- Changes to standards for eligibility for admission to legal permanent residence (the “point system”)
- Temporary Protected Status
- Immigration policy and International security
- Legalization of unauthorized immigrants
- Obama administration executive actions (DACA and DAPA);
- Refugee policy
- Naturalization policy
- Guest worker programs

**Interest groups and key actors central to Congressional policy debates:**
- Republicans in the U.S. Congress (note that there are multiple coalitions that take different positions on immigration policies)
- Immigrant advocacy organizations and civil rights organizations
- Policy research groups
- State governments in the U.S.
- The Trump administration
- Employers, particularly in technology, service, and agriculture
- U.S. trade unions
- Immigrant-sending nations

* Please note that not all these will be discussed in depth in class. You are expected to find readings/do research beyond the topics covered in the readings assigned.
Whereas students are welcome to propose any alternative type of project, for those who would like some ideas, I propose two types of projects around the areas/interest groups above:

1. A client-focused project that addresses an immigration-related issue (a non-profit, a government agency, etc.). This project recommends a specific course of action to respond to this issue. The project must meet standards of good analysis, including precise definition of the problem, careful evaluation of the relevant evidence, identification of important trade-offs, and clear presentation of the conclusions and policy recommendations.

2. A quantitative analysis of an immigration-related issue that may or may not have a client. For this project students identify and analyze data to address a question of relevance to immigration policy. This project puts more emphasis on the quality and interpretation of the data analysis than on the political and ethical issues that arise in making specific policy recommendations.

These group projects will be presented during the last week of class. Each group should be composed of 2-3 people who are expected to meet throughout the semester and at least twice with me. Presentations should be about 15-20 minutes and can involve a variety of presentation styles and media.

**WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS COURSE?**

**Reading Assignments**
The course schedule (posted on Blackboard) is designed as a guide to the class. I may, at times, need to change class assignments and I will do so by an in-class announcement or revision to the course schedule. As a general rule, we will cover one assignment in each class period, although I may cover less or more, depending on class discussion. Unless I instruct otherwise, you are expected to read the next week’s assignment even if we do not completely cover the previous week’s assignment in class.

Due to time constraints, we may not discuss everything that you have read. However, you are still responsible for all assigned reading. If we haven’t been able to discussed something in class that you are highly interested in, I am happy to meet with you during office hours.

**Deadlines and Paper Submissions**
You are entering the professional world. That world is filled with deadlines. If deadlines are missed, your reputation suffers. For that reason, late work will not generally be accepted.

**Blackboard**
As stated above, all course materials are available in Blackboard. All students are required to ensure that they have access to the course’s Blackboard. Important class announcements will also be posted via Blackboard, therefore, please ensure that you check it regularly.

**Laptops**
Laptops are permitted for taking notes only unless otherwise instructed. Internet use is prohibited as well as cellphones, or other electronic devices. Prohibited use of Internet, cell phones, or other technological devices during class will result in penalties to a student’s engagement grade or other sanctions as deemed appropriate.

**Office Hours and email**
My office hours are Mondays 2:00pm-4:00pm. I am happy to meet with you at another time if you cannot meet at those times. To schedule an appointment, email me with a few times that you are available—I am in the office most days!

Feel free to contact me by email with logistical questions such as expected absences or scheduling an appointment to see me. However, for substantive questions that require a longer and deeper explanation, you can email them to me first and I will happily discuss them with you in person during office hours or a scheduled appointment.

**Deliverables (or what else do I need to do in this class)**

**Reflection memos**: (Each paper is worth 5% of your grade, for a total of 25%) You are required to complete five reflection memos throughout the semester. In these papers you are to construct your reflection in response to a reflection question that is related to the corresponding week. These papers should not be longer than 4 pages, double-spaced. You should summarize the main arguments of the readings using a question as a guide—you should come up with the question. However, try to avoid simply describing the readings—rather, provide a synthesis and analysis of the main arguments in response to the reflection question. Conclude your paper with some suggestions on how to advance the research/policy in this area. These assignments are due at the beginning of class so they can help guide class discussions.

