

## **The Politics of Immigration: Race, Rights, and Activism**

Prof. Chris Zepeda-Millán, Ph.D. [czm@uchicago.edu](mailto:czm@uchicago.edu)  
**University of Chicago, Department of Political Science**  
PLSC 26913-01, Cobb Hall Room 115  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 6-7:20pm  
TA: Claudia Sandoval [csandoval@uchicago.edu](mailto:csandoval@uchicago.edu)

### **Course Description:**

This reading intensive course is designed to provide students with a *critical* introduction to the “Politics of Immigration.” The class will begin with a review of some of the mainstream and alternative explanations experts have proposed as being some of the root-causes and initiating forces behind international migration (from colonization to neoliberal economic restructuring). We will subsequently turn our attention to the dynamics of immigration policymaking and examine how race, gender, sexuality, and class both impact and are impacted by immigration laws. The course will then shift focus and take a closer look at some of the most contentious topics related to the issue of immigration, such as: the role of immigrant workers in the U.S. economy, cultural assimilation, undocumented immigration, border militarization, and nativism. The class concludes by examining the various forms of political participation (from voting to activism) that immigrants have traditionally and currently engage in.

### **Coursework Requirements and Percent of Final Grade:**

- 1) Participation - **15%**  
(Includes weekly reflection questions, participation in class discussions, and presentation)
- 2) Midterm - **35%**
- 3) Research Paper - **50%**

### **Required Texts:**

- 1) Joseph Nevins. *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the “Illegal Alien” and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*
- 2) Deepa Fernandez. *Targeted: Homeland Security and the Business of Immigration*
- 3) Kevin R. Johnson. *The “Huddled Masses” Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights*
- 4) Aviva Chomsky. *“They Take Our Job!” and 20 Other Myths About Immigration*
- 5) Leo Chavez. *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*
- 6) Amalia Pallares and Nilda Flores-Gonzalez. *¡Marcha! Latino Chicago and the Immigrant Rights Movement*
- 7) Douglas Massey, Jorge Durand, and Nolan Malone. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration.*
- 8) Roxanne Lynn Doty *The Law Into Their Own Hands*

## **Rules and Procedures**

### **Attendance/Absences:**

Weekly class attendance is mandatory to pass this course. Each student is allowed one unexcused absence without the loss of any points. Absences due to illness (documented by a note from the university student health center or a private physician) or participation in university sports related game or match (with documentation from your coach), and the observation of religious holidays are excused absences. Unexcused absences will lower your grade. On the third absence (including the one free absence), the student must speak to the professor regarding their likelihood of passing the course. If you become ill or have some other emergency and cannot turn in an assignment on time or take an exam on the scheduled day, you should notify me ahead of time.

### **Respect and Discussion Rules:**

Every student brings a different perspective to the classroom and the variety of viewpoints expressed must always be respected. We all reserve the right to respectfully disagree with one another. Discriminatory comments of any kind will not be tolerated.

### **Citations/Footnotes:**

In your papers you must cite authors from whom you draw ideas/quotations. Footnotes and endnotes are also acceptable ways of acknowledging work. In your exams it is a good idea to cite authors that we have read in the course; page numbers are obviously not required for tests. You can use any citation style you prefer as long as it is an official style (i.e. MLA or Chicago).

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a serious offense. If the instructor or TA suspects that you have knowingly misrepresented someone else's work as your own, this is grounds for dismissal from the university.

What constitutes misrepresentation? Obviously, purchasing a paper from the internet is one way. Failing to give credit where credit is due—appropriating quotes from authors as your own or representing authors' ideas as your own—also constitutes plagiarism. For further information on academic integrity and plagiarism consult your university handbook.

## In-Class Presentations & Final Papers

### *In-Class Presentations*

#### **Presenters**

Every Thursday a group of at least two students will serve as “experts” on the week’s readings by leading the class discussion and answering students’ questions about the readings. Presenters will *not* simply summarize the “main points” of the articles/chapters assigned. Presenters must critically assess what evidence is used to establish the claims the authors make, the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments, whether the presenters agree or disagree with them (and why), how they relate to the other assigned readings and lectures, etc. *Every student must present at least once in the semester.*

#### **Non-Presenters**

Students *not* leading the week’s discussion **must submit 3 questions related to the readings by 8pm on the Wednesday before discussion** and be ready for the discussants and professor to call on them to ask their questions and give their opinions about the readings.

### *Research Paper (to be discussed in more detail in class)*

#### **15 Page Research Paper Due on June 4<sup>th</sup>**

Students are expected to write a 15 page research paper on any topic (with the professor’s approval) related to the politics of immigration. We will discuss what is expected from the research paper throughout the quarter. Students must settle on a topic by the 4<sup>th</sup> week of class.

