Labour migration in a global and regional perspective
Course GRAD 7056
African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand

Coordinator: Zaheera Jinnah
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Mon and Wed 09h00-12h00
Venue: Solomon House SH3120C
Consultations by appointment with coordinator zaheera.jinnah@wits.ac.za

While the vast majority of international migration is motivated by economic reasons, and mostly for work related purposes, recent scholarship and public interest for migration in developing countries have often inadequately accounted for this dimension of mobility. Yet, labour migration remains a key component of contemporary mobilities, particularly as it intersects with a range of development issues: political economy, regional integration, governance, statecraft, dependency, etc. This course will help students understand the origins, scope and current dynamics associated with labour migration globally and with more specific empirical material in the Southern African region. The course is structured around 4 key themes destined to equip students with a robust theoretical, conceptual, historical, and contemporary understanding of labour migration globally and in Africa. While the content of the course will be essentially academic, it is intended to allow students to understand the key orientations of and appraise critically global and regional policy positions and responses from organised labour and civil society.

Objectives:
The objectives of the course objectives are:
• To explore key aspects of current theoretical and empirical knowledge of labour migration, historically and in the contemporary period;
• To equip students to envisage these critically and assess contemporary situations autonomously;
• For some, to assist structuring an analytical framework or ensure that a robust LM dimension is built into an analytical framework.

Thematic areas:
The course will be organised around the following 5 sub-themes:

– Global theories and concepts of labour migration;
– Regional and national perspectives on labour migration in south (ern) Africa;
– Precarious and informal work and migration;
– Global, regional and national policy frameworks and debates on labour migration; and
– Responses to migrant workers

Week 1: 25 and 27 July 2016
Concepts, theories and trends of labour migration
From Marxist and World Systems theory to neo-classical, NELM and critical realist approaches; the first two sessions interrogate how scholars have theorised what labour migration is and what role it plays in economies.

Required readings:


**Week 2: 1 and 3 August 2016**

**The Southern African migrant labour system: historical and contemporary perspectives**

What forms and outcomes of labour migration can you identify? How have these been theorised? What is driving the transformation of the LM regime in the region?


**Week 3: 8 and 10 August 2016**

**Informal work, and precarious migration**

**Guest Lecture:** Dr Pragna Rugunanan, University of Johannesburg

Is the nature of work changing? How does migration intersect with (precarious) work? What challenges does this pose to theoretical and policy approaches that explain and respond to labour migration?


**WEEK 4: 15 and 17 August 2016**

**Policy responses to labour migration**
Policy approaches: how has labour migration been regulated across the world? What does this suggest about the underlying premises of labour migration? Can specific systems and regimes globally be identified?


**Week 5: 22 and 24 August 2016**

Responses and challenges to labour migration: organised labour, atypical work and health

Guest Lecturers: Prof Jo Vearey and Dr Rebecca Walker


**Additional readings to be announced**

**Week 6: 29 and 31 August 2016**

Conclusions

- The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration

**Course structure:**

- Available as an elective in the 2nd semester
- Twice a week sessions of 3 hours each
- Mandatory student attendance at all seminars.
- Mandatory readings required
- Short lectures providing students with syntheses of the literatures and analytical tools; and seminars based on readings related to each sub-theme.

**Evaluation:**

- One sit-in written examination (75%);
- One written response paper to be presented in class based on readings (15%);
- One group project consisting of a mini-research report and group presentation (10%).