Welcome to HIST4726, A Nation of Immigrants: Immigration in American History! In this course, we will grapple with the complexities of immigration and immigration policy in the present and the recent past as well as dive into the long history of immigration to the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries.

My office hours and contact information are listed on the right. If you need help or just want to chat about something going on in class, stop by or catch me after class. I’m happy to chat with you and am often in my office in the hours after class. Note that I only check my email once or twice a day, and I try hard not to do so after 7 pm.

Goals

Besides learning about immigration to the United States, in this course you will hone your skills in asking historical questions and reasoning historically. We will strive to limit the amount of lecture, and we proceed on the assumption that knowledge is constructed, not imparted. Think of facts as building blocks of explanations and arguments. Always, always ask questions.

To succeed in this class, you need to:

• Do the readings on time—and think about them.
• Participate vigorously and thoughtfully in class activities.
• Take ownership of your learning.

You will get the most of this course (and any course) if you spend some time up front with the syllabus and other materials. Know what’s coming, think about what you want to get out of it, draft some Big Questions you want answers to. Your education is for you, not for the bean counters.

Decorum

Be kind. Brisk intellectual debate is a wonderful thing; personal attacks are an abomination and a drag. Be courteous to your fellow students. Try not to come in late, and please avoid disruptive or flagrantly inattentive behavior during class meetings. (Penalties may apply.)

Don’t cheat. Academic dishonesty, apart from generally stinking to high heaven, is an insult to your instructors, your fellow students, and your own abilities. Any kind of cheating or plagiarism is utterly unacceptable and will be penalized. You are required to know and abide by the CU honor code (see the link on the last page of the syllabus).

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus.
**Expectations and grade breakdown**

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There are detailed instructions for each category—blog, discussions, project—on the class website. Read them.

![Figure 2: Priorities.](image)

**Attendance and participation** Short version: Be here. Long version: Graded as a bonus to or a deduction from your course grade. You have a few freebies; you should save those up for days you don’t feel well, family emergencies, or amazing powder days. Only documented absences necessary for medical or official university-related reasons (including athletics and ROTC) will be excused. Please scan/photograph the documentation and email to me. Keep the paper documentation until the end of the semester.

**General engagement** The grade category of “General engagement” represents participation and attentiveness in class, along with your satisfactory completion of occasional reading quizzes and small logistical tasks.

**Late work** Ideally, there should be no late work. Deadlines out in the real world do not take into account personal crises, so you should learn to plan ahead. Also, late work is a logistical hassle. I reserve the right to deduct half a grade for each day that an assignment is late.

**Books (available in the CU Bookstore)**


You may, of course, request an extension, which may or may not be granted.

![Figure 3: Impact of number of absences on total grade.](image)

**Absences**  
- \( \leq 2 \) 0.5  
- 3–4 0  
- 5 -1  
- 6–7 -2  
- 8 -4  
- each add’l -0.5

Required articles etc. listed under class meetings.

**Expectations in the age of Google:** You should actively try to find sources of information to help you clarify confusing concepts or define unfamiliar terms. There are tons of resources out there.
Schedule

Note on readings: Readings (and audio/video materials) are available through D2L. All readings and materials are to be completed before the class session under which they are listed. Before doing the readings, you should read the relevant parts of the reading guide & questions (see p. 7.) Occasionally very short readings from primary sources or present-day news and opinion sources may be added. Readings may also be changed or (fat chance) removed. For the most up-to-date information, keep up with D2L news items and the class website, https://immigrationnationcu.wordpress.com/.

Part I: Coming to America: Immigrant dreams and legal regimes

In the first half (and then some) of the course, we focus on trying to understand the immigrant experience as well as how the legal regime interacts with immigrant goals and realities in the immigrants’ home countries to shape patterns of (im)migration. We will also get you started with your class projects.

Tue 8/29: Introduction

Thu 8/31: Basics of the current U.S. immigration system

Read: Syllabus!
Edwards, “How to read a book” (9 pp.)
American Immigration Council, “How the United States Immigration System Works” (9 pp.; bring this to class with you!!)

Tue 9/5: Experience of immigration 1

Read: Gomberg-Muñoz vi–xiii, 1–117

Thu 9/7: Experience of immigration 2

No reading. Dialogue on immigration with immigrant guests, facilitated by the CU Dialogues program. We will split into two groups so you’ll have a better chance to participate.

Tue 9/12: Guest lecture, Dr. Violeta Chapin

Read: TBA?
Dr. Chapin from the CU Law School will tell us about U.S. immigration law as well as how immigration enforcement has changed between the presidencies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

Thu 9/14: What shapes immigrant experience?

