

## Immigrants and Immigration in the Age of Lincoln

**Professor Harold Holzer**

**Spring 2024**

### Course Description

While the issue of slavery understandably dominated American political discourse and debate in the nineteenth century, the roiling subject of immigration persisted as a major area of contention. Through the lens of Abraham Lincoln's rise in local, regional, and national politics, this course will follow the growing nativist response to the rise of Catholic immigration in the 1840s, through to Lincoln's 1863 and 1864 proposals to expand—and even underwrite—immigration to fill the depleted ranks of the Union military as well as American farming and industry. We will explore the role of German and Irish voters in the crucial presidential election of 1864, and deal with the role of the foreign-born in pre-war and wartime politics.

Lincoln struggled with the explosive issue of immigration long before his presidency, yet eventually proposed the first major immigration reforms in generations, and diversified the American armed forces to preserve the Union and destroy slavery. This course will explore and assess the impact, along with its ironies and limitations, of Lincoln's personal and political evolution on immigration.

### Course Readings

1. Holzer, Harold. *Brought Forth on This Continent: Abraham Lincoln and American Immigration*. New York: Dutton, 2024.
2. O'Dowd, Niall. *Lincoln and the Irish: The Untold Story of How the Irish Helped Abraham Lincoln Save the Union*. Wilmington: Skyhorse Publishing, 2018, 7–161.
3. Parker, Kunal M. *Making Foreigners: Immigration and Citizenship Law in America, 1600–2000*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 1–120. ([This reading can be accessed through the Musselman Library.](#))
4. Silverman, Jason H. *When America Welcomed Immigrants: The Short and Tortured History of Abraham Lincoln's Act to Encourage Immigration*. Charleston, SC: Palmetto Publishing, 2020.
5. Whitney, Thomas R. *A Defence of the American Policy, as Opposed to the Encroachments of Foreign Influence . . .* New York: De Witt & Davenport, 1865, 64–187, 230–242, 257–305, 324–332. ([This reading can be accessed on Google Books.](#))

### Course Requirements

- Contribute to nine discussion boards
- Complete five short papers (1–2 pages)

- Participate in at least three Q&As
- Complete a 15-page project or paper of appropriate rigor

### Learning Objectives

- To understand the slow, bumpy, and sometimes painful evolution—both forward and back—of American immigration policy and its powerful impact on local, state, and national politics
- To understand nineteenth-century immigration within the context of the slavery debate and Native American displacement and containment
- To explore and comprehend entirely new and neglected aspects of Abraham Lincoln’s presidential leadership—along with his own, perhaps representative personal and political growth on immigration
- To review the neglected but decisive contribution of immigrant soldiers and officers to the effort to restore the Union and destroy slavery

### Class Schedule

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**Week One:** February 8: Immigration Law and Custom, from the Colonial and Founding Eras

#### Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Introduction and Chapter 1, 1–31.
- David A. Gerber, *American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1–24. ([This reading can be accessed through the Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Parker, *Making Foreigners*, 43–49.

#### Assignments

- Discussion Board One
    - First post due: Sunday, February 11
    - Second post due: Wednesday, February 14
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**Week Two:** February 15: The 1844 Anti-Immigrant Riots & Lincoln

#### Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 2, 32–53.
- Silverman, *When America Welcomed Immigrants*, 1–6.
- Parker, *Making Foreigners*, 99–110.
- Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 1:
  - “Speech and Resolutions Concerning Philadelphia Riots, June 12, 1844,” 337–338. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Two module.](#))

## Assignments

- Discussion Board Two
    - First post due: Sunday, February 18
    - Second post due: Wednesday, February 21
  - Short Paper One due: Wednesday, February 21
    - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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**Week Three:** February 22: "I Am Not a Know Nothing": Lincoln, Springfield, and the Origin and Impact of "Western" Immigration

## Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 3, 54–82.
- O'Dowd, *Lincoln and the Irish*, 31–40.
- Silverman, *When America Welcomed Immigrants*, 7–22.
- Basler, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2:
  - Lincoln, "Letter to Owen Lovejoy, August 11, 1855," 316–317. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Three module.](#))
  - Lincoln, "Letter to Joshua Speed, August 31, 1855," 320–323. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Three module.](#))

## Assignments

- Discussion Board Three
  - First post due: Sunday, February 25
  - Second post due: Wednesday, February 28
- Final Project/Paper Question due: Wednesday, February 28
  - In roughly 1–2 pages, outline the question your final project or paper will attempt to answer. This should include a description of the project or paper you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic, a brief description of your research plan, and a justification for why your particular project or paper is worth pursuing.

**Q&A Session One: Wednesday, February 28 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET**

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**Week Four:** February 29: The Know-Nothing Era and the Presidential Election of 1856

## Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 4, 83–94.
- Whitney, *A Defence of the American Policy*, 64–187, 230–242, 257–305, 324–332.
  - Note: We are reading this for the flavor of anti-Nativist extremism.
- Charles Granville Hamilton, *Lincoln and the Know-Nothing Movement* (Public Affairs Press, 1954), 1–22. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Four module.)
- Stephen A. Douglas, speech, July 4, 1856. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Four module.)
- O’Dowd, *Lincoln and the Irish*, 23–39.
- Parker, *Making Foreigners*, 111–115.

### Assignments

- Discussion Board Four
  - First post due: Sunday, March 3
  - Second post due: Wednesday, March 6
- Short Paper Two due: Wednesday, March 6
  - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.

**Q&A Session Two: Wednesday, March 6 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET**

**Week Five:** March 7: Immigration, the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, and the 1858 Senate Election

### Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 4 (contd.), 94–117.
- Basler, *The Collected Works*, vol. 2:
  - Lincoln, “Speech at Chicago, July 10, 1858,” 485–502. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Five module.](#))
  - Note: Transcripts of full Lincoln-Douglas debates are in *The Collected Works*, vol. 3, 1–325, interspersed with fragments, speeches, and letters of the period.

### Assignments

- Discussion Board Five
  - First post due: Sunday, March 10
  - Second post due: Wednesday, March 13
- Revised Question and Proposed Bibliography due: Wednesday, March 13
  - Revise your initial proposal to incorporate your section professor’s feedback AND

- Create an annotated bibliography containing at least five sources. Each of these sources should be followed by a short paragraph describing the source and what it will contribute to your final project/paper.
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**Week Six:** March 14: Immigrants, Immigration, and the Convention and Election of 1860

Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 5, 118–145 and Chapter 6, 146–180.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Six
  - First post due: Sunday, March 17
  - Second post due: Wednesday, March 20
- Short Paper Three due: Wednesday, March 20
  - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.

**Q&A Session Three: Wednesday, March 20 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET**

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**Week Seven:** March 21: Patronage Jobs for Immigrants: Rewarding the Loyal Foreign Born

Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 6, 146–180.

Assignments

- Discussion Board Seven
    - First post due: Sunday, March 24
    - Second post due: Wednesday, March 27
  - Short Paper Four due: Wednesday, March 27
    - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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**Week Eight:** March 28: Union Recruitment after Sumter: The Germans

Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 7, 181–212 and Chapter 8, 235–250.
- Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, *Germans in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1–34. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Eight module.)
- Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 1–40, 90–115. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Eight module.)

### Assignments

- Project/Paper Preview due Wednesday, April 3
  - Project: Submissions of the project preview will differ from project to project according to type. Determine an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in with your section professor.
  - Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first five pages of your final paper.

### **Q&A Session Four: Wednesday, April 3 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET**

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**Week Nine:** April 4: Union Recruitment Continued: God Bless the Irish Flag

### Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 8, 213–235.
- Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army*, 116–145. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Eight module.)
- O’Dowd, *Lincoln and the Irish*, 89–132.

