

**Department of Sociology  
Dartmouth College  
Winter 2026**

**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 trends in immigration policy and discourse call for a different approach, one that focuses not just on the lives of immigrants but also on the way political dynamics structure our understanding of immigration. Rather than taking immigration and immigrants as a given, this course highlights immigration as a focal point upon which the power dynamics of a host society are projected.

We will venture through three analytical modules. First, we study how the state categorizes certain people as immigrants and subjects them to restriction, often causing much pain and suffering. The consequences of recent immigration policies, such as increased enforcement and changes in the asylum proceedings, will be considered in detail. Second, we look at how individual immigrants creatively respond to these restrictions and continue to cross the border amid intense scrutiny. Third, we review how social scientists and historians have portrayed these dynamics through theories of assimilation, racialization, and transnationalism.

After taking this course, students should be able to understand the contemporary social context of international migration in the United States and beyond. Students should also be able to appreciate the changing landscape of American racial hierarchy, as well as the political dynamic surrounding immigration policy and enforcement.

**NO SCREEN POLICY:** Except for exams and other special occasions, I will not allow use of any personal devices with screen during class. The personal devices include laptops, tablets, and smartphones. You are welcome to take notes with pen and paper, but it is not necessary as my lecture slides will be provided through the Canvas page and there is nothing to memorize in this course. If you want to bring assigned readings with your notes to lectures, I advise you to print them out. This may be inconvenient, but I believe it is essential for us to have time to *think* and *engage*.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

**Attendance (30 points):** Students are expected to participate in all sessions throughout the term. Perfect attendance will automatically grant you 30 points. Missing one session will result in 2 points deducted out of 30. Students who miss more than four sessions will automatically fail the course. You should contact me if you experience any extenuating circumstances preventing you from attending class sessions.

**Reading (0 points):** As you may infer from the reading list below, this course relies much on assigned books and articles. I have, in most cases, kept the amount of reading required to lower than 150 pages per week. **YOU MUST READ ALL OF THE ASSIGNED READINGS BEFORE EACH CLASS SESSION.** My lecture, as well as class discussion, will assume that you have read all the readings beforehand.

Articles will be available to download in the course CANVAS website.

A note on cold calling: I will call upon students without warning any time during class to answer questions about the assigned reading. Failing to answer will not result in point deduction, but you should always be prepared to answer questions about the readings.

**In-class Quiz (10 points):** I will administer quick, short quizzes throughout the term without notice to confirm whether students read the assigned material. The quizzes will consist of simple multiple-choice questions, the answers to which should be obvious to those who have read the course material.

### **Assignment 1: Immigrant Life History (20 points)**

For this assignment, students should interview immigrant(s) – defined as someone who was not born in one country and moved to another – and collect their immigration stories. The interviewee can be family members, friends, professional acquaintances and/or yourself. 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 their adopted homeland. Properly executing and documenting an interview will result in 5 points. A high-quality interview with creative questions and detailed answers will give you another 5 points.

After the 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 push factors impelled this person to migrate? How was the movement related to immigration policy at the time? Under what context of reception did this person engage with their adopted homeland? How did the experience of immigration shape their perspective on the new country? Question, analysis, and writing will be graded on the scale of 10 points.

### **Midterm Exam (20 points)**

The midterm exam will consist of four questions. The questions will examine whether students 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 students can respond in a liberal manner. However, rather than making assumptions and projecting opinions, students should think carefully about what we read in the course and reference some of the facts and arguments presented in those readings. Specific citations are not necessary, but students should at least mention the last name(s) of the author(s). Each question will be graded on the scale of 5 points. Below are a few sample questions.

- Why do people migrate across national borders? How do they do it?
- Why do some politicians love to hate immigrants?
- What does one mean by open borders? Is the idea plausible?
- Who is 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?
- Why is there so much misinformation on immigration and immigrants?

### **Assignment 2: Immigration Policy Brief (20 points)**

This is a team assignment. Students will be grouped into teams to work on various policy questions they find compelling. Each team should write a policy brief pertaining to immigration issues. The brief should not be longer than 10,000 words. 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 (e.g., “The Congress should open up a pathway towards citizenship for the DACA recipients”). Third, there should be a survey of the problem remedied by the policy. This section should persuasively argue that a certain issue requires policy intervention. Lastly, there should be a section containing necessary facts from the relevant literature, which would support the policy recommendation. This section should preemptively address any criticisms that the proposal may face from the opposition. Each of the sections mentioned above will be graded for 5 points out of the total of 20 points.

