Course Description

Foreigners and their children represent 25% of the U.S. population, making the paradox of America’s identity as a “nation of immigrants” more salient today than ever. However, immigrants’ choices about where to live, and the policies that shape their everyday lives, are changing rapidly. How do today’s immigration patterns diverge from historical trends? How well are the new immigrants integrating in the economy and society? How do socially constructed categories like “high skilled” vs “low skilled”, or “legal immigrant” vs “illegal alien”, impact immigrant incorporation and well-being? And what happens to those whom the government decides do not belong? In this course you will explore these questions through critical reflection on classical immigration theories, ethnographic texts, your own independent research, and a personal U.S. immigration blog.

This course has no pre-requisites (apart from your enthusiasm for the material and for collaborating with peers!).
**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board</td>
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<td>Discussion Leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Blog</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Essay/ Interview</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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**Grades** will be assigned according to the Cornell University grading scale.

**Our Learning Contract**

- **YOU** help create a safe learning environment by responding respectfully to the discussion board comments and other written work of your peers. You contribute to an intellectually stimulating classroom environment by participating actively in discussions and assuming the role of discussion leader when scheduled.

- **I** provide encouraging, thought-provoking feedback on your written work. I provide an inclusive, engaging online learning experience by guiding discussions while also providing space for you to direct your own learning.

- **WE** grow collectively through a better understanding of each other’s unique experiences and perspectives on immigration, and by taking our mutual learning responsibilities seriously.

**Online Course Structure**

Online learning places responsibility on students to organize your time and keep up with readings and assignments. To some extent, the reading schedule can be adjusted to your own pace, but you are encouraged to follow the weekly course calendar below to ensure you can participate meaningfully in (graded) discussion board commentaries. To help you along, I will post short video-recordings (5 to 10 minutes) of my own introduction to the topic by 9am EST each Monday of our course. These videos are intended to help you work through the course material by laying out important points of debate and my expectations for assigned work.

Despite the emphasis on individual learning, you will interact frequently with your peers through online discussions and small group activities. After all, our most impactful learning moments often come from inspired discussions and debates.

Continued communication between you and I is essential for a successful learning experience in the online environment. I will post virtual “office hours”, at which time I can be reached on Collaborate Ultra or Skype to discuss your questions and concerns. Also, I will meet with each of you virtually at least one time to discuss your progress.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Improve your understanding of contemporary immigrant groups in the U.S., in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, geographical distribution, and reasons for migrating.

2. Explain what is “new” about contemporary U.S. immigration, and historical turning points that have shaped the immigration policy of today.

3. Demonstrate competency in the theories of immigrant assimilation and transnationalism, and apply these theories to analyze contemporary immigration experiences.

4. Produce a well-argued paper on contemporary U.S. immigration, based on thorough secondary research.

5. Prepare a personal blog about U.S. immigration that is accessible to a non-expert public.

6. Collaborate effectively with peers in an online, distance-learning environment.
Assignments

More detailed guidelines and a grading rubric will be posted to BB. Please note that late work will not be accepted without prior written permission from the instructor.

Discussion Board (20\%): Collegial discussion and debate with your peers is integral to the learning experience, particularly in an online class environment. Every week, you will be expected to post a response to a prompt or question on the readings, as well as a thoughtful comment on a peer’s post, and a counter-response to the comment you receive. We will change up the format to keep our discussions lively (e.g. audio-recording the posts, role plays, including links to outside resources, etc).

Discussion Leader (10\%): This course builds independent study skills by asking you to take ownership of your learning process. For each of the 9 topics, one (or more) student(s) will be responsible to post the Discussion Board prompt for the week, and to participate actively in the discussion by commenting on multiple posts. You will be asked to prepare a one- to two-page reflection paper on what was learned through the online discussion, and post the summary promptly for your peers.

