

**WURZWEILER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
MSW PROGRAM**

Course Name: Immigration

SPRING/FALL 202X

SWK 6139

Instructor Name

Email

Phone

Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines social policies, programs, and social work practice issues affecting immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Students develop a critical understanding of the diversity of immigration experiences and the structural, political, economic, and social forces shaping migration and displacement. Emphasis is placed on oppression, racism, xenophobia, and social justice as they relate to immigration policy and practice.

Social work practice with immigrant and refugee populations is examined within an international and transnational context, including the impact of global conflict, U.S. foreign policy, media representations, and ethnic tensions on lived experience, mental health, and well-being. The course addresses the history of U.S. immigration and asylum policy, contemporary immigration systems, and the role of social workers across micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Students are prepared to engage ethically, culturally responsively, and effectively with immigrant communities in diverse practice settings.

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

The Council on Social Work Education requires all accredited schools of social work to assess nine competencies. This course will help students achieve the following competencies:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the profession's ethical standards and relevant laws and regulations that shape practice across systems. In immigration contexts, students will apply the NASW Code of Ethics and ethical decision-making frameworks to complex issues involving legal vulnerability, confidentiality, documentation status, professional boundaries, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Students will engage in reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and affective responses when working with immigrant and refugee populations impacted by trauma, displacement, and systemic inequities. Supervision and consultation will be emphasized as essential supports for professional judgment in immigration-related practice environments.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers understand how diversity and difference shape identity and lived experience. In this course, students will examine how immigration status, nationality, language, race, ethnicity, religion, and cultural context intersect with other dimensions of identity to influence migration experiences. Students will approach immigrant and refugee clients and communities with cultural humility, recognizing community strengths and resilience while remaining attentive to oppression, marginalization, and barriers to access. Ongoing self-awareness and self-regulation will support ethical engagement across differences.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that social work practice must advance human rights and promote social, racial, and economic justice. In immigration contexts, students will analyze how displacement, exclusion, detention, and structural inequities affect the well-being of immigrants and refugees. The course emphasizes justice-oriented practice that challenges anti-immigrant discrimination and supports access to safety, dignity, and resources. Students will identify advocacy strategies that promote equity and human rights across local, national, and global contexts.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches to evaluate and apply research. Students will critically engage scholarship on migration-related stressors, trauma, acculturation, mental health, family separation, and structural determinants of wellbeing. The course emphasizes the responsible use of empirically informed literature to strengthen culturally responsive assessment, intervention, and policy advocacy with immigrant and refugee communities, while attending to bias and inequity in knowledge production.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that policy practice is essential to advancing justice and human rights. Students will examine how U.S. and international immigration laws, asylum policies, and enforcement systems shape access to healthcare, education, employment, legal protection, and family stability. The course emphasizes policy analysis, advocacy, and interdisciplinary collaboration with community-based organizations to address systemic inequities and promote safety, dignity, and equity for immigrants and refugees.

Competencies 6–9: Engage, Assess, Intervene, and Evaluate with Immigrant and Refugee Populations

Social workers engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities using culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approaches. In this course, students will develop skills in relational engagement and trust-building with immigrant and refugee populations, assess migration-related stressors and protective factors, and explore interventions across clinical, community, and advocacy settings. Students will also examine culturally responsive methods for evaluating the effectiveness of practice and program outcomes in immigrant-serving systems.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply ethical and professional social work principles to practice with immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, including managing ethical dilemmas related to legal status, confidentiality, and power differentials.
(*CSWE Competency 1*)
2. Critically analyze immigration as a human rights and social justice issue, identifying systems of oppression, racism, xenophobia, and structural violence shaping immigrant experiences.
(*CSWE Competencies 2 & 3*)
3. Integrate practice-informed research and research-informed practice to assess the impact of migration, trauma, and displacement on mental health and well-being.
(*CSWE Competency 4*)
4. Evaluate U.S. and international immigration policies and demonstrate the ability to engage in policy advocacy and reform efforts at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
(*CSWE Competency 5*)
5. Demonstrate culturally responsive engagement, assessment, and intervention skills with immigrant individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
(*CSWE Competencies 6, 7, & 8*)
6. Assess and evaluate social work practice and programs serving immigrant and refugee populations, using ethical, culturally responsive, and justice-oriented criteria.
(*CSWE Competency 9*)

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Learning will occur through a variety of experiences and instructional methods designed to support students in developing culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and socially just practices with immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking populations. Instructional methods will include lecture, guided class discussion, case-based learning, policy analysis, experiential exercises, and applied skill-building activities. Students will engage in critical reflection on immigration systems, ethical dilemmas, and anti-oppressive practice approaches, and will participate in collaborative learning through small-group discussion and advocacy-focused activities.

