

INTD 498

Honors Seminar on International Labor Migration and Human Rights



Instructor

Kazue Takamura

Institute for the Study of International Development, McGill University

Room 12-2, 3610 McTavish Street

Email: kazue.takamura@mcgill.ca

Class Times

Mondays 11:35-14:25

Classroom

Education room 338

Office Hours

Mondays 14:30-15:30

Course Description

The Honors Seminar aims to provide critical analysis of the contemporary international labor migration regimes in development. In light of growing concerns for the gross human rights violence against low-skilled migrant workers, we will apply a human rights lens to the study of international labor migration systems. Since the mid-1970s, a 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. The World Bank recently reported that the flows of remittances into low and middle-income countries are three times higher than the amount of development aid in 2019. The growth of remittances is continuously expected due to the high labor demands in high-income countries. 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 here is the understanding of 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 the 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 seminar 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 9) will explore the macro picture of the labor migration system that produces both migrant mobility and immobility. This includes the history of labor migration, neoliberal immigration policies of labor-receiving states, migrant surveillance, 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 migrant workers' access to health, as well as gendered patterns of migrant vulnerability.

The second part of the seminar (between Week 10 and Week 13) will be focused on migrant rights advocacy in practice. In particular, we will participate in the UN Network for 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.

By the end of the semester, the students should be familiar with the key analytical concepts, approaches, logic, stakeholders (actors), policies, contradictions, and gaps 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% participation + 5% class moderation)

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

1-a. Weekly readings

Each week, we have about 80-120 pages of assigned reading materials. To critically and proactively engage with class discussion, students are expected to come to the seminar meeting having done the required readings beforehand.

1-b. Seminar organization

We will begin with a short introductory lecture (10-15 minutes) followed by a keyword exercise and a student-moderated seminar discussion.

1-c. Student moderation (5%)

Between Week 3 and Week 10, we will have student moderators who will lead and facilitate weekly class discussions. Prior to the meeting, weekly moderators are required to submit a seminar moderation plan (or presentation slides) to the instructor via email. The plan should include (a) overarching learning goals, (b) keywords, (c) discussion questions based on the assigned readings, and (d) in-class interactive activities to stimulate students' proactive engagement with the class discussion. Class moderators are encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss their plan. The moderation plan should be submitted by Sunday prior to the seminar meeting. The detailed arrangement will be discussed in the first seminar meeting.

2. Précis (15%)

To maximize your meaningful understanding of course materials, students are required to write *five précis* out of the 9 weekly themes. You are allowed to select any five weekly topics

between week 2 and week 10. 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 500 words.

Please note that the précis should not overlap with the readings that you will analyze in the short analytical paper.

Submission due:

Each précis must be submitted via MyCourses ["Assignments"] by 23:59 on Sunday prior to the seminar meeting.

3. 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 the weekly readings. In the paper, you are expected to develop an original argument that engages with at least 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.

Submission of the short analytical paper:

Friday, February 24 (11:59pm)

4. Group Activity - Participating in the UN Network on Migration Pledging Initiative (15%)

In May 2022, The UN Network on Migration held the first International Migration Review Forum to monitor the implementation of the *Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration* (GCM). The GCM is an intergovernmentally negotiated agreement to “cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner” adopted by the United Nations in December 2018 (<https://ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/GlobalCompactforMigration.aspx>).

To advocate “good practices” of migrant rights protection by growing stakeholders, the UN Network on Migration announced its pledging initiative to invite States and other stakeholders (including civil society organizations) to make tangible commitments to the successful implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.

The group project aims to stimulate students' learning of international labor migration and human rights through practice. As a class, we will participate in the United Nations Network on Migration (UN Network) 's pledging initiative.

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 2 (11:59pm)

b)Presentation of the action plan in class: Monday, April 3

5. Final research paper (40%)

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 3,000 words and a maximum of 3,500 words. You are required to include at least three course readings in the analysis.

Submission of the title and abstract

Students must submit the title of the paper and an abstract describing your topic and the main argument/plan in one paragraph (at least 250 words) by 11:59pm on Sunday, March 26 via MyCourses.

Submission of the final research essay

Friday, April 21 (11:59pm)

Grade distribution:

Assignments	Due	Percentage
Participation	See page 4	10%
Class moderation	See page 4	5%
Précis (5 required)	Sundays 11:59pm prior to the meeting	15%
Short Analytical Paper	Friday, February 24 (11:59pm)	15%
UN Network Migrant Rights Action Plan	a. UN Network Migrant Rights Action Plan submission -Sunday, April 2 (11:59pm) b. Group presentation - Monday, April 3	15%

Final Research Essay	a. Abstract submission - Sunday, March 26 (11:59pm) b. Final essay submission Friday, April 21 (11:59pm)	40%
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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 9) Introduction
PART I. INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION REGIMES
Week 2 (January 16) Price of Rights: The Logic of Labor Migration Regimes
Week 3 (January 23) History of Labor Migration Regimes
Week 4 (January 30) Temporary Foreign Worker Programs and Human Rights
Week 5 (February 6)

Labor Export Policies and Human Rights
Week 6 (February 13) Middlemen - Shadow Regulators of Temporary Labor Mobility
Week 7 (February 20) Migrant Labor Surveillance - Construction of Migrant Illegality
Week 8 (March 6) Labor Migration and Health Rights
Week 9 (March 13) Feminization of Migration and Gendered Vulnerabilities
PART II. PRACTICE OF MIGRANT RIGHTS
Week 10 (March 20) International Migrant Rights Regimes – UN Network for Migration
Week 11(March 27) UN Network for Migration #1 – Preparation for a Migrant Rights Advocacy Action Plan (Group-based meetings) *March 27 – Abstract for the final essay
Week 12 (April 3) UN Network for Migration #2 – Group presentations *Submission of the migrant rights advocacy action plan by April 2
Week 13 (April 12) Conclusion

Week 1. January 9. Introduction

Our first meeting aims to provide an overview of the course, including the key objectives of the seminar, 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 16. 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- 90 (Chapters 1-3, and 5).

