Immigration and Social Work

Purpose and Description

Social work practice in Southern California entails working with diverse immigrant and refugee populations. California is home to the largest immigrant population in the United States. This course will review the history of immigration and immigration policy (who the United States admits) and examine immigrant policy (what is done with immigrants upon arrival). It will focus on the issue of border enforcement and the role of the immigration bureaucracy in shaping the lives of immigrants. The course will discuss recent policy changes relating to welfare and the legal status of immigrants. Finally, the course will review populations of special concern to social workers and the problems and possibilities they encounter.

Competencies:
Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

EPAS 2 - Engage diversity and difference in practice

- Demonstrate knowledge of historical, legal, socioeconomic and psychological forms of oppression and ability to develop culturally sensitive interventions within that understanding.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity or immigrant and refugee communities.

EPAS 3 - Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

- Demonstrate a functional knowledge of advocacy theory, skills and techniques and consistently engage in activities/tasks designed to promote social and economic justice in working with immigrant populations
EPAS 4 – Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

- Employ research findings to evaluate the socio-political and economic conditions of immigrants and to recommend policy to build strong immigrant communities.

EPAS 5 - Engage in policy practice

- Evaluate the effectiveness of policies designed to promote the integration of immigrant populations.

Required Text


  OR


  OR


Required Readings

There is no required text or course reader. Readings are either posted on Blackboard or available on SDSU’s online journal holdings. Those online readings are indicated by an asterisk mark (*) next to the reading.

Source Materials


A good source of immigration enforcement statistics is the Syracuse University webpage: http://www.trac.syr.edu/immigration/
The Migration Policy Institute features both US and international data and analysis from leading scholars in the field: http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/comparative.cfm

The Urban Institute has ongoing research on immigration. Most of its reports can be found at www.urban.org.

To keep up with trends in immigration I highly recommend reading one or more of the following newspapers:

- The Washington Post www.washingtonpost.com
- The Los Angeles Times www.latimes.com

Assignments

1A. Reaction Paper: They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky and When Broken Glass Floats are autobiographical accounts of the refugee experience. Him writes of her life under the Khmer Rouge, one of the most brutal regimes in the last half of the 20th century and Deng, Deng, and Ajak describe their flight for safety from the Sudan to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. These two books portray the conditions and experiences that are all too common for refugees.

Using either book as the basis of your analysis, develop a psycho-social intervention to address the trauma of the refugee experience OR present the types of social services that are necessary for refugees like Him or Deng, Deng, and Ajak to rebuild their lives. Link the service or services back to the event(s) described by in the book. No more than five pages. (You may find Mary Pipher’s The Middle of Everywhere (especially chapter 10 “Healing in all Times and Places” a useful source of ideas for how to help refugees upon resettlement). Points 25. Due date to be determined.

1B. Reaction Paper. Enrique’s Journey captures the dynamics and hardship of Central American unaccompanied youth traveling to the United States. Nazario’s account was written years before this migration stream made the front page last summer, yet the forces that push and pull Enrique to emigrate from Honduras remain largely the same. Using the book as the springboard for your analysis, discuss what policy and social services should be given to the thousands of “Enriques” who immigrate to the US each year. You are strongly encouraged to examine the critiques of the current border policy vis-a-vis unaccompanied minors. Points 25. Due date to be determined.

2. Interview: Locate and interview an administrator or frontline worker at a community-based agency serving an immigrant or refugee community (ies). The interview should explore the social problems or barriers the immigrant
community encounters in adjusting to life in the United States. The interview should discuss the services the agency offers, describe its outreach effort (if any), how it deals with clients with limited English proficiency, its use of paraprofessionals (if any) and bilingual/bicultural professional workers, and whether it is part of a larger coalition/network of service providers. Finally, the interview should assess what are the perceived gaps in services. The write-up of the interview should be no more than seven pages and should use the interview content to reflect on the readings and material covered in the class. Points 25. Due date to be determined.