This course includes 37.5 contact hours. Students will be in class live online with the professor for 2 hours each week for 14 weeks and will complete an additional 9.5 hours of asynchronous learning activities throughout the semester, including assigned readings, written reflections, policy- and case-based assignments, and community- or advocacy-oriented projects.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. Active participation is essential to the learning process in this course, as it provides students with the opportunity to engage critically with course material, deepen their understanding of immigration and refugee experiences, and apply social work values and practice frameworks in discussion. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class, contribute thoughtfully to class discussions, and demonstrate respectful engagement with peers, particularly when exploring sensitive topics related to trauma, displacement, oppression, racism, xenophobia, and social justice.

Because this course emphasizes culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice, students are expected to approach course dialogue with professionalism, openness, and cultural humility. Participation includes attendance, preparedness, engagement in small-group and full-class activities, and completion of asynchronous Canvas components. Consistent professional comportment and adherence to ethical standards are required throughout the semester.

INCOMPLETE POLICY

It is expected that all work must be submitted no later than the final day of this class, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. Incomplete grades are only given in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the instructor. In order for an instructor to issue a grade of "incomplete," the student must be passing this course.

If an incomplete grade is given for this course, an Incomplete Contract will be completed, which will specify a due date for the completion of any outstanding work. It is the student's responsibility to complete all outstanding work before this due date. Students will be unable to enroll in any advanced courses for which this course is a prerequisite.

Failure to complete all outstanding work before the due date will result in a grade change from an “I” to an “F” for this course. Please consult the Student Handbook for the complete incomplete policy which will guide the receipt of an incomplete grade in this course.

Grading Rubric

Assignment	Grade %	Due Date
Assignment #1: Reflective Positionality & Ethics Paper	15%	Week 5
Assignment #2: Immigration Policy Analysis Brief	20%	Week 8
Assignment #3: Trauma-Informed Case Analysis	25%	Week 11
Assignment #4: Advocacy / Community Engagement Project	20%	Week 13
Assignment #5: Final Integrative Evaluation & Reflection	10%	Finals Week
Completion of assigned readings, attendance, participation, and Canvas activities	10%	Ongoing

Required Texts for the Course

Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed.). Guilford Press.

Ngai, M. M. (2004). *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America*. Princeton University Press.

Recommended Text

Potocky-Tripodi, M. (2002). *Best practices for social work with refugees and immigrants*. Columbia University Press.

Silove, D., Ventevogel, P., & Rees, S. (2017). The contemporary refugee crisis: An overview of mental health challenges. *World Psychiatry, 16*(2), 130–139.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.2043>

Note: All required readings outside of the texts above are available on-line through electronic reserve (ERES). Your instructor will distribute the password and directions to access these readings.

Assignment I: Reflective Positionality & Ethics Paper (Due Session 5)

Students will complete a critical analysis paper examining how professional ethics, social location, and cultural context shape immigration-related social work practice. Rather than a purely personal reflection, this assignment requires students to ground their analysis in a concrete immigration-related scenario. Students may select an instructor-provided vignette, a case example from assigned readings, a practicum case, or a publicly documented immigration-related case. Using that scenario, students will identify and analyze at least one ethical dilemma relevant to work with immigrant, refugee, or asylum-seeking populations and explicitly apply relevant sections of the NASW Code of Ethics. Students must directly reference and cite at least two assigned course readings in support of their analysis. The paper should examine how professional roles, cultural assumptions, and positionality influence ethical decision-making in immigration contexts. Students must articulate a clearly justified course of action grounded in social work values, ethical reasoning, and course frameworks.

The paper should be 4–5 pages in APA format and is worth 15% of the final grade. Evaluation will be based on the depth and rigor of ethical analysis, accurate application of the NASW Code of Ethics, integration of course readings, the use of a clearly defined scenario to anchor the discussion, and the clarity and professionalism of writing.

