

Immigration in the United States

GST 110: The Global Experience
Dr. Windham
Fall 2013

Learning objectives

In writing this paper, please concentrate on learning to do the following:

1. Viewing issues from more than one perspective. This will include digesting and reacting to the thoughts of others, thinking about how culture influences the way people perceive things, and even thinking about how your own views are shaped by American culture.
2. Using evidence-based thinking. This will include differentiating between expert and non-expert opinion, understanding what counts as valid information, and forming opinions based on the best available evidence.
3. Communicating your ideas via clear, incisive, critical writing.

These objectives correspond to goals the university sets for GST 110 and for other courses in the General Studies curriculum.

Audience and format

Your audience is other engaged global citizens interested in the topic of immigration. Assume you are writing an analytical essay for The Daily Beast, Newsweek, TIME, etc. Your essay will be longer than a typical column in The Daily Beast, but the genre is the same.

Guidelines

Your essay should

1. Be 2-5 pages single spaced. Use however much space you need to answer the essay prompt thoroughly, but try to keep it under 5 pages.
2. Be your own work. No brains other than your own. (Exception: the use of the Writing Center is encouraged.)
3. Be turned in by the due date listed in the schedule on Moodle. Hard copy please; no electronic versions accepted.

Grading criteria

See the rubric in the syllabus.

Process

You will write the essay in three stages. Stages 1 and 2 are “works-in-progress papers,” in which you turn in specific portions of your work as it is developing. You’ll get commentary from me (and a modest grade) about a week later. Stage 3 is the complete essay in final form, due at the end of the term. Descriptions of each stage follow.

Stage 1: Works-in-progress paper #1

Purpose. Here's where you start thinking about conclusions to draw from the evidence we've gathered. You haven't necessarily made up your mind yet; you're still examining the evidence and considering various perspectives.

Much of what you write here will be included in your semester essay (with revisions and edits, of course).

Process. Examine relevant evidence that pertains to the essay topic. Think and write about the following:

- a) What are the main issues or problems?
- b) What are the relevant facts?
- c) How do those facts help clarify the main issues/problems and identify solutions?
- d) What other opinions have you read about these issues/problems? Use sympathy and critique to evaluate those opinions. Good sources for analytical essays written by professional critics (news columnists and the like) are posted to the blog.
- e) When you're thinking about the main issues/problems, does considering the German context help you understand the issues better and/or see better solutions?

Tip #1: Get a representative sample. Avoid choosing evidence that supports only your pre-conceived notions. At the same time, avoid the "coverage syndrome." This is a short essay, not a master's thesis. Be selective.

Tip #2: Embrace multiple perspectives. Don't be afraid of ambiguity. Can your evidence be interpreted in more than one way? If so, don't panic; considering multiple interpretations actually leads to better thinking and a stronger essay.

Tip #3: Apply what we learned about German immigration. Think about the insights we gained by studying immigration in Germany. This doesn't mean you have to mention Germany explicitly in your paper, although you could. It simply means that you should try to apply the insights gained.

Format. This stage will simply be a collection of paragraphs. They don't have to be in a particular order—this is not yet an essay that has to flow! Each paragraph should

- a) have a topic sentence
- b) refer to specific evidence (and include citation information, using appropriate citation styles)
- c) interpret that evidence, i.e. tie it to the essay topic
- d) examine the evidence from more than one perspective

Stage 2: Works-in-progress paper #2

Purpose. Here's where you begin to make up your mind and to develop a thesis statement.

Tip: Some will find it helpful to begin writing Stage 3 in order to be in a position to hand in Stage 2.

Format. This stage is composed of discrete elements that will go into your final paper, as follows:

Working title

The title needs to introduce the main idea of your essay. Like the thesis statement, it is a bite-sized reminder of what you plan to argue. It's perfectly OK to revise the title as you go.

Tentative thesis statement

The thesis statement is an up-front summary of your argument. A good thesis statement helps you write the rest of your paper, because it gives you a clear, focused idea of what you plan to say. A good thesis statement also indicates consequences or causality, often via a statement with “because” or “in order to.”

Summary of your argument

Immediately below the thesis statement, write a paragraph or two (250-400 words) on what you’ll argue in your paper. When you write the final paper, this material will form the bulk of your introduction. Connect your argument summary directly to the thesis!