[Students may choose to form groups of no more than three to do this assignment]

3. Policy Memorandum: (option 1) As a member of a national “blue-ribbon” commission on immigration reform, you have been asked to draft a conceptual memorandum outlining the basis for a new immigrant policy that will facilitate the adjustment of newcomers to the United States. The memorandum must identify the key values that support your immigrant policy, how you distinguish between the various categories of immigrants and what should (or should not) be done for them, and how length of time in the United States should factor into adjustment programs. All policy is imperfect so please be sure to identify the pros and cons of the position you take. You may wish to consult proposed legislation as well as think-tank position papers for ideas for the memorandum. The memorandum should have a minimum of 15 references.

(option 2) As a staffer on the Commission on Immigration Reform, you have been asked to develop a position paper on the pros and cons of regularizing (legalizing) the status of undocumented immigrants in the United States. The position paper should recommend a policy choice and present the basic structure (premises) of the policy (e.g., who should have their status regularized, what criteria should be used, what numerical ceiling (if any) should be created, and what benefits they should receive). Identify the pros and cons of the position you take. You may wish to consult proposed legislation as well as think-tank position papers for ideas for the memorandum. The memorandum should have a minimum of 15 references.

(option 3) A newly established non-profit agency, Immigrant and Refugee Services, has employed you to develop social and mental health services for refugees and asylees who have recently arrived in the city. Based on the readings, guest presentations, and class discussion and your own ideas, identify a service philosophy, service approaches and models, appropriate staffing, methods of outreach and external organizational linkages. The proposal should have a minimum of 15 references.

(option 4) A non-profit, community-based agency, Life Anew, finds itself serving a new immigrant/refugee population. The Executive Director of Life Anew
recognizes that it must refashion its mental health services to best service this new population. You have been charged with reviewing and critiquing the mental health on some facet of immigrant or refugee mental health (trauma, loss, acculturation stress, to name a few). Because there is limited research and scholarship on this new group, you will need to extrapolate from the literature therapeutic approaches that seem appropriate. You report should have a minimum of 15 references.

The policy memorandum/proposal should be no more than 15 double spaced pages.

The final paper is worth **50 Points and is due on May 5th**.

[Students may choose to form groups of no more than three to do this assignment. If a group is created, I would like a brief statement from each group member detailing the work done to complete the assignment.]

**ADDITIONALLY:**
Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be submitted to Turnitin for textual similarity review for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Turnitin is fully integrated with Blackboard and should be easy to use. Please review instructions on how to use Turnitin well before your paper is due (see Turnitin resources on Blackboard under assignments for this course).

Grades are assigned in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Specifics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Most Superior</td>
<td>Demonstrates mastery of content. Paper is without flaw. Shows creativity and a high level of critical thinking. Creativity refers to the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>performance.</td>
<td>student’s ability to approach the material in a unique, but valid manner that demonstrates thoughtfulness and engagement with the material.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Critical thinking means student is able to go beyond description to analysis. The student is clearly able to express and defend ideas. Uses</td>
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<td>empirical evidence to support positions consistently. The student links ideas to course concepts and demonstrates they have done the required</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>reading. Paper was delivered on time without a request for extension. The paper is well written and properly referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Demonstrates mastery of content. Shows high level of critical thinking in the analysis of material. Student is clearly able to express</td>
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<td></td>
<td>performance.</td>
<td>and defend ideas. Student links ideas to course concepts and demonstrates they have done the required reading. Uses empirical evidence to</td>
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<td>support positions consistently. The paper is well written and properly referenced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>More than</td>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of content without major flaws. Exceeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfactory performance</td>
<td>Student provides a balance of description and analysis. Student does an adequate job of expressing and defending ideas. Student more often than not links ideas to course concepts and demonstrates they have done most of the reading. Uses empirical evidence to support positions at least some of the time. A B+ is normally the ceiling grade for a late paper (with extension) unless the extension is given to the entire class. The student’s writing style is adequate for a graduate student. The paper is properly referenced.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance</td>
<td>Meets expectations for assignment. Demonstrates understanding of content and most concepts, but needs improvement in at least one major area. Paper is probably more descriptive than analytical. Student does an adequate job of expressing and defending ideas. Student sometimes link ideas to course concepts and demonstrates they have at least read the texts, but minimal attention is given to other readings. Uses empirical evidence to support positions at least some of the time. The student’s writing style is adequate for a graduate student. Some problems may be noted in referencing style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Less than satisfactory performance</td>
<td>Below expectations for assignment but demonstrates understanding of some areas of content. Several areas need significant improvement. At least one area has serious deficiencies. Little or no use of empirical evidence. Student may have trouble expressing ideas. Student’s writing skills may need improvement. The student makes minimal use of course concepts and readings. The student may not have followed directions for the assignment or used an acceptable format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Much less than satisfactory performance</td>
<td>Minimal grasp of content. Several significant areas are deficient. Paper is probably poorly written. Student is not using course concepts, and does not provide evidence of reading. Little or no use of empirical evidence. The student may not have followed directions for the assignment or used an acceptable format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- &gt; F</td>
<td>Very poor performance</td>
<td>Minimal to no grasp of content. Serious deficiencies in most areas. Student does not understand course concepts, and does not provide evidence of reading. Little or no use of empirical evidence. Paper is probably poorly written. The student may not have followed directions for the assignment or used an acceptable format.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Grading Policies**

