

INTerrupted Silence



Quarterly Newsletter
Compiled and Published Spring Quarter 2022
Volume 11, Issue 2

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This newsletter showcases the happenings in and work of DePaul INT, including personnel features, department led events, and students' academic papers, external work articles, and creative writing.

Are you interested in being featured next quarter? Email ssulli24@depaul.edu for more information!

DePaul International Studies Department
Lincoln Park Campus
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Chicago, IL 60614



Letter from your INT Representatives

We don't know about you all, but the end of the school year always prompts reflection. It raises our awareness of the passage of time, even more than all other times when change is so prevalent. Although conversations have generally died down about COVID, we feel largely depleted by the continuation of this pandemic, somehow still mounting geopolitical tensions, perpetual anxiety-inducing events. In short, we're tired, as we're sure you are, too.

Perhaps easier said than done, we then must recognize how dynamic change is: filled with good and bad. Though the news may not always be bright, there is still a positive political narrative. That is our personal growth, amongst and comprising a a more critical collective. (INT is certainly our collective!) We know you're learning hard, in and out of school. We're tired also because we have grown our perspectives, our brains, and inevitably our hearts! Now, we reward ourselves with rest.

Happy summer and see you next year!

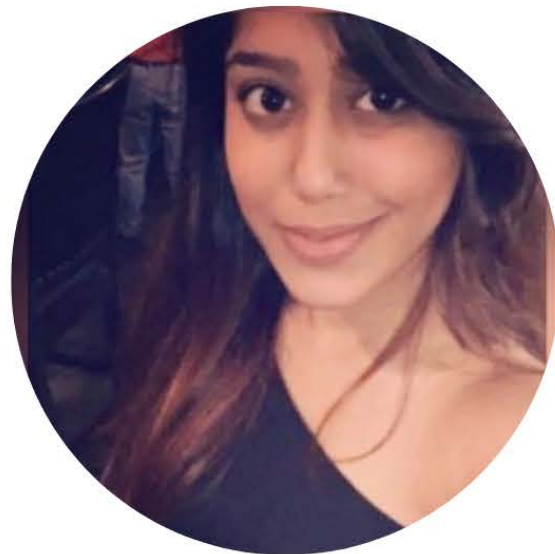
- Kenzie, Jolie, & Diane



Meet the INT Representatives and Student Workers!

Shreya Nadkarni | Front Office Worker

My name is Shreya (she/her). I am 24, and proud to say I'm Indian. At DePaul, I am currently pursuing a master's in business analytics. I love coding and playing with data to get some amazing visual dashboards. I received a bachelor's in economics and business mgmt. from the London School of Economics, followed by a master's in developmental economics and strategic marketing from St Andrews University in Scotland. You would find me as a highly energetic, friendly individual, always up for exploring the city, grabbing a drink over weekends, and most importantly dancing. I became a student assistant of INT as I truly believe in the passion of the department and its students. I look forward to connecting with all of you. You are most welcome to stop by the building anytime you need to relax or talk to someone.



Diane Bou Khalil | Graduate Representative



Hello! My name is Diane Bou Khalil (she/her), and I am the Graduate Assistant and a second year masters student at INT. I also work as a reporter at an immigration news outlet in Chicago. I am extremely passionate about community engagement, immigration, and food! Joining the INT program in 2020 has allowed me to grow academically, intellectually and gain skills that I will carry for life. I am always here to chat with, hear your concerns and answer any questions! You can reach me at dboukhal@depaul.edu



Makenzie Lucas | Jr. Representative

Hello All! My name is Makenzie Lucas (she/her), and I am the Junior International Studies representative. I am an International Studies major (of course!) and I have minors in Political Science and French Language. I work as a case assistant at a law firm downtown, and I am Vice President of the new United Nations Association Chapter at Depaul. I am really looking forward to getting to know more students in our department and helping to facilitate events that you all will want to experience! We are always looking for student feedback, commentary, and questions, so please feel free to reach out to me by email, mlucas14@depaul.edu.