Read: Finish Gomberg-Muñoz (118 ff., 40 pp.)
Cannato, 1–15
Watch: Clips from episodes 1 and 2 of PBS’ Italian Americans (2015, 64 min., link on D2L)

Optional: If you want more on law and judicial precedents, see Sca-perlanda, “Immigration Law: A Primer” https://www.fjc.gov/content/immigration-law-primer-0

Sample “blog” entry due on D2L on Gomberg-Muñoz.

In-class discussion (Dr. Hulden leads). Reflect on the dialogue and the guest lecture as well as materials (incl. today); get discussion questions from D2L.
Tue 9/19: Getting set up with WordPress

No reading. We’ll meet in a computer lab to work through a series of tutorials that will get you set up with your own WordPress site, ready for the blogging and project assignments.

Thu 9/21: Who what where when


Reading Gerber has two goals: one, to get a grasp of the overall chronology, and two, to become acquainted with the issues historically surrounding immigration. This gives you a foundation on which to build as we examine specific cases and periods in the coming weeks. Come to class prepared with questions on anything you found confusing.

Tue 9/26: Workshop on research & getting your project started

No reading. We will meet in the computer lab again, this time with the aim of starting you on doing research in scholarly and newspaper databases in preparation for the project proposal.

Thu 9/28: Comparisons of legal regimes

Read: Antecol et al., “Selective immigration policy in Australia, Canada and the United States” (10 pp.)
“Canada’s Immigration Policy: No Country for Old Men” (4 pp.)
Line & Poon, “How other countries handle immigration” (4 pp.)

Tue 10/3: Nation of immigrants or deportation nation?

Read: Excerpts from Hernández, Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol (27 pp.)
Fountain, Jr., “Stop Saying We’re a Nation of Immigrants” (2 pp.)
Sutherland, “The Nation of Immigrants Myth” (4 pp.)
Listen: This American Life, Ep. 613, Act 1: Line in the Sand (26 min.)

Thu 10/5: Immigration and the writing of American history

Read: Cannato 410–419
Fur, “Indians and Immigrants” (16 pp.)
Zimmerman, “Each Race Could Have Its Heroes Sung” (20 pp.)
On the basis of today’s readings and readings from previous two meetings (as well as Gerber), think about how immigration intertwined with American history and how it has shaped our narrative of that history.

Meet in DUAN G116

You should look over the project guidelines and topics now, if you haven’t already.

Complete D2L exam on Gerber between end of class and Friday 9/22, 5 p.m.

Some of the material in Gerber will already be familiar from previous readings.

Meet in DUAN G116

BLOG #1

Extra credit: Talk by Kelly Lytle Hernández, 5 p.m., BESC 180
Note reading by K.L.H. next week!

Project proposals due

BLOG #2

Discussion #1 (first student-led small-group discussion)
Get discussion questions from the D2L discussion board!
Tue 10/10: Letters home and what they tell us

Read: Cannato 30–54
Kamphoefner, “Immigrant Epistolary” (16 pp.)
Anbinder, “Moving beyond ‘Rags to Riches’” (30 pp.)

Thu 10/12: The other shore

Read: Excerpts from Young, Alien Nation (31 pp.)
Chapter 6 from Wei, Asians in Colorado (26 pp.)

Tue 10/17: Borders and transnationalism

Read: Fernández-Kelly & Massey, “Borders for Whom?” (19 pp.)
Portes and Grosfoguel, “Caribbean Diasporas” (22 pp.)

Thu 10/19: The shaping of immigrant flows and communities

Review readings from (at least) the past three meetings and think about how conditions in the sending country, the ideas and connections and aspirations of immigrants, and conditions in the receiving country shape immigrant flows and the creation of immigrant communities.

Tue 10/24: Melting pots, salad bowls: Assimilation

Read: Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans” (34 pp.)
Barrett, “Americanization from the Bottom Up” (25 pp.)

Thu 10/26: What does assimilation mean?

Read: Skerry, “This Was Our Riot Too” (11 pp.)
Listen: Talk of the Nation (NPR): Immigration and Assimilation in America (35 min)

Part II: The world on our doorstep? Conflicts over immigration

In this part, we zero in on the main issues that have framed American responses to immigration: questions of assimilation, the economic impact of immigration, and the question of citizenship. We also explore the lead-up to the most restrictive immigration laws the United States has ever passed: the 1920s Quota Acts.

Tue 10/31: American doubts, turn of the 20th century

Read: Cannato 57–123
Focusing especially on the turn of the twentieth century, think about how and why Americans doubted the assimilation of immigrants and what they meant by assimilation.

Discussion #3
Get discussion questions from the D2L discussion board!
Thu 11/2 American doubts, turn of the 21st century
Read: Calavita, “The New Politics of Immigration” (18 pp.)

