

Lecture Series

Department of Slavic and Eastern European Studies

Labor Migration in and from Eastern Europe

Fall 2026

Labor Migration in and from Eastern Europe

15 September 2026

Introduction: Labor Migration in and from Eastern Europe, Past and Present

Sandra King-Savić & Jonathan Raspe (University of Zurich & Cornell University)

22 September 2026

Labor Migration and Development in Socialist Yugoslavia: State Visions and Migrant Experiences

Sara Bernard (University of Glasgow)

29 September 2026

Globalizing Border Controls and the Conflict over Labor Migrants: The 1913 Canadian Pacific Affair

Tobias Brinkmann (Pennsylvania State University)

6 October 2026

Labor Migration and Ethnic Hierarchies in the Soviet Union

Jonathan Raspe (Cornell University)

13 October 2026

Nowhere and Nothing: The Entangled Lives of Migrants and Locals in Boston, Lincolnshire

Dace Dzenovska (University of Oxford)

20 October 2026

Tajik Labor Migration to Russia in the Wake of the War in Ukraine

Mariana Peixoto Irby (University of Warsaw)

27 October 2026

Understanding Internal Displacement in Ukraine: Between Housing and Employment

Oleksandra Tarkhanova (University of St. Gallen)

3 November 2026

Border Regimes and Differential Inclusion/Exclusion in and of the Balkans: The Case of Serbia

Marta Stojić Mitrović (Institute of Ethnography SASA, Belgrade)

10 November 2026

Building Austria's "Cucumber Capital": The Past, Present, and Future of Migrant Farmwork in Austria's Agrifood System

Paul Sperneac-Wolfer (University of Barcelona)

17 November 2026

Made a Refugee: Yugoslav Labor and Suspended Recognition in Switzerland

Sandra King-Savić (University of Zurich)

24 November 2026

Business as Usual? Normalizing the Economization of Ukrainian Migration to Poland: From Covid-19 to War in Ukraine

Marta Kindler (University of Warsaw)

1 December 2026

“Fit for Beauty”: Racialized Labor, Skill, and Depletion in Migrant Nail Salon Work

Daria Krivonos (University of Helsinki)

8 December 2026

Labor and Capital in and from the Periphery: A Single Logic of Subordination

Ivan Kalmar (University of Toronto)

15 December 2026

Ambiguity, Race and the Politics of East-West Migration in Europe

Aleksandra Lewicki (University of Sussex)

Tuesdays, 18:15 – 19:45 CET

The lecture series will take place online only (via Zoom) and will also be available as a podcast.

For more information, please visit: www.isos.uzh.ch/de/studium/ringvorlesungen/labor-migration.html.

Admission is free. Please note that the program is subject to change.

Lecture Series

Labor Migration in and from Eastern Europe

Eastern, Central, and Southeast Europe offer a critical vantage point for understanding the complexities of migration, one of the defining forces of our time. Labor migration in and from this region has shaped economies, social structures, and political debates across Europe and beyond. Yet these movements are often overlooked or oversimplified in public discourse.

Since the nineteenth century, people have moved to, from, and within Eastern Europe in search of employment and social mobility. In many of the region's cities and localities, labor migration has transformed local economies, altered political dynamics, and reshaped everyday social life. In destination countries, these movements have contributed to the formation of new diaspora communities and increasingly interconnected labor markets. At the same time, migrants have built transnational networks and sustained cross-border cultural and economic ties that link workplaces, households, and communities across Europe.

This lecture series explores labor migration in and from Eastern Europe, broadly conceived, from a wide range of disciplinary and geographic perspectives. Across fourteen lectures, anthropologists, historians, sociologists and scholars from related fields trace key themes in labor migration from the nineteenth century to the present. Topics include border regimes and the racialization of migrants, precarity, informality, and remittances, as well as return migration and gendered dimensions of care and domestic work.

Organization

Sandra King-Savić, Jonathan Raspe

University of Zurich, Department of Slavic and Eastern European Studies

Contact

sandra.king-savic@uzh.ch