Department of Sociology  
Dartmouth College  
Fall 2020

***THIS IS A DRAFT. THE FINAL VERSION OF THIS SYLLABUS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN THE FIRST DAY OF THE CLASS***

Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity (Sociology 48)  
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Course Description:

This course focuses on three closely related topics: 1) the movement of people across national borders; 2) the way population movement transforms categorization of people; and 3) the political dynamics around such transformations. The American sociology of immigration has traditionally focused on the life trajectories of immigrants, documenting why they migrate and how they adapt to their newfound homeland. However, recent developments in immigration policy and discourse calls for a different approach, one that focuses not just on the lives of immigrants but also on the way political dynamics structures our understanding of immigration. Responding to this challenge, this course proposes a curricular centering on the political sociology of immigration. That is, rather than taking immigration and immigrants as a given, I highlight immigration as a focal point upon which the power dynamics of a host society are projected. In order to survey those dynamics, we will venture through three analytical modules. First, we study how the state categorizes certain people as immigrants and subject them to restrictions, often causing much pain and suffering. Recent developments, such as increased enforcement and changes in the asylum process, will be presented in detail. Second, we look at how individual immigrants creatively respond to these attempts and continue to cross the border amid intense scrutiny. Third, we review how social scientists and historians have portrayed these dynamics through different theories. The theories of assimilation, racialization, and whiteness will be the main topics. By taking this course, students should be able understand the contemporary social context of international migration. Students should also be able to appreciate the changing landscape of American racial hierarchy, as well as the political dynamics surrounding immigration policy and enforcement.

Disclaimer for Remote Learning (Fall 2020 only—hopefully)

This course was NOT originally designed as a course for remote learning, and therefore leaves much to be desired in terms of content and delivery. Given the exceptional circumstances that we are in, I humbly ask everyone to be patient and understanding. I do recognize that many of us are going through tough times and I have tried to do my part by relaxing unrealistic demands on assessment and grading. Please feel free to get in touch and discuss any issue that may prevent you from focusing on this course.
Course Requirements and Grading:

Attendance (40 points): Students are expected to participate in all lecture sessions and discussions throughout the term, with both audio and video functions in Zoom activated. In other words, no black screens except for brief moments. Participating in all class sessions will give you 40 points. Missing one session will result in 2 points deducted out of 40. Students who miss more than five sessions will automatically fail the course. You should contact me if you experience any extenuating circumstances preventing you from attending Zoom sessions.

Assignment 1: Immigrant Life History (20 points) due on October 8th

For this assignment, students should interview immigrant(s) and collect their immigration stories. The interviewee can be family members, friends, professional acquaintances and/or yourself. Needless to say, the interviewee should be notified of the class assignment and give consent. The format of interview is open, but students may want to consider introducing creative questions to explore not just how the interviewee arrived where they are now but also how they see American society. Properly executing and documenting an interview will result in 5 points. A high-quality interview encompassing creative questions and detailed answers will give you another 5 points.

After interview, students should analyze the resulting data in relation to the major immigration policy developments we covered in the class. Use your sociological imagination and connect the personal with the social. Here are some questions to start with: What made this person migrate? How was the movement possible? Under what context of reception did this person engage with their newfound homeland? How did the experience of immigration shape their perspective on American society? Question, analysis, and writing will be graded on the scale of 10 points.

Assignment 2: Immigration Policy Brief (20 points) due on November 12th

For this assignment, students should write a policy brief pertaining to immigration issues. The brief should not be longer than 2,000 words or four single-spaced pages. A policy brief should contain following sections. First, there should be an executive summary succinctly summarizing everything in the brief (less than one page). Second, there should be a clear policy recommendation, which often takes the form of a sentence or two. Third, there should be a survey of problem. This section should persuasively argue a certain issue is a problem that requires policy intervention. Lastly, there should be a section containing necessary facts gleaned from the relevant literature, which would support the policy recommendation. For the literature, students are encouraged to draw from the works discussed in the class but they can draw from their own research into the issue if necessary. Each of the sections will be graded for 5 points out of the total of 20 points.

