

Universität Bremen

Summer Term 2026

FB 8

Institut für Politikwissenschaft

Peter Mayer

phone: (0421) 218-67483

email: prmayer@uni-bremen.de

office hours: Thu 14.00-15.00 hrs. (UNICOM 7.2180) and by appointment

BA Political Science Pol-M10

Seminar: Ethics of Migration

Fri 10-12, UNICOM 3.0210 Seminarraum 2

Goals

In this text-centered seminar, we will discuss seminal contributions to the ethics of migration, which has become a cottage industry in political and moral philosophy over the last few decades. We know that in many places borders are not open, but *ought* they to be so from a moral point of view? Or does this depend on the circumstances? If so, which circumstances matter and why? Do states that restrict immigration (by certain groups of people) violate human rights (and how would we know that)? Or do they merely exercise the right of self-determination of the political community they represent? These are the kinds of questions that we will raise in this seminar, after paving the ground by looking at some conceptual, empirical, and theoretical issues in the initial meetings.

Schedule

Session	Date	Topic
1	10 April	Introduction
2	17 April	Migration: Forms, Causes, and Consequences
3	24 April	Global Migration Governance
	1 May	<i>May Day</i>
4	8 May	Theories of Ethics
5	15 May	Political Theory and Human Rights
6	22 May	The Distribution of Membership: A Communitarian Perspective
	29 May	<i>no session</i>
7/8	5 June	Libertarians, Utilitarians, and Migration
9	12 June	Democratic Theory and Immigration
10	19 June	Immigration and Freedom of Association
11	26 June	The Case for Open Borders

12	3 July	Immigration and Human Rights
13	10 July	Conclusion

Note: The “double session” on 5 June ends at 1 pm and takes place at UNICOM 7.2210.

Requirements

All participants are expected to read and think through the assigned texts in preparation of the sessions. Participation without reading will not be beneficial.

- 6 CP (Pol-M10: TP 1, GS, Erasmus): term paper (15-20 pp.) *or* oral exam (30 min.)
- 3 CP (Pol-M10: TP 2, GS, Erasmus): presentation (15-20 min.) with written elaboration (5 pp.) *or* short term paper (8-10 pp.)

Students who wish to obtain 6 CP in this seminar can claim a 5-page “rebate” for the term paper by volunteering for an oral presentation (without written elaboration). (N.B.: This is merely an option. A term paper of just 10 pages is fine in this case, but so is a longer one closer to or within the normal range of 15 to 20 pages.)

Note that the page numbers given above assume that the papers are formatted according to the rules laid down in the Institute of Political Science’s (IPW) Kompendium/Study Guide (sec. IV 4.1).¹ The expected page ranges include the bibliography (references) and exclude the cover sheet, the table of contents, and annexes (if applicable).

The Kompendium/Study Guide also describes the citation rules that students are expected to comply with in their seminar papers (see sec. III 5. and 6. of the Kompendium or sec. III 2. and 4. of the Study Guide).

Students are required to obtain my consent to their topic before they start writing. In other words, I may reject or downgrade a paper the topic of which I had not previously endorsed. Please inform me about the topic you plan to write about by early September.

Papers (including elaborations of presentations) may be in English or German and must be submitted via email by 30 September 2026. (The preferred format is PDF. Note that as a student at the University of Bremen you can use Nitro PDF Pro for free – see [here](#) under “Schnellzugriff”.) Likewise, oral exams may be taken in English or German. However, students who intend to use the seminar as a proof of proficiency in English (as required by § 3, sec. 6 of the BA examination policy [*Prüfungsordnung*]), must hand in their papers, or take the oral exam, in English.

For more about seminar requirements see the “Additional Information” section on the Stud.IP course site.

¹ The Study Guide is an abridged (and less frequently updated) English version of the Kompendium. The twin documents are available [here](#). To a large extent, the MAIR Study Guide (which can be accessed [here](#)) is a more recent version of the (general) Study Guide. You are encouraged to use it instead of the latter.

General Literature

Introductions, Overviews, Handbooks, Anthologies, Monographs

International Migration: Drivers, Politics, Law

Betts, Alexander/Collier, Paul (2017): *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Betts, Alexander/Loescher, Gil (eds) (2011): *Refugees in International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chan, Sucheng (2018): Migration. In: Juergensmeyer, Mark/Sassen, Saskia/Steger, Manfred B./Faessel, Victor (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Global Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 359–382.

de Haas, Hein/Castles, Stephen/Miller, Mark J. (2020): *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. 6th ed. London: Red Globe Press.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena/Loescher, Gil/Long, Katy/Sigona, Nando (eds.) (2014): *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gold, Steven J./Nawyn, Stephanie J. (eds.) (2019): *Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Goodwin-Gill, Guy S. (2014): The International Law of Refugee Protection. In: Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena/Loescher, Gil/Long, Katy/Sigona, Nando (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 36–47.

Hathaway, James C. (2021): *The Rights of Refugees under International Law*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lahav, Gallya/Lavenex, Sandra (2013): International Migration. In: Carlsnaes, Walter/Risse, Thomas/Simmons, Beth A. (eds.): *Handbook of International Relations*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, Cal.: Sage, 746–774.

McAdam, Jane (2019): The Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration: A New Era for International Protection? In: *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 30 (4), 571–574.

