

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN IMMIGRATION INTO THE UNITED STATES: THE REALITY

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Introduction: An analysis of the different types of education - lectures, simulations, service, community events - we have received via the Canisius Spanish Department, specifically through our class (SPA 324), and how this education has enlightened us to the reality of what it means to immigrate from the southern border into the U.S.

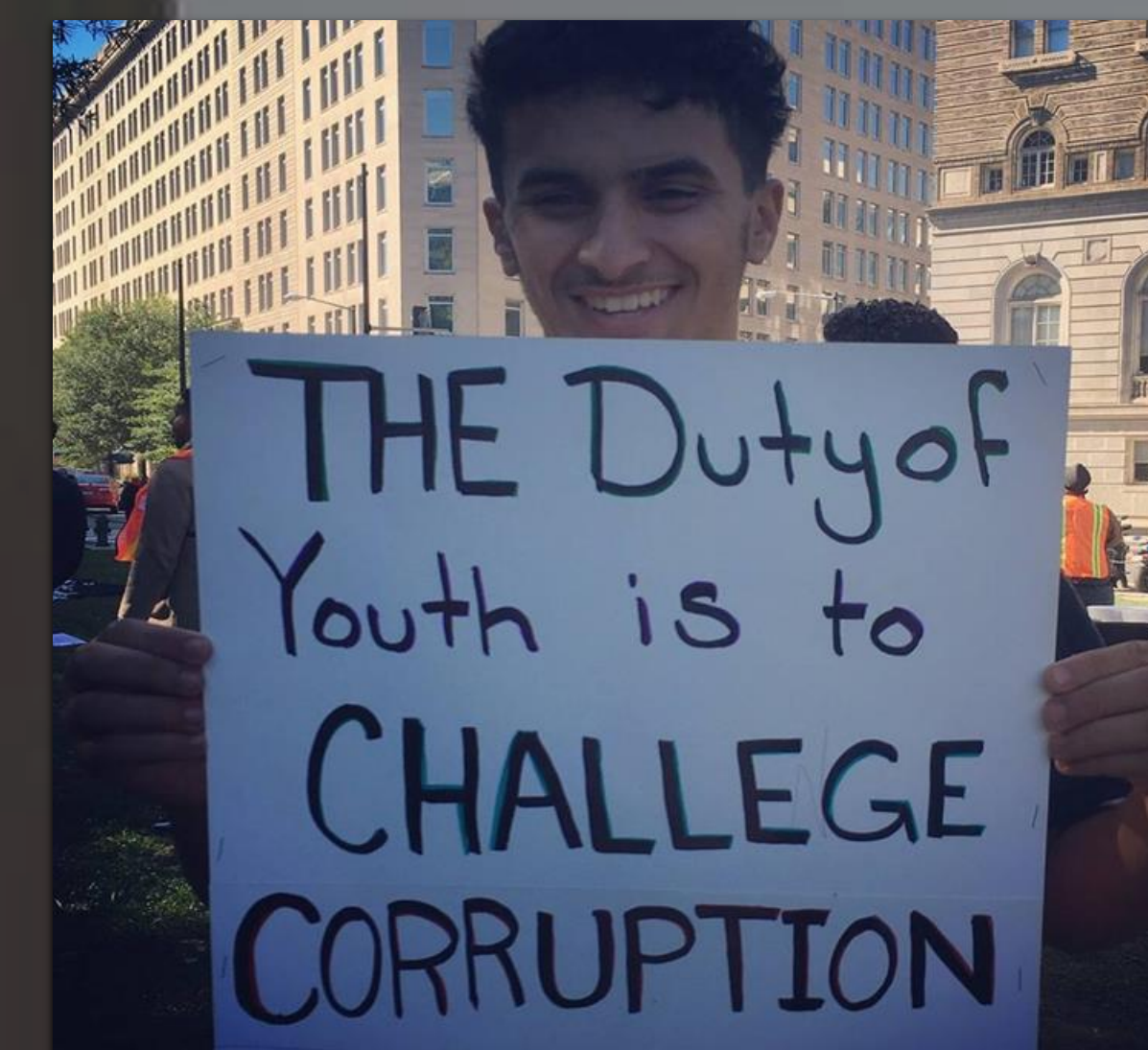
Why they leave: SPA 324 focused on *movimiento*, or the movement of people. We viewed over ten documentaries/films, explaining the structural reasons migrants decide to leave their home countries and the sacrifices made when making the harsh journey northward.

Push: Extreme poverty, starvation, unemployment, gang violence, competition with U.S. markets, persecution (LGBTQ+, race, etc.), climate
Pull: Employment, lure of the "American Dream," family reunification, safety
How: Train hopping, walking through the desert, swimming across rivers, hiring *coyotes*



At the border: During Borders and Migration Week, we participated in an "immigration simulation," in which we were all given roles based on real stories of immigrants and had to go through a mock-U.S. immigration system. It is meant to reflect what immigrants face at the border everyday - visa and asylum denial, expensive fees, racism, language barriers, etc. In many cases, they are forced to turn to illegal and dangerous means of crossing. Another event included playing a board game created for children in detainment that was intended to teach them how to navigate the confusing detention system.

In our community: Currently in NYS, immigrants account for a fifth of the population, and 25% of the labor force (American Immigration Council). In Buffalo, our class worked with Justice for Migrant Families, a volunteer group that aims to offer support and solidarity to immigrant families in WNY. Specifically, we participated in visitations to undocumented peoples in the community who are currently detained in the ICE detention center in Batavia. We experienced what it is like inside one of these facilities and provided emotional support for the people we were visiting in order to take on part of the emotional weight that comes from being detained in isolation. Most detainees we talked with said they were detained at the border when claiming asylum - an act protected under the U.S. Constitution.



References/Photos
Which Way Home?
Rebecca Cammisa
American Immigration Council
Justice for Migrant Families
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