For an example of a policy brief, refer to Migration Policy Institute. However, a policy brief can take many forms, including a power point slide format. The goal of a brief is to aid a decision maker, often an elected official, in enacting a policy intervention. Students are welcome to experiment with the format with this goal in mind.
Final Exam (20 points); questions revealed on November 17th; answers due by November 24th

The final exam will consist of four questions. The questions will touch on the entirety of the course content and examine whether you hold a comprehensive understanding of the course material. Instead of focusing on a narrow subject and taking points off on details, I will provide broad questions to which you can respond in a liberal manner. However, rather than making strong assumptions and projecting opinions, you should think carefully about what we read throughout the course and invoke some of the facts and arguments presented in those readings. Specific citations are unnecessary, but you should at least mention the last name(s) of the author(s). Each of the four questions will be graded as pass or fail, and a pass will equal 5 points. Below are a few candidates for the questions.

- How did the US asylum policy change in recent years, and who were the main targets of those changes?
- How did the Hart-Cellar act transform the way we think about race and ethnicity?
- Why do people migrate across national borders? How do they do it?
- Who are white people and what is whiteness?
- What is assimilation? Should we strive for it? If not, what is the alternative?
- Why do some politicians love to hate immigrants?
- What does one mean by open borders? Is the idea plausible?
- What does one mean by the core of American national identity? Is the idea plausible?
- Who are getting deported, and why? What are the political dynamics behind increased deportations?
- What are some of the main forces behind the making of American immigration policy, and how do they line up on issues such as temporary work visa programs?

The questions will be shared with you on the last day of lectures (November 17th). You should submit your answers to me by e-mail within a week, before the midnight of November 24th.

Grading Scale:

A  94-100
A- 90-93.99
B+ 87-89.99
B  83-86.99
B- 80-82.99
C+ 77-79.99
C  73-76.99
C- 70-72.99
D  60-69.99
F <60

I follow Dartmouth’s Scholarship Ratings:
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~reg/transcript/grade_descriptions.html

Earning an “A” entails the following:
Excellent mastery of course material
Student performance indicates a very high degree of originality, creativity, or both Excellent performance in analysis, synthesis, and critical expression, oral or written Student works independently with unusual effectiveness

Office Hour Meeting

I will hold Zoom office hour sessions every Wednesday from 11 to 12 by appointment. You should sign up at: https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/laojf/. You should sign up for at least one session throughout the term, and I encourage you to meet with me early on in the term so we can get to know each other.

Accessibility:

Go to Student Tech Check at https://services.dartmouth.edu/TDClient/1806/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=101369 for general information. You can ask for a specific form of support (ex., equipment, bandwidth…) in the link.

Student Accessibility Needs: Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are encouraged to schedule a phone/video meeting with me as early in the term as possible. This conversation will help to establish what supports are built into my online course. In order for accommodations to be authorized, students are required to consult with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; SAS website; 603-646-9900) and to email me their SAS accommodation form. We will then work together with SAS if accommodations need to be modified based on the online learning environment. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Course Schedule and Assigned Readings:

9/15 Introduction

9/17 The Immigration Debate: Cultural, Ethical, and Economic Concerns


9/22 The State: Immigration Policy (1)


9/24 The State: Immigration Policy (2)


9/29 The State: Enforcement (1)


10/1 The State: Enforcement (2)


10/6 Discussion: Immigrant Biography

10/8 The State: The Asylum Process and Legible Suffering

A special guest lecture by Dr. Chiara Galli, a postdoctoral fellow at Cornell University

Dr. Galli is an expert on the sociology of asylum-seeking and has worked extensively with unaccompanied minors from Central America. For more information, see her website.

*Immigrant Biography due on 10/8*

10/13 Migrant: Who Migrates? (1)


10/15 Migrant: Who Migrates? (2)


10/22 Migrant: Huddles and Strategies


10/24 Migrant: Mobility Regime


10/27 Discourse: Assimilation (1)


10/29 Discourse: Assimilation (2)


11/3 Discourse: Racialization

**11/5 Undocumented Lives, Documented Organizing**

A special guest lecture by Oscar R. Cornejo Casares, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at Northwestern University.


**11/10 Discourse: Whiteness (1)**


**11/12 Discourse: Whiteness (2)**


*Immigration Policy Brief due on 11/12*

**11/17 The Present and Future of Nativism**