Assignment II: Immigration Policy Analysis Brief (Due Session 8)

Students will complete a critical policy analysis of a specific immigration-related statute, court decision, executive order, enforcement practice, or official agency document at the U.S. or international level. Students must select a formal policy document and attach or provide a direct link to the official source. The brief must engage directly with the language of the policy and include close textual analysis rather than a general overview. The paper should summarize the policy's historical context, stated objectives, and implementation structure, and analyze its impact on immigrant and refugee populations.

Students must directly quote and critically examine at least two sections of the selected policy document and apply a human rights, anti-racist, or social justice framework drawn from course readings. The analysis must include a counter-argument section presenting an alternative or opposing policy perspective and responding to it using social work ethics and empirical evidence. The brief should conclude with feasible, evidence-informed policy or advocacy recommendations consistent with professional social work values.

The paper should be 6–7 pages in APA format and is worth 20% of the final grade. Evaluation will be based on the accuracy and depth of policy analysis, demonstrated engagement with the primary policy document, application of justice-oriented frameworks, quality and feasibility of recommendations, integration of course readings, and clarity and professionalism of writing.

Assignment III: Trauma-Informed Case Analysis (Due Session 11)

Students will complete a culturally responsive, trauma-informed assessment and intervention plan for an immigrant or refugee client or family. The case may be drawn from an instructor-provided vignette, a de-identified practicum case, a documented public case, or a character or family depicted in a film or documentary that focuses on migration or displacement. Regardless of the source, students must clearly describe the case context and provide sufficient detail to support clinical analysis.

The analysis should address pre-migration, migration, and post-migration stressors; psychosocial needs; protective factors; and culturally grounded strengths. Students must develop a trauma-informed conceptualization that integrates relevant course readings and empirical research. The intervention plan should demonstrate alignment with culturally responsive and research-informed approaches and include interventions at the micro and, where appropriate, mezzo levels of practice. Students must justify their intervention choices using course frameworks and scholarly sources.

The paper should be 7–9 pages in APA format and is worth 25% of the final grade. Evaluation will focus on the quality and depth of the assessment, the strength of the trauma-informed conceptualization, the integration of research, the coherence and feasibility of the intervention plan, and the clarity and professionalism of the writing.

Assignment IV: Advocacy and Community Engagement Group Project (Due Session 13)

Students will work in small groups to design, participate in, or critically examine an advocacy, policy, or community engagement initiative focused on immigrant or refugee populations. Projects may include collaborating with immigrant-serving organizations, developing a public education resource, conducting policy advocacy, analyzing a community-based program, or creating a structured advocacy campaign. Groups will be expected to identify a clearly defined initiative and demonstrate how it advances justice-oriented social work practice.

Each group will submit a shared project deliverable, such as a policy memo, advocacy plan, educational resource, program analysis, or community engagement strategy. In addition to the group submission, each student must submit an individual 3–4 page reflective paper that analyzes the initiative's relevance, integrates course concepts and scholarly readings, and articulates their specific role and contributions to the project. The reflection should demonstrate application of social work values, ethical considerations, and systems-level thinking.

This assignment is worth 20% of the final grade. Evaluation will be based on the quality and feasibility of the group initiative, integration of course frameworks, evidence of collaborative engagement, depth of individual reflection, and clarity and professionalism of both the group and individual submissions.

Assignment V: Final Integrative Evaluation and Reflection (Due Final Week)

Students will complete a final integrative paper that synthesizes their learning over the semester and evaluates their development against course objectives and CSWE competencies. Rather than summarizing course content, the paper should demonstrate critical integration of key themes, including ethics, policy practice, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, and advocacy. Students must explicitly reference course readings and assignments in articulating how their understanding of immigration social work practice has evolved.

The paper should present a coherent framework for culturally responsive and justice-oriented practice with immigrant and refugee populations and identify specific areas for continued professional growth. Students are expected to reflect on how they will apply course learning to future practice settings while demonstrating integration of scholarly sources and professional standards.

The paper should be 5–6 pages in APA format and is worth 20% of the final grade. Evaluation will be based on the integration of course concepts, clarity of professional framework, depth of critical analysis, application to future practice, and overall quality and professionalism of writing.

Ongoing Course Requirement: Attendance, Participation, and Canvas Engagement

Students are expected to complete assigned readings, participate actively and respectfully in class discussions, and engage professionally with peers. Participation includes completing Canvas-based activities and maintaining consistent ethical conduct in all course interactions, particularly given the sensitive nature of immigration and refugee practice.

