

COURSE SYLLABUS
POL 239A: Special Topics: Immigration Policy
Davidson College – Spring 2018

Class Meets in Chambers 2146, TTh 1:40 – 2:55 pm

Instructor: Ron Schmidt

Faculty Office: Chambers 2021

Office Hours: Tu 3:00 – 4:00 pm; Th 12:30 – 1:15 pm; and by appointment.

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Course Introduction:

Immigration remains one of the most contentious political issues in U.S politics, as well as in many other parts of the world. Focusing mainly on the United States, this course will provide an overview of immigration policy from several perspectives, and will investigate in some depth three of the most divisive issues raised in relation to immigration policy: (1) the matter of unauthorized immigration and the presence in the U.S. of millions of undocumented immigrants, (2) the increasing number of refugees seeking asylum in the U.S. and elsewhere, and (3) the advisability of shifting the U.S. immigration system from a family-centered approach toward a more skills-based approach.

Learning Outcomes:

By the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Articulate and critically evaluate overview perspectives on the history and political trajectory of U.S. immigration policy.
2. Briefly articulate the administrative workings of contemporary U.S. immigration policy.
3. Articulate and critically evaluate competing views on how the U.S. should address the matter of unauthorized immigration and the presence of millions of undocumented immigrants.
4. Articulate and critically evaluate competing views on how the U.S. should address the increasing numbers of refugees seeking asylum in the United States.
5. Articulate and critically evaluate competing views on proposals to shift emphasis in U.S. immigration policy from family-centered to skills-based criteria.
6. Make and defend an oral presentation representing the views of an assigned political role in relation to a select controversy in U.S. immigration policy.

Requirements:

1. **Reading:** Students will purchase and read two core texts, as well as multiple book chapters, articles and essays that will be posted on the course Moodle page. The core texts for the course, available for purchase at the Davidson College Store, are:

Louis DeSipio and Rodolfo O. de la Garza (DS & dlG in Schedule, below), *U.S. Immigration Policy in the Twenty-First Century* (Westview Press, 2015).

Catherine Dauvergne, *The New Politics of Immigration and the End of Settler Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

2. Writing: Early in the term, students will write a brief two-page descriptive paper on the contemporary workings of the U.S. immigration policy system. The assignment particulars are posted on the course Moodle page, under “Assignments.” Students also will be required to complete three short analytic papers. For analytic papers, the instructor will post an assignment prompt on the course Moodle page (“Assignments” section) two weeks before the assignment is due, in response to which students will write and submit a 5-page essay.

All papers will be graded on both substance and form. That is, students will be expected to concisely summarize information and arguments taken from the readings, lectures, discussions, and independent reading, and to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both informational claims and arguments. In addition, students will be graded based on their ability to organize information concisely, to develop a coherent and insightful line of exposition and analysis, to write without spelling, grammatical, and syntax errors, and to write gracefully.

3. Discussion: Students will be required to prepare for, and participate in, a panel discussion aiming to critically explore the claims made by various political actors and/or observers in relation to select issues of immigration policy. The instructor will assign both discussion topics and panel “roles” that students will articulate in the panel discussion. Students will be graded on their work for the panel discussion in regard to both their preparation and their performance using a rubric provided by the instructor. In addition, students will be graded on their level and quality of participation in classroom discussions. Topics and assignments for the panel discussions will be forthcoming on the course Moodle page.

4. Course Grades.

Students’ work will be evaluated as outlined above, and the course grade will be based on the following point allocations:

<u>Assignment:</u>	<u>Points Possible</u>
Two-page Descriptive Paper	50
First Analytic Paper	250
Second Analytic Paper	250
Third Analytic Paper	250
Panel Discussion	150
Participation	<u>50</u>
	1000

Grade points and course grades will be based on the following criteria: A = 93% or more; A- = 90 – 92%; B+ = 87 – 89%; B = 83 – 86%; B- = 80 – 82%; C+ = 77 – 79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%; D+ = 67 – 69%; D = 60-66%; F = below 60%.

5. Other Requirements.

Timeliness: work turned in late will be penalized (10 points per day of lateness). Avoiding a penalty is possible only if you can convince your instructor (typically with documentation) that you could not reasonably have been expected to avoid the events leading to your tardiness.