Students will have time to choose and discuss their topics in class. Before drafting the final brief, each team will present the outcome of their research to the entire class, most likely in the last two sessions of the term.

For an example of a policy brief, refer to [Migration Policy Institute](#). However, a policy brief can take many forms, including the power point slide format or even a Youtube video. 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 this goal in mind.

Note on teamwork: Students will have a chance to register their dissatisfaction with their teammates early in the process, should they choose to do so. Then I will provide a specific guideline to each member of the team to remedy the situation. Students who fail to adhere to the guideline will be penalized in terms of course grade.

## **Grading Scale:**

A 94-100  
A- 90-94  
B+ 87-90  
B 83-7  
B- 80-83  
C+ 77-80  
C 73-77  
C- 70-73  
D 60-70  
F <60

I follow Dartmouth's Scholarship Ratings:

[http://www.dartmouth.edu/~reg/transcript/grade\\_descriptions.html](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*

In case of a borderline score (i.e., 94), I will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the student's participation during the term to decide on a grade (either A or A-). The main criteria will be attendance, teamwork, and in-class participation. For instance, a 94 who turned in excellent assignments and missed a couple of classes will most likely receive A-. If they actively participated in class discussions and team project, however, they may still receive an A.

## **Office Hour Meeting**

I will hold in-person office hour sessions every Tuesday from 3 to 4 by appointment. We will meet in my office at 301D Blunt. You should sign up at:

<https://www.wejoinin.com/sunmin.kim@dartmouth.edu>. You should sign up for at least one meeting during the term, and I encourage you to meet with me early on so we can get to know each other. If you are unable to meet during this time, please contact me.

## **Accessibility:**

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Getting Started with SAS webpage](#); student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its [Testing Center](#) may play in accommodation implementation. This process works

best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential

### **Title IX Reporting Requirement:**

At Dartmouth, we value integrity, responsibility, and respect for the rights and interests of others, all central to our Principles of Community. We are dedicated to establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive campus where all have equal access to the educational and employment opportunities Dartmouth offers. We strive to promote an environment of sexual respect, safety, and well-being. In its policies and standards, Dartmouth demonstrates unequivocally that sexual assault, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking are not tolerated in our community.

The Sexual Respect Website (<https://sexual-respect.dartmouth.edu>) at Dartmouth provides a wealth of information on your rights with regard to sexual respect and resources that are available to all in our community.

**Please note that, as a faculty member, I am obligated to share disclosures regarding conduct under Title IX with Dartmouth's Title IX Coordinator.** Confidential resources are also available, and include licensed medical or counseling professionals (e.g., a licensed psychologist), staff members of organizations recognized as rape crisis centers under state law (such as WISE), and ordained clergy (see [https://dartgo.org/titleix\\_resources](https://dartgo.org/titleix_resources)).

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dartmouth's Title IX Coordinator or the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for the Guarini School. Their contact information can be found on the sexual respect website at: <https://sexual-respect.dartmouth.edu>.

### **Religious Observances:**

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please contact me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

### **Honor Principle:**

Assignments will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in the Dartmouth Organization, Regulations and Courses. I encourage you to discuss ideas from class with your classmates. However, unless otherwise noted, assignments should be completed independently and all work turned in should be your own. You may study with classmates, but (as noted above) you should not discuss the exam or your answers with classmates or anyone else while completing it. If your paper topic for a project is one that you're exploring in another

class, independent study, or other academic work, you must let me and the other professor(s) know. If you have questions about what is permissible, I urge you to consult the academic honor principle (<https://students.dartmouth.edu/judicial-affairs/policy/academic-honor-principle>), the statement on sources and citations (<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>) and talk with me.

### **Note on the Use of Generative AI (i.e., CHAT GPT and such)**

No part of your written assignment should be produced by any form of a generative AI. You are free to amass relevant facts using AI, similar to the way you use Google search, but please note that the results from AI are often partial and incomplete, if not entirely false. In my opinion, Google searchers are infinitely better because they take you to sources. AI does not. TLDR; WRITE YOUR OWN STUFF. Do not ever use AI to generate summaries of the readings. DO THE READINGS YOURSELF. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in instant dismissal from this course.