Jolie Hackney | Sr. Rep. & INT Tutor

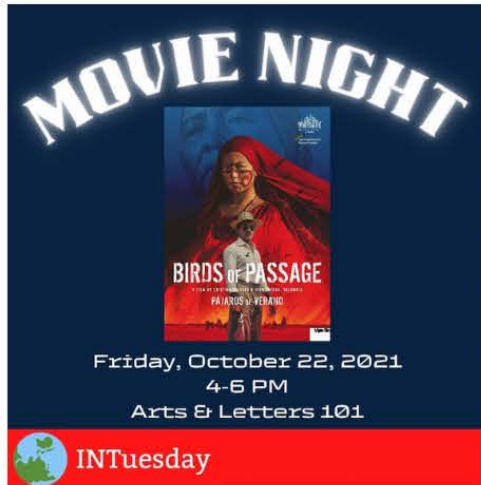


Hey there! I'm Jolie (she/her). If my two positions didn't already convey my immense love for this department, then know you can spot me on campus sporting my INT tote everyday – it's a fantastic bag (also available/free to students for pickup in the office)! If you do spot me, please say hi! I double major in INT and Geography, with minors in French and Architecture & Urbanism. All this said, I am available to navigate INT classes and general resources, to tutor for specific coursework, and to simply discuss life things, as a friend! My email is JHACKNE2@depaul.edu.



Review of this year's events!

SOCIAL EVENTS:



MOVIE NIGHT

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

Friday, October 22, 2021
4-6 PM
Arts & Letters 101

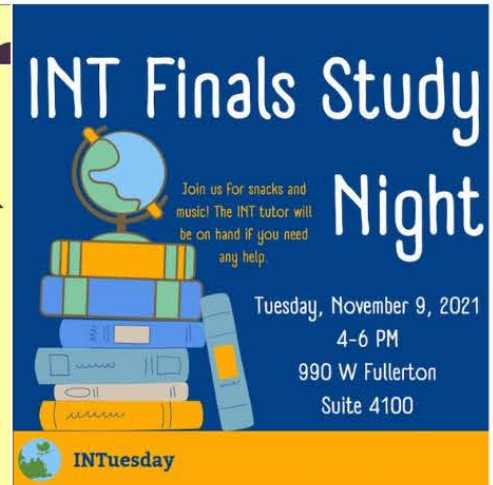
INTuesday



JOIN US FOR AN
INT HALLOWEEN PARTY!

OCT 29
3PM TO 5PM

CANDY, SNACKS, AND SPOOKY ACTIVITIES
990 W. FULLERTON, SUITE 4100



INT Finals Study Night

Join us for snacks and music! The INT tutor will be on hand if you need any help.

Tuesday, November 9, 2021
4-6 PM
990 W Fullerton
Suite 4100

INTuesday



INT Winter Welcome

Friday, January 7, 2022
3 PM - 5 PM

Join us on zoom to kick off Winter Quarter!

INTuesday Register: <https://bit.ly/INTWinterWelcome>



THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PRESENTS...

INT OPEN HOUSE

JOIN US TO LEARN ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PROGRAM AND GET TO KNOW US!

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021
FROM 5-5:45 PM**

JOIN HERE:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/3LqMOQS](https://bit.ly/3LqMOQS)
LINK IN BIO!



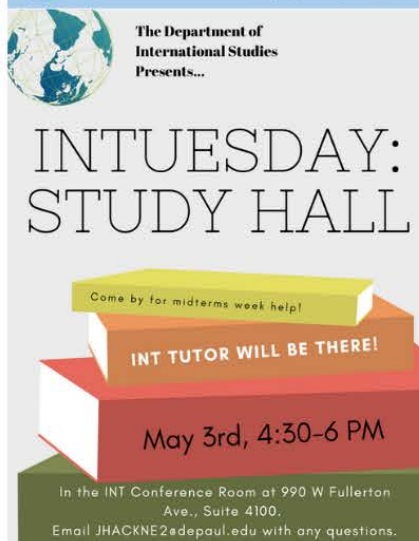
The Department of International Studies presents

CITY-IMMERSIVE MOVIE NIGHT

Friday April 15 • 8:15 pm

We will meet at the INT office (990 W. Fullerton, Suite 4100) at 8:15 pm and then travel together to the Gene Siskel Film Center for a 9 pm showing of *Shortbus*. Visit <https://www.siskelfilmcenter.org/shortbus> to preview the film and theater.

