The decisions we make about politics and society are influenced by what we see and hear in the news. That is why political cartoons are so important. They present clear opinions on complicated matters in ways that transcend everyday language.

At UNLV, we are committed to enabling our students to develop leadership skills for an increasingly multicultural world. This semester, my students and I analyzed historical cartoons on immigration to interrogate the ways in which humans use symbols to communicate messages and attitudes—even those that are ugly and racist—to each other.

The work my students have done on these cartoons addresses a set of goals that UNLV has termed University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes. By familiarizing themselves with the resources available in our library, the students have broadened their intellectual horizons in ways that sustain life-long learning. They have also sharpened such skills as effective inquiry, critical thinking, and communication. Finally, the cartoons have encouraged them to explore issues of citizenship and ethics in a diversifying world.

I am very proud of the work these students have done this semester. Ask them more about it!

SOURCE: Irish World (New York), March 10, 1877