Course Description

The main purpose of this research seminar is to study in-depth the sociology of international labor migration regimes. We will pay particular attention to the manifold socio-economic effects and human rights dilemmas that are produced by the contemporary patterns of low-end (low-skilled and low-waged) labor migration. The study of low-end labor migration matters to development for the following reasons. First, international labor migration is considered a core economic strategy to reduce poverty and bring tangible development outcomes in developing countries. Second, due to the unequal economic process of globalization, growing numbers of workers from developing countries – of whom more than half are female – are incorporated into global labor markets as cheap and disposable low-end laborers. Third, the current neoliberal-driven labor migration systems trigger a myriad of human rights concerns including systemic labor exploitation, denial of public medical services and of other basic welfare rights, family
separation, and forceful deportation and detention of non-status migrant workers.

The seminar themes are divided into three main categories. In the first part, we will analyze the macro structure of the labor migration system, including immigration policies of labor-receiving states as well as labor-export policies of labor-sending states. We will pay particular attention to the migrant vulnerability and exploitability that are produced and normalized through both immigration policies and labor-export policies. In the second part, we will analyze various social implications of labor migration, such as migrant networks, remittances, gender, transnational households, reproductive rights of migrants, and migrant activism. In the third part, we will pay attention to the emerging issues and concerns related to legality and justice. These include construction of illegality, deportation and detention, human trafficking, and social activism. Throughout the course, I will show two documentaries related to low-end labor migration to Canada. In order to gain first-hand insight and dynamic aspects, we will invite guest speakers including local civil society groups and scholars.

Course Requirements

1. Participation
Students are expected to come to class having done the required readings beforehand in order to contribute to class discussion. Readings will average 100-130 pages per week. In order for this seminar to be successful, all students are expected to make thoughtful contributions to the discussion.

2. Précis (reading notes, choose 8 themes out of the 11 weekly themes)
In order to stimulate class participation, students are required to prepare a total of eight précis (short reading notes) out of the 11 weekly themes. You will choose any eight weekly topics between week 3 (Immigration Policies) and week 13 (Human Rights). 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 length will be about 1 double-spaced page.

Please note that you are not allowed to select the same week for your analytical paper. Each précis must be submitted via MyCourses [“Assignments”] by 17:00 on Tuesday prior to the seminar meeting. This exercise is intended to ensure that you pro-actively do the readings and are ready to engage them in the seminar.

3. Group presentation (from week 5 Migrant Networks)
Students must do an oral presentation by working in a group comprised of 3 people. Each group is assigned to a specific week to discuss the given theme. The key goal of this group exercise is to provide policy recommendations relevant to the weekly theme. This exercise is intended to provide a foundation for thoughtful seminar discussion. Through the group presentation, students are expected to proactively contribute to the output as well as to class discussion by engaging with the key issues/problems in an analytical and thoughtful manner. We will begin this exercise from the fifth week of the semester (October 4).

Here are the components of the group presentation. Each group must incorporate assigned readings as well as outside sources in the analysis of the issues.

a) **Introduction**: Identify key development issues relevant to the weekly theme. Demonstrate why the issues matter to the broader development framework and why these issues are largely neglected.

b) **Backgrounds**: Discuss the main structural background related to the issues. You should provide actual examples of the structural problems from the assigned readings. You have to also clarify why and how the structural context affects labor migration.

c) **Policy recommendations**: Frame your policy recommendations in a
clear manner in response to the structural issues. Your policy recommendations should specify a stakeholder to whom you would like to address the issues. The potential stakeholders are labor-receiving states, labor-sending states, or international development agencies.

d) **Conclusion**: Summarize the key development issues and ideas. Provide analytical questions for class discussion.

e) **Time duration**: Not to exceed 30 minutes.

**Note:**
- **Division of labor**: In order to ensure equal group participation, you have to make clear the division of labor among the group members. Each member should play a clear role in the group presentation. Please specify each role during the presentation.
- **Submit your group presentation slides**: Please submit your group presentation slides by 17:00 the day before the seminar via MyCourses.
- You are highly encouraged to meet with me during office hours to discuss the group presentation.

**Evaluation**: Each group presentation will be evaluated through three different methods, namely confidential peer evaluation, confidential class evaluation, and evaluation by the instructor. Therefore, students are expected to participate in the evaluation process.

(1) **Confidential peer evaluation**: you have to evaluate your other group members for their overall contributions to the group exercise. Please submit your peer evaluation after your presentation.

(2) **Confidential class evaluation**: you have to provide your comments on weekly group presentations throughout the semester. Please submit your comments via MyCourses during or after the seminar.
4. Short analytical paper (from week 4 Labor Export Strategies)
-Students must write 1 short analytical paper (4-5 pages, double-spaced pages) based on the assigned readings. The paper is intended to provide an analysis or critique of the reading(s) of a specific week. The goal of this exercise to think critically on the theme of the week and then to write an article that provides a distinct argument on the readings. The paper should advance one central argument regarding the ideas from the readings. The paper should not provide a scattered analysis of the different readings, but instead a coherent focused argument that covers the theme of the week.
-Although some minimal summary of the readings is necessary, the paper should avoid spending significant space summarizing the readings. This is an exercise in analysis and critique.
-You can choose any week in which to write the paper, but it must not coincide with the week in which you are doing the group presentation. These exercises are separate.
-Submit the paper by 17:00 via MyCourses on the Tuesday before the seminar meeting for which you are writing the paper. Note that you must write your paper prior to the seminar meeting, not after the seminar. In other words, you must come to the seminar ready to discuss your paper. We will begin this exercise from the fourth week of the semester (September 30).