RSVP/ receive details about getting tickets by emailing JHACKNE2@depaul.edu!



The Department of International Studies Presents...

INTUESDAY: STUDY HALL

Come by for midterms week help!

INT TUTOR WILL BE THERE!

May 3rd, 4:30-6 PM

In the INT Conference Room at 990 W Fullerton Ave., Suite 4100.
Email JHACKNE2@depaul.edu with any questions.



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

End-of-Year Senior Celebration!

June 2nd, 4 PM
@ Arts & Letters Atrium!



TOPIC DISCUSSIONS:

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PRESENTS

(Re)coding Protocols: Indigenous Futurisms, Decolonial Futurity, and Place-based Praxis

A talk by Dr. Michelle Lee Brown

Indigenous Futurisms are experiments in thought and technologies that challenge colonial constructs of modernity and progress. They offer ways to build inclusive futures and racially just futurities – that is, the present-day educational decisions that make equitable futures possible – without losing sight of histories and ongoing structures of oppression and erasure. IF is inspired by, and pays homage to, Afrofuturisms; they have seeded other global nonwestern futurist initiatives. These interconnected futurisms movements have sparked imaginative models for alliance, support, and justice.

This talk opens with my research on centering Indigenous human and nonhuman kin relations and responsibilities to shift technology and innovation protocols and engagement. If education experiences should weave together mind, place, people, and heart – where do we draw these threads from? Moreover, what futures are shaped or erased by choices we make now? Inclusive futures require cultivating supportive spaces in the present to imagine, test, and iterate. Universities can offer ways to do that on many levels: the second half of the talk charts paths to connect local, regional, and global Indigenous and decolonial political and technology fields with existing racial and environmental justice initiatives. I conclude by modeling what that looks like in practice: a place-based BIPOC technology center that navigates towards just futures guided by what it means to gather and work on Indigenous lands and waters.

Tuesday, November 2 at 4 PM CST
Arts & Letters Room 206
 Register to attend via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/INTMBrown>

THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIES DEPT. PRESENTS:

CAREER GOALS WORKSHOP

w/ Academic Advisor Corban Sanchez

'INTUESDAY' JANUARY 25 4-5 PM CST

For people at all stages of career path development!

REGISTER:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/INTCAREERS](https://bit.ly/INTCAREERS)

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PRESENTS:

GRADUATE SCHOOL DISCUSSION

Online via zoom | Register to attend: <https://bit.ly/INTuesdayGradTalk>

INTUESDAY 2/15 | 4:30-5:30 PM CST

Interested in Grad School? Want to know what to expect? Have questions about how to choose the right one? Wondering if it's worth it or if you really need it for your career? Want to know how to identify "red flags" and other oft-unspoken truths about the grad school experience? Are all those grad accounts complaining on social media true? Should you get an MA/MS first or go straight to PhD (wait, that's an option?!)?

Join INT for an honest talk, led by INT's own Dr. Gilchrest, about the realities of grad school in the 2020s, get answers to your burning questions, as well as tools and information for choosing the right fit, managing the demands of graduate school, and the politics of higher education.

Dr. Gilchrest was a graduate student three times at different institutions. She organized the graduate student union at American University, and supports and mentors graduate students at DePaul University, University of Maryland, and American University. She knows grad life well. She completed an MA from DePaul in 2011 (one of her favorite places!) and an MA and PhD from American University in 2021 (she'll talk about that experience, too). She firmly believes that prospective graduate students should have honest information about graduate school so they can make the best decisions for themselves and avoid potentially toxic or unnecessarily costly situations (which are rampant in higher education).

