Spring 2019
POL 134b (seminar) The Global Migration Crisis
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OFFICE HOURS: TBA

Politics seminar (comparative) and IGS credit available.
This is a writing intensive course (WI credit).
Graduate students are welcome (additional course requirements to be discussed).

Four-Credit Course (with three hours of class-time per week).

The course is cross-listed with IGS and seminar credit is available. The course also counts towards the comparative politics requirement for the Politics major. Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

DESCRIPTION
The course examines the refugee crisis and the patterns of global migration and immigration policy in Europe and the US. Immigration poses a dilemma for Western democracies. Anti-immigrant sentiments are rising but immigrants are, at the same time, regarded as needed for their skills and willingness to take jobs not wanted by others. Anti-immigrant backlash fuels the electoral success of far-right parties, yet employer interests and human rights norms limit what governments can do to control immigration and refugee streams.

There is a global crisis but not every conflict involving migrants and refugees are truly a crisis. 11 million Syrians have fled their homes since the outbreak of civil war in their country in late 2011. In 2017, every month, about 8,000 illegal African migrants have tried to cross the Mediterranean to Italy in rickety boats belonging to people smugglers. Many die on the way. Globally, estimates are that as many as 65 million people have been displaced from their homes by war or ethnic persecution. The Syrian refugee crisis reached proportions matching the displacement of people caused by World War 2.

In 2018 the focus was on the border between the United States and Mexico. In November 2018, more than 7,000 migrants arrived at the US-Mexico border after crossing Mexico and parts of Central America, according to official figures released by the Mexican Interior Ministry. They are staying in temporary shelters in the border cities of Tijuana and Mexicali. Many had traveled—mostly by foot—4,000km (2,500 miles) before reaching the border. The numbers pale in comparison to the migration of fleeing Rohingyas, a Muslim minority group in Buddhist Myanmar, to Bangladesh and other neighboring countries. Since late 2017, more than 1 million Rohingyas have fled religious programs that have been described as genocide.

LEARNING GOALS
Students will become familiar with the facts of migration, the core concepts and theories informing scholarly debates and disagreements, and the conflicting views and interests of policymakers, migrants, and communities affected by immigration. Students are expected to work on improving their writing and oral presentations with respect to style and accuracy, and to demonstrate the ability to use correct style for citations and bibliography in writings.
The class will help students to develop the following core skills:

- Gain knowledge about the history, causes, and facts of global migration and refugee resettlement.
- Become familiar with the international and national legal frameworks for the treatment of immigrants and refugees.
- Evaluating evidence and thinking critically about arguments, based on evidence.
- Learn to read and assess statistical information.
- Present arguments and facts orally with the support of data visualization tools and PowerPoint slides.

Completing the Politics major enables students to develop the following core skills:

- Thinking critically about arguments, based on evaluation of evidence.
- Articulating reasoned arguments clearly, both orally and in written form.
- Familiarity with a variety of research methods for understanding politics, including comparative case study, area studies, textual interpretation and statistical analysis.
- Ability to use the concepts and methods of political science to conduct research and analysis.

**REQUIREMENTS**

(1) Attendance is mandatory. If you are unable to attend, you must call or email the instructor before class.

(2) This is a seminar class. Participation is required. Students are expected to come to class prepared by having completed the assignments and ready to discuss their findings with the class.

(3) Students are expected to complete one PowerPoint presentation to the class, one midterm paper and one final paper (8-10 pages). All assignments must be based upon the assigned readings and resources.

Grades are based upon a student’s ability to demonstrate, in class discussions, a grasp of the core facts or arguments in the weekly readings. Grades will be based on class preparation, presentations, and participation (50%) and on the quality of the midterm and the final paper (50%).

Graduate students may take the class. They are required to read the assignments listed in the syllabus as recommended and to write a final review paper (15 pages) in addition to completing the requirements listed for undergraduate students.

**PLEASE NOTE (1):** If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

**PLEASE NOTE (2):** You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). Any suspected instances
of alleged dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and suspension.