Additional or revised evidence (optional)

If you have significant revisions to any of the paragraphs from stage 1, and would like me to provide feedback, include those here.

If you have additional evidence you want to use in the essay, and would like me to provide feedback, include those paragraphs here.

Topic sentences

Write likely topic sentences for each of the paragraphs in your essay. Make sure the topic sentences directly relate to the thesis. Put the topic sentences in logical order, i.e. in an order that will prove your thesis statement.

Stage 3a: SFD

You won’t hand in this section, but writing it will help you with the final essay. When you’re done, the basic contours of your essay should be complete. If you turned it in as-is, it would be clearly recognizable as an essay and would probably not earn an F. Steps:

1. If you think about it, Stage 2—including your thesis statement and topic sentences—forms a kind of outline for your paper. Begin filling in that outline by writing down your thoughts in rough form and/or copying and pasting from Stages 1 and 2. You’ll end up with around 2-4 pages of first-line, “ugly” writing. You can even use bullet points, phrases, and incomplete sentences. You may include questions, notes to yourself, and things you still need to think about or find information on.
2. Organize your thoughts in logical order. The essay should begin to look like a scientific proof: you begin with a hypothesis (your thesis statement), then go about proving it via discussion of evidence and the weighing of multiple interpretations of that evidence, and wind up with a conclusion that is your judgment of the best available evidence.
3. Tie your evidence to your thesis! Show how it supports the thesis!
4. Begin researching additional information you need at this point.

Stage 3b: Complete essay in final form

5. Finish your research.
6. Revise your thesis statement.
7. Begin cleaning up your first-line, ugly writing.
8. Develop your claims/arguments fully. Be explicit and spell everything out. Here’s how:
 - a) Ground your assertions in evidence.
 - b) Explain the significance of your evidence, rather than just mentioning it.
 - c) Dig in to your evidence, going beyond the initial, superficial interpretation.
 - d) Ask whether the evidence could be interpreted in more than one way. Arguments that try to prove a point without considering alternate interpretations come across as one-sided.

9. Be sure to incorporate viewpoints other than your own. Here's how:
 - a) Find interesting ideas. Read these other arguments sympathetically first, then critically: are there gaps, problems, contradictions, inconsistencies?
 - b) Your argument can and should be informed by your understanding of immigration in Germany. Although the situation in Germany is different from the situation in the United States, the comparison is still fruitful—you can draw contrasts, make comparisons, apply concepts, etc.
 - c) Consider whether there is more than one side. Example: we've said that the American debate is all about economic issues, while the German debate is all about integration and *Leitkultur*. But is that 100% true? Is there any evidence that the Americans are also concerned about cultural issues? Maybe there is no evidence in the end, but it's worth thinking it through.
10. Make sure the essay has a narrative trajectory: it begins with a premise, works through lots of material to develop that premise, and concludes with proof/resolution of that premise. Here's how:
 - a) Each paragraph should express one single idea. Use topic sentences to indicate the structure of the paper: begin each paragraph with a topic sentence, then develop the paragraph with elaboration, details, and evidence. Always think: does each sentence contribute to the main point of this paragraph?
 - b) Pull your thesis through! Each paragraph should support the thesis statement. Keep the thesis prominent in your mind, using the other stuff to support it. Stay focused!
 - c) Each paragraph should lead logically into the next; there should be a clear progression of ideas from introduction to conclusion, like the steps of a scientific proof.
11. Review your essay using the rubric. How well does it meet the criteria? Revise accordingly.
12. Include your sources on the last page. Must be labeled "Works Cited." List all works you refer to in the paper, and don't list works you don't refer to. Use APA, MLA, or Chicago style.
13. At the top of the first page, include the essay title, your name, GST 110, and the date.
14. *Now, and only now*, you are ready to turn in your paper.

Topic

Please write an analytical essay in response to the following prompt:

In his February 2013 State of the Union Address, President Obama continued his push for Congress to act on immigration reform. Obama wants to see some version of the DREAM Act passed. Is the DREAM Act good policy?

In your answer, please consider social integration of immigrants as well as their economic impact. Make specific, useful comparisons to immigration in Germany.