THE OFFICE OF DISABILITIES SERVICES (ODS) collaborates with students, faculty, and staff to provide reasonable accommodations and services to students with disabilities. The purpose of reasonable academic accommodations is to ensure that there is equal access to and the opportunity to benefit from your education at Wurzweiler. It is the student's responsibility to identify himself/herself to the Office of Disabilities Services (ODS) and to provide documentation of a disability. <http://www.yu.edu/Student-Life/Resources-and-Services/Disability-Services/>

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course who will request documented disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services at Wilfods@yu.edu during the first week of class. All procedures, responsibilities, and expectations will be reviewed during your appointment. The office is located in the Belz Building, Suite 412. Once you have been approved for accommodations, please submit your accommodation letter and discuss any specifics with your instructor to ensure the successful implementation of your accommodations.

E-RESERVES

Access full-text copies of most of the "on reserve" articles for a course from your computer. You will need Adobe Acrobat to use this service. Your professor will provide you with a password. The link for e-reserves is <https://library.yu.edu/er.php?b=c>

Most of the articles in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve (E-reserves). You can access the full-text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.

ACCESSING E-RESERVES

FROM CANVAS

1. Go to your class Canvas page.
2. Click the link "Library Resources & E-Reserves" (no password required)

FROM CAMPUS

1. If you wish to access e-reserves from the library home page (library.yu.edu),
2. Use "wurzweiler" all lowercase as the password.
3. If you have problems accessing e-reserves, email Stephanie Gross, Electronic Reserves Librarian: gross@yu.edu or ereserves@yu.edu.

FROM OFF-CAMPUS

1. Go to the library's online resources page:
http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp
2. Click on E-RES; you will be prompted for your Off-Campus Access Service login and password.
3. Use "wurzweiler" all lowercase as the password for all courses in all social work programs.
4. If you have problems accessing e-reserves, email Stephanie Gross, Electronic Reserves Librarian: gross@yu.edu or ereserves@yu.edu.

USING E-RESERVES

1. Click on "Search E-RES" or on "Course Index," and search by instructor's name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author.
 2. Click on the link to your course.
 3. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk. To view documents that are in PDF format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html
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PLAGIARISM

All written work submitted by students is to be their own. Ideas and concepts that are the work of others must be cited with proper attribution. The use of the written works of others that is submitted as one's own constitutes **plagiarism** and is a violation of academic standards. The School will not condone **plagiarism** in any form and will impose sanctions to acts of **plagiarism**. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. **Plagiarism** occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also **plagiarism** to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is **NOT plagiarism** to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. If it is determined that a student has plagiarized any part of any assignment in a course, the student will automatically **FAIL** the course. The student will also be placed on Academic Probation and will be referred to the Associate Dean for any additional disciplinary action, which may include expulsion. A student may not submit the same paper or an assignment from another class for credit. If students or faculty are concerned that written work is indeed plagiarized, they can use the following "plagiarism checker" websites, easily accessible and generally free on Google:

www.grammarly.com/plagiarism_checker

www.dustball.com/cs/plagiarism.checker

www.plagtracker.com

www.plagium.com/

www.plagscan.com/seesources/

www.duplichecker.com/

As a Wurzweiler student, maintaining good standing in the program is dependent on developing and maintaining high standards of ethical and professional behavior. Students are required to adhere to the Code of Ethics promulgated by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

HIPAA

In line with HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present in class or coursework will need to be de-identified. This means that any information that would allow another person to identify the person must be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious identifiers such as names and birth dates, but may also include other information that is so unique to the person that it allows identification, such as diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation, it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

FERPA & OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Wurzweiler's policies and procedures are in compliance with FERPA regulations. Information about FERPA regulations can be found [here](#).

Drug-Free University Policy can be found [here](#).

Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Complaint Procedures can be found [here](#).

The University's Computer Guidelines can be found [here](#).

AI POLICY

The objective of this protocol is to define clear guidelines for the appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and platforms, such as ChatGPT, at WSSW. These guidelines aim to preserve academic integrity, prevent plagiarism, and promote independent scholarly work while acknowledging the potential benefits of AI tools in enhancing research and learning. Though AI tools do offer some potential for enhancing the learning experience, these tools also present significant risks related to academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, and the undermining of critical thinking and originality in scholarly work. Students may use AI tools for the following purposes, provided these uses are in addition to their own creative efforts, and they are not relying exclusively on AI:

(1) Research Assistance: ChatGPT and other similar tools should not replace primary research and initial literature searches. Tools such as ProQuest, PubMed, and Google Scholar should be consulted first. Students may use other AI tools to supplement an initial search for a topic, but only after they have used academic databases, libraries, or other reputable scholarly sources and referenced them. All sources derived from AI should be carefully checked as they are frequently incorrect.

