

INTD 497 International Labor Migration and Human Rights



Instructor

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Class Times

Mondays 11:35am-2:25pm

Classroom

ENGMD 276

Office Hours

Wednesdays and Fridays 2:30pm-4:00pm

*Registration link is available via MyCourses

Teaching Assistants

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Course Description

The aim of this course is to critically analyze contemporary international labor migration regimes in development. Since the mid-1970s, labor export policy has been integral to the “success” of development. Remittances sent by migrant workers are considered a robust solution to overcome chronic poverty, low economic growth, and accumulated foreign debt, especially experienced by low and middle-income countries. Policymakers and scholars have highlighted the positive externalities of migrant remittances in terms of improving key human development indicators, such as income, food security, health, education, and other basic human needs. Increased labor mobility from low and middle-income countries is thus considered a win-win-win economic solution for labor-senders, labor-receivers, and migrant workers and their families.

However, what is missing is an understanding of the hidden costs and risks that are also prevalent in contemporary international labor migration. Civil society organizations, human rights lawyers, and scholars have documented a multitude of human rights abuses and harmful labor practices against low-skilled migrant workers. Migrant women are especially vulnerable to labor exploitation and discrimination due to the existing gender stereotypes in labor markets. Migrant workers continuously endure these barriers and abuses in order to fulfill the financial obligation to their left-behind families, as well as to reduce their burden of debt bondage caused by overpriced pre-departure fees. The course will closely examine the profound contradiction between the opportunity for labor mobility and the adversity of human rights abuses in transnational labor migration.

The course is divided into two main parts. The first section (between Week 2 and Week 8) will explore the macro picture of the labor migration system that produces both migrant

mobility and immobility. This includes the logic of labor migration regimes, temporary foreign worker programs, labor-export policies of labor-sending states, and the role of migrant labor brokers. We will also delve into the social implications of temporary labor migration. These topics include gender and labor, labor surveillance, and health and food insecurity.

The second part of the course (between Week 9 and Week 13) will be focused on migrant rights advocacy in practice. In particular, we will participate in the UN Network on Migration's pledging initiative. We will divide the class into smaller groups and prepare for the submission of migrant workers' rights advocacy proposals to the UN Network. We will also organize a visit to a local migrant advocacy organization based in Montreal.

By the end of the semester, students should be familiar with the key analytical concepts, debates, gaps, stakeholders (actors), and policies surrounding contemporary international labor migration regimes.

Required Course Materials

All the required readings are available via MyCourses.

Health protocol: While students are not required to wear masks in the classroom, please comply with McGill's health regulations on campus. For McGill's updated health guidelines, please visit: <https://www.mcgill.ca/return-to-campus/>

1. Participation (10%)

For this course to be successful, you are expected to make committed, engaged, and meaningful contributions to class discussion. Due to the nature of the discussion topics that involve culturally and socially sensitive development concerns, all the participants must engage in class discussion in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Weekly readings

Each week, we have about 60-80 pages of assigned reading materials. To critically and proactively engage with class discussion, students are expected to come to the meeting having done the required readings beforehand.

2. Weekly In-Class Quizzes (5%)

Between Week 2 and 10, nine weekly in-class quizzes will be given. In order to maximize the points, you are required to answer eight quizzes. These quizzes are based on the in-class activities. You are required to submit your answers via MyCourses (Assignments - Quizzes) by 11:59pm on the same day (Mondays) of the class.

3. Précis (10%)

To maximize your understanding of course materials, students are required to write four précis out of the 8 weekly themes. You are allowed to select any four weekly topics between week 2 and week 9. Each précis examines one article or one book chapter from the weekly readings. The précis should clarify the main argument of the article and then provide your reflections (including a critique) on the article. The précis should be written in at least 450 words.

Please note that the précis should not overlap with the readings that you will analyze in the short analytical paper. You are not allowed to write multiple précis based on the same weekly readings.

Submission due:

Each précis must be submitted via MyCourses ["Assignments"] by 11:59pm on Sunday prior to the meeting.

4. Short analytical paper (15%)

The aim of the short analytical paper is to provide a critical analysis of a key theme discussed between Week 2 and Week 9. You are required to submit one short analytical paper based on any two weekly readings. In the paper, you are expected to develop an original argument that engages with two readings (separate authors). The argument should reflect a critical assessment of a specific question or problem or further development of an idea that you find insightful. The paper must above all show the capacity to analyze and critique in a coherent and systematic manner. The paper should be written in a minimum of 1,200 words and a maximum of 1,400 words. Please note that your short analytical essay should not overlap with the readings that you used for the précis assignment. Please note that the two readings in the analytical essay should be separate from the four précis.