Rosenblum, Marc R./Tichenor, Daniel J. (eds.) (2012): *The Oxford Handbook of the Politics of International Migration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ethics and Political Theory

Beitz, Charles R. (1999): *Political Theory and International Relations*. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Brock, Gillian (2009): *Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Account*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Darwall, Stephen L. (1998): *Philosophical Ethics*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Darwall, Stephen L. (2014): Theories of Ethics. In: Cohen, Andrew I./Wellman, Christopher Heath (eds): *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*. 2nd ed. Malden, Mass.: Wiley Blackwell, 13–32.

Dryzek, John S./Goodin, Robert E. (eds.) (2006): *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frankena, William K. (1973): *Ethics*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Goodin, Robert E./Pettit, Philip/Pogge, Thomas (eds.) (2007): *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (2 vols.). 2nd ed. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

Hutchings, Kimberly (2010): *Global Ethics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity.

Kymlicka, Will (2002): *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levy, Jacob T. (ed.) (2015): *The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Contemporary Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nardin, Terry/Mapel, David R. (eds.) (1992): *Traditions of International Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shapcott, Richard (2010): *International Ethics: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity.

Shapcott, Richard (2017): International Ethics. In: Baylis, John/Smith, Steve/Owens, Patricia (eds.): *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. 7th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 204–218.

Singer, Peter (ed.) (1993): *A Companion to Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Ethics of Migration

Barry, Brian/Goodin, Robert E. (eds.) (1992): *Free Movement: Ethical Issues in the Transnational Migration of People and of Money*. University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Bauböck, Rainer/Mourão Permoser, Julia/Ruhs, Martin (2022): The Ethics of Migration Policy Dilemmas. In: *Migration Studies*, 10 (3), 427–441.

Blake, Michael (2005): Immigration. In: Frey, Raymond G./Wellman, Christopher Heath (eds.): *A Companion to Applied Ethics*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 224–237.

Brock, Gillian/Blake, Michael (2015): *Debating Brain Drain: May Governments Restrict Emigration?* Oxford New York: Oxford University Press.

Carens, Joseph H. (1987): Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders. In: *Review of Politics*, 49 (2), 251–273.

Carens, Joseph H. (2013): *The Ethics of Immigration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carens, Joseph H. (2014): An Overview of the Ethics of Immigration. In: *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 17 (5), 538–559.

Dumitru, Speranta (2023): The Ethics of Immigration: How Biased Is the Field? In: *Migration Studies*, 11 (1), 1–22.

Ferracioli, Luara (2018): International Migration and Human Rights. In: Brown, Chris/Eckersley, Robyn (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of International Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 520–532.

Fine, Sarah/Ypi, Lea (eds.) (2016): *Migration in Political Theory: The Ethics of Movement and Membership*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miller, David (2016): *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Niederberger, Andreas/Okeja, Uchenna/Gördemann, Johanna (eds.) (2025): *Handbook of Migration Ethics*. Cham: Springer.

Song, Sarah (2018): Political Theories of Migration. In: *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21 (1), 385–402.

Wellman, Christopher Heath (2024): Immigration. In: Zalta, Edward N./Nodelman, Uri (eds.): *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2024 Edition). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2024/entries/immigration/>

An extensive, structured bibliography of the ethics of migration is available via the Further Reading folder on the Stud.IP course site.

Internet Sources

Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs (<http://www.carnegiecouncil.org>)

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.iep.utm.edu>)

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu>)

Required Reading

10 April 2026

1 – Introduction

17 April 2026

2 – Migration: Forms, Causes, and Consequences

Adamson, Fiona B. (2006): Crossing Borders: International Migration and National Security. In: *International Security*, 31 (1), 165–199.

24 April 2023

3 – Global Migration Governance

Betts, Alexander (2011): Introduction: Global Migration Governance. In: Betts, Alexander (ed.): *Global Migration Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–33.

8 May 2026

4 – Theories of Ethics

Darwall, Stephen L. (2014): Theories of Ethics. In: Cohen, Andrew I./Wellman, Christopher Heath (eds): *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*. 2nd ed. Malden, Mass.: Wiley Blackwell, 13–32.

15 May 2026

5 – Political Theory and Human Rights

Lukes, Steven (1993): Five Fables about Human Rights. In: Shute, Stephen/Hurley, Susan (eds.): *On Human Rights*. The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993. New York: Basic Books, 19–40.

22 May 2026

6 – The Distribution of Membership: A Communitarian Perspective

Walzer, Michael (1983): *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. New York: Basic Books, ch. 2.

5 June 2026

7 – Libertarianism and Migration

Steiner, Hillel (1992): Libertarianism and the Transnational Migration of People. In: Barry, Brian/Goodin, Robert E. (eds.): *Free Movement: Ethical Issues in the Transnational Migration of People and of Money*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 87–94.

8 – Utilitarianism and Refugees

Singer, Peter (1994): Practical Ethics. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 9.

12 June 2026

9 – Democratic Theory and Immigration

Abizadeh, Arash (2008): Democratic Theory and Border Coercion: No Right to Unilaterally Control Your Own Borders. In: *Political Theory*, 36 (1), 37–65.

19 June 2026

10 – Immigration and Freedom of Association

Wellman, Christopher Heath (2008): Immigration and Freedom of Association. In: *Ethics*, 119 (1), 109–141.

26 June 2026

11 – The Case for Open Borders

Carens, Joseph H. (2013): *The Ethics of Immigration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 11.

3 July 2026

12 – Immigration and Human Rights

Miller, David (2016): Is There a Human Right to Immigrate? In: Fine, Sarah/Ypi, Lea (eds.): *Migration in Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 11–31.

10 July 2026

13 – Conclusion