

INTLPOL 214A: The Politics of Migrant Exclusion

Claire Adida

Winter 2026

E-mail: cadida@stanford.edu
Office Hours: Sign up [here](#)
Office: Encina C146

Web: [Canvas site](#)
Class Hours: Tuesdays, 9-11.50am
Class Room: LATHROP015

Course Description

Migrants are easy scapegoats. They are blamed for stealing jobs, draining resources, spreading disease, committing crimes, and challenging cultural norms. This course first investigates the theoretical underpinnings of these various threat narratives, and examines empirically if and how they shape public attitudes and behaviors toward migrants and migration policy. It then turns to inclusion, surveying the prejudice-reduction literature and investigating if and how it applies to migrant inclusion. The course aims to shed light on how a global phenomenon, the scapegoating of migrants, is aggravated or alleviated, with an eye toward causal inference, scale-up, and policy implications.

Prerequisites/Corequisites

There are no formal prerequisites for this class, though students who have completed INTLPOL 301A/301B will likely get more out of class discussion.

Course Structure

Class Structure

The course meets once a week for two hours and fifty minutes. It is a discussion-based course, meaning that its success relies on your active engagement and participation.

Assessments

You will be evaluated based on three items:

- Class participation (out of 3 per session, 30 total): you are expected to attend every session and participate actively in discussion. Every session, you will receive either a 1 (did not attend or write a make-up response paper), a 2 (attended but did not really try to participate), a 2.5 (attended and tried to participate but did not demonstrate having done the readings), or a 3 (attended, tried to participate, and demonstrated having done the readings). You can only miss one class and still receive full credit on this dimension as long as you write a strong response paper. If you miss more than one class, you will be penalized 1 point even if you write a response paper. Week 1 doesn't count: everyone gets a 3/3.
- Real world application of class themes (out of 40): each week, students should share a (social) media story or current event that touches upon the themes discussed in the week's readings. The presentation should include a brief description of the event, how it relates to the week's readings, and one question it raised for you for further discussion. The first and last week won't count, so there are eight weeks, each graded out of 5 points. Every session, you will receive either a 1 (did not bring an application), a 2 (brought an application and described it), a 3 (brought an application, described it, related it to one class reading), a 4 (brought an application, described it, related it to more than one class reading), or a 5 (brought an application, described it, related it to more than one class reading, and raised at least one question for further discussion).
- Final projects (out of 30): The concept is an evidence-based response to a flawed narrative you have found in the (social) media landscape about migrants. Your modality can be social-media based or op-ed based. You will be evaluated based on the following criteria, each graded out of 6 points:
 - Relevance and identification of the flawed narrative to the concepts covered in class: does the media piece promote a narrative about migrants to increase exclusion; which narrative(s)?
 - Theoretical strength of your response: is your response internally valid, grounded in the literatures we have discovered this quarter?
 - Empirical strength of your response: does your response bring empirical evidence to bear? How compelling is this evidence?
 - Translational power: How well does your response translate academic research for a broader public? How well does it convey relevant research design or theoretical concepts to a lay audience?
 - Final presentation: you will present your final project in class during Week 10. This presentation will consist of 5 slides. The first slide motivates the project by presenting and describing the flawed narrative and relating it to the relevant literature. The second slide presents the logic of your response. The third slide presents the evidence to support your response. The fourth slide describes and motivates the medium you chose to convey your response. The fifth slide presents your actual response. We will set aside time for questions and feedback from the entire class.

Grading Policy

The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

- 30% of your grade will be determined by your class participation.
- 40% of your grade will be determined by your class presentations.
- 30% of your grade will be determined by your final project.

Course Policies

During Class

Please refrain from using computers for anything other than activities related to the class. Phones are prohibited as they are rarely useful for anything in the course. Please respect your peers when engaging in class discussion. Do not interrupt others. Contribute to constructive criticism and fruitful, respectful debate. Ad hominem attacks will not be tolerated.

I am fully committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspectives, experiences, and identities. I urge each of you to contribute your unique perspectives to discussions of course questions, themes, and materials so that we can learn from them, and from each other. If you should ever feel excluded, or unable to fully participate in class for any reason, please let me know, or you may also submit feedback to Jonathan Achter, Assistant Director of Academic and Student Affairs (650.725.9155, or his [O.H.](#))

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. Any absence must have documentation of a valid excuse. To avoid an absence affecting your participation grade, you can write a 7-10pp response paper covering the week's topics, due by the Sunday of that week at 5pm PST. I will allow one such make-up for the quarter without an impact on your participation grade. After that, even with a response paper, your participation grade will be impacted.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Each student is expected to follow Stanford's [Honor Code](#) and to excel with integrity in this course. Please also abide by Stanford's [Code of Conduct](#).