(2) Language Support: AI can assist with language translation, grammar checks, and vocabulary. WSSW's Writing Consultants should be sought for any writing beyond these areas. Tools such as Grammarly may be used to assist with proofreading, but they should not be used to generate ideas, arguments, or content for assignments.

The use of AI language models, such as ChatGPT, for the purposes listed above is subject to strict adherence to certain conditions. The intent of this policy is to reinforce the importance of students developing and using critical thinking, writing skills, and originality. AI may be seen as a useful tool, but it should not replace the intellectual work that is central to academic growth.

The following actions are [prohibited](#) and will be considered academic misconduct:

(1) Content Generation: Students are prohibited from using AI platforms, including ChatGPT, to generate any content submitted as original work.

(2) Conceptualization and Analysis: Students may not use AI tools to develop original arguments, ideas, analysis, hypotheses, conclusions, or to structure, summarize, paraphrase, or contextualize content for assignments. The cognitive work of creating ideas, forming arguments, and critically engaging with course material must be entirely the student's own effort.

If you need assistance in these areas, we advise using the Writing Consultants. The use of AI language models, such as ChatGPT, will be checked by your professor to ensure that your work is your own. Turnitin and other plagiarism detection tools will be used to verify the originality of your work. Any submission that includes this content presented as the student's own work constitutes plagiarism (see WSSW Policy Manual). More specifically, any content created that is not your own qualifies as academic misconduct and will be referred to the Student Review Committee for further action. The intent of this policy is to reinforce the importance of students developing and use critical thinking, writing skills, and originality. AI may be seen as a useful tool, but it should not replace the intellectual work that is central to academic and professional growth. If there are questions regarding the authenticity of your work, your professor will contact you.

COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT I: Introduction and Course Overview (Session 1)

Learning Objectives Covered: 1, 6

Week 1 – Introduction to Immigration, Refugees, and Social Work

This session introduces immigration as a core social work practice domain and establishes foundational definitions, ethical responsibilities, and human rights frameworks for work with immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker populations.

Module Focus:

Definitions and distinctions among immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers; global and U.S. migration trends; social work roles across micro, mezzo, and macro levels; ethical responsibilities in legally vulnerable contexts.

Required Readings:

Androff, D. K., & Mathis, C. (2022). Human rights-based social work practice with immigrants and asylum seekers in a legal service organization. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 7(2), 178–188. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-021-00197-7>

Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed., Chapter 1). Guilford Press.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2022* (Executive summary). <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022>

Recommended Multimedia (Optional):

TED-Ed. (2017, June 20). *What is a refugee?* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HTtXqE0Kik>

CSWE Competencies: 1, 2

UNIT II: Global and Historical Contexts of Immigration (Sessions 2–4)

Learning Objectives Covered: 1, 2, 3, 4

Week 2 – Global Migration and Forced Displacement

This session examines migration within global systems shaped by war, persecution, climate change, poverty, and structural inequality.

Module Focus:

Push–pull factors; forced migration; international refugee protection frameworks; global inequities and transnational migration systems.

Required Readings:

Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world* (6th ed., Chapter 2). Guilford Press.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2023). *Global trends: Forced displacement in 2022* (pp. 1–20). <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022>

Recommended Reading:

Silove, D., Ventevogel, P., & Rees, S. (2017). The contemporary refugee crisis: An overview of mental health challenges. *World Psychiatry, 16*(2), 130–139. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20438>

CSWE Competencies: 2, 4

Week 3 – History of U.S. Immigration and Exclusion

This session explores the historical development of U.S. immigration policy, including racialized exclusion and the construction of citizenship and belonging.

Module Focus:

Immigration waves and nation-building; exclusionary laws; immigration and citizenship as racialized constructs; historical roots of contemporary debates.

Required Readings:

Ngai, M. M. (2004). *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America* (Introduction). Princeton University Press.

Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The age of migration* (6th ed., Chapter 3). Guilford Press.

Recommended Reading:

Chávez, L. R. (2013). *The Latino threat: Constructing immigrants, citizens, and the nation* (2nd ed., Chapter 1). Stanford University Press.