### **Course Schedule and Assigned Readings:**

#### **1/5 Introduction**

#### **1/7 The Immigration Debate: Cultural, Ethical, and Economic Concerns**

- Huntington, Samuel. 2004. *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. Simon and Schuster (p. 37-49; 53-61).
- Caplan, Bryan, and Zach Weinersmith. 2019. *Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration*. First Second (p. 1-80).
- Macedo, Stephen. 2007. "The Moral Dilemma of U.S. Immigration Policy: Open Borders Versus Social Justice?" p. 286-305 in *Debating Immigration*, edited by Carol Swain. Cambridge University Press.

#### **1/9 The State: Immigration Policy (1)**

- Tichenor, Daniel. 2002. *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America*. Princeton University Press (p. 1-45).

#### **1/12 The State: Immigration Policy (2)**

- Lee, Erika. 2002. "Enforcing the Borders: Chinese Exclusion Along the U.S. Borders with Canada and Mexico, 1882-1924." *The Journal of American History* 89(1): 54-86.
- Ngai, Mae. 2004. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton University Press (p. 17-55).

#### **1/14 The State: Enforcement (1)**

- Goodman, Adam. 2020. *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants*. Princeton University Press (p. 37-72; 107-133).

Lim, Julian. 2017. *Porous Borders: Multiracial Migrations and the Law in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. The University of North Carolina Press (p. 63-94)

### **1/16 Discussion Session**

**1/19 MLK Day; no class**

### **1/21 The State: Enforcement (2)**

Hernández, Kelly Lytle. 2010. *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol*. The University of California Press (p. 45-69).

Vega, Irene. 2025. *Bordering on Indifference: Immigration Agents Negotiating Race and Morality*. Princeton University Press (p. 95-133).

### **1/23 Special Guest Lecture: Oscar Cornejo Casares '17, Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies, Davidson College (Reading TBA)**

“As a sociologist, I research how legal status and its racial intersections shape the social lives of undocumented immigrants from womb to tomb. Relying on qualitative methods, I analyze the construction, consequences, and reproduction of inequality, state power, and immigration law. My current book project focuses on the long-term effects of migrant illegality and the embodied forms of legal violence. My lived experiences, like being an immigrant or a first-generation college student, inform my scholarship and teaching. As a professor, I aim to foster classrooms where students interrogate the social order, connect their own biography to histories and structures, and further new futures and societies. At Davidson, I will teach courses at the intersection of Sociology and Latinx Studies.

I am a scholar-activist and a filmmaker committed to accessible forms of knowledge production. I co-produced the 2019 documentary, “Change the Subject,” which chronicles the history and political efforts to replace the subject heading “illegal aliens” from the Library of Congress. The sequel is currently in pre-development. My other work has appeared in local and national media, like the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times. My research has been funded by the Social Science Research Council, the Russell Sage Foundation, and the American Bar Foundation. Before coming to Davidson, I earned my B.A. in Sociology and Native American Studies modified with Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Studies from Dartmouth College and my M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology from Northwestern University.”

### **1/26 Discussion: Immigrant Life History**

### **1/28 Migrant: Who Migrates?**

Massey, Douglas. 1999. “Why Does Immigration Occur? A Theoretical Synthesis.” Pp. 34-52 in *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, edited by C. Hirschman, P. Kasinitz and J. DeWind. Russell Sage Foundation.

Paul, Anju Mary. 2011. “Stepwise International Migration: A Multistage Migration Pattern for Aspiring Migrant.” *American Journal of Sociology* 116(6): 1842-86.

## Immigrant Life History due on 1/29

### **1/30 Migrant: Climate Migration**

- Huang, Lawrence. 2023. [“Climate Migration 101: An explainer.”](#) Migration Policy Institute.
- Vince, Gaia. 2022. *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World*. Flatiron Books (p. 1-9; 105-140).
- Ahuja, Neel. 2021. *Planetary Specters: Race, Migration, and Climate Change in the Twenty-First Century*. The University of North Carolina Press (p. 1-36).

