General information

RSOS4958 – International Migration: Sovereigns, Borders, Control

Final home exam, autumn 2024

Language: The exam paper can be answered in English, Norwegian, Danish or Swedish.

Size: Maximum 4000 words.
Front page, contents page (optional) and bibliography are not included. If footnotes are used in the text (at the bottom of each page), they are included in the 4000 word limit.

Papers that exceed the 4000 word limit will be rejected, and not graded.

Cheating: Any exam at the University of Oslo is being checked for both correct word count and incidents of cheating. Text recognition software will be used to find cases of plagiarism. Failure to cite sources or highlight quotes in any assignments that are handed in is considered cheating. You must cite the source if you obtain data, reasoning and arguments from the literature, syllabus and web pages. Short or long pieces of text quoted verbatim from other sources must be italicised so that it is obvious that it is a quote.

Submit your exam: Your exam answer shall be handed in electronically in Inspera. Exams at the University of Oslo are anonymous. Write only your candidate number found in StudentWeb.

Allowed file types to be uploaded: PDF

Contact info during your home exam:
In case of any issues during the exam, please contact: Info@jus.uio.no
In the subject field of your e-mail write: URGENT – EXAM – RSOS4958

Note that all other inquiries should be directed to info@jus.uio.no.
Please do not contact the course teacher during the exam, as such inquiries will not receive a response.

Best of luck on your exam!

1 RSOS4958 Exam H24

RSOS4958 – International Migration: Sovereigns, Borders, Control

Life in Country X is challenging. The economy is fragile, unemployment high and corruption widespread. X comes towards the bottom in international evaluations rating countries for civil liberties and quality of life. X has a land border with Country Y, which has a land border with Country Z. Z is a strong economy, and in recent years, many citizens of X have travelled irregularly to Z to work there.

22-year-old citizen of X, Ari, belongs to an ethnic minority that faces discrimination in X. For him as a member of this minority, it is even more difficult to find employment in X. Ari has long been looking into ways to get to Z and work in Z´s big construction sector. He knows it will have to be informal employment. He also knows working in construction is risky and that he is doomed if gets injured. But a couple of his childhood friends did so well in Z. With the money they sent back home, their families built houses, bought land to cultivate, started businesses…

Ari´s first attempt to leave X was with a counterfeit passport and visa which his family had put all their savings into. But during passport control at the airport, the police had immediately understood that Ari's documents were fake. This time Ari is travelling by land, in a hidden compartment of a trailer truck. The "agency" that is arranging Ari's travel will also be connecting him to the construction business he will work for in Z. The deal is that Ari will have to give part of his salary to this agency the first two years but after that, he will get to keep the money he earns. The arrangement costs a small fortune but the price was cut in half for Ari after he recruited three additional people to take the same travel and employment deal.

Soon after Ari and his companions start the long journey, countries Z and Y make a deal whereby Y undertakes to strengthen border control and prevent irregular departures from its territory to Z. Minister of Interior of Z announces the deal as "a historic moment". "We are fed up with all the smuggling and criminality threatening our borders and we are not putting up with it anymore. Illegal people are not welcome in this country," she says.

With border controls intensified, Ari and his travel companions get stuck in Y. They work odd jobs and try to survive in the hope that the border situation will soon change and they will be able to cross to Z. A young NGO worker who helps distribute food and other necessities in their area says that Ari should consider applying for asylum in Y. "You have rights, you know," she says. Ari looks puzzled. "I don't know what rights you are talking about," he responds, "I wouldn't even know where to start. Plus, all I want is a job."

At the same time as this conversation, a very different one is taking place in an affluent neighborhood of X. Johny is celebrating his daughter's first birthday with family and friends and excitedly talking about the house he recently bought in Country Z. "All we must do is spend two weeks in Z every year. At the end of four years, we will get permanent residency and soon after that, Z-citizenship. Forget about investing in companies and whatnot, buying citizenship is the best investment," he says.

Question: Please write an essay discussing select aspects of the events/developments described in this fictional text, with reference to three of the debates/themes/concepts we covered in RSOS 4958, drawing from and making meaningful use of the relevant literature in the syllabus.

Note: You will notice that the above text includes various elements touching upon many of the debates/themes/concepts we covered this term. Please do not try to address every issue you

identify but choose three things to focus on and make your choice clear to the reader. Try to think of the syllabus as a toolbox that you can use to evaluate and make sense of new developments in the world. There is no single right or best answer here but many relevant discussions to be had. Note that ChatGPT and similar tools are not allowed. Remember the word limit. Best of luck!

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