

Syllabus — Introductory Migration Economics

Wintersemester 2025/26

Ali Demir, Ruhr University Bochum

Language & Audience

The course is taught in English and targets bachelor students; no prerequisites. Enrollment is capped at 20 participants.

Time & Place

Wednesdays, 16:00–18:00, room GD 03/218.

Overview

This course introduces key concepts, legal categories, and empirical methods in migration economics. It emphasizes how to read and evaluate empirical research on labour markets in the context of migration.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Distinguish major migrant categories and legal statuses, using German statistical definitions consistently.
- Explain core mechanisms: selection, networks, human capital, demand–supply adjustment.
- Assess identification strategies in migration research (DiD, IV, synthetic control).
- Present and critically discuss empirical papers, interpreting magnitudes and external validity.

Format & Workload

- 3 Lectures (concepts, facts, and methods)
- 1 Workshop (guided case study: Mariel Boatlift)
- 10 Presentation Sessions (two student presentations per session; 20 talks total)

Each student gives one 30-minute presentation, followed by 15 minutes of discussion. Active participation is mandatory in all sessions.

Assessment

- Presentation: 80% (clarity, identification, results, interpretation)
- Participation: 20% (discussion quality, preparedness, engagement)

Readings

No textbook required. Suggested readings:

- Bodvarsson & Van den Berg (2013) *The Economics of Immigration*.
- Borjas (2014) *Labor Economics*.

Assigned papers for the workshop (pre-reading required):

- Card (1990) — Miami labour market after Mariel.
- Borjas (2017) — Reappraisal focusing on low-skill dropouts.
- Peri & Yasenov (2019) — Synthetic control re-analysis.
- Clemens & Hunt (2019) — Reconciling conflicting results.

Schedule (WS 2025/26)

- 15 Oct — Lecture 1
- 22 Oct — Lecture 2
- 29 Oct — Lecture 3
- 05 Nov — Workshop
- 12 Nov — Session 1
- 19 Nov — Session 2
- 26 Nov — Session 3
- 03 Dec — Session 4
- 10 Dec — Session 5
- 17 Dec — Session 6
- 24 Dec — No class (Christmas)
- 31 Dec — No class (Christmas)
- 07 Jan — Session 7
- 14 Jan — Session 8
- 21 Jan — Session 9
- 28 Jan — Session 10
- 04 Feb — Backup date

Topics & Paper Selection

A curated list of influential empirical papers (not theory-heavy) will be provided on Moodle. Students choose one paper and submit slides as PDF by 18:00 the day before their session.

Policies & Notes

- **Enrollment:** Register via FlexNow (or as required by your program).
- **Capacity:** Withdraw promptly if you decide not to continue, so wait-listed students can join.
- **Academic integrity:** Follow citation and replication norms; figures/tables must report units, samples, identification clearly.
- **Practical tip:** Bring 1–2 identification figures per paper; keep regressions focused on the main result.

Instructor & Contact

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