CSWE Competencies: 2, 3, 5

Week 4 – U.S. Immigration and Asylum Law

This session introduces legal categories, asylum processes, enforcement practices, and the role of social workers within interdisciplinary legal systems.

Module Focus:

Immigration pathways; refugee and asylum procedures; detention and deportation; rights and limitations of noncitizens; social work practice in legal contexts.

Required Readings:

American Immigration Council. (2023). *An overview of the U.S. immigration system* (Policy brief). <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org>

Abrego, L. J., & Lakhani, S. M. (2015). Incomplete inclusion: Legal violence and immigrants in liminal legal statuses. *Law & Policy*, 37(4), 265–293.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/lapo.12039>

Recommended Multimedia:

Vox. (2018, June 19). *How America's immigration system works* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXqnRMU1fTs>

CSWE Competencies: 5, 8

UNIT III: Oppression, Diversity, and Structural Inequality (Sessions 5–6)

Learning Objectives Covered: 1, 2, 3

Week 5 – Migration Narratives, Media, and Power

This session examines how immigration discourse is shaped by media, nationalism, moral panic, and political rhetoric, with implications for advocacy and practice.

Required Readings:

Chávez, L. R. (2013). *The Latino threat: Constructing immigrants, citizens, and the nation* (2nd ed., Chapter 2). Stanford University Press.

De Genova, N. (2002). Migrant “illegality” and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, 419–447.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.31.040402.085432>

Recommended Multimedia:

TED. (2016, September 27). Adichie, C. N. *The danger of a single story* [Video].

YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>

CSWE Competencies: 3, 5

Week 6 – Structural Racism, Xenophobia, and Legal Violence

This session focuses on intersectionality and the structural systems that shape immigrant marginalization and exclusion.

Required Readings:

Misra, S., Kwon, S. C., Abraído-Lanza, A. F., Chebli, P., Trinh-Shevrin, C., & Yi, S. S. (2021). Structural racism and immigrant health in the United States. *Health Education & Behavior*, 48(3), 332–341. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10901981211010676>

Abrego, L. J., & Lakhani, S. M. (2015). Incomplete inclusion: Legal violence and immigrants in liminal legal statuses. *Law & Policy*, 37(4), 265–293.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/lapo.12039>

Recommended Reading:

Tervalon, M., & Murray-García, J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 9(2), 117–125.

CSWE Competencies: 2, 3

Week 7 – Trauma, Displacement, and Refugee Mental Health

This session focuses on the psychological impact of forced migration and displacement, including pre-migration trauma, post-migration stressors, and trauma-informed, culturally responsive approaches to refugee mental health and resilience.

Required Readings:

Nickerson, A., Bryant, R. A., Silove, D., & Steel, Z. (2011). A critical review of psychological treatments of posttraumatic stress disorder in refugees. *Clinical Psychology Review, 31*(3), 399–417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.10.004>

Silove, D., Ventevogel, P., & Rees, S. (2017). The contemporary refugee crisis: An overview of mental health challenges. *World Psychiatry, 16*(2), 130–139. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20438>

CSWE Competencies: 4, 7

Week 8 – Cultural Humility and Trauma-Informed Engagement

This session focuses on cultural humility, relational engagement, and trauma-informed frameworks in working with immigrant and refugee individuals and families across diverse settings.

Required Readings:

Miller, K. K., Brown, C. R., Shramko, M., & Svetaz, M. V. (2019). Applying trauma-informed practices to the care of refugee and immigrant youth: 10 clinical pearls. *Children, 6*(8), 94. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children6080094>

Tervalon, M., & Murray-García, J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 9*(2), 117–125.

Recommended Multimedia (Optional, Unit IV):

World Health Organization. (2019, May 10). *Mental health support for refugees* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g0S34XE2b8>

CSWE Competencies: 1, 6, 8

Week 9 – Assessment with Immigrant and Refugee Populations

This session focuses on culturally responsive biopsychosocial assessment, migration-related stressors, language access, and avoiding the pathologization of culturally normative expressions of distress.

Required Readings:

Derr, A. S. (2016). Mental health service use among immigrants in the United States: A systematic review. *Psychiatric Services, 67*(3), 265–274. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201500004>

Recommended Reading:

Haagen, J. F., Ter Heide, F. J. J., Mooren, T. M., Knipscheer, J. W., & Kleber, R. J. (2017). Predicting post-traumatic stress disorder treatment response in refugees: A multilevel analysis. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 56*(1), 69–83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.12124>

CSWE Competencies: 7**Week 10 – Clinical Interventions Across the Lifespan**

This session focuses on adapting evidence-informed and trauma-informed clinical interventions for immigrant and refugee children, adults, and families across the lifespan, with attention to cultural responsiveness, resilience, and treatment engagement.