REQUIRED READINGS
The reading readings and factsheets are listed in the schedule. Students are expected to study the links to factsheets and statistical sources prior to class. Undergraduate students are expected to choose and skim read, at least, one article from the recommended readings for each class. Graduate student are expected to read the “recommended readings” in addition to those listed as “required.” Articles assigned are available via the university library webpage (Brandeis Scholar). This book is required reading and available at the campus bookstore:


The book is available through the Brandeis Library system as an Ebook. (Use OneSearch to access: https://www-jstor-org-resources_library_brandeis.edu/stable/10.1525/j.ctt6wqc7v. You must sign in using your UNET credentials to access the electronic version of the book.)

Other required and recommended readings are listed in the class schedule and are available for direct download from the library webpage.

**January**

**Wedn., Jan 16**

**The Numbers—The Big Picture**

*Question*: What are the legal differences between migrants and refugees? And when does a refugee become a migrant—and vice versa?

**Required reading:**


**Resources:**

- https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017
- https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis
Wedn., Jan 23 — The Numbers, cont.—Trends and the Current Status of Immigration to the United States

Does the United States have an immigration problem? If yes, what is the problem? If no, why do so many people believe there is a problem? But wait, who says there is a problem?

*Quote:* The United States must adopt an immigration system that serves the national interest. To restore the rule of law and secure our border, President Trump is committed to constructing a border wall and ensuring the swift removal of unlawful entrants. To protect American workers, the President supports ending chain migration, eliminating the Visa Lottery, and moving the country to a merit-based entry system. These reforms will advance the safety and prosperity of all Americans while helping new citizens assimilate and flourish.

https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/

Required reading:


Resource:


Recommended:


Wedn. Jan 30 — Explaining Migration—Theory v. Complex Realities
Why do people migrate? Migration occurs in global waves shaped by “push” and “pull” factors. How do refugees fit into the migration debate?

Required reading:


Recommended:


**February**

**Wedn., Feb. 6**  
**Global Hotspot—Students’ Oral Presentations & PowerPoint Slides**

Where are the main sources of refugees and migrants in the world? Where do they come from—and where do they go?

The class will focus on students’ presentations of their findings.

**Assignment:** Prepare an oral presentation to the class backed up by a PowerPoint presentation. Make a PowerPoint presentation comprised of max. 7 slides for a ten minute talk presenting your findings.

Pick a region (see list below) and identify the conflicts driving refugees and migration in the region—both internal and trans-border—in the region.

And answer the following questions:

- **How many** people are migrating or fleeing?
- **Which** are the sender countries and which are the recipient countries?
- **Who** are the affected people?
- **What** are the main drivers and causes of migration or refugee stream?

Make paper copies of your presentation to hand out in class. You are expected to revise your PowerPoint presentation in response to feedback from the class and the instructor.
Basic advice on how to make a PowerPoint presentation:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1CMxb90g7c

Region picks: North Africa, Africa south of the Sahel, North Americas (United States and Canada), South America, Central America and the United States, Caribbean, Australia & New Zealand (Oceania), Eastern Europe, Western Europe, South East Europe (Balkans and Turkey), Middle East (aka Southwest Asia), Central Asia (Caucasus), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), Russia.

Resources:

- The Migration Policy Institute (http://www.migrationpolicy.org/) and the International Organization for Migration (http://gmdac.iom.int/data-and-analysis-search) produce a wealth of data and analyses, which may be accessed through their websites.
- The UN Refugee Agency focuses on refugees and IDPs (internally displaced persons). It too publishes a wealth of data, see https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html. The agency’s Global Trends report is more detailed; see https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/.


Student presentations, cont.

Feb. 18-22   Vacation break

Wedn. Feb. 27   Refugees are not migrants: True or false?

What rights do refugees have? And what rights do irregular migrants have?

Quote: Refugee law and international human rights law are closely intertwined; refugees are fleeing governments that are either unable or unwilling to protect their basic human rights. Additionally, in cases where the fear of persecution or threat to life or safety arises in the context of an armed conflict, refugee law also intersects with international humanitarian law.

(From http://www.ijrcenter.org/refugee-law/).

Required reading:


Resources:


Recommended:


**MIDTERM EXAMS DUE MARCH 4**

**March**

**Wedn., March 6  Human Smuggling—A Business.**

Rueben Andersson is an anthropologist by training. Anthropologists study communities. What are the boundaries of the community in his book, *Illegality, Inc.?* The first class focuses on his *method.* How was this study made? Who are the actors?

