

**North of the Border: Mexican Immigration Past and Present (79-276)**  
**Fall, 2007**

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**Mondays 6:30 to 9:20**

Office Hours: By Appointment

**Introduction**

Over the past few years we have been bombarded with information about Mexican immigration, much of which is inaccurate or incomplete, much of which is highly charged emotionally and politically. This phenomenon of movement to the north has a long and complex history with many dimensions, a history important to understand because what we believe about the past influences our perceptions of the present. In this course we will explore, among other things, the historical reasons behind the economic and social dislocations of Mexican immigrants, the impact on both the sending and receiving communities, their integration into the U.S. economy, the changing destinations and demographics of the more recent immigrants, and barriers and facilitators to integration and mobility.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Discuss in detail why Mexican immigrants cross significant cultural, linguistic and geographic boundaries to migrate to the United States (based on international migration theory and the perspectives of authors we read in the course)
- Discuss how the history between the United States and Mexico (from 1821) has impacted and continues to impact Mexican immigration and responses to it
- Discuss recent trends (post-1965) in Mexican migration to the U.S. (including patterns of migration and new destinations), the reasons behind these trends, and the potential impact of this information on policy decisions
- Articulate and debunk some of the common myths about Mexican immigration
- Discuss the impact of migration on both the sending and receiving communities
- Discuss agency (i.e., degree of self-determination) as it relates to Mexican migrants
- Discuss reactions to Mexican immigration and the reasons behind the respective reactions
- Discuss the phenomenon of return migration and its potential impact on policy decisions

**Course Expectations**

*Attendance:* Attendance is mandatory for the following reasons: (1) the class meets only fourteen times because of Labor Day (September 3), so in essence we “lose a week” of class time; (2) the class is discussion-based and depends heavily on the different perspectives that each of us brings as we struggle to explore in as broad a way as possible the topics at hand – so each person’s thoughtful analysis, questions and comments are vital to the success of the course; and (3) many of the documentaries we will view are not commercial videos and cannot be rented from Netflix or Blockbuster. Consequently, even one missed class will affect your grade.

*Preparation:* It is imperative that you read the assignments before the class session as the discussion will not review the content of the readings, but rather will build on them. *You should read critically, question the authors' assumptions, the types of questions they ask or issues they raise or address, their methodology, and the conclusions they draw.*

*Weekly Quizzes:* At the beginning of each class, you will respond to one of two or three general questions posed about the reading (open-book and notes allowed). For example, these questions may ask you to state and respond to the author's argument, connect the author's argument to something we previously read, discussed or watched on video, hypothesize about the implications of the author's argument, etc. I will provide questions in advance for the first week or two to give you a sense of what I will be focusing on. The purpose of these weekly quizzes is to (a) get you into the right frame of mind for class; (2) seed the discussion; and (3) help you to read "with a purpose" as you become more familiar with the types of questions I will ask.

*Midterm and Final Exams:* I will provide you with a sense of the potential questions in advance of each exam and a grading rubric so that you understand the criteria by which you will be assessed.

*Concept Map Exercise:* Half-way through the course I will ask you to create a concept map (we will discuss in more detail what a concept map is and I will provide examples) which will represent your visualization of how the material in the course connects to show a coherent story. At the end of the semester you will revise the concept map as a way to show how your thinking and understanding has changed over the course of the semester, and write a short (1-2 page) reflection of this.

## **Grading**

Your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

Weekly quizzes	20%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%
Class participation	20%
Concept map exercise	20%

## Required Texts

I recommend that you purchase the following texts from Amazon.com. This is much cheaper than purchasing them from the bookstore (hence I did not order the books to be sold there). **It is your responsibility to have the respective book in hand in time for class readings** (beginning September 17 with the Gonzales and Fernandez book).

*A Century of Chicano History: Empire, Nations, and Migration.* Gilbert G. Gonzalez & Raul A. Fernandez. (New York: Routledge, 2003). Available from Amazon for \$29.66

*Crossing the Border: Research from the Mexican Migration Project.* Jorge Durand & Douglas S. Massey, Editors. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004). Available from Amazon for \$22.50.

*New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States.* Victor Zúñiga & Rubén Hernández-León, Editors. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005). Available from Amazon for \$21.95.

*Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail.* Ruben Martinez. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001). ). Available from Amazon for \$10.20.

