

Immigration Experiences and Debates

Course #	20FIM
Format:	Seminar
Moderators:	Stephanie Levin, Julie Schlobohm
Date and Time:	Tuesday, 9:30-11:30 10 weeks, starting September 22
Location:	Rockridge, Northampton Meeting room
Maximum number of participants:	20
Auditors accepted:	Yes, up to 2

Purpose: Immigration to the U.S. generates some of the country's most controversial political debates. This course will explore what's behind the controversies so that each of us can make our own decisions about the right directions for future policies.

Description: We will start by exploring the diverse experiences of immigrants to the U.S. through memoir and fiction, as well as by looking at the immigration histories of members of the class and their families. The reading will focus on contemporary immigrants and refugees.

Next, we'll go on to investigate such difficult questions as what the U.S. should do about its borders, how it should meet the needs of refugees from around the world, and whether to deport or grant amnesty to the 12 million or more "illegal" or undocumented immigrants who are already here.

We'll read and discuss competing arguments by political scientists: some who insist that immigration limits are necessary for the good of the country and some calling for completely open borders as the best way to go. Time will also be available to discuss immigration issues raised by the presidential election as they occur.

Role of participants: The emphasis in class will be on discussion rather than lectures, with participants leading discussions about class readings and the topics that they raise.

Resources: All participants will be expected to read four sources:

1) *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives* edited by Viet Thanh Nguyen; 2) *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid; 3) a Xeroxed compilation of short pieces on immigration policy; and 4) *Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration* by Bryan Caplan and Zach Weinersmith.

About the Moderators: Stephanie Levin is a lawyer who taught at Western New England College School of Law and Hampshire College and co-taught the Learning in Retirement seminar "Writing to Remember." Julie Schlobohm taught high school English in Westfield for three decades, and was a volunteer English tutor to refugees from many countries over the years. In Learning in Retirement, she taught "Poetry Outloud."