

University of Toronto
Faculty of Arts & Science
Department of Political Science
2022

**POL377 TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS:
BORDERS, MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**

Summer session
May 9-June 20, 2022

Instructor: Martha Balaguera, PhD, Assistant Professor

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Synchronous meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m. (Eastern time) on Zoom.

Virtual office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 4:15-5:00 p.m. (Eastern time) or by appointment on Zoom.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Between 1990 and 2020, the [total number of international migrants almost doubled, reaching 280,6 million people](#) around the world; [more than 10% of them were refugees and asylum seekers](#). In the same period, even while mounting flows of capital, goods and people became the hallmark of globalization, there were unprecedented efforts at fortifying borders, constraining people's mobility, and detaining noncitizens, including those fleeing war, conflict and persecution.

This course exposes students to the tensions between the mobility of people across international borders, and the hardening regimes of governance facing migrants. Drawing on a variety of concepts and theories from different fields, we will pay especial attention to the intersections of class, race and gender at stake in the politics of migration. While we will engage with studies about different migration trajectories, we will emphasize the Americas.

Course content will address the following questions: Why do people migrate? How do policies and discourses constitute different categories of people (e.g., native v. migrant; economic migrant v. refugee; legal v. illegal immigrant)? How are migrations governed? What are some of the ways in which immigrants, refugees and their allies have responded to increasing restrictions to the right to migrate and the right to seek asylum?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Our main objectives in this course will be:

- To identify the causes of international migration in historical perspective.
- To acquire conceptual and analytical tools for the study of contemporary migrations and the regimes that govern them.
- To delve deeper into concrete empirical cases, with a focus on the Americas.

- To examine the structures of power that shape different categories of migrants and their attendant rights claims.
- To analyze the tension between increasing human mobility and thickening borders.
- To underscore the agency and struggles of immigrants and refugees.

POL377 is also intended to increase awareness and sensitivity to issues pertaining to human rights and social justice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the causes of international migrations, with a focus on the Americas.
- Assess critically the categories of personhood ascribed to international migrants.
- Analyze contemporary trends in the governance of international migrations.
- Apply concepts and theories to discuss empirical evidence and support specific viewpoints and arguments.
- Evaluate the forms of oppression experienced by migrants and refugees and their efforts to resist violence and create change.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required

Article-length readings, films and podcasts can be accessed through permanent links provided in the Course Schedule below. Where links are not provided, a PDF scanned copy will be made available. You can access all course materials via “Modules” and the “Library Reading List” on Quercus. In addition, the “General information” module contains a link to a full reading schedule with hyperlinks.

Recommended

Recommended materials are included in the course schedule. Whenever possible, permanent links are provided.

Changes

There may be changes to the required course materials. An announcement will be provided at least a week in advance so that students can prepare accordingly. Any new materials will be made available digitally on Quercus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Type	Description	Due date	Weight
1. Test	<u>Five quizzes (10% each)</u> Quizzes will be due on Friday at 11:59 p.m. in Weeks 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6. Prompts will be posted twenty-four hours in advance.	May 13 May 20 June 3 June 10 June 17	50%
3. Assignment	<u>Blog post</u> Blog entry to be posted on Quercus. Your assignment will be visible to the entire class.	May 27	15%
4. Presentation	<u>(Pre-recorded) Presentation</u> Short presentations on assigned material, including an open question for discussion will be due 24 hours before our class meets. These presentations will be visible to the entire class. Students will sign up for a schedule of presentations in the first week of classes.	See calendar below	10%
5. Assignment	<u>e-Portfolio</u> You will develop this assignment throughout the course. It involves, among others, a mandatory ungraded reflection due on May 9. Your assignment will be visible to the entire class.	June 20	25%
Total			100%

Last day to drop F section code courses from academic record: June 6, 2022.

Schedule of focused reflections

Due date	Topic	Presenters
May 24	<i>Categories of personhood</i>	Students should sign up for one of these presentation dates during the first week of classes.
May 29	<i>Policing and deterring</i>	
May 31	<i>Legal violence</i>	
June 5	<i>Undermining asylum</i>	
June 7	<i>Criminalizing, detaining, deporting and profiting</i>	Presentations are pre-recorded and submitted twenty-hours before our class meets.
June 12	<i>Walling</i>	
June 14	<i>Offshoring and externalizing</i>	

IMPORTANT DATES

May 9. Classes start.

May 23. Victoria Day. University closed.

June 6. Last day to drop F courses from academic record.

June 20. Classes end.

