

# Gate-crashing the Party: the American Immigration Story

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## Course Outline



- Class 1** (ca. 20,000 BCE~1787) – First Arrivals across the Bering Strait. Early European scramble to divide up the hemisphere. Spanish, French, and British and differing attitudes to colonialism. Early Spanish colonies along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts; British colonize the Atlantic coast, using Africans, English, Scots, and Germans to build a society finally self-confident enough to become independent.
- Class 2** (1787~1860) – Industrializing the Northeast, settling the Midwest, and forcibly displacing the native peoples. The United States builds an economy on the backs of enslaved Africans, Germans filling in the Ohio Valley and eastern prairies, and Irish filling the lowest rung in the cities. Rising anti-Catholic and anti-immigration sentiment.
- Class 3** (1860~80s) – Economic expansion, geographical expansion, corruption, and labor unrest. Booming industry and prairies opened to Scandinavian and eastern European farmers fuel runaway rapacious capitalism. Western states drive anti-Asian legislation.
- Class 4** (1880s~1918) – The Ellis Island years. Arrival of vast numbers of wretched, huddled, Socialist masses, mainly eastern European Jews and Southern Italians. They make America the world industrial leader, and are thanked for it by rising anti-immigrant attitudes.
- Class 5** (1918~80s) – Years of paranoia: fear of socialists, fascists, and communists. Ellis Island closes, quotas are set, and immigration dries up. WWII creates a new category—refugee—with America as their dream. Cold War politics dominate immigration patterns, and the quota system is stretched to breaking. The unexpected new factors of Western Hemisphere immigrants and Southeast Asian refugees.
- Class 6** (1980s~2013) – Today Latin America and east and south Asia dominate the immigration numbers. The perception of a rising, uncontrolled tide polarizes the never-ending debate about how to define America: “the permanently unfinished country”.