

U.S. Immigration Policy

PSCI 3102.401 – Summer 2026

Instructor: Dr. Gabriela Okundaye
Last name pronounced (“oh-kun-die”)

Contact: Please use Canvas Messaging (**Use this method only**)
Messages received M – Th will receive a response within 24 hours.
Messages received F – Sunday may take additional time.

Teaching Assistant(s)
(Contact first)

Jean-Philippe Kandissounon - Use Canvas Messaging (**Use this method only**)

Office Hours:

By appointment (Use the link below to sign up)
<https://calendly.com/gabriela-okundaye-unt/30min>

Class Meets:

Online and asynchronous format.

Course Summary and Objectives:

This course explores the history, development, and contemporary issues surrounding immigration policy in the United States. Through a combination of historical readings and contemporary case studies, students will engage with key topics such as the evolution of immigration laws, the impact of landmark legislation, the intersection of immigration and race, and the economic and social consequences of immigration policy. The course will cover major legislative changes, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and policies post-9/11. Additionally, students will analyze current debates surrounding immigration reform, DACA, and border security, and will assess the future trajectory of U.S. immigration policy in an increasingly globalized world.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to (numbered in order of presentation):

- Understand the historical foundations of U.S. immigration policy.
- Analyze the legal and political factors shaping immigration policy over time.
- Examine the economic, social, and cultural impacts of immigration on U.S. society.

- Engage in critical discussions about contemporary immigration issues, including undocumented immigration, refugee policies, and national security concerns.
- Evaluate the future of U.S. immigration policy and reform efforts.

Course Structure:

This course takes place 100% online. Other than that, your interaction with me and with your fellow students will take place in Canvas. There are 5 weeks of content that you will move through. I will open up a new module each week.

Required Texts

There is one required textbook for purchase:

- Gerber, David A. 2011. American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Most readings will be available on Canvas or through library resources.

Grading Breakdown

- Course Policies Quiz: 60 points (5%)
- Reading Discussion: 240 points (20%)
- Reading Quizzes: 240 points (20%)
- Policy Papers: 240 points (20%)
- Final Exam: 420 points (35%)

Total: 1100 points

Grading Scheme

- **Course Policies Quiz and Introduce Yourself (5%) – 60 points**
 - An 18-question quiz on the course’s policies, grading structure, and expectations, ensuring students understand the rules of the course. (42 Points)
 - Assignment: Introduce Yourself. Take a moment to introduce ourselves and begin building a sense of community in our online class (18 points)
- **Reading Discussion (20%) – 240 points**
 - Weekly Questions: Post one original, well-researched question related to the week’s topic (10 points per question for 5 weeks).
 - Weekly Responses: Post at least two responses to your peers' questions (5 points per response per week for 5 weeks).
 - There will be 14 reading discussions throughout the course, each worth 20 points. **To support flexibility and account for unforeseen circumstances, only your top 12 discussion scores will count toward your final grade.** This means that your two lowest discussion scores will be automatically dropped at the end of the

semester. This policy allows for occasional missed discussions without impacting your overall grade.

- **Reading Quizzes** (20%) – 240 points
 - 10 Weekly Quizzes (25 points per quiz): Short quizzes on assigned readings, testing key concepts and ideas from the course material. Quizzes will take place throughout the semester.

- **Policy Papers** (20%) – 240 points
 - Two short policy papers are required. Students will analyze a specific immigration policy from the previous six (6) weeks of content based on its historical, social, and political context, integrating course readings and outside research.
 - Paper 1 (due Week 6): 120 points
 - Paper 2 (due Week 12): 120 points

- **Final Exam** (35%) – 420 points
 - A comprehensive final exam covering material from the entire course, including multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions.

Assessing Your Work

Grade	Percent Range	Points (out of 1200)
A	90-100%	1080-1200 points
B	80-89%	960-1079 points
C	70-79%	840-959 points
D	55-69%	660-839 points
F	Below 55%	Below 660 points

Grades are based on mastery of the content. As a rule, grades are not “curved” because that is a comparison of one student’s outcomes to others. I do, however, encourage you to find opportunities to learn with and through others. Explore [Navigate’s Study Buddy](https://navigate.unt.edu) (<https://navigate.unt.edu>) tool to join study groups. Maximize your learning with our coaching staff at the Learning Center. Focus on areas where you are struggling in this course by attending scheduled study group sessions with me. Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people’s work without citations will be violating UNT’s Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of [guidelines for your academic success](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

