Overview: This course reviews the theoretical and empirical models that economists have developed to study the economic impact of immigration. We will review the history of immigration policy in the United States and analyze the various economic issues that dominate the current debate over immigration policy. These issues include the changing contribution of immigrants to the country’s skill endowment; the economic assimilation of immigrants; the impact of immigrants on the employment opportunities of native-born workers; the extent to which immigrants “pay their way” in the welfare state; and the source and magnitude of the economic benefits generated by immigration. After having gathered an understanding of the costs and benefits of immigration to the United States, we will discuss current immigration policy from interior to border enforcement policies, focusing on the intended and unintended consequences of the various policies. We will wrap up the course with a discussion of what the “optimal” immigration policy should be based on what we have learned.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to describe and explain the determinants of immigration to the United States and its consequences for natives and the economy. Additionally, students should be able to describe and identify some of the impacts of a variety of current U.S. immigration policies—such as AZ SB1070, E-Verify, and increased border enforcement.

Prerequisites: Six units of economics, including Economics 102 and, preferably, Economics 321.

Materials Used in the Course:

1. REQUIRED BOOKS & READINGS:
   - Cato Journal, “Is Immigration Good for America?”, Winter 2012, Volume 32, Number 1. Available online at: http://www.cato.org/pubs/journal/cj32n1/cj32n1.html - you should download the volume in its entirety while it is free. Otherwise, you will need to purchase the volume.

2. USE OF BB WEBSITE: The course website is found on the SDSU Blackboard server, http://blackboard.sdsu.edu/ The course should appear automatically when you are enrolled in the course. To login, use the same information you use to access WebPortal. Your username is your Red ID and your password is your University PIN. If you don't know your ID number or wish to change your University PIN, contact SDSU e-services at http://www.sdsu.edu/e-services/. PIN changes should be recognized by Blackboard within 24 hours.

Announcements made in class will be posted on the website, as will any handouts. All assignments, answer keys, and your grades will also be posted on the course website. I will tell you when I post new material but you are responsible for checking the site regularly.
**Grading:** Grades for the course are based on in-class quizzes, a class presentation and the best of three exam scores from three midterms and one final (the latter is optional) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Midterms &amp; Optional Remedial Final (20% each – I use your 2 highest scores)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Research Project &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation &amp; Discussion of One Reading</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Class Discussions Throughout the Semester</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**100%**

An optional, remedial, comprehensive final exam will be administered during Finals Week. You may use the score from your final exam to make up for one of your midterm exams, whether you missed one of the exams or whether you want to drop one of the scores. I will only use substitute your lowest midterm exam score with your final exam score if your final exam score is higher.

**To compute your class grade, you will carry out the following calculation:**

\[
\text{Percentage Score} = [0.20 \times \text{first highest exam score in } \% + 0.20 \times \text{second highest exam score in } \% + 0.20 \times \text{average percentage score from in-class quizzes} + 0.20 \times \text{group research project score in } \% + 0.10 \times \text{score in the group presentation and discussion of an assigned reading} + 0.05 \times (\text{no. of days you participated in discussions up to 50% of total in-class discussion days}) + 0.05 \times \text{percentage of times you were present in class when attendance was recorded}] 
\]

A few things to remember when computing your grade:

- I will drop the quiz with the lowest score.
- You do not need to participate in every single discussion to get full credit in that category – only 50% of the times.
- Class attendance, especially during the poster presentation days, will be closely monitored. As I explain in what follows, this course is designed around your participation, for which you need to be present.
- All scores must be in percentage terms (i.e. 85 if you got 85%).
- Percentage scores are rounded to the nearest integer. That means that an 85.5 will become an 86, whereas an 85.4 becomes an 85. No exceptions. The following grade scale will be most likely used:

A: 95%+
A-: 90-94%
B+: 87-89%
B: 83-86%
B-: 80-82%
C+: 77-79%
C: 73-76%
C-: 70-72%
D+: 67-69%
D: 63-66%
D-: 60-62%
F: 59%-
**Midterm Exams**

There will be two midterm exams. Each exam will cover the material discussed in class after the last test and up through the last day of class before the test. Tentative exam dates are listed at the end of your syllabus next to the chapters that each exam will likely cover. Nonetheless, definite exam dates will be announced at least a week in advance in class. There will be no make-up (or early) exams. If you miss an exam, you can make up the grade by taking the mass remedial exam, which will be comprehensive of the material covered in the course.

**In-Class Quizzes**

There will be periodic and often –usually once a week. In-class quizzes are unannounced. In-class quizzes will refer to the content of the assigned reading for that day. Some questions will be more basic and others a bit more challenging. I will drop the quiz with the lowest score.

**Other Grade Components:**

One of our goals of this class is to help you communicate more effectively, both in writing and orally, your knowledge, beliefs and opinions. As a result, part of your grade in this course will be based on class presentations and participation measured in various ways, as I shall explain in what follows. Simply put, this course follows a discussion framework and will not work if you do not participate. Therefore, attendance and class participation are crucial aspects of this course.

**Research Project and In-Class Presentation**

Another component of your grade will come from a detailed 20-minute presentation (consisting of approximately 20 PowerPoint slides) of a group research project. I will make up groups (2 to 4 students depending on the class size) and assign a presentation day at random. I will hand out a suggested list of topics, but you are welcome to analyze an alternative topic. The topic, however, should focus on the economic impact of either a particular component of current immigration policy or of a proposed reform of immigration policy. Your analysis may focus on policies pursued by countries other than the United States.