### Assignments

- Discussion Board Eight
    - First post due: Sunday, April 7
    - Second post due: Wednesday, April 10
  - Short Paper Five due: Wednesday, April 10
    - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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**Week Ten:** April 11: Immigration, the Confederacy, and Foreign Policy

### Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, selected: 209–211, 216–217, 226–227, 272–281, 298.
- O’Dowd, *Lincoln and the Irish*, 73–82.

- Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 1–32 and selected. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Ten module.)

### Assignments

- Rough Draft due: Wednesday, April 17
  - Project: Submissions of the project rough draft will differ from project to project according to type. Determine an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in with your section professor.
  - Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first ten pages (at minimum) of your final paper.

### **Q&A Session Five: Wednesday, April 17 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET**

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**Week Eleven:** April 18: Immigration and the Election of 1864

### Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 9, 251–287, 298–320.
- Lieber, Francis. "Lincoln or McClellan: Appeal to the Germans in America, 1864" in Paul J. Springer, ed., *Propaganda from the American Civil War*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2019, 242. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))

### Assignments

- Discussion Board Nine
    - First post due: Sunday, April 21
    - Second post due: Wednesday, April 24
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**Week Twelve:** April 25: Lincoln the Great "Immigrator": The Major Reform Efforts of 1863 and 1864

### Readings

- Holzer, *Brought Forth*, Chapter 10, 288–297, 320–334.
- Silverman, *When America Welcomed Immigrants*, 23–47, 67–87.
- Basler, *The Collected Works*, vol. 7:
  - Lincoln, "Annual Message to Congress, December 8, 1863," 36–53, esp. 38 and 40. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Twelve module.](#))
- Basler, *The Collected Works*, vol. 8:
  - Lincoln, "Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1863," 136–153, esp.

140–141 and 151. ([A link to this reading can be found in the Week Twelve module.](#))

### Assignments

- Final Project/Paper due: Wednesday, May 1
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### **Course and Program Policies**

It is the responsibility of students to know, understand, and abide by course and program policies.

For a full overview of program policies, review the Gettysburg College–Gilder Lehrman Institute Student Handbook.

#### Course correspondence

Correspondence with faculty and administrators should be formal. Include a subject line, addressee, and closing. Put the name and number of your course in the subject line.

#### Plagiarism and AI

This program uses Turnitin to check for instances of plagiarism and AI. Plagiarism and papers composed fully or in part by AI will not be tolerated. This includes self-plagiarism. A student caught plagiarizing or composing papers with AI for the first time may receive a zero on the assignment. A student caught plagiarizing or composing with AI for a second time may be permanently removed from the program.

Your section professor will set the policies for use of AI for research or purposes other than composing your papers.

#### Late work

Assignments should be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on the due date unless otherwise specified by your section professor. If you think you will be unable to submit an assignment on time, it is your responsibility to contact your section professor to ask for an extension before the assignment's due date. Late assignments will be docked 5% if less than a week late, 10% if one week late, and an additional 10% for each subsequent week.

#### Grading scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Grade Points
A	95%–100%	4



A-	90%–94%	3.67
B+	87%–89%	3.33
B	84%–86%	3
B-	80%–83%	2.67
C+	77%–79%	2.33
C	74%–76%	2
C-	70%–73%	1.67
D+	67%–69%	1.33
D	64%–66%	1
D-	60%–63%	.67
F	0%–59%	0

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### **Assignment Descriptions**

Short Papers (25% of grade – 5% per short paper)

Students will complete five short papers. Each should be approximately 500 words long. The purpose of these papers is not to merely summarize weekly readings but to demonstrate that you have read them analytically and contextually. Students have the option of responding to a prompt created by their section professor or to one of their own design. Prompts should reflect the themes discussed in course readings. If you need help getting started, you can complete one of the options listed below.

Complete a thesis identification - Select one of your assigned readings and focus on identifying the thesis as well as the evidence the authors use to support that thesis.