The points and grade distribution for determining the final course grade are as follows:

- **A** 94-100
- **A-** 90-93
- **B+** 87-89
- **B** 83-86
B- 80-82
C+ 77-79
C  73-76
C- 70-72

**Note:** The instructor reserves the right to reduce the final course grade if a student has more than two absences. The instructor also reserves the right to alter the syllabus as necessary.

**Course Policies**

**SDSU Faculty Senate Disability Policy**
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Accommodation for Religious Observances**
Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements in advance of a religious observance. However, it is the student’s responsibility to contact me in advance so that I can make the necessary arrangements.

**Academic Misconduct**
Academic misconduct is an act in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation, uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise, forges or falsifies academic documents or records, intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others, engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance, or assists other students in any of these acts.

Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, is a serious offense in academia and will be treated according to the university policy, as written in the SDSU catalog/Graduate Bulletin. Any Academic misconduct, including plagiarism infractions, will be reported to the SDSU Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities as is mandated by the CSU Chancellor.

If you are unsure as to what is plagiarism: Students can take the 30-minute pre- and post-online quiz: **SDSU Plagiarism: The crime of intellectual property** by SDSU librarian Pamela Jackson, found at: [http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/index.cfm](http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/index.cfm).

For more information visit the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility: [http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html](http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html)
Class Etiquette and Expectations

This class on immigration and social work and social welfare will deal with a number of controversial issues and topics; disagreements will occur. That is fine. Hopefully, beliefs and values are not so deeply entrenched that we cannot change them. As Camus wrote, “To feel absolutely right is the beginning of the end.” In the process of our intellectual exchanges, I ask that we treat each other with respect and not personalize the argument or discussion.

Class begins and ends at the specified times. As a courtesy to others, students are expected to arrive on time and to remain until the end of the class. Students must inform the instructor if it is necessary to leave class early. A break will be given.

This class is a cell-phone free zone!!!! Please turn off such devices before the class starts.
Week 1  
Course Introduction  
1/21

- Review course goals and objectives
- Review main themes of course

Required Reading


Week 2  
Immigration History  
1/28

Required Readings


Additional Readings

- James Ciment, editor, *Encyclopedia of American Immigration* [this is a four volume set that provides a detailed history of American immigration and histories of major immigrant groups].

Week 3  
Immigration Policy and Classification  
2/4

Required Readings
- The web page of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services has material on the classification of immigrants and summaries of major U.S. immigration policy.
  - http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis

**Additional Readings**


Guest Presenter: Amber Lawless, IRC

**Week 4**

**The Demographics of Immigration**

2/11

**Required Readings**

- Jeffrey Passel, D’Vera Cohn, and Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, “Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero – and Perhaps Less,” *Pew Hispanic Center* (April 23, 2012). [skim for basic content]
- Migration Policy Institute, Immigration Data Hub
  - http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/index.cfm
  (examine the website for data on California)
Additional Readings

- Richard Fry, Gender and Migration Pew Hispanic Center (2006).
  - o http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/64.pdf
- Counting California
  - o http://countingcalifornia.cdlib.org/

Week 5
2/18

Refugee and Asylum Policy

Required Readings


- Chanrithy Him, When Broken Glass Floats.

