Chicano/Latino Studies 289:  
Theorizing Illegality and the Experiences Undocumented Immigrants  

Spring 2017  
Thursday 1:00-3:50pm  
Social Science Tower 318

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
Research has situated the experiences of undocumented immigrants in the context of a number of theoretical frameworks, including assimilation and incorporation, citizenship, law, social movements, and social capital. This course provides an introduction to illegality as an emerging theoretical framework for studying the production and significance of undocumented immigration status. It focuses primarily on the U.S. case.

We will engage the growing body of literature on undocumented immigrants to think about how illegality has been conceptualized, how it can be applied, and identify directions for future theoretical development. Although we will not survey the substantive literature on undocumented immigrants, you will be read key articles that explore their educational, employment, political, and social experiences.

Course Objectives:
- Understand illegality as a theoretical framework for studying undocumented immigrants and immigration status.
- Develop a broad understanding of the laws and policies that structure the lives of undocumented immigrants.
- Articulate new directions for theorizing illegality and for the study of undocumented immigrants.

COURSE READINGS
Required Texts: We will read multiple chapters from the following books:


Required Readings: Additional required readings can be downloaded from each week’s module on the course website.
Optional Readings: The syllabus lists a number of optional readings each week. You are not expected to read these but they can be used to complete the annotated bibliography assignment. The optional articles and book chapters are available in the “files” section of the course website. I have copies of the books which you can arrange to borrow.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Participation and Attendance (15%): You are expected to come to class having done the reading and prepared to actively participate in discussion. Accommodations will be made only in the event of a medical emergency, family situation, immigration crisis, or for professional duties where scheduling is out of your control (e.g. conference attendance).

Collective Annotated Bibliography Entries (30%): Each member of the class will produce nine annotated bibliography entries: three for required readings and six for supplementary texts. These will be compiled at the end of the course so we will have a collective annotated bibliography with over 100 entries. The purpose of this is two-fold: to develop an extensive reading list you can use for comprehensive exams and future work and to practice the process of conducting a literature review.

Each member of the class will select, read, and annotate a supplementary reading for weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7-9. Supplementary readings are readings of your choice but should be related to the week’s topic and not required for another part of the class. You are required to employ a variety of methods to identify supplementary reading, including the optional reading lists, works cited by the pieces for that week, works that build on (i.e. cite) the pieces we read that week, or other pieces you are aware of. If it is a book, you can annotate a single chapter or the entire book (by drawing mostly on the introduction and conclusions of the book and chapters).

To avoid replication, you will sign up for your chosen texts on the shared google excel document linked in the “sign-up” module on the course website. You will sign up for your three required texts during week 1. Sign-ups for the supplementary readings will begin at the end of class on the preceding Thursday. You are free to change your reading after signing up as long as it does not repeat someone else’s.

Your entries should be added to the shared google doc for that week. These can be found in the “collaborations” tab. Entries should be completed prior to the week’s class meeting. Entries should include the full citation, your name, and one paragraph covering the following:

- What is the main argument and key finding(s)?
- What is their theoretical framework? How does illegality fit into it?
- What data do they use? Assess the pros and cons of the methods and sample.
- What does the piece tell us about illegality and/or the experiences of undocumented immigrants?
- How do these findings align or differ from other readings?
- What are the limitations of the study?

Note that choosing a reading may require you to first read a few abstracts and/or skim several articles to select one that seems relevant to the theme and your general interests. Embrace this as part of the process for developing a literature review. You are encouraged to add relevant, un-annotated citations to the bottom of the week’s annotated bibliography.

Mid-term Reflection Paper (15%): You will write a 3-4 page reflection paper, due Friday May 12th (week 6) where you will reflect on the readings from the first half of the class. You should be drawing connections between readings, but not necessarily summarizing or quoting them. The memo should respond to the following prompt: What is immigrant illegality? How can it be conceptualized? Do you see any tensions or connections with other theoretical frameworks you use? What future directions would help further develop this theoretical framework? What remaining questions do you have?
Final Paper (40%): There are two options for the final paper. Both options will be graded based on the level of understanding you show of illegality as a theoretical framework.

