

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Immigration and the Transformation of American Society
Spring 2015

Instructor: Van C. Tran
Office: 606 Knox Hall
Phone: 212-854-4115
E-mail: vantran@columbia.edu
Course time: Mondays & Wednesdays, 8:40-9:55 a.m.
Location: Fayerweather 313
Office hours: Wednesdays, 4:15-6:15 p.m. Please sign up [here](#).
Website: https://courseworks.columbia.edu/portal/site/SOCIW3214_001_2015_1/
Teaching Assistant: Ms. Nicol Valdez
Email: nmv2116@columbia.edu

“Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants *were* American history.” - Oscar Handlin’s *The Uprooted* (1951:1)

Course Description:

In 2010, one in eight residents of the United States was born outside of the country. The arrival of these newcomers affects the cultural, economic, political and social dynamics of our society. Since immigration shows no signs of slowing down—in the United States or in many other countries of the world—the causes, consequences and repercussions of immigration will be one of the most important topics of the 21st century.

The course will proceed in four parts. In the first part, we begin the class by looking at why people move and the immigration policies that let some people in while keeping others out. In the second part, we will consider assimilation and incorporation, the processes by which immigrants and their children become integrated into American society and its implications for the future of ethnic and racial inequality. We will explore how sociologists theorize, measure, and evaluate immigrant incorporation. In particular, we will focus on competing predictions about second-generation decline versus second-generation advantage. In the third part, we will discuss the growth in the unauthorized population, their experiences in the United States and the contentious politics surrounding them. We will spend some time talking about new immigrant destinations and how they might differ from traditional gateways of immigration. In the final part, we will address how immigration is reshaping the color line and the future of American society. This course will primarily focus on the United States, not on the impact of migration on those left behind.

There are no prerequisites to the course and it is open to all undergraduates. Because immigration is an interdisciplinary field of study, the course welcomes students from diverse backgrounds, including sociology, urban studies, political science, economics, psychology, social anthropology and history. Students may also audit the course with the permission of the instructor.

Course Objectives:

In this course on immigration, we will:

1. Develop an understanding of major trends on contemporary immigration.
2. Become familiar with key theoretical debates on immigrant assimilation.
3. Explore key concepts through which sociologists study the experience of immigrants.
4. Gain hands-on experience doing some empirical research on the topic of immigration.

Course Requirements:

1. Class participation (15% of final grade)
2. Three short papers (15% each of final grade)
3. Take-home final exam (40% of final grade)

Three Short Papers

More details about each of these three assignments will be distributed in class. You will be expected to do some original research and to write approximately 6–8 pages per assignment.

1. Neighborhood memo of an immigrant neighborhood in New York City, **due February 23**
2. Interview paper with an immigrant about the immigrant experience, **due March 23**
3. Policy memo to an elected official advising a stance on immigration reform, **due April 20**

Take-home Final Exam

The final exam will cover materials from the entire course. It will be distributed in class on May 4 and will be **due on May 11 at 5 p.m.** There will be three essay questions requiring a synthesis of the course readings, lectures, and class discussions.

Course Policies:

1. Doing the reading is essential to your comprehension and participation in class. Some questions to ponder for each reading assignment include: What data and methodology is employed by the author? What is the main argument or thesis? What claims are being made by the author? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument? Do you agree or disagree with the author? If so, why? How does the reading relate to the lecture materials? How does it relate to current events or public opinion? Thinking about and answering these questions will help prepare you for class discussions and written assignments.
2. Please complete assigned readings before each class and come prepared to discuss them. Everyone should join in, even those who are naturally shy. The quality of your comments is more important than the quantity. Your active participation in class is strongly encouraged. I will set aside some time during my lectures for discussion, so you can raise any questions that you might have then. If you don't understand something, it is often the case that some of your classmates might also have the same questions, but they might be too shy to ask them. By raising questions about the reading materials, you will help all of us to learn better.

3. I am happy to meet with you individually during my office hours to answer questions on any aspects of the course. I also would like to get to know you, to learn more about your interests and to see how I can help you. I would encourage you to sign up for a 15-minute appointment with me early on in the semester. Before major assignment deadlines, I will make an effort to provide extra office hours, but it is always best to plan ahead if you anticipate needing any help. I would like you to perform as well as you can in my course, so please do not hesitate to ask questions and to get feedback on your work. Your teaching fellow could be a great resource, so I would encourage you to approach her as well.
4. Paper assignments should be submitted in hard copy and are due on **Mondays at 5 p.m.** You may submit them in class, to your teaching fellow or to Professor Tran's mailbox in 501 Knox in the department of sociology. Recognizing that we all have busy lives and balance multiple commitments, you will be allowed one 48-hour no-question-asked extension on one of your papers (but not on the final exam). Beyond this allowance, late assignments will receive a lower grade. **No further extensions will be granted**, except in the case of serious illness. If you are ill, you should go to see your physician and provide a note to support any extension request.
5. Technology in the classroom can be both a blessing and a real distraction. If you would like to use your laptop during class, I would recommend that you turn off your internet browsers and email clients. **Laptops should be used for note-taking purposes only** and we will rely on the honor code for the reinforcement of this rule. Please help me and your classmates in our effort to create a classroom environment that is truly conducive to learning and sharing.

