

Bjorklunden Seminar: August 5-9, 2019

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION:

A Legal, Cultural, & Historical Approach To Understanding The Complex And Controversial Issue Dominating Our National Dialogue

Instructors:

Jennifer S. Esperanza, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology Beloit College

Paul Wickham Schmidt, Georgetown Law (retired U.S. Immigration Judge)

Class Description:

All Americans are products of immigration. Even Native Americans were massively affected by the waves of European, involuntary African-American, Asian, and Hispanic migration. Are we a nation of immigrants or a nation that fears immigration? Should we welcome refugees or shun them as potential terrorists? Do we favor family members or workers? Rocket scientists or maids and landscapers? Build a wall or a welcome center? Get behind some of the divisive rhetoric and enter the dialogue in this participatory class that will give you a chance to “learn and do” in a group setting. Be part of a team designing and explaining your own immigration system.

Class Objectives:

- Understand how we got here;
- Understand current U.S. immigration system and how it is supposed to work;
- Learn more about the various lived experiences of immigrants and refugees through their personal stories and ethnographic accounts
- Develop tools to become a participant in the ongoing debate about the future of American immigration;
- Get to know a great group of people, enjoy Door County, and have some fun in and out of class.

Class Readings and Activities:

Course readings can be found as attachment files or links (to online articles) in your email: Jenn will be sending a separate email for each day of the course.

On this syllabus, you will also find a list of “Class Study Questions” -- these are questions that can help you as you read the assigned articles, chapters, etc. each day. Feel free to jot down your thoughts, ideas and answers to any of the questions that are of interest to you; we will discuss them in class.

Monday, August 5, 2019 : An Introduction to immigration (“From the Top-Down and the Bottom-Up”)

a. Introductions: Instructors and class participants

1. Name, year graduated from Lawrence, why they took the course, also-- if they can share a bit about what where their ancestors came from
2. “Welcome to Carthage”

b. Jenn:

1. National Geographic Project on Human Migration:
<https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/human-journey/>
2. Brodtkin-Sacks, Karen. “How did Jews become White Folks?” [attachment in your Class 1 email]

c. Paul:

1. Hipsman & Meissner, “Immigration in the United States: New Economic, Social, Political Landscapes with Legislative Reform on the Horizon” (MPI 2013)
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigration-united-states-new-economic-social-political-landscapes-legislative-reform/>;
2. Schmidt, An Overview and Critique of U.S. Immigration and Asylum Policies in the Trump Era (Manuscript), <https://1drv.ms/w/s!AngkNKvfs8J9atwo1l47PpD19IA>;
3. Hon. Jeffrey S. Chase, “U.S. Asylum History, Pts 1 & 2,” (Jeffrey S. chase Blog), July 13, 2017, [https://www.jeffreyschase.com/blog/2017/7/13/us-asylum-history-part-i-1?rq=Asylum history](https://www.jeffreyschase.com/blog/2017/7/13/us-asylum-history-part-i-1?rq=Asylum%20history), & July 20, 2017, <https://www.jeffreyschase.com/blog/2017/7/20/us-asylum-history-part-ii>

d. Green Card Stories discussion:

1. Susan Delvalle, “The Immigrant,” [Attachment in your Class 1 email]

2. Tien “Johnny” Nghe, “The Refugee,” [Attachment in your Class 1 email]

Class 1 Study Questions:

1. What is the history of migration? How has it changed (past/present)?
2. What’s the difference between migrants/immigrants/refugees?
3. What are the challenges with modern day immigration?
4. How did your family come to the U.S.? What is the best thing about your family’s immigrant heritage?
5. Is there anything that concerns or bothers you about your family’s immigrant heritage?
6. Have you ever experienced discomfort, discrimination, or insults based on your heritage?
7. What good qualities does America’s immigrant heritage embody?
8. What are problematic aspects of America’s treatment of immigrants?
9. What do our immigration laws say about us as a country and our national values?
10. What is the “genius of the 14th Amendment” from a migration standpoint?

Tuesday, August 6, 2019: Labor Migration: Push/Pull Factors

a. Paul:

1. Haley Sweetland Edwards, “The Stories of Migrants risking Everything for a Better Life,” (Time Magazine, Jan. 24, 2019) <https://time.com/longform/migrants/>;
2. Mosin Hamid, “in the 21st Century, we are all migrants,” (National Geographic August 2019) <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2019/08/we-all-are-migrants-in-the-21st-century/>

b. Jenn:

1. Gomberg-Munoz , Ruth “Willing to Work” [Attachment in your Class 2 email]
2. Radford, Jynnah, “Key Findings About US immigrants”
<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>
3. To watch in class: Jason De Leon “Decoding Stories of Border Crossings”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwhbWikqlkw>

c. Green Card/First Day Stories discussion

1. Mogtaba Maki, “[Refugee From Sudan](#),” [Attachment in Class 2 email]

Class 2 Study Questions:

1. What drives so-called “labor migration?”
2. Is labor migration distinct from migration based on other factors such as family status or persecution in one’s home country?
3. What famous Americans were immigrants?
4. What notable American businesses were started by immigrants?
5. What sorts of cultural or entertainment activities were “imported” to the United States from abroad?
6. Does labor migration help or hurt America today? How or why?
7. What kind of “labor migrants” do we want to encourage? Discourage?