### Reading Materials on Blackboard website

The following materials are available on the Blackboard website for you to download for the appropriate class discussion:

“An Evaluation of International Migration Theory: The North American Case.” Douglas S. Massey et. al. *Population and Development Review* 20, No. 4, December 1999.

*Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States.* Manuel G. Gonzales. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, Chapters 3 & 4.

Excerpts from *Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of the Mexican Americans.* David J. Weber, Editor. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973, 2003.

“The Border Is Wide.” Cecilia Balli, *Harper’s Magazine*, October, 2006.

“Putting a Stop to Slave Labor.” Bryan Welch; “Communities on the Move.” Danielle Maestretti; “Viva La Union.” Hannah Lobel; “Same Old Song.” Daniel Tichenor. Articles from *Utne Reader*, March/April 2007.

Belinda I. Reyes, *Dynamics of Immigration: Return Migration to Western Mexico*, 1997.

“Do Immigrants Make Us Safer?” *The New York Times Magazine*, December 3, 2006.

“Nuevo Catholics.” David Rieff, *The New York Times Magazine*, December 24, 2006.

*Beneath the Pines: Stories of Migrant Tree Planters*, Southern Poverty Law Center. AL: Montgomery, 2007.

*Close to Slavery: Guestworker Programs in the United States*, Southern Poverty Law Center. AL: Montgomery.

“The New Sweatshops,” (2005) from *Suburban Sweatshops: The Fight for Immigrant Rights.* Jennifer Gordon. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press., 2005

**Note that the length of the readings vary from week to week, so please plan accordingly.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>	<b>In Class Experiences Beyond Discussion</b>
8/27	Introduction to Course		Video: A Day Without a Mexican (99 min.)
9/3	Labor Day – No Class		
9/10	Why do people migrate? International Migration Theories	Massey, 1999 ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	Documentary: Race, The Power of Illusion (Episode 2: The Story We Tell, 55 min.)
9/17	Why <i>have</i> Mexicans migrated? Origins of 19 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Migration	Gonzales, Chapters 3 & 4 ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )  Gonzales and Fernandez, Chapters 1	Documentary: Race, The Power of Illusion (Episode 3: The House We Live In, 55 min.)
9/24	How were Mexicans viewed historically?	Gonzales and Fernandez, Chapters 2 and 3 & Weber, pgs. 52 – 61 & Weber, pgs. 88 – 100 ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	Exploration of Primary Sources
10/1	Why <i>do</i> Mexicans migrate? Trends in Post 1965 Migration	Durand and Massey, Chapters 1 & 2  Balli, 2006 ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	Documentary: Beyond The Border (55 min.)
10/8	Where do they settle? New Destinations	Zúñiga and Hernández-León, Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4	Documentary: Crossing Arizona (77 min.)  <b>FIRST CONCEPT MAP DUE</b>
10/15	Who migrates? Demographics	Gonzales and Fernandez, Chapter 4  Set of articles from Utne Reader, 2007 ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
10/22	Do they stay?	Reyes, Dynamics of Immigration: Return Migration to Western Mexico ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	Documentary: The Sixth Section (27 min.)
10/29	What is the more recent impact on communities?	Zúñiga and Hernández-León, Chapters 5 & 6; Press, 2006 ( <i>on Blackboard</i> ); Rieff, 2006 ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	Documentary: Maid in America (57 min.)

11/5	What are the reactions to Mexican immigrants over the past two decades?	Zúñiga and Hernández-León, Chapters 8, 9 & 10	Documentary: Senorita Extraviada (74 min.)
11/12	How have Mexican immigrants historically been integrated into the U.S. economy?	Gonzales and Fernandez, Chapter 5 & Conclusion  Close to Slavery: Guestworker Programs in the United States ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )  Beneath the Pines ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	Documentary: Fruit of Labor (60 min.)
11/19	Should Mexican migrants be hopeful?	Gordon, Chapter 1, The New Sweatshops ( <i>on Blackboard</i> )	Satire: South Park Gooback Episode (Season 8, 2004, 25 min.)
11/26	Personalizing it: the impact on Mexican families & sending and receiving communities I	Martinez, Prologue & Chapters 1 – 6	<b><i>FINAL CONCEPT MAP DUE</i></b>
12/3	Personalizing it: the impact on Mexican families & sending and receiving communities II	Martinez, Chapters 7 – 13 & Epilogue	<b><i>FINAL EXAM</i></b>