Option 1: A literature review of a substantive issue involving undocumented immigrants. The review should be 7-10 pages and should draw on required, supplemental, and additional outside reading. It should include an assessment of directions for future research and how illegality frameworks may or may not be helpful for moving forward in this substantive area.

Option 2: A more traditional 12-15 page final paper that draws on the required and supplemental course readings to provide an assessment of illegality as a theoretical framework for studying undocumented immigrants. We would jointly develop the specific question.

Option 3: If you are working on a relevant academic project (e.g. master’s paper, journal article, conference paper, project proposal) and do not yet have a developed literature review, your final paper can be this paper, with attention to integrating course topics into the literature review and theoretical framework. You must make significant modifications during the course and include a 1-2 page memo explaining the state of the piece before the class and how it has been (re)shaped by the theoretical issues discussed in the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1 (April 6): Introduction: Conceptualizing Illegality and Centering Laws
What is immigrant illegality? Is there a difference between studying undocumented immigrants and immigrant illegality? What laws construct historical and contemporary experiences of illegality? What are some of the consequences of contemporary illegality?


Week 2 (April 13): The Legal Production of Undocumented Immigrants
How have laws contributed to the historical production of undocumented immigrants as a social group? How is this part of a larger national project?

Ngai, Mae N. 2004. Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction, all section introductions (e.g. 93-95), Ch4, Ch6, Ch 7


Optional Readings:

Week 3 (April 20): Conceptualizing Illegality in the Context of Citizenship and Incorporation

How do scholars conceptualize citizenship and where do undocumented immigrants fit into these models? How does illegality shape nation-state membership and incorporation? Are there alternative forms of membership that undocumented immigrants develop?

**You are highly encouraged to attend Centering Stories: A Symposium on AAPI Undocumented Students. April 20 5-7pm and April 21 9am-3:30pm. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/centering-stories-a-symposium-on-aapi-undocumented-students-tickets-32461069934**


Optional Readings:


**Week 4 (April 27): The Production and Negotiation of Inclusion and Exclusion**

How do laws produce both inclusion and exclusion? How and why do individual’s personal experience of inclusion/exclusion differ? How do undocumented immigrants negotiate this unique social position?


**Optional Readings:**


**Week 5 (May 4): Conceptualizing Legal Inbetweenness**

*How have scholars conceptualized the legal inbetweenness of those who are both included and excluded? Are these conceptualizations mutually exclusive or how can they fit together?*


Optional Readings:


**Week 6 (May 11): Conceptualizing the Significance of Illegality**

*How have scholars conceptualized the significance of illegality? How does illegality connect to other significant social locations, like race, class, and gender?*


Optional Readings:


Enriquez, Laura E. Forthcoming. "Gendering "Illegality": The Family Formation Experiences of Undocumented Immigrant Young Adults." American Behavioral Scientist.


**Week 7 (May 18): Illegality as a Shared Experience**

How does illegality function as a shared experience? What facilitates such shared experiences when immigration status is a personal characteristic?


Optional Readings:


**Week 8 (May 25): Long-Term Impacts of Illegality**

What are the long-term impacts of illegality? What leads to these long-term impacts? Can all or some of these consequences be reversed?


Optional Readings:


**Week 9 (June 1): The Role of Place**

How does place play a role in differentiating experiences of illegality? What drives these differences?


*Optional Readings:*


**Week 10 (June 8): Researching Undocumented Migration**

*How can we measure and capture the experiences of illegality we have covered in the course? What issues might you encounter while researching illegality and undocumented migration? How can you make your work policy-relevant given the significant consequences of illegality?*


Enriquez, Laura. Personal Correspondence.