Required reading:

• Factsheet: Andersson—in his own words: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05r3z43

Recommended:


**Wedn. March 13  Globalization and clandestine migration**

Pull out a map and trace Europe’s borders. Where are the borders on Andersson’s map? And who are the border patrols?

Required reading:


Recommended:


**Wedn. March 20  The Ecosystem of Human Smuggling**  (Class ends at 3:30)

Why do people pay people smugglers to take them on perilous journeys to countries where they may never be allowed to live legally? Use the “push” vs. “pull” concepts to analyze the motivations of the people populating Andersson’s book.

Required reading:

- Andersson, *Illegality, Inc.*, pp. 177-244.
- Interview with a Mexican people smuggler: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/mexico704/interview/smuggler.html

For two completely contrary views of how human smuggling is managed, see:
• ‘Migrants are more profitable than drugs’: how the mafia infiltrated Italy’s asylum system, The Guardian, February 1, 2018; see https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/feb/01/migrants-more-profitable-than-drugs-how-mafia-infiltrated-italy-asylum-system

Recommended:


Wedn. March 27 Community Impact—Winners & Losers at the Point of Origination

Who benefits? The human costs to migration in sender countries are often ignored. And who are the losers in the global chain linking sender communities to smugglers and to the footholds in the destination countries?

Required reading:

• Andersson, Illegality, Inc., pp. 245-281.

Recommended:


April

Wedn., April 3 What’s happening South of the border? The Central American Migrant Caravans—Who, How, and Why?

Group assignment: Please work together in small groups to develop a summary history of the origins of the Central American Migrant caravan of some 7,000 people who in November 2018 arrived at the US border near Tijuana, and of the policy issues involved.
Please attempt to answer the following questions:

- Who organized the march? Was there any leadership?
- Who are the people, and what are their motivations—if it is possible to generalize about such?
- What are the push and pull factors that appear to have played a role?
- What legal and practical policy issues arise, and what do you think will happen next?

Be careful to use only reliable news sources, and to use a variety of sources.

From Wikipedia: “The Central American migrant caravans, also known as the Viacrucis del Migrante ("Migrant's Way of the Cross"), are migrant caravans organized by Pueblo Sin Fronteras (People Without Borders) that set off during Holy Week in early 2017 and 2018. Composed of people who fled gang violence, poverty, and political repression from the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA), the caravans travel from the Guatemala–Mexico border to the Mexico–United States border. There have also been smaller unrelated caravans in previous years and a larger unofficial caravan in late 2018.”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_American_migrant_caravans)

Documentation (supplement with your own research):

- https://www.thedailybeast.com/heres-how-some-africans-really-did-join-the-migrant-caravan-heading-for-the-us
- https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2018/11/redrawing-central


Most refuges move to neighboring countries. Migrants go to the G20, aka the “rich” countries. Why, then, does the West complain so much? But many refugees are highly educated. Is the system completely messed up? How different are the United States and other Western countries when confronting global migration and the refugee crisis?


Documentation:

See this site belonging to George J. Borjas, a labor economist: https://gborjas.org/


Wedn. April 17 In a borderless world there would be no immigration—True or False?

Would states treat their subjects better if there were no borders? Or put differently, are borders the problem? Is a borderless world possible? Is it desirable?

Required:


Documentation: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/b2NpfdLqhTr5r1zl1Y0s0G/dotighter-border-controls-lead-to-increased-migrant-illegality

Recommended:


April 19-26 Spring recess

May
Wedn. May 1 The Things They Say (Last day of class)

Why is immigration so controversial—and the debates so irrational?

Required readings:

Undergraduate students should pick three readings from the list—graduate students read all.

- Elisabeth Ivarsflaten, “What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe?: Re-Examining Grievance Mobilization Models in Seven Successful Cases,” *Comparative Political Studies*, January 2008 41: 3-23

**FINAL PAPERS DUE MAY 10.**

**Final exam question:**

(Choose two questions to answer.)

*Question 1:* Define the “push” and “pull” concepts and explain how the two concepts apply in different ways to migrants and to refugees. In your answer, use the reading assignments and the class presentations to demonstrate a grasp of the concepts and facts.

*Question 2:* Write a review essay of Ruben Anderssons' book, *Illegality, Inc*. In your answer, be sure to summarize the author's argument and methodology, key findings, and his inferences regarding the causes and effects of global migration.

*Question 3:* What key policy recommendations do you draw from the class?