LATE AND MISSED WORK POLICY

Blog post and e-portfolio

Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends) of the total mark. Assignments submitted five calendar days beyond the due date will be assigned a grade of zero. Cases of emergency should be communicated to the instructor via email as soon as possible and documented in line with university policy.

Quizzes

In cases of documented emergency, make-up quizzes will be conducted in oral form. Only one re-scheduling option will be provided.

Presentation requirement

If you miss the submission date your pre-recorded presentation is due on Quercus, you will be assigned a grade of zero.

GRADE APPEALS

Reflection period

Your grade may go either up or down during the appeal process. There is a 72-hour reflection period before you can file a grade appeal. Appeal requests made before the reflection period ends will not be read or receive a response.

Reassessment procedure

Either the instructor or a TA will be responsible for grading tests, assignments and presentations. If you do not agree with a grade you obtained in the course, you can appeal it by following the procedure detailed below:

- Request a reassessment of your grade in writing. Address your email to the person who graded your test, assignment or presentation. You have 72 hours --after the reflection period has concluded-- to make a reassessment request.
- In your email, explain in a detailed manner the reasons why you disagree with your grade. You should specifically respond to the feedback obtained and the relevant prompt or guidelines provided for the test, assignment or presentation.
- You will hear back from your instructor or TA within a week after you submitted your request.
- If, after receiving the response from your instructor or TA, you are still unsatisfied with your grade, you can appeal the decision. If your test, assignment or presentation was initially graded by a TA, send the instructor all the relevant information, namely, your assignment and feedback provided as well as the reassessment request email and the response from the TA. If it was initially graded by the instructor, you should direct your request to the Chair of the Department of Political Science.

REMOTE LEARNING

POL377 will run online for the entire Summer 2022 term. We will hold synchronous and asynchronous activities on Quercus and Zoom. While we may not always meet synchronously, or for the entire 2-hour duration of our designated time, students should be available for synchronous activities to be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2 to 4 p.m., Eastern time.

Office hours will be held via Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays between 4:15 and 5 p.m. Eastern time.

Zoom

Students are strongly encouraged to share their webcam and participate actively during our synchronous meetings.

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS

I will communicate with you via Quercus announcements and your _.@mail.utoronto.ca email address. It is your responsibility to check Quercus and your institutional email frequently.

Please be respectful in your interactions with others and treat all your communications with the instructor and TAs as a professional form of communication. In your emails, include “POL377” in the subject line, followed by a brief description that summarizes the purpose of your message. Use proper grammar, sentences, and formal greetings and sign-offs. Please allow two working days to hear back from the instructor and TAs, unless an automatic response instructs to proceed otherwise.

EQUITY STATEMENT

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behavior that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

CODE OF CONDUCT

During the first week of classes, we will discuss and create agreements about the course code of conduct. It will then be posted on Quercus for everyone’s reference.

CONTENT WARNING

The content and discussion in this course will often deal with different forms of discrimination, oppression and violence. Much of this content will be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with. I will flag especially graphic or intense material and will do my best to make this class a space where we can engage bravely, empathetically and thoughtfully with difficult content.

ACCESSIBILITY

Students with diverse learning needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and Accessibility Services as soon as possible. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

The staff members of Accessibility Services are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. Their contact information is included below.

Accessibility Services
455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400
Phone: 416-978-8060
E-mail: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca

NOTICE OF COLLECTION

The University of Toronto respects your privacy. The information on medical certificates is collected pursuant to section 2(14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971. It is collected for the purpose of administering accommodations for academic purposes based on medical grounds. The department will maintain a record of all medical certificates received. At all times, it will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If you have questions, please refer to www.utoronto.ca/privacy or contact the University's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office at 416-946-5835. Address: Room 201, McMurrich Bldg., 12 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A1.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. Advice on writing at the University of Toronto, and guidance on how to cite sources and how not to plagiarize can be found at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources> and <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

Academic integrity in an online environment

Students are expected to maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting. Potential academic offences in a digital context include, but are not limited to:

- Accessing unauthorized resources (search engines, chat rooms, Reddit, etc.) for assessments.
- Using technological aids (e.g. software) beyond what is listed as permitted in an assessment.
- Posting tests or assignment questions to message boards or social media.
- Creating, accessing, and sharing assessment questions and answers in virtual “course groups.”
- Working collaboratively, in-person or online, with others on assessments that are expected to be completed individually.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional sources at the University of Toronto.

PLAGIARISM DETECTION TOOL

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Opt-out option

Students may opt out of Turnitin for submitting their assignments. To do so, they should notify the instructor via email no later than May 13, 2021. Assignments should then be submitted via email.