Complete a primary source evaluation - Evaluate a primary source from the Gilder Lehrman Collection or elsewhere. Primary sources must be relevant to that week's readings. Keep the following questions in mind:

- Who is the author of this document?
- Who was their intended audience?
- How might both author and audience impact the content of the document?
- For what reason was this document created?

Complete a book review - Focus on one of the secondary sources assigned in this course and critique it. Keep the following questions in mind:

- What is the author's argument?
- Does the author adequately support their argument?
- Are you convinced of their argument? If not, why not?
- How does this source fit into the larger discussion of its topic?

Discussion Board Posts (18% of grade – 2% per discussion board)

Students will interact in nine discussion boards in this course. Discussion boards are led by section professors, who will provide specific instructions for participation in their section. You are required to make at least one post to each discussion board and respond to **at least two other students**.

Question-and-Answer Sessions (15% of grade – 5% per reaction)

Throughout the semester the lead professor of each course will conduct five Q&As. Students **MUST** attend at least three of these sessions for each course they are taking. **In order to receive credit for attending each Q&A, you must complete a 1–2-paragraph Q&A Reaction within 24 hours of participation.** Note: If you cannot attend three of the five Q&As, you may receive credit by viewing archived Q&As and completing a 500-word review of topics covered for each missed Q&A. **Makeup assignments must be completed within two weeks of the missed Q&A.**

Final Project/Paper (42% of grade)

For the final assignment of each course, you will choose to complete either a research project or 15-page research paper. Research projects are a public-education tool designed for the general population, teachers, and/or students of varying ages. Sample projects include (but are not limited to) vodcasts and podcasts, documentary editing and transcription, websites, annotated readers, walking tours, or museum exhibits. Lesson plans *will not* be accepted. A 5-page paper narrative must accompany the project. Your section professor must approve research projects.

The research paper can be a traditional position paper that uses original research to prove a thesis statement or a historiography paper that critically examines how American historians have interpreted the same event differently and why shifts in historical debates may have occurred.

Both final assignment options require you to ask an open-ended historical question (something that does not have an easy yes or no answer) that you do not yet know the answer to. You will then use the research process (pulling from a variety of resources, mostly primary source documents) to explore that question and create a thesis-driven answer. Regardless of whether you choose to pursue a project or paper, finals are scaffolded throughout the semester. This method breaks up a large grade into smaller constituent grades and allows time to incorporate instructor feedback into assignments.

## Scaffolded Assignments

- Final Project/Paper Proposal (2%)

In roughly 1–2 pages, you should outline the main question, topic, or purpose of your final project or paper. This should include a description of the project or paper you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic (answer the questions who, what, where, and when), a brief description of your research plan (this does not need to be super specific, but should outline how many weeks you plan to research, if you need to schedule research trips or if your sources are published or available digitally, and when you plan to begin writing) and a justification for why your particular project or paper is worth pursuing (what is the significance of this topic? What does it add to our historical knowledge? Are you filling a gap that other historians have overlooked such as considering race, ethnicity, or gender?)

- Revised Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (3.5%)

This assignment will give you the opportunity to incorporate the feedback you received on the first draft of your proposal. In addition to incorporating your section professor's comments, you will also submit a proposed bibliography listing five sources you plan on utilizing in your research for your final product. Each of these sources should be followed by a brief summary (3–5 sentences) of the source and what it will contribute to your research process.

- Project or Paper Preview (5%)

This will give you the opportunity to show the progress you have made on your final project or paper and get some early-stage feedback from your section professor. For a final project, determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final submission to turn in. For a final paper, this should be roughly the first five pages of what will ultimately be your final submission.

- Rough Draft (10.5%):

For a final project, determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final submission to turn in. For a final paper, this should be, at minimum, the first ten pages of what will ultimately be your final submission.

- Final Product (21%):

Final Project: Much like the final paper option, a final project is meant to prove that you have mastered the content covered by this course. We encourage you to be creative in your approach to this project, though it should be equivalent in rigor and workload to a final paper.

Final Paper: Final papers should be at least fifteen pages in length. These can take the form of research papers or historiography papers.