

<b>Course title:</b>	<b>Europe, Migration, Refugees</b>
<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Nerges Azizi
<b>Email address:</b>	nerges.azizi@sciencespo.fr
<b>Track:</b>	B-Track
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>Contact hours:</b>	48 (6 per day)
<b>ECTS credits:</b>	6
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2) or higher. No prior knowledge is required but the willingness to think beyond the usual framings on migration.

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### **Course description**

This seminar aims to provide students with a critical analytical toolbox to understand migration, asylum, and border regimes in Europe. We will develop an understanding of the movement of migrants and refugees to Europe, their struggles for equality and rights, initiatives in solidarity with refugees and migrants, as well as state and supranational responses. For that, the seminar is organized around three interconnected themes. The first aims at assessing the historical and legal bases of asylum, including the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. We will also examine how refugees are conceptualized in regional human rights frameworks. The second part investigates border violence and pushbacks at Europe's external borders, and their contestations through legal interventions and counterforensic investigations. The third part considers the realities of migrant workers in Europe, histories of collective struggle of people on the move and those in solidarity with them, and everyday practices of survival and solidarity as sites of political engagement.

The course integrates theoretical perspectives with empirical case studies, audiovisual materials, field visits to relevant sites and organizations in Berlin, fostering a reflective and interdisciplinary approach to the theme of migration and forced displacement to Europe. Throughout our seminar, active engagement, critical thinking, and robust discussions are encouraged.

### **Student profile**

This course is designed for all students having a personal, professional or political personal interest in a deeper and thus more differentiated understanding of transnational migration.

### **Course requirements**

The basic conditions for the course are regular attendance, participation in discussions and a close reading of the literature provided.

- Oral presentation (max. 10 min.) on a topic from the syllabus or a reflection paper on one of the field trips (max 3 pages)

- The final examination will consist of answering 2-3 leading questions regarding the contents of the seminar in continuous text.

### Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced intermediate level (B2) is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>

### Attendance

Each class consists of six teaching modules (45 minutes each). If you miss 6 modules (unexcused), your final course grade will drop by one grade. Coming more than 20 minutes late counts as one missed module (this also applies to excursion days). If you come late to class six times (up to 20 minutes) your entire course grade will also drop by one grade. If you miss 14 modules or more (unexcused), you will fail the class. Excused absences, such as those with medical documentation, do not count toward these totals.

### Grading

Class participation: 30%  
Oral Presentation or Reflection Paper: 30%  
Final Exam: 40%

### Readings

A course reader will be provided online as PDF file.

### Course schedule

Date	Program*
Tuesday, July 21, 2026	<p><b>Overview and Core Concepts</b></p> <p>We will critically reflect on the concept of “refugee” as defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and consider how the refugee is conceptualised in regional treaties such as the American Convention on Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>El-Enany, Nadine. 2020. “Between Legal Idolatry and Legal Pragmatism: On the Desertion of the Refugee.” <i>International Journal of Refugee Law</i> 32 (4): 567–590. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/aaaa030">https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/aaaa030</a></p>
Friday, July 24, 2026	<p><b>Critical Approaches to Migration Studies</b></p> <p>This session introduces critical debates in migration studies. We first consider migration as a site of decolonial critique, exploring how mobility challenges legacies of colonial power and exclusion. We then explore the autonomy of migration literature and the concept of mobile commons, highlighting migrant self-</p>