The project must include, overall, the following:

1. A detailed description of the policy being considered.
2. What was the context (historical, social, political and/or economic) that led to this new policy (or policy change)?
3. A brief accounting of the benefits and costs associated with the type of policy. How will the policy impact the number and composition of immigrants entering the country? Which groups are more likely to benefit and which groups are most likely to lose?
4. A discussion of the intended and unintended consequences of the policy.
5. A discussion of whether the host country would benefit from adopting or repealing this particular immigration policy.

To the extent possible, your analysis must use empirical results from the literature to justify your conclusions. A short three to four page written document will be turned in along with your class presentation. I will combine your written projects to make a small booklet for each student so that all of you have a reference document about immigration policy.
Specific details of how class presentations will be graded will be posted on Blackboard. Among other things, you will be graded based on the content, organization, presentation and, to some extent, on the sparked interest. Each member of the group has to be present and participate in the presentation to get credit.

**Important Note:** Everyone should be present and pay attention (no use of computers to browse the net and such, please) out of respect towards your classmates. Class attendance will be closely monitored during the presentation days. As a whole, class attendance (not just during the poster presentation days) will count towards 5% of your grade in the class.

**In-Class Discussion of Readings**

Another grade component will originate from the in-class discussion of an assigned reading. Each day, I will start the class with a summarized discussion of the reading assigned for that day. Then, a group of students (2 to 4 students depending on the class size) will follow-up with a 30-minute detailed presentation and discussion of the reading at hand, preferably using PowerPoint slides for everyone to see. Each member of the group has to be present and participate in the presentation to get credit. As part of the presentation/discussion, each group will bring a list of 10-15 content/discussion questions that are comprehensive of the content of the reading and/or promote discussion among your colleagues. An example of the type of questions that should be presented will be provided in class. Your presentation, along with the list of questions, has to be made available to me one week before your assigned in-class discussion, we will meet the following day during office hours to go through it and you will submit it your corrected version the morning of your presentation day at the latest. I will post your questions online for all your classmates on the day of your presentation.

**Important Note:** Everyone should come prepared and willing to contribute to the discussion of the assigned reading for that day. Participation in the in-class discussions led by your colleagues will be closely monitored and counts towards 5% of your grade in the class. Don’t forget: participation is not just about quantity (you only need to participate half of the times to get a perfect score in this category), it is also about quality. Do the reading and come prepared and ready to contribute.

Overall, the group research project and the group presentation/discussion of the readings are intended to be fun group exercises that address several goals crucial in the job market: (1) To promote critical thinking by figuring out what are the crucial aspects in the article being reviewed and by practicing the analysis of policy impacts; (2) To practice working in a group environment, and (3) To familiarize yourself with presenting your work to others, talk in public and being evaluated on your performance when doing so.

**Other Important Information:**

**Academic misconduct:** Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism and cheating of any kind. Your work must be your own and you must give credit for ideas from other sources. During an examination, looking at someone else’s paper or telling someone else the answer is considered cheating. Usage of someone else’s clicker is also considered cheating. Any evidence of cheating will be promptly reported to the Judicial Procedures Office as required by law. You should be aware that the consequences are serious in the United States. They include expulsion from the university and can result in ineligibility to apply to law, medical and other school programs throughout the country based on your academic record.
Classroom conduct: To minimize distractions, please observe the following:

- **Turn off your cell phones before class begins.** You are welcome to exit the classroom to answer your phone or keep track of your text messages at any time but, please, avoid playing with your phone while in class. It is very distracting.
- **Arriving late, leaving early, and talking during class can be disruptive to the instructor and to other students and should be minimized.** If you have any questions, please raise your hand and ask me. I usually welcome interruptions and, if I am in the middle of something, I will simply let you know and address your questions as soon as I am done.
- **Inappropriate behaviors will not be tolerated.** If necessary, the matter will be turned over to the Judicial Procedures Office for appropriate disciplinary action.

Any request for grade change, whether related to an exam or assignment, has to be submitted to me in writing, indicating the question and the rationale/argument behind your request.

Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking assistance in a timely manner.

**TOPICS, READING LIST AND TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

1. **Immigration into the United States: Who Migrates and Why?**
   - Week 1: M, Aug. 27th: Class Introduction.
   - Week 2: W, Sep. 5th: Borjas, Chapter 2. (No class on M, Sep. 3rd – Labor Day)
   - Week 3: M, Sep. 10th: Borjas, Chapter 3.

2. **Labor Market Impact of Immigration**
   - Week 4: M, Sep. 17th: Borjas, Chapter 4.

3. **Economic Benefits of Immigration**

4. **The Fiscal Impact of Immigration**

**First Midterm:** Week 7: W, Oct. 10th

5. **Immigration Policy**


6. Proposals for Immigration Policy

• Week 11: W, Nov. 7th: Borjas, Chapter 10.

• Week 12: W, Nov. 14th: Borjas, Chapter 11. (No class on M, Nov. 12th – Veteran’s Day)


Second Midterm: Week 13: W, Nov. 21st

Research Project Presentations (4 days): Week 14, M, Nov. 26th through Week 15, W, Dec. 5th

Final Exam (Optional and Comprehensive): Week 16: As determined by the University.