An ‘A’ paper is one that is thoughtful, critical, and one that raises questions that the readings may not address, or do not adequately address. Each paper is due through email by 2pm the day the readings will be discussed (please also bring hard copies of your papers to class).

**Leading class discussion**: (25% of your grade) Each student is expected to lead class discussion twice (please note that you are not allowed to write papers on the weeks that you lead discussion). This consists of guiding your colleagues through a synthesis and analysis of the readings and providing questions that will allow the class to reflect on the underlying theoretical debates and the implications for empirical observations. A sign-up sheet will be provided the first week of class. These discussions will be treated as part of your participation grade. I highly recommend that if you are signed up to lead discussion with someone else, that you do NOT just split up the readings and come up with questions independently. Rather, you should work collaboratively to devise questions that draw on various themes across the readings (rather than approaching the discussion one reading at a time). This approach will allow for a more seamless discussion of the readings to draw out more analysis in class discussions rather than merely describing what was read.

**Engagement**: (25% of your grade): All students are expected to be engaged in a variety of ways throughout the semester. What do I mean by this?

- **Preparedness**: I expect students to be prepared for each class and actively and substantively participate in discussions. If you are not prepared for a particular class, please let me know by 2:00 PM before class via email so that I will know not to call on you that day. This privilege is available no more than twice and counts towards your absences (see below). If you are not prepared for a question during class you may not pass on the question. I reserve the right to count you as absent if your inability to answer questions is the result of being unprepared for class.
- **Respect**: For those who are NOT speaking, this means you should be listening to and learning from your colleagues; for those who ARE speaking, this means being prepared and making time for others to participate in class. In addition, individuals have differing views on issues. To
ensure that everyone will feel comfortable sharing their ideas and views, we will all listen and respond respectfully.

- **Attendance**: Attendance is mandatory. Therefore, each time you are absent it will be counted against your engagement grade.
- **Tardiness**: I expect all students to be in class at the start of class. Late attendance is disruptive to the class and will count as an absence.

**Final Projects**: (25% of your grade) As explained above and to be discussed in class.

**Grading**:
I have high expectations of students and these are reflected in my grading policy:

- **A**=Excellent. Work that is not only good, but shows creative, imaginative incorporation of the material, a genuine investment in the subject matter, and uncommon expertise in presentation.
- **B**=Good. Work that goes beyond the basic requirements by demonstrating genuine understanding of the material, seriousness of purpose, and skill in execution.
- **C**=Satisfactory. Work that fulfills all the basic requirements but goes no further.

**Out of Class Learning**: Average minimum amount of independent, out-of-class, learning expected per week in a 15-week semester, including exam week: A minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction.

**Respect for Diversity**: It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. I strive to create an inclusive classroom and present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, and political affiliation. Your suggestions on how to help me succeed with this are encouraged and appreciated.

**Academic Integrity**: Cheating, plagiarizing, and the selling of notes or recordings of my class sessions strictly prohibited. These activities are assaults on academic integrity and property rights, and engaging in them will result in either a failure on the assignment, or failure in the course. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: [studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity](http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity)

**Special Accommodations**: Any student needing special accommodations is encouraged to meet with me privately during the first week of class to discuss accommodations.

**Disability Support Services (DSS)**: Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: [gwired.gwu.edu/dss/](http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/)

**Mental Health Services (tel: 202-994-5300)**: The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services, and referrals. [counselingcenter.gwu.edu/](http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu/)
Religious Observances: Students should notify me during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. I will extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up any examinations.

Emergencies: In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for GW to suspend normal operations. During this time, GW may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It’s the responsibility of the student to monitor Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, and the main GW, College, and department websites, emails, and GW messages for important general information.

(Last updated September 2, 2018)