Use of AI

While artificial intelligence (AI) tools can be valuable in certain contexts, in this course it is important that students develop their own skills and abilities to research, think critically, and communicate without the use of this technology. To maximally gain from the intentionally designed learning experiences in the course, it will be crucial that all members of the course community rely on personal efforts rather than use of AI tools. In fact, in many cases, it will be the effort itself (not the product) that is most valuable! For this class, all assignments should be written in your own words. Just as you cannot take credit for others' writing in your assignments, you cannot use paraphrasing software ("spinbots") or AI writing software (like ChatGPT) and submit the output as your own. Doing so in this is a violation of the Stanford Honor Code.

Course privacy

As noted in the university's [recording and broadcasting](#) courses policy, students may not audio or video record class meetings without permission from the instructor (and guest speakers, when applicable). If the instructor grants permission, students may keep recordings only for personal use and may not post recordings on the Internet, or otherwise distribute them. These policies protect the privacy rights of instructors and students, and the intellectual property and other rights of the university. Students who need lectures recorded for the purposes of an academic accommodation should contact the [Office of Accessible Education](#).

Accommodations for Disabilities

Stanford is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for disabled students. Disabled students are a valued and essential part of the Stanford community. We welcome you to our class.

If you experience disability, please register with the [Office of Accessible Education \(OAE\)](#). Professional staff will evaluate your needs, support appropriate and reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Academic Accommodation Letter for faculty. To get started, or to re-initiate services, please visit oae.stanford.edu.

If you already have an Academic Accommodation Letter, I invite you to share your letter with me. Academic Accommodation Letters should be shared at the earliest possible opportunity so that I may partner with you and OAE to identify any barriers to access and inclusion that might be encountered in your experience of this course.

Students who are immunocompromised should register with the OAE as soon as possible.

Student athletes who anticipate challenges in being able to participate in class or submit assignments on time should contact me as soon as possible about available alternatives or allowances.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Expectations; Migrants as economic threat

We review the expectations for the course. We discuss the economic threat narrative, which explains migrant exclusion as a function of the perceived threats they represent to host economies.

- Adida, Claire. 2021. Migration and Public Opinion. [Chapter](#).
- Hainmueller, Jens and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2014. "Public attitudes toward immigration." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17.
- Scheve, K.F. and Matthew J. Slaughter. 2001. "Labor market competition and individual preferences over immigration policy." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 83(1).

Week 2: Migrants as cultural threat

We evaluate the main alternative to the economic threat, which explains migrant exclusion as a function of the perceived threats they pose to host cultural norms and values.

- Adida, Claire, David Laitin, Marie-Anne Valfort. 2010. "Identifying barriers to Muslim integration in France." *PNAS* 107(52).
- Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox. 2007. "Educated Preferences: Explaining attitudes toward immigration in Europe." *International Organization* 61.
- Sniderman, Paul M., Louk Hagendoorn and Markus Prior. 2004. "Predisposing factors and situational triggers: Exclusionary reactions to immigrant minorities." *American Political Science Review* 98(1).
- Tajfel and Turner. Available [here](#)

Week 3: Migrants as physical threat

Most recently, the literature has analyzed the role of migrants as perceived physical threats (via disease, crime, and terrorism) in understanding migrant exclusion.

- Adida, Claire, Kim Y. Dionne and Melina Platas. 2018. "Ebola, elections, and immigration: how politicizing an epidemic can shape public attitudes." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 8(3).
- Dipoppa, Gemma, Guy Grossman, and Stephanie Zonszein. 2023. "Locked down, lashing out: COVID-19 effects on Asian hate crimes in Italy." *Journal of Politics* 85(2).
- Masterson, Daniel and Vasil Yasenov. 2021. "Does Halting Refugee Resettlement Reduce Crime? Evidence from the US Refugee Ban." *APSR* 115(3).
- Ward, Dalston G. 2019. "Public attitudes toward young immigrant men." *American Political Science Review* 113(1).