Submission of the short analytical paper:

Friday, March 1 (11:59pm)

5. Migrant Rights Action Plan (15%)

The group project seeks to address international labor migration and human rights in practice. As a class, we will participate in the United Nations Network on Migration's (UN Network) pledging initiative (<https://migrationnetwork.un.org/pledges>).

Each group will propose an action plan (a pledge) that intersects with at least one of the Global Compact for Migration's 23 objectives. Examples of activities include a policy brief, a country profile, a fund-raising activity, a discussion panel, a film screening event, and a high school curriculum for promoting migrant rights. In short, your group is expected to propose an action plan that reflects one of the GCM's 23 goals. We will discuss the details of the group exercise in class.

- a) Submission of the action plan via MyCourses: Sunday, April 7 (11:59pm)
- b) Presentation of the action plan in class: Monday, April 8 & Thursday, April 11 (Migrant Rights Forum) *April 11 is a make-up date for Easter Monday
- c) Submission of the peer evaluations: Friday, April 12

6. Final research paper (45%)

The primary goal of the final research paper is to delve more deeply into a topic on international labor migration and human rights. Your essay should be written in a minimum of 2,500 words and a maximum of 2,800 words. You are required to include at least three course readings beyond external sources in the analysis. The detailed instructions will be provided in class.

Submission of the final research essay:
Friday, April 26 (11:59pm)

Grade distribution:

Assignments	Due	Percentage
Participation	See page 3	10%
Weekly In-Class Quizzes (8 required)	Mondays 11:59pm (the same day of the class)	5%
Précis (4 required)	Sundays 11:59pm prior to the meeting	10%
Short Analytical Paper	Friday, March 1 (11:59pm)	15%
Migrant Rights Action Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Action plan submission (Sunday, April 7)2. Migrant Rights Forum in-class presentation (April 8 & 11)3. Peer evaluations (Friday, April 12)	15%
Final Research Essay	Friday, April 26 (11:59pm)	45%

Academic Integrity:

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information)

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

Language of Submission:

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue)

Copyright of lectures:

All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation) ends. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

Course Evaluations:

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Course schedule

Week 1 (January 8) Introduction
PART I. INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION REGIMES
Week 2 (January 15) Price of Rights: The Logic of Labor Migration Regimes
Week 3 (January 22) Temporary Foreign Worker Programs
Week 4 (January 29) Labor Export Policies: Labor Brokerage State
Week 5 (February 5) Middlemen: Shadow Regulators of Temporary Labor Mobility
Week 6 (February 12) Gender and Labor: Legal Infantilization

Week 7 (February 19) Labor Surveillance: Politics of Containment
Week 8 (February 26) Migrant Health and Food Insecurity
PART II. MIGRANT RIGHTS IN PRACTICE
Week 9 (March 11) International Migrant Rights Regimes: UN Network on Migration
Week 10 (March 18) Migrant Community Visit
Week 11 (March 25) Migrant Rights Action Plan (Group-based Meetings)
Week 12 (April 8) Migrant Rights Forum #1
Week 13 (April 11) Migrant Rights Forum #2 *Make-up date for Easter Monday

Week 1. January 8. Introduction

Our first meeting will provide an overview of the course, including the key objectives, course schedule, requirements, class moderation schedule, and course readings. We will also introduce each other and share our thoughts/perspectives on the study of international labor migration and human rights.

PART I. INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION REGIMES

Week 2. January 15. Price of Rights: The Logic of Labor Migration Regimes

Readings:

Ruhs, Martin. 2013. *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1- 52 (Chapters 1-3).

Week 3. January 22. Temporary Foreign Workers

Readings:

Preibisch, Kerry. 2010. "Pick-Your-Own Labor: Migrant Workers and Flexibility in Canada's Agriculture." *International Migration Review* 44(2): 404-441.

Hari, Amrita. "Temporariness, Rights, and Citizenship: The Latest Chapter in Canada's Exclusionary Migration and Refugee History." *Refuge* 30: 35-44.

Marsden, Sarah. 2011. "Assessing the Regulation of Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada." *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 49: 39-70.

Optional:

Hanely, Jill et al. 2017. "Does Canada 'Care' about Migrant Caregivers? Implications under the Reformed Caregiver Program." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 49(2): 121-139.

Film Screening: *Migrant Dreams* (2016) by Min Sook Lee

Week 4. January 29. Labor Export Policies

Readings:

Rodrigues, Robyn Margalit. 2010. *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp.ix-xxviii, pp.19-92 (Introduction, Chapters 2-4).

