

**UCI INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTER FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF
ETHICS AND MORALITY**

**2020 SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
Monday, June 29, 2020 – Friday, July 24, 2020**

MODULE 6

Note: Because of recent political events concerning the death of George Floyd, we added Module 6. If you wish to be in this module, please email Marilu Daum daumm@uci.edu ASAP.

Module 6.

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Title: American Equality: Fact or Fiction?

“All men are created equal,” the U.S. Declaration of Independence boldly asserts. Penned in 1776 by Thomas Jefferson, modified by John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, the Declaration of Independence enshrined the belief in American exceptionalism based on equality for all; that belief is honored as one of the sacred cornerstones of the American republic. Of course, equality would be ideal. But in reality some people are more equal than others. Back then, *all men* meant white men with property. Despite Abigail Adams’ plea to “remember the ladies,” the founding fathers omitted all women, who lacked even the right to vote until August 1920. The founding fathers also excluded Native Americans, poor people, and enslaved African-Americans. Even after achieving legal equality, most of these groups continued to be treated as second-class citizens. Further, as new groups came to the land of the free, many hyphenated-Americans and “real Americans” having different sexual/gender orientations have also been subjugated to the sting of prejudice, discrimination and inequality, with signs like “No dogs, no Irish” or “Whites only” on drinking fountains. Why? Public policy is the instrument that creates social categories and attaches them to rights and benefits or burdens and obligations. In this module you will learn about how what social scientists call social categories – black Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, and so on – are created and used to excuse discrimination against our fellow American citizens. How does public policy treat social categories and what makes some categories more deserving than others? Do these categories change, and if so, how?

Before the course, students are asked to view two of the following four movies about discrimination: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (on prejudice against blacks), *South Pacific* (against Asians), *Gentleman’s Agreement* (anti-Semitism), and *Crash* (on how we all have some prejudice, and some good as well as some bad). We will discuss those the first meeting of the course.

Week 1: Will focus on the scholarly literature on social categories to discuss the concept and ask how it relates to everyday prejudice.

Week 2: Will begin empirical examination of one of the most important discriminated group, especially in this geographic area: Mexican immigrants and the way they were treated in the USA immigration policy since 1920. Students will be divided into two -four teams, depending on the number of students in this module. One team will examine how Mexican immigrants were portrayed in the early years when they emerged as temporary laborers in the United States (1920-1950). A second team will consider Mexican immigrants in the context of immigration policy under Obama and Trump. Each team will write a literature review on their time frame (a simple summary of the sources and a synthesis of their main findings) and then we will compare the results.

Week 3: Will collect data using the Library of the Congress and look at the way political elites (both Democrats and Republicans) talk about Mexican immigrants in Congressional Debates. Our goal will be to understand patterns that emerge and differences between the political parties on this particular immigrant category.

Week 4: Will conclude by students bringing comparisons between the Mexican immigrant groups and other important hyphenated-American groups, such as African-Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.

Meetings: Will begin the week of June 29th. Hours will be flexible and dependent on the schedules of the members of our module but we will coordinate as a group twice a week, through Zoom meetings and use Google Drive to keep track of our research. These meetings will be for 2-3 hours two days a week.