The Economics of Migration

The basic idea behind the ECON 4999 courses is participation on the part of the student. This participation may take a number of forms, but writing and speaking are the two that are stressed here, along with the development of research skills.

This section of ECON 4999 is concerned with the economics of migration, and especially with the economics of U.S. immigration. Presently, U.S. immigration is a highly visible public policy issue. It promises to be a major issue for years to come. Rarely does a day pass without one of the area newspapers carrying an article about migration. These articles range broadly from problems at the U.S.-Mexico border to immigrant sweat shops in Los Angeles to refugees in the former Yugoslavia to more general issues such as the labor market consequences of U.S. immigration.

My goal is to encourage you to think critically like an economist about various migration issues. To this end, I see the course unfolding in two major parts. First, I will lecture for approximately the first two months. My intention is to acquaint you with various concepts and issues relating to U.S. internal migration and to U.S. immigration. During this period, I expect you to develop a migration topic for intense study, to begin to prepare a draft of your research paper, and to work with me to prepare a list of background readings relevant to your specific topic. I also expect you to prepare a short critique during the period.

Second, during November and December you will present your research to the class. These oral presentations will require considerable preparation. I expect each member of the class to speak for about one-half hour. Each individual will be required to recommend one article for the class to read before the presentation. This recommendation should be made two weeks prior to the actual presentation. The idea here is to sufficiently acquaint the rest of the class with your topic that we will have some background to understand your discussion, as well as to ask good questions.

We also will have one debate in which each member of the class is required to participate.

I have assigned no text for this course. My intention is to work closely with each of you to help you design a program of study of your own. This program of study will be strongly oriented toward your research topic. However, from time to time I will suggest articles for you to read in connection with my lectures. Moreover, I want you to access "Migration News" on the World Wide Web. This is a lengthy monthly publication that contains great detail concerning recent developments regarding migration and especially international migration. You should be able to get numerous ideas from this source. It also will help keep you current about policy developments concerning U.S. immigration. The last two months (issues) are available on the web, and you should examine these back issues. The web site is: http://migration.ucdavis.edu/.

To participate you must be in attendance. I am not big on requiring attendance, but in this class I do have an "attendance clause" (see below). Whether students make their presentations early in the term or late, I want them to have an audience. Moreover, I want this class to be a pleasant and exciting learning experience for each of you. Your experience is in an important sense tied not only to your own participation, but also to that of your fellow students.
ASSIGNMENTS

1. From an economist's perspective, a 3 to 4 page (doubled-spaced) critique of a current article (or editorial) regarding U.S. immigration taken from the popular press (i.e., newspaper or magazine). In addition to the article itself, your critique must contain at least three references that you cite. Please attach to your critique a copy of the article you select. Points will be deducted for failure to meet the length requirement noted above. Your critiques will be presented orally to the class on October 7th and 9th.

   Due: October 2
   Points: 20

2. A major research paper. You will be expected to make an oral presentation of your work. The presentation must occupy at least 30 minutes, not including questions from the class and your answers to these questions. You will be penalized 3 points for falling short of 30 minutes and for exceeding 35 minutes. If you fall more than 5 minutes short of 30, you will be penalized 10 points. Topics must be discussed with me and approved by me. I will also help you with references. Your paper must contain at least six references.

   Final drafts of papers are due December 12, 1996. Working drafts must be submitted to me seven days prior to your presentation. I will read and make comments/suggestions that can be incorporated into your presentation and your final draft.

   Points: Paper 40
   Oral Presentation 20

3. We will establish the guidelines for a debate on U.S. immigration. I would like to gain a consensus of the students regarding the broad topic of the debate. Plan on holding the debate on October 21st and 23rd.

   Points: Debate 10

OFFICE HOURS

Office: Economics - Room 208
         Center for Economic Analysis

Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:30 am - 11:00 am
       Mondays and Wednesdays: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
       By appointment
Summary of Points:

1. Critique 20
2. Research Paper 40
3. Oral Presentation of Research Paper 20
4. Debate (Presentation and Discussion) 10
5. Other Participation 10

TOTAL POINTS 100

Less 10 points for three (3) absences, plus four (-4) points for each additional absence.

Grade Requirements:

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