Ruhs, Martin. 2013. *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 122-153 (Chapter 5).

Week 5. February 5. Middlemen: Shadow Regulators of Temporary Labor Mobility

Readings:

Lindquist, Johan et al. 2012. "Introduction: Opening the Black Box of Migration: Brokers, the Organization of Transnational Mobility and the Changing Political Economy in Asia." *Pacific Affairs* 85(1): 7-19.

Davidson, Julia. 2013. "Troubling Freedom: Migration, Debt, and Modern Slavery." *Migration Studies* 1(2): 176-195.

Deshingkar, Priya et al. 2019. "Producing Ideal Bangladeshi Migrants for Precarious Construction Work in Qatar." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45(14): 2723-2738.

Killias, Olivia. 2009. "The Politics of Bondage in the Recruitment, Training and Placement of Indonesian Domestic Workers." *Sociologus* 59(2): 145-172.

Optional:

Kah, Henry Kam. 2019. "'Blood Money', Migrants' Enslavement and Insecurity in Africa's Sahel and Libya." *Africa Development* 44(1): 25-44.

Week 6. February 12. Gender and Labor: Empowerment or Legal Infantilization

Readings:

Parreñas, Rhacel. 2021. *Unfree: Migrant Domestic Work in Arab States*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.1-77 (Introduction, Chapters 1-2.)

Lan, Pei-Chia. 2006. *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic Workers and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp.29-58 (Chapter 1.)

Hwang, Maria. 2018. "Gendered Border Regimes and Displacements: The Case of Filipina Sex Workers in Asia." *Signs* 43(3): 515-37.

Optional:

Parreñas, Rhacel. 2005. "Long Distance Intimacy: Gender and Intergenerational Relations in Transnational Families." *Global Networks* 5(4): 317-336.

Madianou, Mirca and Daniel Miller. 2011. "Mobile Phone Parenting: Reconfiguring Relationships between Filipina Migrant Mothers and Their Left-Behind Children." *New Media & Society* 13(3): 457-470.

Week 7. February 19. Migrant Labor Surveillance

Readings:

Ngai, Mae. 2004. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and The Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.1-14 (Introduction).

Xiang, Biao. 2013. "Transnational Encapsulation: Compulsory Return as Labor-Migration Control in East Asia." In *Return: Nationalizing Transnational Mobility in Asia* (edited by Biao Xiang et al). Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 83-99.

De Genova, Nicholas. "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 419-447.

Constable, Nicole. 2022. *Passport Entanglements: Protection, Care, and Precarious Migrations*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.1-25 (Chapter 1).

Week 8. February 26. Migrant Health and Food Insecurity

Readings:

Hennebry, Jenna et al. 2015. "Out of the Loop: (In)Access to Health Care for Migrant Workers in Canada." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 17: 521-538.

Weiler, Anelyse et al. 2017. "Food Insecurity at Whose Expense? A Critique of the Canadian Temporary Farm Labor Migration Regime and Proposals for Change." *International Migration* 55(4): 48-63.

Willen, Sarah. 2012. "Migration, 'Illegality,' and Health: Mapping Embodied Vulnerability and Debating Health-related Deservingness." *Social Science & Medicine* 74: 805-811.

Viladrich, Anahi. 2019. "'We Cannot Let Them Die': Undocumented Immigrants and Media Framing of Health Deservingness in the United States." *Qualitative Health Research* 29(10): 1447-1460.

PART II. MIGRANT RIGHTS IN PRACTICE

Week 9. March 11. International Migrant Rights Regimes: Migrant Rights Convention and the UN Network for Migration

Readings:

Gest, Justin et al. "Tracking the Process of International Norm Emergence: A Comparative Analysis of Six Agendas and Emerging Migrants' Rights." *Global Governance* 19(2): 153-186.

Bosniak, Linda. 1991. "Human Rights, State Sovereignty, and the Protection of Undocumented Migrants under the International Migrant Workers Convention." *The International Migration Review* 25(4): 737-770.

Pécoud, Antoine. "Narrating an Ideal Migration World? An Analysis of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration." *Third World Quarterly* 42(1): 16-33.

Optional:

Kanstroom, Daniel and Jessica Chicco. 2015. "The Forgotten Deported: A Declaration on the Rights of Expelled and Deported." *NYU Journal of International Law & Policy* 47(3): 537-592.

Week 10: March 18. Migrant Community Visit

No Readings

Week 11. March 25. Migrant Rights Action Plan (Group-based Meetings)

No Readings

Week 12. April 8. Migrant Rights Forum #1

No Readings

Week 13. April 11 Migrant Rights Forum #2

No Readings

*Make-up date for Easter Monday