Wednesday, August 7, 2019

Making Home

a. Jenn:

1. Diner, Hasia “Hungering for America” **[Attachment in Class 3 Email]**
2. In class: Listen to NPR podcast on German immigrants in rural Wisconsin
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102523977?storyId=102523977>

b. Paul:

1. Hon. Jenny A. Durkan, “Seattle Isn’t Afraid of Immigrants,” Washington Post (April 12, 2019) https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/seattle-isnt-afraid-of-immigrants-mr-trump/2019/04/12/f26c370e-5d5e-11e9-9625-01d48d50ef75_story.html

c. Green Card/First Days Immigration Stories discussion:

1. Jose Martinez-Leyva (Mexico), “Living the American Dream” **[Attachment in Class 3 Email]**
2. Sam Ebute (Nigeria), “Living the American Dream in the Midwest” **[Attachment in Class 3 Email]**
3. Susan Cruz (El Salvador) “My Name is Susan Cruz”
<https://www.firstdaysproject.org/story/susan-cruz>

c. CLASS EXERCISE: “Dick’s Last Resort vs. Mother Hen”

Class 3 Study Questions

1. What “All-American” traditions are actually part of our immigrant heritage?
2. Is assimilation good or bad? Why?

3. Should we require assimilation by forcing immigrants to either naturalize within a certain period of years or leave the U.S.? Why or why not?
4. What things help immigrants assimilate? What are the factors that allow an individual and/or a community of immigrants begin to feel that America is now “home?”
5. What are possible roadblocks to assimilation?
6. What should the role of the Government or communities be in the assimilation process?
7. Is “assimilation” a “one-way street?”
8. Are there things we should change about the ways in which we deal with assimilation as a nation?
9. What is so-called “chain migration?” Is it good or bad?
10. What does it mean to “Live the American Dream?” Do you think it becomes harder and harder to achieve for new immigrants and subsequent generations?

Thursday, August 8, 2019: Determining a “Well Founded Fear”

a. Paul:

1. Mini-Lectures: 1) History of Forced Migration in eight Steps and 2) Eras of Modern U.S. Refugee History
2. Readings: Review Refugee and Asylum Sections from my “Overview & Critique” and Judge Jeffrey Chase’s article on U.S. Refugee History (Day 1)
3. Hamed Aleaziz, “**Central Americans Who Travel Through Mexico To The US Will No Longer Qualify For Asylum**” (BuzzFeed News, July 15, 2019)
<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/trump-asylum-central-americans>

b. Jenn:

1. Jenn Esperanza’s Live Storytelling Performance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEODrtuj_Pk&t=323s
2. Vargas, JA. “My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant” **[Attachment in Class 4 Email]**
3. HOMEWORK FOR FRIDAY: Deciding on Political Asylum Cases

Class 4 Study Questions

1. What is the difference between a “refugee” and an “asylee” under U.S. law?
2. What is the origin and purpose of our current refugee and asylum laws?
3. How could we better address the situations throughout the world that are creating refugee situations?
4. What is the current and potential environmental impact on refugee flows? Should so-called “environmental refugees” be specifically recognized under international law?

5. What would it be like to be a refugee in today's world?
6. Is the 1951 Geneva Convention still an effective way for the international community to address refugee issues?
7. Is a so-called "economic refugee" a "refugee" under the UN definition? Why or why not?
8. What role does "nexus" play in refugee determinations? Did you understand that role before this class?
9. Who makes asylum determinations under U.S. law? Is this system "fair and impartial?" Should it be?

Friday, August 9, 2019 Contemporary Issues—the future of Immigration?

a. CLASS PRESENTATIONS on Political Asylum cases

b. Paul:

1. Schmidt, "SMART ACT OF 2019," <https://immigrationcourtside.com/security-migration-assistance-renewal-technical-systems-act-smarts-act-of-2019/>;
2. John Blake, "There's a sobering truth to Trump's racist tweets that we don't like to admit," (CNN July 15, 2019) <https://apple.news/AoJLk8Im5TFStnyRtQgq2JA>;
3. Jason Dzubow, "A New Foundation for Asylum Reform," (The Asylumist June 19, 2019) <http://www.asylumist.com/2019/06/19/a-new-foundation-for-asylum-reform/>;
4. David Leonhardt, "The hard immigration questions," (NY Times July 16, 2019) https://static.nytimes.com/email-content/TY_15282.html?campaign_id=39&instance_id=10960&segment_id=15282&user_id=8a1f473740b253d8fa4c23b066722737®i_id=79213886

c. Jenn

1. Gulnahr Alam, "Asylee From Bangladesh (Domestic Violence)," **[Attachment in Class 5 email]**
2. Grigsby Bates, Karen. "Nailing the American Dream, With Polish" <https://www.npr.org/2012/06/14/154852394/with-polish-vietnamese-immigrant-community-thrives>

Class 5 Study Questions:

1. Whom should we welcome?
2. Should legal migration be based on the needs of the individual migrant or the needs of our country? Why?
3. What is meant by "merit-based immigration?" Is the use of this term fair?

4. How many of your ancestors would have passed a “merit-based” test for immigration to the U.S.?
5. Are restrictive immigration laws necessary to protect the U.S. Labor market?
6. Given today’s controversies and extreme positions, is a future “consensus” on U.S. immigration policy possible?
7. What might such a consensus look like?
8. Is a “national consensus” a prerequisite to reforming current U.S. immigration policies?
9. Should states and local communities play a larger role in U.S. immigration policy? If so, what would that role be?
10. Using the Vietnamese American example, what are some ways that immigrants have created new economic opportunities? What role did non-Vietnamese Americans assist in making this happen?

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