### **2/2 Migrant: Membership and Belonging**

- Kim, Jaeun. 2016. *Contested Embrace: Transborder Membership Politics in Twentieth Century Korea*. Stanford University Press (p. 73-125).
- Liu, Jiaqi. 2021. “Citizenship on the Move: The Deprivation and Restoration of Emigrants’ hukou in China.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47(3): 557-574.

### **2/4 Special Session: Indigenous Peoples and Migration**

- Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. 2021. *Not a Nation of Immigrants: Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and a History of Exclusion and Erasure*. Beacon Press (p. 270-283).
- Sharma, Nanditha. 2020. *Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants*. Duke University Press (p. 1-35).

### **2/6 Migrant: Transnationalism**

- Lopez, Sarah Lynn. 2015. *The Remittance Landscape: Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA*. The University of Chicago Press (p. 1-70)

### **2/9 Migrant: Interconnected Identities**

- Shams, Tahseen. 2020. *Here, There, and Elsewhere: The Making of Immigrant Identities in a Globalized World*. Stanford University Press (p. 1-35; 100-134).

### **2/11 [Extra session]**

### **2/13 Discourse: Assimilation**

- Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Harvard University Press (p.1-66).
- Warikoo, Natasha. 2022. *Race at the Top: Asian Americans and Whites in Pursuit of the American Dream in Suburban Schools*. University of Chicago Press (p. vii-xvii; 47-74; 126-149).

### **2/16 Discourse: Racialization**

- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2015. *Racial Formation in the United States* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Routledge (p. 1-52).
- Kim, Clare Jean. 1999. "The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans." *Politics and Society* 27(1): 105-138.

### **2/18 Discourse: Undocumented Lives**

- Gonzales, Roberto G. 2015. *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America*. University of California Press (p.1-34; 120-175).
- Vasquez, Sergio '22. 2022. *Years of Solitude as a Migrant Farm Worker in Vermont*. Senior Independent Research Project Report, The Department of Sociology, Dartmouth College.
- Dreier, Hannah. 2023. "[Alone and Exploited, Migrant Children Work Brutal Jobs across America.](#)" *New York Times* (February 28, 2023)
- Eder, Steve, Danielle Ivory, Marcela Valdes. 2024. "[The Hidden Truth Linking the Broken Border to Your Online Shopping Cart.](#)" *New York Times* (November 19, 2024).

### **2/20 Midterm**

### **2/23 Discourse: Law and Migration**

- Menjívar, Cecilia. 2006. "Liminal Legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan Immigrants' Lives in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 111(4): 999-1037.
- Menjívar, Cecilia. Andrea Gómez Cervantes, and Daniel Alvrod. 2018. "The Expansion of "Crimmigration," Mass detention, and Deportation." *Sociology Compass* 12(4).

### **2/25 Special Guest Lecture (TBA)**

### **2/27 Discourse: The Limits of Facts**

- Kim, Sunmin. "Limits of Facts-Based Advocacy: Immigration Politics Past and Present." Unpublished Manuscript.
- Bialas, Ulrike. 2023. *Forever 17: Coming of Age in German Asylum System*. The University of Chicago Press (p. ix-xiv;24-52; 77-103).

### **3/2 Discussion: Immigration Policy Brief**

### **3/4 Discourse: Wishful Thinking and Cruel Reality**

- Alba, Richard. 2016. "The Likely Persistence of a White Majority: How Census Bureau Statistics Have Misled Thinking About the American Future." *American Prospect* (January 11, 2016).
- Rodríguez-Muñiz, Michael. 2021. *Figures of the Future: Latino Civil Rights and the Politics of Demographic Change*. Princeton University Press (p. 1-30; 56-82; 173-200).
- Herrera, Jack. 2024. "[Why Democrats Lost Latinos.](#)" *Politico Magazine* (November 11, 2024).
- Venkatraman, Sakshi. 2024. "[The Year of Newly Minted Indian American GOP Stars.](#)" *NBC News* (December 22, 2024).

Qin, Amy. 2024. “Why Chinese Americans Have Shifted Rightward.” *New York Times*  
(December 9, 2024).

**3/6 Policy Brief Presentations**

**3/9 Policy Brief Presentations**

*Immigration Policy Brief due on 3/12*