

Economics 292.01  
The Economics of Immigration  
Fall 1996

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Carney 145  
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Office Hours: TTH 4:40-5:40pm

Course Description

More immigrants entered the United States during the decade of the 1980's than in any comparable period since the turn of the Century. Why did this upswing in immigration occur? Who are the new immigrants. Where do they come from and what do they do in the U.S? Do immigrants hurt the labor market opportunities of native-born workers and drain the U.S. social welfare system? How does U.S. immigration policy affect the number and type of immigrants we receive. What other countries receive immigrants and what kind of immigration policies do these countries have? This course will use theoretical and empirical tools learned in other economics courses to address these questions and more.

Course Organization

Course grades will be based on the following:

- 1) Midterm Exam (20%)
- 2) Book Review (15%)
- 3) Group Project (30%)
- 4) Final Exam (25%)
- 5) Participation (10%)

**Exams:** The midterm exam (20% of semester grade) will be given in class on October 15th. The final exam (25% of semester grade) will be given on December 17th at 9am. No early or late exams will be given, so please check your schedule for conflicts now.

The exams are designed to test your knowledge of a broad range of issues in the study of immigration and to allow you to apply your knowledge of economics.

**Book Review and Constructive Comments:**

Choose one of the following books:

- 1) The Jungle by Upton Sinclair
- 2) The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
- 3) The Promised Land by Nicholas Lemann

(You may choose another book that you find more interesting as long as you clear it with me first.) Begin reading it as soon as possible. I then want you to write a 5 to 10 page summary and critique of the material in the book based on what you have learned in the course. A first draft of the book review will be due October 8th. These drafts will be distributed to other students for constructive comments. The comments are due on October 17th. The rewritten final draft will be due October 24th.. Be sure to include economics in your book review! The book review is worth 15% of the total semester grade. The comments will form a major part of the participation grade.

More and more employers are emphasizing the need for good writing skills, and skills at taking and giving constructive criticism. Good writing generally means re-writing. It is very important to

learn to revise something you have written in response to comments regarding its content and clarity. These skills all take practice; this portion of the course requirements is designed to give you some.

**Group Project:** On the first day of class you will pick from a list of topics that interest you. I will then form groups of 3 to 5 people based on these interests. The last few lecture periods will be devoted to oral presentations of the projects. In addition to the oral presentation you will be required to hand in an outline and a bibliography for the project. Each person will also hand in an evaluation of each of the other group members' contributions to the project. To help you get the earliest possible start, project proposals will be due on September 26th. The group project is the single biggest component of your semester grade (30%).

**Participation:** In addition to the comments on other students' book reviews, you should keep up with the readings and come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. In addition there will be several small assignments as we go along.

### Syllabus

The primary source for this book is Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy by George J. Borjas. The book is out of print, so I had it photocopied. You can purchase it at the University Bookstore. The price is around \$15 (much less than the hardback edition costs).

We will use this book as an outline for the material to be covered, but you will be expected to supplement your reading as indicated. Supplementary materials will be put on reserve (at least one week in advance) or handed out in class. Not all materials are listed here since some of the sources are current newspaper and journal articles, and I may wish to add to these as new things come out.

## I. U.S. Immigration Policy and History

Borjas chp 1 Who Comes: How the Immigration Market Works

Borjas chp 2 American Immigration Policy

"The Political Economy of Immigration Restriction," by Claudia Goldin. NBER Working Paper Series.

Time Magazine, special issue Fall 1993, Read: Editor's introduction, articles on p. 10, p.18, p.28, p.34.

## II. Who are the Immigrants?

Borjas chp 3 A Statistical Portrait of Immigrants

Borjas chp 4 Illegal Aliens: The Black Market for Immigrants

Urban Institute report, chp 2 "Estimates of the Undocumented Immigrant Population in Seven States: 1992 and Beyond," p. 17-29.

Time Magazine, article on p. 16.

### III. Immigrant's Impact on the U.S. and Immigrant Assimilation.

Borjas chp 5 The Impact of Immigrants on Native Earnings and Employment

Time Magazine, articles on p.60, p.62, p.69, p.73, p.80, p.86.

"The Impact of the Mariel Boatlift on the Miami Labor Market," by David Card, Industrial and Labor Relations Review, January 1990.

Urban Institute Report, chp. 3, "Costs of Incarcerating Illegal Aliens in Seven States," p.35-54.  
Urban Institute Report, chp. 4, "Costs of Providing Public Primary and Secondary Education to Undocumented Aliens in Seven States," p. 61-86.

Borjas chp 6 Assimilation and the Earnings of Immigrants

"Long-Run Convergence of Ethnic Skill Differentials: The Children and Grandchildren of the Great Migration," G. Borjas, Industrial and Labor Relations Review, July 1994.

Time Magazine, articles on p.55, p.57, p.64, p.78.

Borjas chp 7 Why are the New Immigrants Less Skilled than the Old?

Borjas chp 8 Employment and Poverty in the Immigrant Population

"The Fertility of Immigrant Women," by Francine Blau, in Immigration and the Workforce.

Borjas chp 9 Immigration and the Welfare State

Urban Institute report, chp 5., "Costs of Providing Emergency Services Under Medicaid to Undocumented Aliens, p. 107-123.

Urban Institute report, "Estimated Tax Contributions of Undocumented Immigrants in Seven States," p. 131-143.

Borjas chp 10 Immigrant Entrepreneurship and Immigrant Enclaves

Time Magazine, p.82.

Borjas chp 11 The Ties that Bind: The Immigrant Family

"Mass Emigration, Remittances and Economic Adjustment: The Case of El Salvador in the 1980's," by Edward Funkhouser in Immigration and the Work Force.

### IV. International Issues in Immigration

Borjas chp 12 American Competitiveness in the Immigration Market

Borjas chp 13 Implications for Policy

"Migration Pressure in Germany: Past and Future," by Cristoph M. Schmidt and Klaus F. Zimmerman in Migration and Economic Development, ed. Klaus F. Zimmerman.

"Violence against immigrants in Germany," A. Krueger and J-S. Pischke.