PRIVACY AND USE OF COURSE MATERIALS

Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor.

COURSE SCHEDULE¹

Week 1

Ungraded reflection due on Quercus.

May 9. Introduction.

[\(Film\) *Harvest of Empire*. 2017. Story by Juan González. Onyx Media Group.](#)

Recommended material:

[\(Podcast\) “Lines of Life and Death”: A Podcast with Geographer Joseph Nevins on Global Apartheid and the Right to the World.](#)

May 11. Types and theories of migration.

De Haas, Hein, Stephen Castles, and Mark J. Miller. 2020. *The age of migration: international population movements in the modern world*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press. Chapters 2 and 3, pp. 21-74.

May 13. First quiz due on Quercus.

Week 2

May 16. Empire, racism and labor migration.

[Walia, Harsha. 2014. “What is border imperialism?” In: *Undoing Border Imperialism*. New York, NY: AK Press.](#)

[Ngai, Mae M. 2014. *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 4, pp. 127-166.](#)

Recommended readings:

[Ngai, Mae M. 2014. *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3, pp. 96-126.](#)

[Ngai, Mae M. 2021. “Racism Has Always Been Part of the Asian American Experience.” *The Atlantic*. April 21.](#)

Gonzalez, Gilbert G. 2011. “Mexican Labor Migration, 1876–1924.” In: *Beyond la frontera: the history of Mexico-U.S. migration*, edited by Mark Overmyer-Velázquez. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

May 18. Forced migrations during and after the Cold War.

[Yen Le Espiritu. 2014. “Militarized Refuge\(es\).” In: *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge\(es\)*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 24-48.](#)

[García, María Cristina. 2017. “The New Asylum Seekers.” *The Refugee Challenge in Post-Cold War America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 158-199.](#)

¹ As stated on page 2, required materials for the course may change. An announcement will be provided at least a week in advance so that students can prepare accordingly. Any new materials will be made available digitally on Quercus.

Recommended materials:

- [García, María Cristina. 2006. *Seeking refuge: Central American migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 12-41.](#)
- [Abrego, Leisy J. 2017. "On Silences: Salvadoran Refugees Then and Now." *Latino Studies*. 15\(1\): 73-85.](#)
- (Film) [Eternos Indocumentados: Central American Refugees in the U.S.](#) 2020. Directed by Jennifer A. Cárcamo. Human Rights Alliance for Child Refugees and Families | The Critical Refugee Studies Collective | Schlesinger Library - Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study – Harvard University.

May 20. *Second quiz due on Quercus.*

Week 3

May 23. *Victoria Day – University closed.*

May 25. *Categories of personhood.*

[Hamlin, Rebecca. 2021. *Crossing: How We Label and React to People on the Move*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Chapter 1: "The Migrant/Refugee Binary," pp. 1-24.](#)

(Podcast) ["Conversation with Nandita Sharma: 'Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants'." 2022. *Displacements*. Season 2, Episode 3.](#)

[Menjívar, Cecilia. 2021. "The Racialization of 'Illegality.'" *Daedalus*. 150\(2\): 91-105.](#)

Recommended readings:

[Luibhéid, Eithne. 2013. *Pregnant on arrival: making the illegal immigrant*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Introduction, pp. 10-40.](#)

[Ngai, Mae M. 2014. *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America*-updated edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction, pp. 29-41.](#)

[Yarris, K. and Castañeda, H. 2015. "Special Issue Discourses of Displacement and Deservingness: Interrogating Distinctions between "Economic" and "Forced" Migration." *International Migration*. 53\(3\): 64-69.](#)

[Heller Charles, et al. 2016. "'Migrant Crisis'/'Refugee Crisis.'" In: "Europe / Crisis: New Keywords of 'the Crisis' in and of 'Europe,'" edited by Nicholas de Genova and Martina Tazzioli. *Near Futures Online* \(1\) "Europe at a Crossroads," pp. 16-22.](#)

May 27. *Blog post due.*

Week 4

May 30. *Policing and deterring.*

[Alvarez, C. J. 2017. "The United States–Mexico Border." In: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*.](#)

[De León, Jason. 2015. *The land of open graves: living and dying on the migrant trail*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Chapter 1, pp. 23-37.](#)

Recommended reading:

[Hernández, Kelly Lytle. 2010. *Migral: a history of the U.S. Border Patrol*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.](#)

June 1. Legal violence.