- 11/2 (Re)coding Protocols - Dr. Michelle Brown
 1/25 Career Goals Workshop - Advisor Corban Sanchez
 2/15 Graduate School Discussion - INT's Dr. Gilchrest

Sponsored by DePaul University's Departments of *International Studies, Islamic World Studies, Geography, Latin American and Latino Studies, Environmental Science and Studies, Political Science, & the Grace School of Applied Diplomacy*

Global Supply Chains & the Green New Deal

The supply chains of green technologies like electric vehicles, wind turbines, and solar panels begin in the extractive frontiers of the global economy: sites of environmental harm, labor exploitation, and Indigenous dispossession. These supply chains are now the site of intense geopolitical competition – and militant protest. In this session, we will discuss the political economy of the resource extraction linked to renewable energy systems, and what it tells us about the history and future of global capitalism, as well as the possibility for a more just transition.

Wednesday 2/23 | 6:00-7:30 pm CST

This is a hybrid event –
 Register online: <https://bit.ly/Riofrancos>
 OR
 Attend in-person at DePaul: Levan 505

A talk with Thea Riofrancos.

Thea Riofrancos is an Andrew Carnegie Fellow (2020-2022), an Associate Professor of Political Science at Providence College, and a member of the climate + community project.

Professor Riofrancos's research focuses on resource extraction, renewable energy, climate change, green technology, social movements, and the left in Latin America. She is the author of *Resource Radicals: From Petro-Nationalism to Post-Extractivism in Ecuador*, and the forthcoming *Extraction: The Frontiers of Green Capitalism*, as well as many book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed journals.

As an activist and public intellectual, Dr. Riofrancos's writings regularly appear in the *Guardian*, *New York Times*, the *Jacobin*, *N+1*, *NACLA*, *In These Times*, *Baffler*, and *Dissent*, among others.

The background for this flyer is Riofrancos's photo of Los Flamencos National Reserve, Atacama Desert, Chile

Sponsored by DePaul University's Departments of *Islamic World Studies, International Studies, Geography, Political Science, Women's and Gender Studies, & the Grace School of Applied Diplomacy*

Gender and the Politics of Space in the Middle East

Wednesday 3/2, 1:00-2:30 PM CST

This is a hybrid event.
 Register to ATTEND ONLINE: <https://bit.ly/GenderPoliticsME>
 OR ATTEND IN-PERSON: Arts & Letters, Room 102

Do gender segregated spaces always limit women's participation? Can some gender segregated spaces paradoxically enhance and support women's better integration in to public life? This talk will explore the complexities of women's spatial and social participation in the contemporary urban Middle East.

Nazanin Shahrokni
 Assistant Professor of Gender & Globalization at the London School of Economics

Nazanin Shahrokni is a sociologist and professor at the London School of Economics, where she directs the MSc Programme in Gender Research. She is the author of *Women in Place: The Politics of Gender Segregation in Iran* (University of California Press, 2020). Before receiving her doctorate in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley she worked a journalist for *Zan*, an independent women's magazine in Iran. More recently Shahrokni has served on the editorial boards of *Middle East Report* (Merip), *Jadaliyya*, and *Middle East Law and Governance*.

Sponsored by *Islamic World Studies, Geography, International Studies, Environmental Science & Studies, Political Science, Grace School of Applied Diplomacy*

Kali Rubaii

(Joining from Fallujah)

Surviving Militarized Ecologies in Iraq: A View From Anbar Province

Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Duke University

Professor Rubaii studies the materiality of structural violence, especially ecological arrangements between living and nonliving things in war-torn Iraq. She will be speaking to us from Fallujah, where she is conducting field research on the environmental impacts of war-torn Iraq's infrastructure in Iraq.

What can we teach about how to think, act, and feel when our worlds are devastated? As people from all walks of life are considering how to survive ecological disaster, what routes to repair are really possible?