	<p>organization and transnational mobility beyond state control.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Achiume, Tendayi. 2019. "Migration as Decolonization." <i>Stanford Law Review</i> 71: 1509–1574.</p> <p>Papadopoulos, Dimitris, and Vassilis S. Tsianos. 2013. "After Citizenship: Autonomy of Migration, Organisational Ontology and Mobile Commons." <i>Citizenship Studies</i> 17 (2): 178–196.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2013.780736">https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2013.780736</a></p>
Tuesday, July 28, 2026	<p><b>Contestations of the European Border Regime</b></p> <p>This session examines contemporary forms of border violence in Europe and the practices resisting them. We will engage with counter-forensic investigations, and legal strategies challenging the criminalization of people on the move and border deaths.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Pezzani, Lorenzo, and Charles Heller. 2013. "A Disobedient Gaze: Strategic Interventions in the Knowledge(s) of Maritime Borders." <i>Postcolonial Studies</i> 16 (3): 289–298.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2013.850047">https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2013.850047</a></p> <p>Borderline Europe. 2023. <i>A Legal Vacuum: The Systematic Criminalisation of Migrants for Driving a Boat or Car to Greece</i>.</p> <p><b>Field trip to an organisation engaged in contesting European border violence (upon availability)</b></p>
Friday, July 31, 2026	<p><b>Migration and the cityscape in Berlin</b></p> <p>We will explore how migration historically shaped the cityscape of Berlin.</p> <p><b>To Watch:</b></p> <p>Love, Deutschmarks, and Death by Cem Kaya</p> <p><b>Field trip to a museum specializing in the history of migration to Berlin / small tour in the area (upon availability)</b></p>
Tuesday, August 4, 2026	<p><b>Critical Reflections on 'Welcome Culture'</b></p> <p>This session interrogates the discourse of <i>Willkommenskultur</i> and the politics of hospitality in Germany and Europe following the 2015 migration moment. We will examine how narratives of</p>

	<p>benevolence, humanitarianism, and “welcome” intersect with histories of colonialism, racialised borders, and ongoing violence against migrants.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>Danewid, Ida. 2017. “White Innocence in the Black Mediterranean: Hospitality and the Erasure of History.” <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 38 (7): 1674–1689.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1331123">https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1331123</a></p> <p><b>Field trip to a ‘Welcome-Initiative’ (upon availability)</b></p>
Friday, August 7, 2026	<p><b>Transformation of Migrant Labor</b></p> <p>This session examines changing forms of migrant labor beyond traditional segmentation models. We will discuss how diverse labor roles, ranging from logistics and care work to entrepreneurship and digital work, are shaped by stratified legal status and shifting border regimes. The discussion will focus on how migrant “illegality” functions as a mode of labor control while enabling selective incorporation into the economy.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>De Genova, Nicholas. 2013. “Spectacles of Migrant ‘Illegality’: The Scene of Exclusion, the Obscene of Inclusion.” <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> 36 (7): 1180–1198. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.783710">https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.783710</a></p> <p><b>Documentary film maker will discuss their movie on the realities of platform workers in Berlin (upon availability)</b></p>
Tuesday, August 11, 2026	<p><b>Migrants’ Perspectives: Struggles and Resistance in Berlin</b></p> <p>This session focuses on migrant and refugee self-organising in Berlin, examining how those facing precarious residency status have shaped the city’s political landscape. We will discuss experiences of resistance and collective action, with particular attention to perspectives of refugee women organisers.</p> <p><b>To Watch:</b></p> <p>You can’t evict a Movement  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uf8OlnNBWh0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uf8OlnNBWh0</a>.  Please activate subtitles in English.</p> <p><b>Field trip to a migrant/refugee women organization (upon availability)</b></p>
Friday, August 14, 2026	<p><b>Future of Migration: Freedom of Movement</b></p>

	<p>In this closing session, we reflect on the themes of the course and critically discuss visions for the future of migration. We will explore the politics and possibilities of a no-borders framework and the idea of freedom of movement and connect it to debates on justice, solidarity, and global mobility regimes. The session includes the final class discussion and exam.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Bridget Anderson, Nandita Sharma, and Cynthia Wright (2011). Editorial: Why No Borders?</p> <p>Heller, Charles, Lorenzo Pezzani, and Maurice Stierl. 2018. "Toward a Politics of Freedom of Movement: In Defense of Free Movement." In <i>Open Borders: In Defense of Free Movement</i>, edited by Reece Jones, 51–76. Athens: University of Georgia Press.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22nmc35.8">https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22nmc35.8</a>.</p>
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\*Field trips are subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, class hours may be adjusted.