Course Blog (20\%): Immigration is a sensitive issue that increasingly affects us all. To practice your skills as a public sociologist, you will maintain a personal blog that gathers and analyzes popular media on immigration (e.g. documentaries, TED talks, academic presentations, or even popular media that touches on immigration). You might choose to focus your materials on a U.S. immigration “hotspot” of your choice. Research for the blog should also assist you in preparations for your final paper.

Mid-Term Essay & Interview (20\%): Qualitative sociologists make analytical connections between individual lived realities, wider social forces, and theory. You will practice these skills by interviewing someone who has immigrated to the U.S. about their experiences, and writing an essay (min. 6 pages) analyzing your findings using the theoretical tools developed in class. Tips for effective (and ethical) interview techniques will be provided.

Final Paper & Presentation (30\%): As your final assignment for the course, you will write an argumentative paper (min. 12 pages) addressing the question: How should new immigrants to the U.S. expect to fare? This question can be addressed as narrowly or broadly (with respect to U.S. geography, immigrant groups, political/ social/ economic dimensions of immigrant incorporation, etc) as you like. A first draft of your paper will be reviewed by at least one of your peers. You will post a presentation of your findings for your peers, and provide commentary on each other’s work.
# Course Calendar

## MODULE 1: Immigration Trends, Then and Now

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
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| Immigrant Integration Overview | (R1) National Academy of Sciences, *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*. Summary.  
(R2) Huntington, “The Hispanic challenge.” | June 16:  
DB posts |
| Historical Turning Points      | (R3) Fleegler, *Ellis Island Nation*. Introduction.  
(R4) Ngai, “The civil rights origins of illegal immigration.”  
(R5) Rodriguez, “Dis)unity and diversity in Post-911 America.” | June 20:  
DB posts |

## MODULE 2: Theorizing Immigrant Experiences

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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(R7) Karatani, “How history separated refugee and migrant regimes.”  
(R8) Iskander & Lowe, “The Politics of Skill.” | June 27:  
DB posts |
| Assimilation                       | (R9) Alba & Nee, “Rethinking assimilation theory”  
(R11) Bohra-Misra & Massey, “Interrace marriage among new immigrants” | July 7:  
(Take a break for July 4th weekend)  
DB posts  
Complete interview for mid-term essay |
| Transnationalism                   | (R12) Smith, *Mexican New York*.                                                      | July 11:  
DB posts  
Submit mid-term essay |

## MODULE 3: Immigrant Social and Economic Incorporation

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<th>Topic</th>
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| New Immigrant Destinations         | (R13) Singer, “Contemporary Immigrant Gateways in Historical Perspective.”  
(R14) Winders, “New Americans’ in a ‘New South’ city?”  
(R15) Kandel & Parrado, “Restructuring of the US Meat Processing Industry.” | July 18:  
DB posts |
| Gendered Experiences of Incorporation | (R16) Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, “I’m here but I’m there.”  
(R17) Kurien, “Gendered Ethnicity.”  
(R18) Le Espiritu, “We don’t sleep around like white girls do.” | July 25:  
DB posts  
First draft of final paper (peer review) |
(R20) Gonzalez, “Learning to be Illegal.”  
(R21) Sherry et al, “International Students.” | August 1:  
DB posts  
Post final paper presentation |
| Deportation                        | (R22) Golash-Boza, *Deported*.                                                   | August 9:  
DB posts  
Submit final paper |

Sexsmith
Detailed Readings

(R1) National Academy of Sciences. 2015. The Integration of Immigrants into American Society. Summary (pp. 1-10).

Classroom Policies and Expectations

Students with disabilities: Please arrange to meet with me (virtually) during the first week of class if you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course.

E-mailing the Instructor: You should not expect a same-day response if you send me an e-mail with questions or concerns about this course after 5pm or on the weekend.

Academic Integrity: All the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another, and must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Collaborative work of the following kinds is authorized in this course: peer review and critique of students’ essays by one another and, when approved by the instructor in particular cases, collaborative projects by pairs of students. The normal penalty for a violation of the code and the guidelines above is an “F” for the term.