Formatting and Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due at the start of class and are considered late after the first 10 minutes of class. Written assignments should be submitted in Times New Roman 12-point font, with 1-inch margins, be double-spaced, and paginated. **Most word-processing programs do not have these margins/font/page requirements by default please change them accordingly.** All written assignments should also be uploaded to Canvas. Students are required to submit all assignments in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats and use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel for their assignments. A free copy of the Microsoft suite can be obtained by all currently enrolled students [here](#). No cover page is necessary. The upper right-hand corner of the first page, single-spaced, should include:

- Your full name
- Title of the assignment
- Assignment due date
- Course and Section number (PSCI 3102)

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

Immigration is a highly complex and often controversial issue that touches on many aspects of society, including economics, culture, and national security. In this course, we will be exploring immigration policy through the lenses of history, law, and politics. Given the diverse perspectives on immigration, it's important that we approach our discussions with an open mind and respect for differing viewpoints.

Our Focus on History, Policy and Politics:

The goal of this course is to critically examine U.S. immigration policy — its history, current state, and future trajectory. We will focus on the political and legislative aspects of immigration, analyzing laws, court cases, and government actions without delving into personal or emotional arguments. Our discussions will center on how immigration policy has been shaped by political movements, economic forces, and social factors.

Guidelines for Discussion:

- **Respectful Debate:** Immigration is a topic that often stirs strong opinions. While disagreements are natural and welcome, all contributions must be grounded in respect for others and should focus on policy, not personal beliefs.
- **Evidence-Based Discussions:** When sharing your views, support your arguments with data, historical context, or references to readings. This will help keep the conversation centered on facts and avoid emotional or personal bias.
- **Staying on Topic:** We will keep our discussions focused on the political and policy dimensions of immigration. Discussions of personal experiences or opinions are valid but

should connect back to the material we are studying, such as specific laws, court cases, or political debates.

By maintaining a focus on immigration policy and politics, we can engage in productive and meaningful discussions while respecting the diverse viewpoints within the class. Let's work together to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable analyzing this important issue from a scholarly perspective.

Required/Recommended Materials

Required Readings

There is one required textbook for purchase.

- **Gerber, David A.** 2011. *American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

All other readings will be available on a course reserve page [here](#). You can also find the course readings via the UNT Library website at <https://library.unt.edu/>. Select course reserves and enter our course code PSCI 3102. To access password protected scanned book chapters via the online course reserve, please enter the password: PSCI3102

Supplementary Materials and Readings:

Any supplementary materials will be available through the Canvas Learning Management System. These materials may include articles, chapters from relevant books, and other multimedia resources to supplement weekly topics. While there is only one required textbook for purchase, regular engagement with all the readings is crucial for success in this course.

Technology Requirements:

This course has several digital components. To fully participate, students will need:

- **Reliable internet access** for referencing content on the Canvas Learning Management System.
- **Respondus Lockdown Browser:** Required for taking reading quizzes and Final exam.
- **Webcam and microphone:** For synchronous Zoom meetings, taking reading quizzes and Final exam. Students with accessibility needs should contact the instructor regarding LockDown Browser.
- **Microsoft Office Suite:** For completing assignments and papers.

If circumstances change, you will be informed of additional technical requirements to access course content.

For additional information on succeeding in an online learning environment, visit **Learn Anywhere:** <https://online.unt.edu/learn>.

Accessing Course Readings Through the UNT Library

To access the required readings for this course, please use the University of North Texas Library's online search system. This system allows you to locate and access a variety of academic resources, including books, journal articles, and reports that are assigned for this class.

- **Visit the UNT Library Search Page:** Go to [UNT Library Search](#) to begin your search.
- **Search by Title or Author:** Enter the title or author of the reading in the search bar. This should bring up any materials available in the library's digital or physical collection.
- **Login with Your UNT Credentials:** When prompted, use your UNT login credentials to access online resources.

If you need assistance, the library offers tutorials and support to help you navigate the search system effectively.

Note: In addition to the required readings, the library provides access to a vast collection of academic journals, e-books, and research databases. Exploring these resources can deepen your understanding of course topics and enhance your research skills.