Tue 11/7: Migration, labor, and the economy
Lowenstein, “The Immigration Equation” (21 pp.)

Thu 11/9: Immigration and “national character”
Read: Cannato 127–215

Tue 11/14: The concept of “undesirable” immigrants
Read: Cannato 216–286
Flake, “We Need Skilled…” (op-ed, 2 pp.)
Raleigh, “Let’s Focus on Merit…” (op-ed, 2 pp.)

Thu 11/16: Understanding doubts about immigration
Think about how immigrants have been construed as desirable or undesir-able and why; also consider how historical conjunctures and change in the United States has shaped ideas about immigration. In addition to readings from the past four meetings, you may wish to revisit Barrett (from 10/24) and the Talk of the Nation clip (from 10/26).

Tue 11/21 & Thu 11/23: FALL BREAK

Yay!

Tue 11/28: Who is a citizen and what does it mean?
Read: Liu, “Citizenship” (encyclopedia entry, 6 pp.)
Baker, “Citizenship” (encyclopedia entry, 5 pp.)

Thu 11/30: The quota acts and their legacy
Read: Cannato 289–349

Tue 12/5: Immigration, race, and citizenship
Read: Ngai, “Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law” (26 pp.)
Cannato 350–376
Think hard about what exactly citizenship means, who has been con-strued as eligible for citizenship and who not, and what the requirements of citizenship are (or should be).

Thu 12/7: Reconfiguring the law: The 1965 act and its impact
Read: Cannato 379–390
**Tues 12/12: The Past and the Future**

Read: Cannato 391–409

Revisit past readings. Look over the syllabus and remind yourself of what different readings contained, and how they might help us think about the past and the future of American immigration. I would suggest especially revisiting readings from 9/28 and 10/5, but feel free to bring in others.

**Thu 12/14: Concluding Discussion**

Read: Caplan & Naik, “A Radical Case for Open Borders” (30 pp.)

Another reading TBA (ca. 20 pp.)

Think about whether history can help us think about the future of immigration and whether it is possible to construct a fair and just immigration system in the contemporary world.

**Final projects/take-home exams due Tues Dec 19, 4 p.m.**

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**Reading and discussion guide through 10/17**

General reading tips: Apply Edwards, “How to read.” Note the **year of publication** of each reading! Read these questions **before** doing the reading. Look up terms you don’t know, and do other relevant follow-up. All this is more important for your learning than trying to memorize or even trying to read every word.

These questions are, of course, only a start. Feel free to formulate your own additional questions. Questions with an **asterisk** (*) are questions to be taken up in (small group) discussions. When you are slated to lead discussion, you should incorporate the questions with an asterisk related to readings since the preceding discussion into the discussion questions to be posted on D2L.

**Edwards (8/31)** What does Edwards mean by “read the whole thing”? How can you apply this to get more out of your readings?

**American Immigration Council (8/31)** What different categories of immigrants does the U.S. admit? What is the structure of numerical limits on immigration?

**Gomberg-Muñoz part 1 (9/5)** Throughout, pay attention to what influences who can and cannot become a legal immigrant. Also, read pp. 13–15 with attention (lays out the book’s structure). Questions:
- How did G-M go about her research—i.e., what is the evidentiary basis for her book? How did her project change during her research?
- What, according to G-M, shapes who gets to be considered a refugee and who does not?
- How does immigration status shape family dynamics for individuals in mixed-status families? Why?
• What factors determine whether an undocumented individual can legalize his or her status?
• How, according to G-M, do mixed-status families apply normative ideas about the family to bolster their case in the extreme hardship petitions?
• * Why would someone decide not to legalize their status even if they are technically eligible?
• * Do you think the information in the book indicates that the U.S. immigration system should be changed in some way? If so, in what way? If not, why not?

Gomberg-Muñoz part 2 (9/14) In what ways did legalizing their status change things for the immigrants and the couples discussed here? What problems remained? What about those whose cases were rejected, or about the impact of the various provisional statuses on the immigration system and immigrants?

Cannato 1–15 (9/14) Find one quote that highlights some key aspect of this reading. Also:
• What did being processed through Ellis Island to enter the U.S. entail?
• How does Cannato characterize most Americans’ attitudes about immigration at the turn of the 20th century?
• According to Cannato, how is his book different from others considering the same historical themes?

Italian Americans film clips (9/14) Overall, how would you characterize the experience of Italian Americans based on these film clips? Also:
• What factors contributed to Italian migration into the United States? What is meant by “Birds of Passage”?
• Gerald Meyer says that Italian Americans faced a “loyalty conflict.” What does he mean? Do you think this is a common experience for immigrants? Why?
• Did Catholicism form a common bond between Italian Americans and Irish Americans? Why / why not?
• What drew Italians / Italian Americans to anarchism?
• * Consider the dynamic of immigrant assimilation and immigrant critique of their new home. Should immigrants criticize their new country or should they focus on assimilating? Or are the two compatible?