## **General (Im)Migration Data Sources**

Department of Homeland Security- [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)

Migration Policy Institute (MPI)- [www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org)

Pew Hispanic Center- <http://pewhispanic.org/>

## **National Anti-Immigration/Immigrant Organizations**

Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)- <http://www.fairus.org/site/PageServer>

Center for Immigration Studies- <http://www.cis.org/>

American Patrol- <http://www.americanpatrol.com/>

Zero Population Growth (ZPG)- <http://www.populationconnection.org/site/PageServer>

Americans for Legal Immigration (ALIPAC)- <http://www.alipac.us/>

Minuteman Civil Defense Corps- <http://www.minutemanhq.com/>

Minuteman Project- <http://www.minutemanproject.com/>

## **National Pro-Immigration/Immigrant Organizations**

National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (NNIRR)- <http://www.nnirr.org/>

National Immigration Forum- <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>

Essential Workers Immigration Coalition- <http://www.ewic.org/>

Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)- <http://standing-firm.com/>

Immigration Policy Center- <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/>

We Are America Alliance- <http://www.weareamericaalliance.org/>

Immigration Works USA- <http://www.immigrationworksusa.org/index.php?p=40>

Detention Watch Network- [www.detentionwatchnetwork.org](http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org)

## INTRODUCTION

### **Week 1/March 27 – Pushed, Pulled, or Hooked? The Root-Causes of International Migration**

#### ***Readings:***

- Massey- Chapters 3- “System Assembly: A History of Mexico-U.S. Migration.” *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration.*
- Massey- Chapters 4- “System Specifications: Empirical Parameters and Constants in the U.S.-Mexican Immigration System, 1965 to 1985.” *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration.*
- Massey- Chapters 5- “A Wrench in the Works: U.S. Immigration Policies After 1986.” *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration.*
- Massey- Chapters 6- “Breakdown: Failure in the Post-1986 U.S. Immigration System.” *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration.*

### **Week 2/April 3 - A Nation By Design: Immigration Policy as Social Engineering**

#### ***Readings:***

- Johnson- Chapter 1- “Immigration and Civil Rights in the United States.” *The “Huddled Masses” Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights*
- Johnson- Chapter 2- “Exclusion and Deportation of Racial Minorities.” *The “Huddled Masses” Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights*
- Johnson- Chapter 3- “Exclusion and Deportation of Political Undesirables.” *The “Huddled Masses” Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights*
- Johnson- Chapter 6- “The Marginalization of Women Under the Immigration and Nationality Laws” *The “Huddled Masses” Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights*
- Johnson-Chapter 7- “Exclusion and Deportation of Lesbians and Gay Men.” *The “Huddled Masses” Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights*

## **MAJOR ISSUES & POLICY DEBATES Part I**

### **Week 3/April 10 - From Deportation Nation to Border Militarization: Immigration Enforcement Measures**

#### ***Readings:***

- Nevins- Chapter 5- “Producing the Crisis: the Emergence of Operation Gatekeeper.” *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond: The War on “Illegals” and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary.*
- Nevins- Chapter 7- “The Effects and Significance of the Bounding of the United States.” *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond: The War on “Illegals” and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary.*
- Fernandes- Chapter 1- “The Border Crackdown.” *Targeted: Homeland Security and the Business of Immigration.*
- Fernandes- Chapter 5- “The Immigration-Industrial Complex: Booming Business at the Expense of Immigrant Rights?” *Targeted: Homeland Security and the Business of Immigration.*
- Brotherton- “Exiling New Yorkers.” *Keeping Out the Other: A Critical Introduction to Immigration Enforcement Today.*

### **Week 4/April 17 - Denaturalizing “Illegality”: How White Illegals Got Multiple Amnesties and Brown People Without Papers Became Criminal Aliens**

#### **\*Paper Proposals Due!\***

#### ***Readings:***

- Guskin and Wilson- Chapter 4- “Why Can’t They Just ‘Get Legal?’” *The Politics of Immigration: Questions and Answers.*
- Guskin and Wilson- Chapter 5- “Is It Easy To Be ‘Illegal?’” *The Politics of Immigration: Questions and Answers.*
- De Genova- “The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant ‘Illegality.’” *Latino Studies.* Vol. 2. 2004.

- Nevins- Chapter 5- “The Ideological Roots of the Illegal as Threat and the Boundary as Protector.” *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond: The War on “Illegals” and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*.
- Spener- “Global Apartheid, *Coyotaje*, and the Discourse of Clandestine Migration: Distinctions Between Personal, Structural, and Cultural Violence.” *Migration and Development*. Vol. 10, 2008.
- Sharma- “White Nationalism, Illegality and Imperialism: Border Controls as Ideology.” *(En)Gendering the War on Terror*.

