

Economics of Migration (F000919)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 2)

English

Gent

lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Ruyssen, Ilse

EB21

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

[Bachelor of Science in Business Economics](#)

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Economics](#)

6

A

[Bachelor of Science in Economics \(Double Degree\)](#)

6

A

[Master of Science in Complementary Studies in Economics](#)

6

A

[Exchange programme in Economics and Business Administration](#)

6

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

International migration, internal migration, drivers of migration, economic impact of migration, migration policy

Position of the course

Welcome in the course Economics of Migration!

There are an estimated 1 billion migrants in the world today and demographic imbalances, economic inequality, increased globalization, political instability and climatic changes all predict further episodes of large-scale migration. Given its social, economic and political effects on both source and destination regions, migration forms a top-priority issue in the global policy debate. Hence, this is an exciting time to examine the economics underlying political and policy debates about international migration.

This course will first look into the patterns of global migration, and the economic theories that explain them: why do people decide to migrate, and why do some choose to do so while others do not? Then, we examine the integration of immigrants into the host country and how migration influences the economies of both destination and origin countries. Finally, we investigate the differences in migration policies between countries, along with their evolution over time, and analyze the effectiveness of migration regulation in shaping migration flows to specific countries and their relationship with economic development.

Contents

In the course, we will cover the following aspects:

1. Introduction: Why study migration?
2. The determinants of migration: Why do people migrate?
3. Selection of immigrants: Who migrates?
4. Economic assimilation: How do migrants do?
5. Implications of immigration for the destination country
 - Attitudes towards migration
 - Labor market impact (wages and unemployment)
 - Fiscal impact (impact on the social security system)
 - Growth impact (innovation, investment, entrepreneurship)
6. Implications of emigration for the origin country

- Brain drain and brain gain
 - Financial transfers (remittances)
 - Social transfers (transfer of norms and values)
7. Migration policy: How is/can/should migration be managed?
- Migration policy restrictiveness and selectivity
 - Effectiveness of migration policies
 - Global migration policy framework

Initial competences

The final competences of the courses Economics (e.g. Samuelson) and basic micro-economics.

Final competences

- 1 students are able to understand international and internal migration flows and patterns.
- 2 students are familiar with the most important theoretical and empirical frameworks within which the determinants of the size and composition of migration flows are analyzed.
- 3 students are able to interpret public discussions regarding the implications of migration for both countries of destination and origin (based on an assessment of the labor market, fiscal and growth effects).
- 4 students are able to evaluate the arguments pro and contra restrictive/selective migration policies.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

This course aims to impart the basic economic principles of internal and international migration, hence mainly in the form of ex-cathedra lectures, though with lively didactics and systematic illustrations based on practical examples, which also gives students the opportunity to pick up on (current) events.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Handbook The Economics of Migration
 Indicative price: € 35
 Optional: yes
 Language : English
 Author : Cynthia Bansak, Nicole Simpson, Madeline Zavodny
 ISBN : 978-0-36741-616-4
 Number of Pages : 470
 Alternative : Lecture slides
 Oldest Usable Edition : 2nd edition
 Online Available : Yes
 Available in the Library : No
 Available through Student Association : No
 Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : intensive
 Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : one-time

Type: Slides

Name: Lecture slides
 Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
 Optional: no
 Available on Ufora : Yes
 Online Available : Yes
 Available in the Library : No
 Available through Student Association : No

References

Bodvarsson, O. and H. van den Berg (2013), *The Economics of Immigration - Theory and Policy*, Berlin Heidelberg: Springer
Borjas, G. J. 2014. *Immigration Economics*. Harvard University Press.

Course content-related study coaching

Course related and relevant information additional to the lectures are offered by teacher and assistant.

On Ufora the students can obtain the slides of the course, a summary of the questions and answers with respect to the course and topical information concerning migration issues.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Presentation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

EXAM: Written exam which tests the understanding of the concepts, relations and structures concerning the economics of migration through a conceptually insightful exposition of the treated matter.

ASSIGNMENT: Choice between two possible tasks, namely (i) the presenting (via video or podcast) of a mapping of the migration patterns of a country of choice; or (ii) the presentation of a well-funded opinion about the migration policy of a country of choice (via video or podcast). More information available on Ufora. Both tasks are graded on 5 points.

Calculation of the examination mark

End-of-term evaluation (75%) and permanent (25%) evaluation.