  OR

- Benson Deng, Alephonsion Deng, & Benjamin Ajak, They Poured Fire on Us from the Sky.


Additional Readings


U.S. Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement
  o http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/orr/

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
  o www.unhcr.ch

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
  o http://www.lirs.org/

The International Rescue Committee (IRC)
  o http://www.theirc.org/

Catholic Charities

* Guest Speaker: Robert Montgomery, International Rescue Committee
Week 6
2/25

Unauthorized Immigrants

Required Readings

• Ted Conover, Coyotes, pp. 107 – 141. [skim]

Additional Readings


• Movie: In the Shadow of the Law

Week 7
3/3

Border Enforcement

Required Reading


Additional Reading

- California Rural Legal Assistance: The Border Project
  - [www.crlaf.org/border.htm](http://www.crlaf.org/border.htm)

  Movie: Crossing Arizona
  Death on a Friendly Border

**Week 8**

**IIRIRA and Detention Policy**

**3/10**

**Required Reading**

Additional Readings

  - www.hrw.org
  - http://www.lchr.org/refugee/behindbars.htm

✏ Movie: Chasing Freedom

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**Week 9**

3/17

**Human Trafficking**

Required Readings

Additional Reading:

• United States, Department of Justice: http://www.usdoj.gov/whatwedo/whatwedo_ctip.html
• United States, Department of State: http://www.state.gov/g/tip/
• International Organization for Migration: http://www.iom.int/

Week 10  Torture Treatment Issues  3/24

Required Readings


Additional Readings


• Guest Speaker: Survivors of Torture, International

Week 11  Spring Break
3/31

Week 12  Public Benefits and Poverty
4/7
Required Readings

- National Immigrant Law Center, Access to Public Benefits https://www.nilc.org/access-bens.html

Additional Readings

- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), “Factsheet on Legal Immigrants and Hunger,” November 2001


**Week 13  **

**Mental Health**

**4/14**

**Required Readings**

  OR

**Additional Readings**

- Surgeon General, *Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity* (2001)  
  o www.surgeongeneral.gov

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**Week 14  **

**Domestic Violence**

**4/21**

**Required Readings**


OR


Additional Readings


- Guest Speaker: Anne Bautista, ACCESS

**Week 15**  
**4/28**  
**Issues in Immigrant Policy**

**Required Readings**


- http://www.lhc.ca.gov/lhcdir/report166.html

- Sylvia Guendelman, Helen Halpin Schauffler, and Michelle Pearl, “Unfriendly Shores: How Immigrant Children Fare in the U.S. Health System,” *Health Affairs* 20:1 (Jan/Feb 2001): 257 – 266,*

**Week 16**  
**5/5**  
**Paper Advisement**
Appendix A

Course Objectives

Knowledge
1. Appraise how history has shaped United States immigration policy.
2. Interpret the components of immigration policy and the importance of immigration status.
3. Evaluate the fit of refugee and asylum policies and the psycho-social problems persecuted populations experience.
4. Critique the consequences of immigration control on the border and the dynamics of undocumented immigration.
5. Evaluate U.S. immigrant policy and the gaps between what is needed and what is provided.
6. Appraise service delivery issues and strategies in providing services to immigrant and refugee populations.

Skills
1. Appraise major resource for research in immigration/immigrant policy.
2. Evaluate the demographic changes to the United States and California resulting from immigration.
3. Critique what public benefits and social services are available to immigrants and refugees.
4. Analyze the structure of immigration policy and the assumptions embedded in it.

Values
1. Assess the link between social work and immigration.
2. Appraise how immigration policy and its implementation can result in oppression.
3. Critique the need for services and benefits for immigrants.
4. Evaluate the value conflicts in immigration and immigrant policy.

Competencies
1. Students will be able to evaluate key concepts and issues in immigration policy.
2. Student will be able to interpret the impact socioeconomic impact of immigration on the United States, California, and San Diego.
3. Students will be able to critique the strengths and weaknesses of policy designed to facilitate the economic and social adaptation of immigrants and refugees.
4. Students will be able to appraise resources and data used in analyzing immigration policy.