Attendance: since student participation is a vital part of the course, attendance will be taken each day of class. You will get two unexcused absences “for free”; after that, you will be penalized 25 points per class missed. This means that six unexcused absences will lower your course grade by one full grade. Receiving an “excused” absence will involve convincing your instructor – usually with documentation – that your health and the health of your classmates required your absence from class.

Computer use: Personal computers (including e-tablets) are not to be used during class sessions. Research findings increasingly indicate that students gain more information and understanding from lectures and discussions when taking notes by hand rather than by computer: see, e.g., <http://www.vox.com/2014/6/4/5776804/note-taking-by-hand-versus-laptop>; <http://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/05/24/taking-notes-bring-pen-skip-computer/e3kGp47M7znyaNKOamUwrO/story.html>

Class decorum: students will be expected to actively engage in the class proceedings by attentive listening, respectful participation, and quiet note taking. Mobile phones are to be turned off before class begins. Engaging in disrespectful behavior toward other students, or toward the instructor, will not be tolerated. This is especially important in a course that – by its very nature – engages our involvement in a deep and often emotional way.

Eating or drinking (except water) is not allowed during class.

Honor Code: students in this course will be expected to meet both the spirit and the letter of the Davidson College Honor Code. If in doubt about what this means, do not hesitate to contact the instructor for guidance.

Topical Outline and Schedule of Assignments:

Week 1 (Jan 16-18) Course Introduction; Overview of Current Debates
Readings: DS & dlG – Chapter 1; Moodle readings for Week 1

Week 2 (Jan 23-25) U.S. Immigration History, Policy, Politics
Readings: DS & dlG – Chapters 2-4

Week 3 (Jan 30 – Feb 1) U.S. Immigration – Political Trajectories
Readings: DS & dlG – Chapters 5-6; Moodle Readings for Week 3
Feb 1: **Short Descriptive Paper Due**: How Does U.S. Immigration System Work?

Week 4 (Feb 6-8) The Undocumented: Who Are They? What is the Problem?
Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 4
Feb 8: PANEL 1: Who Are the Undocumented? What is the Problem?

Week 5 (Feb 13-15) The Undocumented: Broken Systems – Border Control, Interior Enforcement
Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 5
Feb 15: PANEL 2: How do we Untangle the Undocumented Stalemate?

Week 6 (Feb 20-22) The Undocumented: Toward Solutions – The Wall, Deportations, Decriminalization, Paths to Citizenship?

Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 6

Feb 22: First Writing Assignment Due

Week 7 (Feb 27 – Mar 1) Post-Settler Migration: A New Era?

Readings: Dauvergne, Chapters 1-6

Week 8 (Mar 6-8) SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 9 (Mar 13-15) Post-Settler Migration: A New Era?

Readings: Dauvergne, Chapters 7-10

Week 10 (Mar 20-22) The Refugee Crisis and the U.S.

Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 10

Mar 22: PANEL 3: Problems with U.S. Refugee Policy?

Week 11 (Mar 27-29) The Refugee Crisis and the U.S.

Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 11

Mar 29: NO CLASS: PROFESSOR AT CONFERENCE

Week 12 (Apr 3-5) The Refugee Crisis and the U.S. (cont.)

Apr 3: NO CLASS: EASTER BREAK

April 5: PANEL 4: How to Reform U.S. Refugee Policy?

Week 13 (Apr 10-12) The Refugee Crisis and the U.S. (cont.)

Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 13

April 12: Second writing Assignment Due

Week 14 (Apr 17-19) From Family-Centered to Skills-Centered Policy?

Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 14

April 19: PANEL 5: Pros & Cons of Skills-Centered Policy Approach

Week 15 (Apr 24-26) From Family-Centered to Skills-Centered Policy? (cont.)

Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 15

April 26: PANEL 6: Weighing the Balance: Family-Centered vs. Skills-Centered

Week 16 (May 1-3) From Family-Centered to Skills-Centered Policy? (cont.)

Readings: Moodle Readings for Week 16

Week 17 (May 8-10) READING DAYS

Week 18: Third Writing Assignment Due