Chapter 1. The Rights of Migrant Workers: Reframing the Debates

Chapter 2. The Human Rights of Migrant Workers: Why Do So Few Countries Care?

Chapter 3. Nation-States, Labor Immigration, and Migrant Rights: What Can We Expect?

Chapter 5. Regulating the Admission and Rights of Migrant Workers

Week 3. January 23. History of Labor Migration Regimes

Readings:

Ngai, Mae. 2004. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and The Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.1-90 (Introduction, Chapters 1&2)

Introduction: Illegal Aliens: A Problem of Law and History

Chapter 1. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 and the Reconstruction of Race in Immigration Law

Chapter 2. Deportation Policy and the Making and Unmaking of Illegal Aliens

Morris-Suzuki. 2006. "Invisible Immigrants: Undocumented Migration and Border Controls in Early Postwar Japan." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 4(8): 1-28.

Week 4. January 30. Temporary Foreign Worker Programs and Human Rights

Readings:

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

Xiang, Biao. 2013. "Transnational Encapsulation: Compulsory Return as a 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.

Parreñas, Rhacel. 2021. *Unfree: Migrant Domestic Work in Arab States*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.25-47 (Chapter 1. Legal Infantilization and the Unfreedom of Servitude).

Bhattacharjee, Shikha Silliman. 2014. "Legal Protection for Migrant Trainees in Japan: Using International Standards to Evaluate Shifts in Japanese Immigration Policy." *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law* 35(4): 1149-1173.

Week 5. February 6. Labor Export Policies and Human Rights

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).

Introduction: Neoliberalism and the Philippine Labor Brokerage State

Chapter 2. A Global Enterprise of Labor: Mobilizing Migrants for Export

Chapter 4. New National Heroes: Patriotism and Citizenship Reconfigured

Parreñas, Rhacel. 2021. *Unfree: Migrant Domestic Work in Arab States*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.48-77 (Chapter 2. Managing Vulnerable Migrants)

Week 6. February 13. 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): 7-9.

Abella, Manolo I. 2004. "The Role of Recruiters in Labor Migration" In *International Migration: Prospects and Policies in a Global Market* (edited by Douglas S Massey and Edward Taylor). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 201-211.

Lan, Pei-Chia. 2006. *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic Workers and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*. Duke University Press, pp.59-93 (Chapter 2. Disdained Aliens, Stratified Others).

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

Jones, Loring et al. 2011. "Human Trafficking between Thailand and Japan: Lessons in Recruitment, Transit, and Control." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 20: 203-21.

Week 7. February 20. Migrant Labor Surveillance - Construction of Migrant Illegality

Readings:

De Genova, Nicholas. 2010. "The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement." *The Deportation Regime*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp.33-65.

Borren, Marieke. 2008. "Towards an Arendtian Politics of In/visibility: On Stateless Refugees and Undocumented Aliens." *Ethical Perspectives: Journal of the European Ethics Networks* 15 (2): 213-237.

Cornelisse, Galina. 2010. "Immigration Detention and the Territoriality of Universal Rights." *The Deportation Regime*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp.101-122.

Torrey, Philip. 2015. "Rethinking Immigrations' Mandatory Detention Regime: Politics, Profit, and the Meaning of 'Custody'." *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* 48(4): 879-913.

Optional:

Arifianto, Alexander. 2009. "The Securitization of Transnational Labor Migration: The Case of Malaysia and Indonesia." *Asian Politics & Policy* 1(4): 613-630.

Telavera, Victor et al. 2010. "Deportation in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Anticipation, Experience, and Memory." *The Deportation Regime*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp.166-195.

***No class on February 27 (Spring break)**

Week 8. March 6. Labor Migration and Health Rights**Readings:**

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

De Lomba, Sylvie. 2011, "Irregular migrants and Health Right to Health Care: A Case-Study of Health-Care Provision for Irregular Migrants in France and the UK." *International Journal of Law in Context* 7(3): 357-374.

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.

Week 9. March 13. Feminization of Migration and Gendered Vulnerabilities

Readings:

Constable, Nicole. 2014. *Born Out of Place*. University of California Press, pp.1-22 (Chapter 1. "A Very Tiny Problem") and 56-89 (Chapter 3. "Women").

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

Silvey, Rachel. 2004. "Transnational Domestication: State Power and Indonesian Migrant Women in Saudi Arabia." *Political Geography* 23: 245-264.

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

Optional:

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.

PART II. PRACTICE OF MIGRANT RIGHTS

Week 10: March 20. International Migrant Rights Regimes – CMW 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.

Bohning, Roger. 1991. "The ILO and the New UN Convention on Migrant Workers: The Past and Future." *The International Migration Review* 25(4): 698-709.

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 11. March 27. UN Network for Migration #1 – Preparing for a Migrant Rights Advocacy Action Plan (Group-based meetings)

No Readings

Week 12. April 3. UN Network for Migration #2 – Group presentations

No Readings

Week 13. April 12 (Wednesday). Conclusion

*** A make-up lecture day for April 10 (Monday)**

No Readings