Course Materials:

Books to purchase

Available at Book Culture at 536 W. 112th St. and on reserve at Lehman Social Sciences Library

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Foner, Nancy. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Nazario, Sonia. 2007. *Enrique's Journey*. New York: Random House.

Ngai, Mae. 2014. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Phillip Kasinitz, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Articles

All other readings (articles and chapters) will be made available via the course website in PDF.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Immigrant America

Wednesday, January 21

Portes, Alejandro and Rubén G. Rumbaut. 2006. *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. 3rd Edition. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapters 1-2.

Week 2: Immigration History, 1880-1924

Monday, January 26

Wednesday, January 28

Ngai, Mae. 2014. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Chapters 1-2.

Week 3: Immigration History, 1924-1965

Monday, February 2

Wednesday, February 4

Ngai, Mae. 2014. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 3-5.

Faculty Guest: Professor Mae Ngai (Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies and Professor of History, Columbia University)

Week 4: Immigration History, 1965-present

Monday, February 9

Wednesday, February 11

Ngai, Mae. 2014. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 7 & Epilogue.

Passel, Jeffrey S. and D’Vera Cohn. 2011. “Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010.” Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

Massey, Douglas S. and Karen A. Pren. 2012. “Unintended Consequences of U.S. Immigration Policy: Explaining the Post-1965 Surge from Latin America.” *Population and Development Review* 38(1): 1-29.

Week 5: Immigrant New York, 1880-1924

Holiday, February 16

Wednesday, February 18

Foner, Nancy. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York’s Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 2, & 3.

Week 6: Immigrant New York, 1965-present

Monday, February 23

Wednesday, February 25

First paper due on Monday, February 23

Foner, Nancy. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapters 5, 6, & 7.

Week 7: Assimilation and Transnationalism

Monday, March 2

Wednesday, March 4

Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1-4.

Week 8: Second-Generation Decline

Monday, March 9

Wednesday, March 11

Gans, Herbert. 1992. "Second-Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of the Post-1965 American Immigrants." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15(2):173-90.

Portes, Alejandro and Min Zhou. 1993. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530:74-96.

Portes, Alejandro, and Rubén G. Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Chapter 3, pp. 44-69.

Spring Recess: Happy Spring Break!

Week 9: Second-Generation Advantage

Monday, March 23

Wednesday, March 25

Second paper due on Monday, March 23

Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1-3.

Neckerman, Kathryn M., Prudence Carter, and Jennifer Lee. 1999. "Segmented Assimilation and Minority Cultures of Mobility." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (6):945-965.

Agius Vallejo, Jody. 2012. "Socially Mobile Mexican Americans and the Minority Culture of Mobility." *American Behavioral Scientist* 56: 666-681.

Week 10: Second-Generation Achievement

Monday, March 30

Wednesday, April 1

Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 4-7.

Week 11: Citizenship and Participation

Monday, April 6

Wednesday, April 8

Hochschild, Jennifer and John Mollenkopf. 2009. *Bringing Outsiders In: Transatlantic Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press. Chapters 1-2.

Kasinitz, Philip, John H. Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters and Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 9.

Week 12: The Undocumented Experience

Monday, April 13

Wednesday, April 15

Nazario, Sonia. 2007. *Enrique's Journey*. New York: Random House.

Passel, Jeffrey S., D'Vera Cohn, Jens Manuel Krogstad and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera. 2014. "As Growth Stalls, Unauthorized Immigrant Population Becomes More Settled." Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

Gonzales, Roberto G. 2011. "Learning to be Illegal: Undocumented Youth and Shifting Legal Contexts in the Transition to Adulthood." *American Sociological Review*, Volume 76, Number 4, 602-619.

Week 13: New Immigrant Destinations

Monday, April 20

Wednesday, April 22

Third paper due on Monday, April 20

Waters, Mary C. and Tomás R. Jiménez. 2005. "Assessing Immigrant Assimilation: New Empirical and Theoretical Challenges." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 31: 105-125.

Singer, Audrey. 2013. "Contemporary Gateways in Historical Perspective." *Dædalus: The Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences*: 76-91.

Marrow, Helen B. 2013. "Assimilation in New Destinations." *Dædalus: The Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences*: 107-119.

Week 14: The American Color Line

Monday, April 27

Wednesday, April 29

Waters, Mary C, Philip Kasinitz, and Asad L Asad. 2014. "Immigrants and African Americans." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40(1):369-390.

Lee, Jennifer and Frank D. Bean. 2004. "America's Changing Color Lines: Race/Ethnicity, Immigration, and Multiracial Identification." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 221-242.

Jiménez, Tomás R. 2008. "Mexican-Immigrant Replenishment and the Continuing Significance of Ethnicity and Race." *American Journal of Sociology* 113(6): 1527-1567.

Marrow, Helen B. 2009. "New Destinations and the American Colour Line." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32(6): 1037-57.

Week 15: Changing American Society

Monday, May 4

Take-home final exam will be given out in class and will be due on Monday, May 11, 2015.

Foner, Nancy. 2000. *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 8.

A final note on academic integrity and collaboration at Columbia:

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

If you have any questions about what constitutes a primary source to be cited, please come to see me during my office hours and we can talk in more details. For further information, please see: <http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity>