ECON 700: SEMINAR ON IMMIGRATION  
MW 2:00-3:15 pm at MCN-111  
Spring 2013

Professor: Dr. Amuedo-Dorantes  
Office: Adams Humanities 4179  
Phone: 594-1663  
E-mail: camuedod@mail.sdsu.edu  
Office Hours: TTH 4:15 -5:15 pm

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. Additionally, we will discuss both the public opinion shaping those policies, as well as the phenomenon of illegal immigration. Most of the course is focused on how immigration impacts the host country. Therefore, to wrap up the course, we will discuss the implications of immigration on the sending economies.

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, as well as for the host and sending economies. 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, and provide some examples of how public opinion helps shape and, therefore, explains current immigration policy.

Prerequisites: Economics 321.

Materials Used in the Course:

1. REQUIRED BOOKS & READINGS:
   
   

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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation, Discussion and Critique of Readings</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Class Discussions</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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To compute your class grade, you will carry out the following calculation:

**Percentage Score** = \[0.5*\text{class project in \% } + 0.15*(\text{total quiz points up to 90\%}/90\% \text{ of all total points possible}) \times 100 + 0.10*\text{class presentation and discussion of reading score in \% } + 0.03*(\text{no. of days you participated in discussions up to 50\% of total in-class discussion days}/50\% \text{ of total in-class discussion days}) + 0.02*(\text{no. of days you were present when attendance was recorded}/\text{no. of days attendance was recorded}) + 0.20*\text{final exam \% score}\]

A few things to remember when computing your grade:

- You only need 90\% in your quizzes to get a perfect score in that category. This is intended to allow you to miss a quiz without a penalty.
- You do not need to participate in every single discussion to get full credit in that category – only 50\% of the times. What matters is quality, not quantity.
- Class attendance, especially during the project 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.
- 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>95-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• **Research Project**

The main component of your grade will come from a paper on an immigration topic of your choice and your periodic class presentations of the various sections of your project. I will hand out a suggested list of topics, but you are welcome to analyze an alternative as long as it focuses on one of the multiple sections covered in the course or on the impact of current immigration policy/proposed reform. If you are interested, you are also welcome to focus on policies pursued by countries other than the United States. Your research project will be structured as a research paper. That means that, as the articles you will be reading, your paper will have a clearly stated purpose or aim, motivation, theoretical/conceptual framework, testable hypotheses, detailed data analysis using micro or macro-level data, econometric modeling and analysis testing your hypotheses and, finally, conclusions and policy recommendations. There will be periodic presentations in class of the aforementioned sections to monitor your progress and guide you in your work.

Specific details regarding how the project will be graded will be posted on Blackboard. Among other things, you will be graded based on the contribution of your analysis, the theoretical/conceptual framework used to derive your testable hypotheses, the empirical analysis, organization, writing and clarity of the project and class presentations and, to some extent, on the sparked interest.

**Important Note:** *Everyone should be present and pay attention (no use of computers to check your email or browse the net, please) out of respect towards your classmates. If you choose to do so, I will ask you to leave the class. Class attendance will be closely monitored during the presentation days.*

• **In-Class Quizzes**

There will be periodic – usually once a week in-class quizzes. They are unannounced and will refer to the content of the assigned reading for that day. Some questions will be more basic and others a bit more challenging. You only need 90% in that category to get a perfect score, allowing you to miss one quiz without penalty. There are no make up quizzes.

• **Class Presentation, Discussion and Critique of Assigned Readings**

Another grade component will originate from the in-class presentation and discussion of one or two assigned readings. Each day, I will start the class with a summarized discussion of the reading assigned for that day. Then, one of you will follow up with a 25-minute detailed presentation, discussion and critique of the reading at hand, preferably using PowerPoint slides for everyone to see. As part of the presentation/discussion, you will bring a list of 10 content questions that are comprehensive of the content of the reading and of 10 critique/discussion questions about the article to entice participation 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 class period 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 presentation, content and discussion questions on BB for all your classmates after your presentation. Specific details of how the presentation and discussion will be graded will be posted on Blackboard.

**Important Note:** *Everyone should come prepared to contribute to the discussion of the assigned reading for that day. Simply put, this course follows a discussion framework and will not work if you do not participate. Therefore, participation in the in-class discussions led by your colleagues will be closely monitored and will count towards 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), but primarily about quality. Do the reading and come prepared and ready to contribute.

Overall, your research project and presentation/discussion/critique of the readings are intended to be fun 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 promote your analytical and empirical skills by writing a substantial research project, and (3) To familiarize yourself with presenting your work to others, talk in public and being evaluated on your performance when doing so.

- **Comprehensive Final Exam**

There will be a comprehensive final exam on the day established by the university. It will cover all the material covered in class. I will post a brief study guide to serve as a general guideline of the topics you need to review for the test as we approach the date.

**Other Important Information:**

**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.
- **Do not use your computers for checking/answering your mail or to browse the net while in class.** It is disrespectful and I will likely ask you to step out until you are done.
- **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.

**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 plagiarism or 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.

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

Article readings can be downloaded from the library database or by visiting the corresponding website. Otherwise, they will be posted on BB.

1. **Who Migrates? Trends, Characteristics and Determinants of Migration (3rd and 4th week)**
   - M, Jan. 28th: Hanson, Chapter 2.
   - W, Jan. 30th: Borjas, Chapter 2.
   - W, Jan. 30th: Borjas, Chapter 3.

2. **Labor Market Impact of Immigration (4th and 5th week)**
   - W, Feb. 6th: Borjas, Chapter 4.


3. **Economic Benefits and (Fiscal) Costs of Immigration (6th and 7th week)**
   - W, Feb. 20th: Borjas, Chapter 5.
   - W, Feb. 27th: Hanson, Chapter 3.

4. **Illegal Immigration (8th week)**

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5. Thinking about Immigration Policy (10th through 11th week)

• M, Mar. 18th: Borjas, Chapters 10 and 11.

• M, Mar. 18th: Hanson, Chapter 5.


Week 12: SPRING BREAK: April 1-5, 2013.

6. Immigration and Public Opinion (13th week)

• M, Apr. 8th: Hanson, Chapter 4.


Week 14: M & W, Apr. 15th and 17th: Presentations of econometric modeling, testable hypotheses and preliminary results.
7. **Impact of Immigration on Sending Economics (15th and 16th week)**


**Week 17:** M & W, May 6th and 8th: Presentations of terminal paper.

**Week 18:** M, May 13, 1-3 pm: Comprehensive Final Exam.