Week 4: Exposure

We discuss the concept of exposure, whereby superficial interactions with migrants, exacerbate migrant exclusion.

- Dinas, E. et al. 2019. "Waking up the Golden Dawn: Does exposure to the refugee crisis increase support for extreme-right parties?" *Political Analysis* 27.
- Enos, Ryan. 2014. "Causal effect of intergroup contact on exclusionary attitudes." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(10).
- Zhou, Yang-Yang. 2024. "Refugee proximity and support for citizenship exclusion in Africa." *OSF Preprint*.

Week 5: Politicizing threats: the role of identity, elites and the media

We discuss if and how the media and elites exacerbate migrant exclusion.

- Alrababa'h et al. 2025. "The free movement of people and the success of far-right parties: evidence from Switzerland's border liberalization." *APSR*

- Couttenier, Mathieu, Sophie Hatte, Mathias Thoenig, and Stephanos Vlachos. 2024. "Anti-Muslim voting and media coverage of immigrant crimes." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 106(2).
- Hobbs, William and Nazita Lajevardi. 2019. "Effects of divisive political campaigns on the day-to-day segregation of Arab and Muslim Americans." *American Political Science Review* 113(1).
- Hopkins, Daniel J. 2010. "Politicized places: explaining where and when immigrants provoke local opposition." *American Political Science Review* 104(1).
- Rosenzweig, Leah R. and Yang-Yang Zhou. 2021. "Team and nation: sports, nationalism, and attitudes toward refugees." *Comparative Political Studies* 54(12).

Week 6: Policies of exclusion and integration

We evaluate the effect of specific policies on migrant integration and exclusion.

- Abdelgadir, Aala and Vasiliki Fouka. 2020. "Political secularism and Muslim integration in the West: assessing the effects of the French Headscarf ban." *American Political Science Review* 114(3).
- Fouka, Vasiliki. 2020. "Backlash: the unintended effects of language prohibition in U.S. schools after World War I." *Review of Economic Studies* 87.
- Grossman, Guy and Stephanie Zonszein. Forthcoming. "Voted in, standing out: public response to immigrants' political accession." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Hainmueller, Jens et al. 2017. "Protecting unauthorized immigrant mothers improves their children's mental health." *Science* 357(6355).
- Zhou, Yang-Yang, Guy Grossman, and Shuning Ghe. 2023. "Inclusive refugee-hosting can improve local development and prevent public backlash."

Week 7: Contact

Can meaningful contact improve migrant inclusion? We contrast this with the effect of exposure from Week 4.

- Finseraas et al. 2019. "Trust, ethnic diversity, and personal contact: A field experiment." *Journal of Public Economics* 173.
- Lowe, Matt. 2025. "Has intergroup contact delivered?" *Annual Review of Economics* 17.
- Mousa, Salma. 2020. "Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq." *Science* 369(6505).
- Steinmayr, A. 2021. "Contact versus exposure: refugee presence and voting for the far right." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 103(2).

Week 8: Emotions and narratives

How do emotions such as anxiety and empathy shape inclusionary/exclusionary attitudes and behaviors toward migrants? Do narratives often used by migrant advocates help?

- Adida, Claire L., Adeline Lo, and Melina R. Platas. 2018. "Perspective taking can promote short-term inclusionary behavior toward Syrian refugees." *PNAS* 115(38).
- Albertson, Bethany and Shana Gadarian. *Anxious Politics*. Chapters 3 and 5.
- Alrababa'h et al. 2021. "Can exposure to celebrities reduce prejudice? The effect of Mohamed Salah on Islamophobic behaviors and attitudes." *American Political Science Review* 115(4).

Week 9: Migrant behavior

What actions on the part of migrants increase or decrease inclusion?

- Adida, Claire L. and Amanda Robinson. 2023. "Why (some) immigrants resist assimilation: US racism and the African immigrant experience." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 18.
- Fouka, Vasiliki. 2019. "How do immigrants respond to discrimination? The case of Germans in the US during World War I." *American Political Science Review* 113(2).
- Hopkins, Daniel J. 2014. "The upside of accents: language, inter-group difference, and attitudes toward immigration." *British Journal of Political Science* 45.
- Sambanis, Nicholas, Mathias Poertner, and Danny Donghyun Choi. 2022. "Native Bias: Overcoming discrimination against immigrants." Chapters 2, 5, and 6.

Week 10: Final Presentations