### **\*Week 5/April 24 – MIDTERM & Documentary**

#### **How the Politics of Immigration is Lived:**

“Farmingville: Welcome to the Suburbs, Home of the New Border Wars”

### **MAJOR ISSUES & POLICY DEBATES Part II**

#### **Week 6/May 1 - Immigrant Labor for American Consumption: Formal and Informal Immigrant Workers in the U.S. Economy**

##### ***Readings:***

- Chomsky-Part One- “Immigrants and the Economy.” *“The Take Our Jobs” and 20 Other Myths About Immigration*.
- Milkman- Chapter 3- “Turning the Clock Back: Anti-Union Reaction, the Return of the Sweatshop, and the New Immigration.” *L.A. Story: Immigrant Workers and the Future of the U.S. Labor Movement*. [Garment, Construction, Trucking, and Service Workers]
- Mathew- Chapters 2 & 3- “Horse Hiring: Abolition and Return” and “The Age of Greed, or What’s Neoliberalism Got to Do with It?” *Taxi! Cabs and Capitalism in New York City*. [Taxi Drivers]
- Hondagneu-Sotelo- Chapter 1- “New World Domestic Order.” *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. [Nannies and Maids]
- Gordon- Chapter 1- “The New Sweatshops.” *Suburban Sweatshops: The Fight for Immigrant Rights*. [Day Laborers]

## Week 7/May 8 - American = White? Assimilation and its Discontents

### *Readings:*

- Chomsky- “Myth 10. The United States is a melting pot that has always welcomed immigrants from all over the world.” *“The Take Our Jobs” and 20 Other Myths About Immigration.*
- Chomsky- “Myth 11. Since we are all the descendents of immigrants here, we all start on equal footing.” *“The Take Our Jobs” and 20 Other Myths About Immigration.*
- Blauner- Chapter 4- “Colonized and Immigrant Minorities.” *Still the Big News: Racial Oppression in America.*
- Huntington- “The Hispanic Challenge.” *Foreign Policy.* No. 141. Mar-Apr. 2004.
- Citrin et al.- “Testing Huntington: Is Hispanic Immigration a Threat to American Identity?” *Perspectives on Politics.* March 2007.

## Week 8/May 15 - Racialized Nativism & the Modern Anti-Immigrant Movement

### *Readings:*

- Chavez – Introduction. *The Latino Threat.*
- Chavez – Chapter 1 “The Latino Threat Narrative.” *The Latino Threat.*
- Doty – Chapter 2 “I’m Proud to be a Vigilante. How About You?” *The Law Into Their Own Hands.*
- Doty – Chapter 3 “It’s Your Country, Take it Back.” *The Law Into Their Own Hands.*
- Doty – Chapter 4 “Spreading the Message.” *The Law Into Their Own Hands.*
- Fernandes – Chapter 6 “How White Supremacists Are Writing Immigration Policy and Democrats Are Asleep at the Wheel.” *Targeted.*
- \*[SKIM] Mock- “Immigration Backlash: Hate Crimes Against Latinos Flourish.” *Intelligence Report.* No. 128. Winter 2007. <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2007/winter/immigration-backlash>



- \*[SKIM] Potok- “Rage on the Right” *Intelligence Report*. No. 137. Spring 2010.  
<http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2010/spring/rage-on-the-right>

### **Week 9/May 22 - *Ilegal Y Que?! Immigrant Activism and Political Participation***

#### ***Readings:***

- Pantoja, Adrian, Ricardo Ramirez and Gary M. Segura. "Citizens by Choice, Voters by Necessity: Patterns in Political Mobilization by Naturalized Latinos." *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No.4, Dec. 2001.
- Davis et al.- Chapter 4 “The Role of the Catholic Church in the Chicago Immigrant Mobilization” *Marcha!*
- Oliva- Chapter 9 “Permission to March? High School Youth Participation in the Immigrant Rights Movement” *Marcha!*
- Pallares- Chapter 12 “Representing ‘La Familia’: Family Separation and Immigrant Activism” *Marcha!*
- Muniz- Chapter 13 “Grappling with *Latinidad*: Puerto Rican Activism in Chicago’s Pro-Immigrant Rights Movement.” *Marcha!*

### **Week 10/May 29 - Border Battles in Action**

#### ***Documentary:***

- “Walking The Line”

**\*\*\* RESEARCH PAPER DUE JUNE 4<sup>th</sup> \*\*\***