Required Readings:

Miller, K. K., Brown, C. R., Shramko, M., & Svetaz, M. V. (2019). Applying trauma-informed practices to the care of refugee and immigrant youth: 10 clinical pearls. *Children, 6*(8), 94. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children6080094>

Nickerson, A., Bryant, R. A., Silove, D., & Steel, Z. (2011). A critical review of psychological treatments of posttraumatic stress disorder in refugees. *Clinical Psychology Review, 31*(3), 399–417. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2010.10.004>

CSWE Competencies: 8

UNIT V: Policy Practice, Advocacy, and Community Engagement (Sessions 11–13)
Learning Objectives Covered: 5, 8, 9

Week 11 – Community-Based and Mezzo-Level Practice

This session focuses on community-based and mezzo-level interventions that promote integration, mutual aid, advocacy, and organizational collaboration in supporting immigrant and refugee communities.

Required Readings:

Popescu, M., & Libal, K. (2018). Social work with migrants and refugees: Challenges, best practices, and future directions. *Advances in Social Work, 18*(3), i–x.

Potocky-Tripodi, M. (2002). *Best practices for social work with refugees and immigrants* (Selected chapters). Columbia University Press.

CSWE Competencies: 6, 8

Week 12 – Policy Practice and Advocacy

This session focuses on policy analysis, legislative advocacy, and systems-level change strategies to advance immigrant and refugee rights through anti-racist, human-rights–based social work practice.

Required Readings:

Congress, E. P. (2017). Social work with immigrants and refugees: Legal issues, clinical skills, and advocacy. *Social Work*, 62(3), 201–208.

Bernstein, H., McTarnaghan, S., & Islam, A. (2021). *Centering race and structural racism in immigration policy research*. Urban Institute.

Recommended Multimedia (Optional, Unit V):

National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *Social work with immigrants and refugees* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goqE6TR_TnM

CSWE Competencies: 5

Week 13 – Ethical Challenges and Professional Sustainability

This session focuses on ethical dilemmas, professional boundaries, vicarious trauma, and strategies for sustaining ethical and reflective social work practice in immigration-related settings.

Required Readings:

Congress, E. P. (2017). Social work with immigrants and refugees: Legal issues, clinical skills, and advocacy. *Social Work*, 62(3), 201–208.

CSWE Competencies: 1, 9

UNIT VI: Integration, Ethics, and Evaluation (Session 14)

Learning Objectives Covered: 1, 9

Week 14 – Integration, Evaluation, and Future Directions

This session focuses on synthesizing course learning, evaluating practice effectiveness, reflecting on professional growth, and identifying future directions in immigration social work practice.

This concluding session synthesizes course learning and emphasizes evaluation of practice effectiveness, professional sustainability, and future directions in immigration social work.

Required Readings:

Menjívar, C., & Abrego, L. J. (2012). Legal violence: Immigration law and the lives of

Central American immigrants. *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(5), 1380–1421.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/663575>

Fazel, M., Wheeler, J., & Danesh, J. (2005). Prevalence of serious mental disorder in 7000 refugees resettled in Western countries: A systematic review. *The Lancet*, 365(9467), 1309–1314. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(05\)61027-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(05)61027-6)

Recommended Multimedia:

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2016). *I am more than a refugee* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0T6T9RjTi94>

CSWE Competencies: 9

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- Bernstein, H., McTarnaghan, S., & Islam, A. (2021). *Centering race and structural racism in immigration policy research*. Urban Institute.
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- Congress, E. P. (2017). Social work with immigrants and refugees: Legal issues, clinical skills, and advocacy. *Social Work*, 62(3), 201–208.
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- Haagen, J. F., Ter Heide, F. J. J., Mooren, T. M., Knipscheer, J. W., & Kleber, R. J. (2017). Predicting post-traumatic stress disorder treatment response in refugees:

- A multilevel analysis. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 56(1), 69–83.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.12124>
- Menjívar, C., & Abrego, L. J. (2012). Legal violence: Immigration law and the lives of Central American immigrants. *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(5), 1380–1421. <https://doi.org/10.1086/663575>
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