Political Science 150 A, Summer Session II

Instructor: Mike Nicholson
Office: SSB 343
E-mail: mdnichol@ucsd.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12-1 PM.
TA: Thomas Flaherty

Introduction

This course explores how the United States and other immigrant-receiving countries respond to, and are transformed by, international migration. It addresses many key questions in migration studies and provides a comprehensive overview of the debates that have arisen among scholars and policymakers in the field. We will address many topics, including why people migrate, ethical debates related to efforts to control immigration, the politics and determinants of immigration policy, immigrant societal and political incorporation (and exclusion), and the politics of refugee resettlement.

In the first four sessions, we will discuss how politics shape migration policy, with a particular emphasis on the causes and consequences of U.S. policies. We will then discuss the conceptual and practical challenges of integrating immigrant populations as well as the causes of anti-immigrant backlash. Finally, we will discuss the ethics of migration and integration policy, including policies towards undocumented migrants and refugees/asylum seekers.

The course readings will include both academic texts and policy reports.

By the end of this course, students will develop a nuanced understanding of migration debates in the United States and beyond.

Course Materials

All readings are posted online on the course website on TED in the ‘Contents’ folder.

My Expectations

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Immigration is an extremely complex issue and we will engage with a variety of perspectives. I urge you to read each piece with an open and reflective mind.

Your papers should demonstrate not only that you read and understood the readings, but that you have thought about them critically and formed an opinion. I expect you to be able to articulate your opinion in a thoughtful, balanced way, acknowledging the pros and cons of your argument. You should also demonstrate that you can integrate concepts from the readings in an organized, succinct manner.

Grading
You will be graded based on your participation, a 5 page opinion paper and data exercise, and a 5 page final paper (double-spaced).

For the first assignment, you will be required to respond to an opinion piece on immigration akin to what you mean read in the paper or internet. You will be required to fact check the piece, correct any figures that are incorrect, and write a 3 page response in which you agree or disagree with the key points made by the author. You will also be required to write 5 short, 2-sentence bullet points with concrete policy recommendations based on the opinions you express in the essay portion of the assignment. I will pass out detailed instructions in class on August 15th and the assignment will be due at the beginning of class on August 24th.

Your final paper will be due on September 7th at the beginning of class. You will be given a prompt on August 24th with 3 questions pertaining to the course readings. I expect you to write a 5 page paper answering one of these questions to the best of your ability, keeping in mind the expectations stipulated above.

There will be at least 2 informal writing assignments, to be completed in the last hour of class, that are meant as practice for the final essay. These will not count as a grade; they are meant only for me to check your progress and address any difficulties students are having. On occasion, you will also be expected to read and comment on your classmates’ in class assignments.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

25% Participation

35% Assignment 1

40% Final Paper

Late Policy

Your grade will drop one half a letter grade (e.g. A to A-) for each day you are late in turning in your papers. After one week, I will not accept papers without a documented medical or family excuse.

Course Schedule

Class 1, August 8: Course Overview: Why do People Migrate?


Class 2, August 10: Theories of Migration
Key Question: Why do people migrate across borders?


Class 3, August 15: Sources of Migration Policy

Key Question: What social forces shape immigration policy? Can migration be controlled?


Class 4, August 17: Migration Policy in the U.S.

Key Question: How has U.S. immigration policy evolved over time?


Class 5, August 22: Immigrant Integration in Comparative Perspective

Key Question: What policies have countries undertaken to integration immigrant-origin populations? What does it mean to be successfully ‘integrated’? What are the key challenges facing Europe and how do they differ from those of America?


**Class 6, August 24: The Societal Impact of Migration; Anti-Immigrant Backlash**

Key question: Why do people oppose immigration? Are their arguments justified? Why do right-wing parties form in opposition to immigration?


**Class 7, August 29: Migration and the Welfare State**

Key Questions: What is the effect of immigration on welfare?


**Class 8, August 31: The Ethics of Migration Control**

Key Question: What responsibility do states have toward migrants?

Class 9, September 4: Undocumented Migration

Key Question: What rights should the U.S. government grant undocumented migrants?


Class 10, September 7: Refugees

Key Questions: What responsibilities do states have towards refugees and asylum seekers?