5. Research paper
-The research paper should be a minimum of 15 double-spaced pages and a maximum of 20 double-spaced pages. Students can choose any topic related to international labor migration but the argument should engage with international development.
-The goal of the research paper is to employ key concepts discussed in the seminar and to develop one’s own research ideas. The paper should focus on one central argument and examine it through empirical cases.
-Please submit a title of your paper and an abstract by Tuesday, November 14 via MyCourses.
-Research papers are due by 11:59pm on Wednesday, December 13 via MyCourses.
- Further details on the research paper will be given in class.

**Grade Distribution**
1. *Seminar participation*: 10%
2. *Weekly précis*: 15% (8 précises)
3. *Group project*: 15%
4. *Analytical paper*: 20%
5. *Research paper*: 40%

**Books to Purchase**
The required books have been ordered at Paragraphe Bookstore on 2220 McGill College Avenue. They are also available on online shops (for example, amazon.ca) often at lower prices for used copies. Copies of the three required books will be placed on reserve in the Humanities and Social Sciences library as well.


All the assigned articles other than the three required books will be placed on *MyCourses*. **NOTE:** There is no coursepack available for this research seminar.

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

Policy on Languages
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.

General Information
If you have a hearing, visual and mobility impairment, please contact the instructor immediately (in advance of any evaluations or other class requirements).

Notare Bene
This course syllabus is subject to change in case of unforeseen circumstances.

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Part 1. Macro Picture: Issues and Actors

WEEK 1 (September 6)
Introduction

Goal: Discuss the broader outline of the seminar as well as the key assignments for the course. We will also introduce ourselves and share your main interests in the study of international labor migration and development.

WEEK 2 (September 13)
Labor Mobility and Migrant Vulnerability

Goal: Explore the global patterns of labor flows especially in low-skilled sectors. We will identify who are the key actors (labor-sending and labor-receiving countries, international organizations, migrants, and their family members) as well as what are the emerging development dilemmas surrounding international development. We will pay particular attention to the intensified interconnections between the increased labor mobility from low-income countries and the vulnerable conditions of migrant workers. We will closely look at these dilemmas through a documentary.

Film screening:  
Readings


WEEK 3 (September 20)
Immigration Policies in Labor-Receiving Countries

Guest speaker: Eugénie Depatie-Pelletier, President and Chief Executive Officer, Association for the Rights of Household Workers

Goal: Explore the multifaceted factors that shape immigration policies in labor-receiving countries. We will pay particular attention to the structural barriers that limit the human rights of temporary low-skilled migrant workers as well as non-status migrant workers.

Readings:


**Optional:**


**WEEK 4 (September 27)**
Labor Export Strategies in Labor-Sending Countries

**Goal:** Examine the key push factors that facilitate outflows of low-skilled laborers. We will also discuss the role of labor-sending countries in terms of pushing neoliberal-driven labor-export strategies.

**Readings:**


**Optional:**
Part II. Social Implications

WEEK 5 (October 4)

Migrant Networks and Middlemen

Goal: Examine the roles of migrant networks and middlemen in low-end labor migration regimes. In particular, we will pay attention to the dynamics of irregular migration channels that facilitate flows of low-end migrant workers.

Readings:


Optional:
Remittances

Goal: Examines the multifaceted effects of remittances on labor-sending countries. We will explore emerging critical approaches to remittance, the overlooked issues, as the distinct intersections between gender and remittances.

Readings:


Optional:

WEEK 7 (October 18)
Gender and Transnational Households  
Guest Speaker: Jill Hanley, School of Social Work, McGill University

Goal: Examine the significance of gender in the study of labor migration. We will pay particular attention to the gender-specific migrant vulnerabilities that are experienced by low-skilled migrant women. We will also discuss the socio-cultural effects of female labor migration on left-behind family members.

Readings:


Optional:
WEEK 8 (October 25)
Reproductive Vulnerability

Goals: Explore the impact of neoliberal labor migration systems on migrant women’s ability to exert their reproductive rights.


WEEK 9 (November 1)
Migrant Activism

Goal: Understand the key role of migrant activism in terms of advocating the human rights of low-skilled migrant workers and non-status migrant workers.

Readings:

Optional:


**Part III. Legality and Illegality**

**WEEK 10 (November 8)**

*Sovereignty and Illegality*

**Goal:** Understand the ways in which migrant illegality is produced by the state’s restrictive border control and immigration policies. We will engage with the critical discussion that link migrant illegality with sovereignty.

**Readings:**


Optional:
De Genova, Nicholas P. “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability in Everyday Life.”
WEEK 11 (November 15)
Deportation and Detention

Guest speaker: Action Refugies
Goal: Explore the key effects of the state’s border control and its disciplinary actions on low-skilled migrant worker. We will pay particular attention to the everyday sanctioned practices of deportation and detention and examine the socio-political meanings attached to these practices.


WEEK 12 (November 22)
Human Trafficking
Goal: Understand the contemporary patterns of human trafficking as well as analyze the human rights concerns that are embedded in human trafficking. Identify who are the key actors and what are the key factors that facilitate the trafficking of vulnerable social groups.
Readings:


Optional:

**WEEK 13 (November 29)**
Emerging Human Rights Dilemmas

Goal: Examine the emerging human rights dilemmas in international migration and development. We will discuss the key dilemmas surrounding
international human rights regimes through a lens of statelessness.


Optional: