Econ 3970

Migration: Economics, Politics & Policy

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Office Hours

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As anyone who has even modest knowledge of current politics knows, in the US and virtually everywhere else in the world, migration is a public political issue of first-rate importance. Unfortunately, much of the public discourse around the issue is poorly informed. The good news is that, not surprisingly, migration has been a very active area of research for both labor and trade economists.

In this course we take advantage of this research to enhance our understanding of a number of key elements of international migration: foundations of the individual decision to migrate and the choice of country of immigration; the factors affecting economic performance of migrants in host countries; factors underlying aggregate patterns of migration; the aggregate consequences of migration for host country economies (e.g. wages, unemployment, growth); the effects of policy on migration flows; the political economy of immigration policy; and normative (i.e. welfare) implications of migration on host and home countries. Given the centrality of this issue, most other fields in the social and behavioral sciences also work in this area–especially demography, sociology and political science–and, while we will occasionally draw on work from these areas when they bear directly on our economic analysis, our focus will be the economic analysis of migration.

This is a 3000 level Economics course. I assume that you are comfortable with material from principles of Microeconomic and Macroeconomic (Economics 1010 and 1020. I will also assume that you can follow and reproduce mathematical argument consistent with high school algebra and geometry.

Readings for the course will be drawn from:

Cynthia Bansak, Nicole Simpson & Madeline Zavodny (2021). *The Economics of Immigration*. New York: Routledge. [**BSZ**]

A small number of articles and papers. The syllabus contains many (many) more articles that we will be able to read. Required readings are marked by a black square (■), optional readings by an empty circle (○).

There are many (MANY) good books on immigration, but a very nice recent book provides a very interesting take on the issue based on an extraordinary data creation and analysis exercise. It's not required, but I will note where chapters from the book provide useful context (they will all be marked ○).

Ran Abramitzky & Leah Boustan (2022). *Streets of Gold: America's Untold Story of Immigrant Success*. New York: Public Affairs. [**AB**]

Evaluation: Your performance in this course will be evaluated on the basis of 2 examinations (worth 100 points each); and1 short, policy-evaluation paper (worth 100 points). To receive an A, you must earn at least 90 percent of the points available. To pass the course you must earn at least 60 percent of the points available. Grades between these limits will be determined on the basis of your performance relative to that of the class as a whole.

Both exams will have the following format: about 40% short answer questions and about 60% essays. In general there will be more questions of both types than must be answered, so you will have some choice (though there is often one mandatory question which everyone must answer). **Exams must be written in blue books, which you must supply.**

The midterm exam will be given on Friday, 14 March. **The final examination will only be given on the scheduled date: Saturday, 3 May at 3:30pm** (there will be no exceptions so do not make travel plans that conflict with this). Without exception, everyone must take the exams at their scheduled time.

Every student is required to produce a short policy evaluation paper on some aspect of the economics of immigration. These papers must be original work, *plagiarism will not be tolerated*. Broadly speaking, I expect papers in the 10-15 page range. To ensure that topics are well-established and suitable for the course, I require a proposal due no later than the date of the mid-term exam (Tuesday, 3 October). Late proposals will result in a 10 point penalty to be assessed on the paper's final score. Policy evaluation papers are due at the last regular meeting of the course (Friday, 30 April). ***Late papers will not be accepted**, and will earn a score of 0 points*.

The paper assignment involves identifying either an existing or actually proposed policy dealing explicitly with immigration, giving a clear and accurate description of the legal/institutional details of the policy in question, and providing an economic analysis of the policy using the tools and information from the course as the basis of your analysis (you may, of course, use additional tools, but you are not required to do so). I expect the majority of the paper, i.e. at least 60% to deal directly with the economic analysis (this is an Economics course, after all). Possible topics could include: adoption of a point system where points are allocated to economic benefit (skills, investable resources, etc.); dramatic restriction in number of legal immigrants; dramatic increase in border enforcement; deportation of all illegal immigrants; amnesty for all non-felon illegal immigrants resident in the US for some specific period of time; adoption of an expanded guest-worker program. Again, this list is illustrative, there are many other possibilities. Note, well: the analysis is to be fundamentally positive, not normative. That is, while you might well draw normative conclusions (and those conclusions might be why you actually picked the topic), your paper will be evaluated strictly based on the positive analysis.

Some Good Advice (At No Extra Charge): First, keep current with the reading. Second, ask questions in class. If you read something and it is unclear and then it is unclear during lecture, ask about it. Your classmates will probably thank you. This is one of the few ways, before an exam, that I can gauge how the material is getting across. However, third, avoid questions that can be rendered into the form "are you wasting my time with this material" (e.g. "will this be on the exam"). Fourth, come see me during my office hours. This is another opportunity to get clarification and help on material about which you are unclear. But don't wait until the last minute, by then it is usually too late.

Tulane/SACS Program & Learning Outcomes

Program outcomes: Relative to the educational objectives developed by the Economics Department to satisfy SACS requirements for accreditation, among other things, in this course the student should:

1. Apply the basic market model to explain and predict price changes in individual markets–in this course, the main application is labor markets, both national and international, though we are also interested in the interaction between labor markets and goods markets in general equilibrium.

2. Identify and assess the opportunity costs involved in any economic activity, whether the decision-maker is a private individual, business firm, or social

organization. Individual, firm and governmental decisions relating to immigration will be analyzed in detail.

3. Identify economic issues and problems, gather data needed to evaluate them, and analyze that data to gain insights into economic behavior and formulate possible solutions. As the course objectives state at the beginning of this syllabus, we will be doing all of this with particular reference to international migration.

4. Apply the tools of economic analysis to specific policy issues at a level appropriate to both majors in Economics and the University community more generally. This is an upper level class, so the tools applies to the analysis of immigration and immigration policy are those consistent with such a level.

5. Gain an in-depth understanding of several specialized areas in economics, thereby learning how to apply microeconomic and macroeconomic theory to specific policy issues. Same as (4).

Learning objectives: After completing this course, the student should be able to apply formal and econometric methods to understand:

1. Foundations of the individual decision to migrate and the choice of country of immigration;

2. The factors affecting economic performance of migrants in host countries;

3. Factors underlying aggregate patterns of migration;

4. The aggregate consequences of migration for host country economies (e.g. wages, unemployment, growth);

5. The effects of policy on migration flows;

6. The political economy of immigration policy; and

7. Normative (i.e. welfare) implications of migration and migration policy on host and home countries.

Syllabus

- 13 - 17 January: Course Introduction (Including some review of basic microeconomics)
    - BSZ, Chapter 1
    - AB, Chapter 3

- 22 & 24 January: To Where Do People Migrate?
    - Patterns of International Migration
        - BSZ Chapter 2
- Why Do People Migrate?
    - 27-31 January: Determinants of Migration
        - BSZ, Chapter 3
    - 3-7 February: Migration Choice (Selection models)
        - BSZ, Chapter 4
- What Happens to Immigrants in the Host Country?
    - 10-14 February: Assimilation
        - BSZ Chapter 5
        - AB, Chapter 4
    - Optional topic: The Second Generation
        - BSZ Chapter 6
        - AB, Chapter 5
- What Happens (to the Economy) When People Migrate?
    - 17-21 February: Labor Market Effects, Theory
        - BSZ Chapter 7

    - Gaston and Nelson (2013). "Bridging Trade Theory and Labour Econometrics: The Effects of International Migration". *Journal of Economic Surveys*, V.27-#1, pp. 98-139.

- 24-28 February: Labor Market Effects, Evidence
    - BSZ Chapter 8
    - AB, Chapter 7
    - Card, David. 2009. "Immigration and Inequality." *American Economic Review*, 99(2), 1-21.
    - Dustmann, Schönberg and Stuhler (2016). "The Impact of Immigration: Why Do Studies Reach Such Different Results?" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, V.30-#4, 31-56.

• Tulane Mardi Gras Break 2 – 9 March

- 10 & 12 March: Effects on Other Markets
    - BSZ Chapter 9

• Midterm Exam: 14 March

- 17 & 19 March: Fiscal Effects
    - BSZ Chapter 10
- 21 & 24 March: Effects on Source Countries
    - BSZ Chapter 11

- Normative Analysis of Migration Policy?
    - 26-31 March: Basic Welfare Economics of Migration
        - Borjas (1995). "The Economic Benefits from Immigration." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, V.9-#2, 3-22.
        - Clemens (2011). "Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, V.25-#3, 83-106.
        - Borjas (2015). "Immigration and Globalization: A Review Essay." *Journal of Economic Literature*, V.53-#4, 961-74.

    - 2 & 4 April: Ethics of Migration

        - Sidgwick (1891). “Principles of External Policy,” In *The Elements of Politics*, 285-315. London: Macmillan. [Canvas]
        - Walzer (1981). “The Distribution of Membership”. in Brown and Shue, eds. *Boundaries: National Autonomy and Its Limits*. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 1-35.
        - Carens (1987). “Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders”. *Review of Politics*; V.49-#2, pp. 251-273.

- What Does Actual Immigration Policy Look Like?
    - 7 – 14 April: U.S. Immigration Policy
        - BSZ Chapter 13
        - AB Chapter 8
- Politics of Migration
    - 18 & 21 April: What are the Drivers of Anti-Immigrant Politics?
        - Alesina and Tabellini (2024). “The Political Effects of Immigration: Culture or Economics?” *Journal of Economic Literature*, V.62-#1, 5–46.
        - Gaston and Nelson (2000). “Immigration and Labour Market Outcomes in the United States: A Political-Economy Puzzle.” *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, V.16-#3, 104-14.
    - 23 & 25 April: Is Immigration a Threat to the Welfare State?
        - Eger, Maureen A. (2022). “Economics or Politics? Assessing Immigration as a Challenge to the Welfare State,” in M. M. L. Crepaz ed *Handbook on Migration and Welfare.* Edward Elgar Publishing, 45-63.
    - 28 & 30 April: Is Immigration a Threat to Democracy?
        - Pevnick (2024). “Immigration, Backlash, and Democracy.” *American Political Science Review*, V.118-#1, 332-44.
        - Bartels (2020). “Ethnic Antagonism Erodes Republicans’ Commitment to Democracy.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, V.117-#37, 22752-59.

- **Final Exam: Saturday, 3 May at 3:30 pm**

ADA/Accessibility Statement

Tulane University is committed to offering classes that are accessible. If you anticipate or encounter disability-related barriers in a course, please contact the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility to establish reasonable accommodations. If approved by Goldman, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. I will never ask for medical documentation from you to support potential accommodation needs. **Goldman Center contact information:** Email: goldman@tulane.edu; Phone (504) 862-8433; Website: accessibility.tulane.edu

Code of Academic Conduct

The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., Code of Academic Conduct and Code of Student Conduct) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement (EDI)

"Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are important Tulane values that are key drivers of academic excellence in our learning environments. In our drive for academic excellence, we seek to ensure that students, faculty, and staff across diverse social identities, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences can thrive - especially those from from underrepresented and underserved communities (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, social class, international, veterans, religious minorities, age, and any other classification protected by applicable law - see Tulane's Nondiscrimination Policy). In order to build a supportive culture and climate for every member of our community, we recognize that we each of have unique EDI strengths to share with others and that we also have areas for EDI growth, learning, and change. This EDI commitment and cultural humility helps us collectively build a university community and culture where everyone experiences belonging."

Religious accommodation policy

Per Tulane's religious accommodation policy as stated at the bottom Tulane's academic calendar, *I will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are able to observe religious holidays without jeopardizing their ability to fulfill their academic obligations. Excused absences do not relieve the student*

from the responsibility for any course work required during the period of absence. Students should notify me within the first two weeks of the semester about their intent to observe any holidays that fall on a class day or on the day of the final exam.

Title IX: (***REQUIRED by University Policy as stated here)***

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at allin.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either "Confidential" or "Private" as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am required by the university to share your disclosure in a Care Connection to the Office of Case Management and Victim Support Services to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. The Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration is also notified of these disclosures. You choose whether or not you want to meet with these offices. You can also make a disclosure yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns.

Confidential	**Private**
Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one's self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission. ▪ Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) | (504) 314-2277 ▪ The Line (24/7) | (504) 264-6074	*Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.* ▪ Case Management & Victim Support Services | (504) 314-2160 or srss@tulane.edu ▪ Tulane University Police (TUPD) | Uptown - (504) 865-5911 | Downtown – (504) 988-5531 ▪ Office of University Sexual Misconduct Response and Title IX Administration | (504) 865-5611 or titleix@tulane.edu ▪ Student Affairs Professional On-Call (24/7) | (504) 920-9900

▪ Student Health Center | (504) 865-5255 ▪ Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE) | (504) 654-9543	

Emergency Preparedness & Response: *(REQUIRED by University Policy as stated here)*

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS: TU ALERT	**SEVERE WEATHER**
In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and/or phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university. Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.	▪ Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirens ▪ Seek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is given ▪ Do not use elevators ▪ Do not attempt to travel outside if weather is severe Monitor the Tulane Emergency website (tulane.edu/emergency/) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event
ACTIVE SHOOTER / VIOLENT ATTACKER	**EVERBRIDGE APP**
▪ **RUN** – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possible ▪ **HIDE** – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERT ▪ **FIGHT** – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort ▪ For more information or to schedule a training, visit emergencyprep.tulane.edu	▪ Download the Everbridge app from the App Store or Google Play store ▪ The Report feature allows you to silently and discreetly communicate with TUPD dispatchers ▪ The SOS button allows you to notify TUPD if you need help ▪ The Safe Corridor button serves as a virtual escort and allows you to send check-in notifications to TUPD

From: Tulane Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response