[Abrego, Leisy J. and Sarah M. Lakhani. 2015. "Incomplete inclusion: legal violence and immigrants in liminal legal statuses." *Law & Policy*. 37\(4\): 265-293.](#)

[Coutin, Susan Bibler. 2011. "Falling Outside: Excavating the History of Central American Asylum Seekers." *Law & Social Inquiry*. 36\(3\): 569-596.](#)

Recommended readings:

[Menjívar, Cecilia and Abrego, Leisy J. 2012. "Legal Violence: Immigration Law and the Lives of Central American Immigrants." *American Journal of Sociology*. 117\(5\): 1380-1421.](#)

[Llewellyn, Cheryl. 2021. "Captive While Waiting to Be Free: Legal Violence and LGBTQ Asylum Applicant Experiences in the USA." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*. \(18\): 202-212.](#)

June 3. Third quiz due on Quercus.

Week 5

June 6. Undermining asylum.

[Mountz, Alison. 2020. *The Death of Asylum: Hidden Geographies of the Enforcement Archipelago*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Introduction, pp. 1-26.](#)

[Gonzales, Alfonso. 2018. "Derechos en crisis: Central American asylum claims in the age of authoritarian neoliberalism." *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. 1-19.](#)

[\(Newsletter\) Love, Allegra. 2021. "Yelling about Title 42." April 15.](#)

[\(Short clip\) "U.S. Welcomes Ukrainians at Border, Uses Title 42 as "Political Tool" to Block Other Asylum Seekers." 2022. *Democracy Now*. April 20.](#)

Recommended reading:

[Washington, John. 2020. *The Dispossessed: A Story of Asylum at the US-Mexico Border and Beyond*. Verso.](#)

June 8. Criminalizing, detaining, deporting and profiting

[Menjívar, Cecilia, Andrea Gómez Cervantes, and Daniel Alvord. 2018. "The expansion of 'crimmigration,' mass detention, and deportation." *Sociology Compass*. 12\(4\): 1-15.](#)

[Ryo, Emily. 2019. "Understanding Immigration Detention: Causes, Conditions, and Consequences." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*. 15: 97-115.](#)

[\(Film\) *The infiltrators*. 2019. Directed by Cristina Ibarra and Alex Rivera.](#)

Recommended readings:

[Young, Elliott. 2021. *Forever Prisoners: How the United States Made the World's Largest Immigrant Detention System*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.](#)

[Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2016. "The Parallels between Mass Incarceration and Mass Deportation: An Intersectional Analysis of State Repression." *Journal of World-Systems Research*. 22\(2\):484-509.](#)

[Golash-Boza, Tanya. 2015. *Deported: immigrant policing, disposable labor, and global capitalism*. New York, NY: New York University Press.](#)

June 10. Fourth quiz due.

Week 6

June 13. Walling.

[Brown, Wendy. 2010. *Walled states, waning sovereignty*. New York, NY: Zone Books. Chapter 1, pp. 7-42.](#)

[Paik, A. Naomi. 2020. *Bans, Walls, Raids, Sanctuary: Understanding US Immigration in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 2, pp. 47-74.](#)

Recommended reading:

[Díaz-Barriga, Miguel, and Margaret E. 2020. Dorsey. *Fencing in Democracy: Border Walls, Necro-citizenship, and the Security State*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Chapter 1, pp. 15-48.](#)

June 15. Offshoring and externalizing.

[Mountz, Alison. 2020. *The Death of Asylum: Hidden Geographies of the Enforcement Archipelago*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 1, pp. 29-56.](#)

[\(Film\) *The Vertical Border*. 2022. Produced by Sonja Wolf. CIDE-Habesha Media.](#)

Recommended materials:

[Minian, Ana Raquel. 2020. “Offshoring Migration Control: Guatemalan Transmigrants and the Construction of Mexico as a Buffer Zone.” *The American Historical Review*. 125\(1\): 89–111.](#)

[Jennifer Hyndman and Alison Mountz. 2008. “Another Brick in the Wall? Neo-Refoulement and the Externalization of Asylum by Australia and Europe.” *Government and Opposition*. 43\(2\): 249-269.](#)

Miller, Todd. 2019. *Empire of borders: the expansion of the US border around the world*. New York, NY: Verso.

[\(Film\) *Border South*. 2019. Produced by Jason de León. Andar Films | Siendo Films.](#)

June 17. Fifth quiz due.

Week 7

June 20. Final reflections.

[Scheel, Stephan and Martina Tazzioli. 2022. “Who is a Migrant? Abandoning the Nation-state Point of View in the Study of Migration.” *Migration Politics Journal*. 1\(1\): 1-23.](#)

e-Portfolio due.