Course Requirements/Schedule

Week/ Section	Topics and Readings
1-1	Introduction to U.S. Immigration Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Introduction “Mass Immigration, Past And Present” • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Part I “The Law of Immigration and the Legal Construction of Citizenship” • Daniels, Roger. <i>Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life</i>. New York: Harper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 2 “English Immigrants in America: Virginia, Maryland, and New England” • Aristide Zolberg. 2006. “Rethinking the Last 200 Years of U.S. Immigration Policy.” Migration Policy Institute https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/rethinking-last-200-years-us-immigration-policy
1-2	Early Immigration Policies (Colonial Era to 1800s)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i>, Ch. 1 “Unregulated Immigration And Its Opponents From Colonial America To The Mid-Nineteenth Century” • Daniels, Roger. <i>Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life</i>. New York: Harper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 3 “Slavery and Immigrants from Africa” • Foner, Nancy. 2000. <i>From Ellis Island to JFK: New York’s Two Great Waves of Immigration</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 5 “The Sting of Prejudice”
1-3	The Chinese Exclusion Act and Early 20th Century Legislation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i>, Ch. 4 “Removing Barriers and Debating Consequences,” • Lee, Erika. 2003. <i>At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943</i>. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 3 “Exclusion Acts: Race, Class, Gender, and Citizenship in the Enforcement of the Exclusion Laws” • Ngai, Mae M. 2004. <i>Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 1 "The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 and the Reconstruction of Race in Immigration Law"
2-4	Immigration Policy in the Interwar Period
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i>, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 3 “Removing Barriers And Debating Consequences” · Higham, John. 1963. <i>Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925</i>. New York: Atheneum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 10 “The Tribal Twenties” · Ngai, Mae M. 2004. <i>Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 2 “Deportation Policy and the Making and Unmaking of Illegal Aliens”
2-5	Post-WWII Policies and the Displaced Persons Act
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bon Tempo, Carl J. 2008. <i>Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 1 “The Age of the Uprooted Man: The United States and Refugees, 1900-1952”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruno, Andorra. 2018. <i>Refugee Admissions and Resettlement Policy</i>. Washington DC: Congressional Research Service. https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL31269/22 • Hamlin, Rebecca. 2014. <i>Let Me Be a Refugee: Administrative Justice and the Politics of Asylum in the United States, Canada, and Australia</i>. New York: Oxford University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 4 “Courting Asylum: The Judicialization of RSD in the United States”
2-6	The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i>, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 5 “Mass Population Movements And Resettlement, 1965 To The Present” • Gjelten, Tom. 2015. <i>A Nation of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story</i>. New York: Simon & Schuster. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 10 “The 1965 Reform” • Massey and Pren, “Unintended Consequences of US Immigration Policy: Explaining the Post-1965 Surge from Latin America.” <i>Population and Development Review</i> 38(1):1-29. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2012.00470.x • Muzaffar et al. 2015. <i>Migration Policy Institute</i>. Fifty Years On, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act Continues to Reshape the United States. <i>Migration Policy Institute</i> https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/fifty-years-1965-immigration-and-nationality-act-continues-reshape-united-states
3-7	Immigration During the 1980s and IRCA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tichenor, Daniel J. 2002. <i>Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 9 "Two Faces of Expansion: The Contemporary Politics of Immigration Reform" • Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. 2002. <i>Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration</i>. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 5 “A Wrench in the Works: U.S. Immigration Policies After 1986.” • Townsend, Sarah L. 2022. “Undocumented Irish Need Apply: Ethnic Whiteness, Immigrant Rights, and the Campaign for US Diversity Visas in the

	<p>1980s” <i>Radical History Review</i> (143): 125–140. https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-9566146</p>
3-8	Immigration Policy Post-9/11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garcia, Micheal and Ruth Ellen Waslem “9/11 Commission: Current Legislative Proposals for U.S. Immigration Law and Policy.” <i>Congressional Research Service</i>. https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metacrs5952/ • Ngai, Mae M. 2004. <i>Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch 6 "Security and Exclusion: The Impact of September 11" • Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. 2002. <i>Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration</i>. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 7 "The Post-9/11 Era and the Politics of Immigration"
3-9	Recent Immigration Policy (2000s-Present)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Warren, Robert; Kerwin, Donald. 2015. “Beyond DAPA and DACA: Revisiting Legislative Reform in Light of Long-Term Trends in Unauthorized Immigration to the United States.” <i>Journal on Migration and Human Security</i>; 3(1): 80-108. https://doi.org/10.1177/233150241500300104 · Wong, Tom K. 2017. <i>The Politics of Immigration: Partisanship, Demographic Change, and American National Identity</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 1 “The Politics of Immigration” · Finley, Laura and Luigi Esposito. 2020. “The Immigrant as Bogeyman: Examining Donald Trump and the Right’s Anti-immigrant, Anti-PC Rhetoric.” <i>Humanity & Society</i>, 44(2):178 – 197 https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597619832627
4-10	The Economics of Immigration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borjas, George J. 1999. <i>Heaven’s Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ch. 1 “Who Comes: How the Immigration Market Works” • Azoulay, Pierre, Benjamin Jones, J. Daniel Kim, and Javier Miranda. 2022. “Immigration and Entrepreneurship in the United States.” <i>American Economic Review: Insights</i> 4(3): 305–20.

4-11	Immigration Policy and Public Opinion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MacDonald, David. 2021. "Political Trust and Support for Immigration in the American Mass Public." <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 51(4):1402-1420. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007123419000668 • Grigorieff, Alexis, Christopher Roth, and Diego Ubfal. 2021. "Does Information Change Attitudes Toward Immigrants?" <i>Demography</i> 57(3): 1117–1143. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-020-00882-8
4-12	Immigrant Assimilation and Acculturation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i>, o Part III "The Dialogue of Ethnicity and Assimilation" • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i> o Ch. 6 "The Widening Mainstream" • Huntington, Samuel. 2009. "The Hispanic Challenge." <i>Foreign Policy</i> https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/28/the-hispanic-challenge/ • Massey, Douglass. 2009. "The Real Hispanic Challenge." http://pscources.ucsd.edu/ps108/7%20Immigrant%20Integration%20in%20US/Massey%202015-%20The%20Real%20Hispanic%20Challenge.pdf
5-13	The Future of U.S. Immigration Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerber, <i>American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction</i>, "The Future Of Assimilation" Ch. 7. • Desipio, Louis, and Rodolfo O. De La Garza. 1998. <i>U.S. Immigration in the Twenty-First Century: Making Americans, Remaking America</i>. Boulder: Westview Press. o Ch. 6 "Immigration Policy For The Twenty First Century" • White House Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/report-on-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-migration.pdf
5-14	Course Wrap-Up Final Exam Week
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tichenor, Daniel, and Daniel Alvord. 2020. "Navigating Uncertainty: Immigration Policy in the Trump Era." <i>Policy Studies Journal</i> 48(S1): S106–S126. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12407 • Peters, Margaret E. 2022. "Immigration and International Relations: American and European Perspectives." <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 25: 337–358. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-101210

****The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus and will give notice****

Policy Papers (20%)

As part of this course, you are required to submit two short policy papers (1500 words), each worth 100 points. These papers will require you to analyze a specific immigration policy covered during the course, focusing on its historical, social, and political context.

Instructions:

1. Choose a Policy:

Select an immigration policy discussed in the previous six weeks of the course. For policy paper 1, pick a policy discussed in weeks/section 1-2. For policy paper 2, pick a policy from weeks/section 3-4.

2. Analyze the Policy:

Your paper should provide an analysis of the chosen immigration policy, addressing the following aspects:

- **Historical Context:** When and why was the policy enacted? What were the circumstances or events leading up to its creation?
- **Social Context:** How did the policy affect different communities (e.g., racial, ethnic, economic groups)? What were the societal reactions to the policy?
- **Political Context:** What political ideologies, leaders, or movements influenced the policy? How was it debated or supported in government?

3. Integration of Course Readings and Research:

Use course readings to support your analysis, but also integrate at least two additional sources from outside research. This can include academic journal articles, books, or reputable news sources.

4. Structure and Format:

- **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the policy, outlining what you will cover in the paper.
- **Analysis:** Write the historical, social, and political context of the policy.
- **Conclusion:** Reflect on the long-term impact of the policy and its relevance today.
- **Length:** Each paper should be 1500 words, double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.
- **Citations:** Use APSA citation style for any references.

Grading Criteria (100 points per paper):

- **Clarity and Organization** (20 points): Is the paper well-structured and easy to follow?
- **Depth of Analysis** (30 points): Does the paper thoroughly analyze the historical, social, and political context of the policy?

- **Use of Course Readings and Research** (30 points): Are course readings and outside research effectively integrated into the analysis?
- **Writing Quality** (20 points): Is the paper well-written, free of errors, and professionally presented?

F-1 Visa regulations:

Federal regulations state that students may apply only 3 fully-online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for [F-1 Visa \(DOC\)](#) holders. Full-time status for F-1 Visa students is 12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students.

UNT ADA Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](#) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class and describe that the calendar is subject to change, [Campus Closures Policy](#) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).

How to Succeed in this Course

I highly value communication and encourage you to reach out if you have questions or need support. **Virtual office hours** are an excellent opportunity to clarify course material, discuss assignments, or simply check in on your progress. I often receive feedback from students saying they find office hours helpful for breaking down complex topics and for guidance on how to approach assignments. *During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A kind reminder is always appreciated.*

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.