

University of Illinois at Chicago
United States Politics: Current Problems and Controversies: Debates in the Political
Process - Immigration
Political Science 111
Summer 2007

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Class Location: 1171 BSB

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Office Hours: T/TH: 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.
and by appointment
Class Meets: T/TH: 10:00 to 12:30 p.m.

Introduction & Overview

Few issues in recent times have divided Americans and inflamed passions as immigration. It is the great challenge in American politics, rooted in history and fought contemporarily along political, economic, social, ideological, and cultural lines. At every level of government (federal, state and local) immigration remains controversial and dominates public policy debates.

Our goal in this introductory course is to understand immigration from all facets. We will explore how it has become an enduring problem and consider all the sides of the debate. In the end students should gain new insight on the subject.

Teaching Method

Consistent with the theme, this course will be taught as seminar with occasional lecture. Each class begins with an introduction of the topic and presentation of relevant information intended to provoke debate/discussion. Everyone participates. I prefer you do not wait to be called upon.

Course Requirements

Three rubrics will be used to judge performance in this course.

- 1.) Attendance and participation are jointly considered. For the former, I will track the number of times you come to class and take it into consideration when calculating your grade. Participation will be determined by a weekly 1-page summary of the reading submitted to my email box at oadeo1@uic.edu beginning Monday, June 4, 2007 (Deadline: 6:00 p.m.) and your general attitude toward the class. Both explain 30 percent of the grade.
- 2.) A middle-of-the-semester exam worth 40 percent of the grade.
- 3.) An insightful/analytic class presentation on U.S. immigration policy worth 30 percent of the grade.

Readings

The main text for this course is *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* by Roger Daniels and published 2005 by Hill and Wang. This book provides the factual contexts for the debate and discussion that are the centerpiece of this course. Documentaries and relevant hand-outs will also be utilized.

Please make sure to have the correct email address for references of online reading materials and other course related information.

Grading Scale

Based on weighted scores in the above rubrics, the final grade will be determined as follows:

A = 93 – 100 percent

B = 83 – 92 percent

C = 75 – 82 percent

D = 65 – 74 percent

F = Under 65 percent

Instructor's Policy

On Attendance:

For the goal of this course to be realized, you need to be here and on time. Class begins on time. I consider habitual late-coming disrespectful and it tells me you are not serious about the course. Three or more unexcused absences put you at risk for failure in this course no matter your other scores. Frivolous excuses, such as missing the train or car breaking down, will not be entertained. Academic accommodations will be given to students with documented disabilities, per university regulations. Such students should inform me of their condition early in the semester. Medical emergencies must be validated by an MD.

On Assignments:

Assignments are due on deadlines. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized accordingly. No exceptions.

On Academic Dishonesty:

A word of caution: Don't plagiarize or use a surrogate to do your work. Great variance between the skills shown in class and those displayed in take-home assignments will trigger an investigation that may lead to serious consequences for the student.

On Class Decorum:

Cell phones, pagers and related gadgets capable of setting off and distracting the class must be completely turned off before you enter the class. You may bring but not read newspapers during class. Conversations that are irrelevant to the course will be shut down. Finally, while a cup of coffee or a bottle of soda may be allowed, chewable items (including gum) are forbidden.

On Course Information:

This syllabus is your primary source of written information for the course; consult it regularly. If you lose the copy given to you in class ask for a replacement or print one online.

Course Calendar

Note: This calendar does not demarcate specific topics for each class meeting. Topics will be covered cumulatively; that is, we will pick up from where we left off the previous meeting.

Week of 5/29

Introduction and course overview. Why the immigration controversy? State of immigration; myths and assumptions; Politics of immigration; Discussion of the liberal, conservative and moderate positions; Immigration and American values: Immigration and the U.S. Constitution; Civil Liberties and Civil Rights.

Assignment: Assess American public opinion on immigration by scanning newspaper editorials online. Turn in a 1-page report to my email box at oadeoye@uic.edu Friday, June 1, 2007.

Week of 6/5

Contexts of Early Immigration

Read Chapters 1 & 2

Documentary: *The Chinese American Experience*.

Week of 6/12

Defining Events of Continued Immigration (1)

Read Chapters 3 & 4

Week of 6/19

Defining Events of Continued Immigration (2)

Read Chapters 5 & 6

Week of 6/26

Change in Immigration Policy

Read Chapter 7

Thursday, June 28 – **Midterm Examination**

Week of 7/3

Change and Continuity (1)

Read Chapters 8 & 9

Documentary on Latinos and Asians in the U.S.

Week of 7/10

Change and Continuity (2)

Read Chapter 10

Final class presentations (1)

Week of 7/17

Politics of Reform, Interest groups and other Stakeholders

Read Chapters 11 & 12

Documentary on Post-9/11 immigrant communities in the U.S.

Final class presentations (2)

Publishers Weekly

Immigration—perhaps no other subject so contentiously touches on both our collective idealism and our capacity for irrational fear. Nostalgic about past immigrants, we magnify the threat of newly arriving hordes of outsiders. Daniels, author of several books about the Japanese-American experience, judiciously avoids a sweeping narrative in favor of an immersion in the messy details of legislation and demography, although accurate assessments are elusive. Reflecting the lack of overarching plot, the book's first half is chronological to 1965, after which it switches to an ethnic breakdown. As Daniels shows, the subject yields hyperbolic rhetoric and misleading statistics, which rarely lead to coherent or effective legislation. Congress rarely grasp the real ramifications of its immigration policy as it underfunds its nominally ambitious measures. Despite his deeply academic cast of mind, Daniels keeps his prose engaging and lively, as he displays his evident love of accuracy and impatience with obfuscation. Those who read closely will unearth arresting tidbits, such as the central role of the Chinese as targets in virtually all early anti-immigration measures and the brief but virulent anti-Filipino hysteria of the early 1930s. Perhaps most interesting is the final section, in which Daniels tackles broader questions about the debate, including the surprisingly little-changed status of immigration in the post-9/11, post-INS landscape. (Jan.) Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information.

Foreign Affairs

This useful study introduces readers to the tangled history of immigration policy in the United States. Such an introduction is badly needed: on the evidence of this book, much of U.S. immigration policy has been made by those who did not understand the consequences of the policies they struggled to enact. Before 1882, the country had no immigration policy: anyone who got here could stay here. But Americans already living here have always felt ambivalent toward new arrivals; while recognizing that immigrants provide cheap and willing labor, they have doubted the ability of various groups to assimilate. Benjamin Franklin worried about the Germans, and later generations worried about the Irish, the Italians, and the Jews. Historically, these fears have been expressed in terms of race; today, "culture" is the preferred term to distinguish the assimilable, useful immigrants from the purportedly dangerous ones. Daniels sees immigration policy moving in long waves. From 1882 to 1921, the doors were slowly closed. Immigration policy was tightest between the two world wars, but controls began to relax during Harry Truman's presidency. A second period of openness culminated in the amnesties of the 1980s. Now, with the percentage of foreign-born residents comparable to levels of a century ago, there may be further efforts at tightening ahead.