Gerber (9/21) See separate study guide.

Readings for 9/28 How would you group Australian, Canadian, British, and U.S. systems of immigration (which share features, which differ)? What are the clearest differences? How do they have different results?
* To what extent does immigration law shape actual migration and migrant outcomes? What pitfalls exist?
* What do migration systems tell us about the philosophical or ideological bases on which immigrants are welcomed or rejected?

Hernández (10/3) This is snippets from Hernández’ book on the history of the Border Patrol. Broadly, consider how Hernández represents the formation of and shifts in the Border Patrol’s praxis and policies. Also:
• Since the border was essentially too long to guard, the Border Patrol early on took another tack in policing immigration. What was it?
• * Hernández writes that “the triumphs of 1954 […] were not won with the raids, deportations, and demonstrations of force so often attributed to that summer” but with “negotiation, compromise, and, most important, retreat” (173). What is she referring to? And why was this the case?
• What groups of Mexican American supported the Border Patrol’s 1950s efforts to get unauthorized migration under control and why?
• What does Hernández mean by the phrase “the Border Patrol’s abolitionist narrative” (178)?
• How did the Bracero Program change in response to complaints from South Texas growers? Did the changes make the program more palatable to the growers?
• How does Hernández criticize the claim that the increase in the number of workers in the Bracero program and decrease in apprehensions of unauthorized migrants shows that Operation Wetback and Bracero program reform had solved the border issues?
Neither Fountain nor Sutherland thinks the “nation of immigrants” label appropriate. How are their reasons different?

* Is the “nation of immigrants” characterization of the U.S. appropriate or useful? Why or why not? Does it have specific implications for policy? Why or why not?

Why did Francisco Cantu become a Border Patrol agent? Was it what he had expected?

How, according to Cannato, has Ellis Island been used in contemporary discourse? Does it help or hinder current policy discussions?

Fur claims that “Fictions bookend the concurrent histories of Native peoples and newcomers in America” (58). What are these fictions? How are they related to what Fur terms “history as a narrative of identity” versus “history as materiality” (68–69)? Also, what was the significance, according to Fur, of adopting or promoting Indian cultural forms?

According to Zimmerman, the classic image of 1920s America as a nation split between tolerant and progressive cultural pluralism versus conformist Protestant old-guard nationalism is incorrect. In what way, and how does he argue that case?

Pay attention to the broader context here: what large processes shaped the U.S. in the latter half of the 19th century, and how did that shape attitudes toward immigrants? Also:

• What was the purpose of Castle Garden? Who opposed its creation and why?
• Was Castle Garden a success?
• How does Cannato contrast Castle Garden and Ellis Island?

Were guidebooks and emigrant societies an important influence on immigrants from Germany, according to Kamphoefner? What about immigrant letters home? Did the latter on the whole encourage or discourage immigration?

Note the different types of sources that Anbinder discusses—and their problems. Also:

• How is the “rags to respectability” narrative different from the earlier “rags to riches” one? What does Anbinder think of each?
• * Anbinder calls on historians to “reconceptualize how we think about immigrant economic achievement in America.” How and why does he believe it should be reconceptualized?

How does Young question the significance of the national frame of reference in thinking about (Chinese) immigrant identity?

* In what ways did Chinese migrants exercise “agency”—take an active role in shaping their fates—and in what ways were they tricked or coerced? Why does Young term Chinese “perpetual aliens”?

How did Americans view the Japanese, as compared to the Chinese? How did the Japanese fare in Colorado; what work did they perform and what did they aspire to? What was labor unions’ attitude toward the Japanese and why? What were picture marriages?

Pay attention here to the ways in which measures and developments not directly related to immigration nevertheless have an impact on migration patterns. Questions:

• In whose interests was NAFTA crafted, according to the authors? Give an example.
• What has been the impact of tougher enforcement of immigration law on the U.S.-Mexican border, according to the authors?

What is the socioeconomic range of insular (used here in the sense of “related to islands”) migration from the Caribbean to the United States and what patterns in migration and reception do Portes and Grosfoguel identify? What has the migration meant for the sending countries?
The fine print

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Digital distraction. When your laptop or tablet screen is displaying things irrelevant to class, you distract not only yourself but other students to whom the screen is visible. Research demonstrates that such distraction is detrimental to learning. We expect your full attention and presence, and we expect you to allow the same to others.

Classroom Conduct. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. I pledge to treat each of you with dignity, respect, and professional courtesy; I expect you to do the same for me and for each other. See also http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior and http://www.colorado.edu/osccr/.

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