Purpose one of the best places to ask these questions is in Anbar, Iraq. Here, decades of military violence have transformed the possibilities for plants, people, animals, and landscapes to coexist as they have before. It is here, among people trying to make things grow on a blasted landscape, that Kali Rubaii situates three main arguments: **First**, counterterrorism is not just about military strategy, but also a set of environmental conditions that kill relations among beings. **Second**, political violence is an assault on multiplexed survival, and therefore social and environmental justice are inseparable. **Third**, repair may not be about prescriptive restoration, but instead reorientation to the future that makes room for antagonism as a prevailing mode of relationality.

Monday 3/7, 1-2:30 PM CST

This is a hybrid event.
 Register to ATTEND ONLINE:
<https://depaul.zoom.us/j/60816809090>
 OR ATTEND IN PERSON: Arts & Letters Room 102

- 2/23 Global Supply Chains & the Green New Deal - Dr. Thea Riofrancos
 3/2 Gender & the Politics of Space in the Middle East - Dr. Nazanin Shahrokni
 3/7 Surviving Militarized Ecologies in Iraq - Dr. Kali Rubaii

TOPIC DISCUSSIONS:



JOIN US ONLINE VIA ZOOM

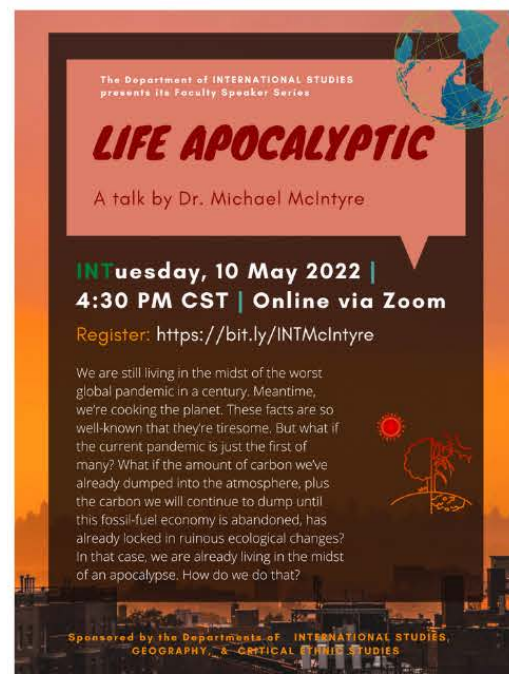
<https://depaul.zoom.us/j/97130795366?pwd=Yzd3SEpLUHBJMHpwL0N6cy9ncG5Ez09>

PASSWORD: 85849



3/8 Panel on Ukraine: The Attack and Its Effects

4/14 Ukrainian Refugees: The EU Welcome



4/25 Afghanistan's Missing History - Dr. Benjamin Hopkins

4/27 Graduate Student Panel - Zaynah Habibi, Diane Bou Khalil, & Yen Hai Nguyen

5/10 Faculty Talk: "Life Apocalyptic" - Dr. Michael McIntyre



The Department of INTERNATIONAL STUDIES presents its
Faculty Speaker Series

**PROFESSORS WRITE PAPERS, TOO:
THE INS & OUTS OF
'ACADEMIC LEAVE' & PUBLICATION**

A talk by Dr. Heidi J. Nast

**INTuesday, 17 May 2022 |
4:30 PM CST | Hybrid event**

Register online: <https://bit.ly/INTNast>
OR attend in-person: Arts & Letters 102

While there may be overlap between teaching and writing interests, the immediacies of teaching and service often crowd out the time allocated for research and writing such that many faculty fall behind in what they'd hoped to accomplish. Luckily, every six years at DePaul, tenured faculty are eligible to apply for an 'academic leave' during which time they can catch up with those hopes, even if 'catch up' isn't how academic leaves are supposed to work.

In this talk, Dr. Nast discusses what she plans on accomplishing during her upcoming year-long leave period (AY22-23), a good chunk of which involves completing projects that she started some time ago, over the past years falling progressively behind. The projects include: (1) a long paper that describes and theorizes the distinct characteristics of hyper-realistic sex doll production and marketing in China and the US; (2) a paper about how western cosmopolitan elites shut down China's state-sponsored dog/livestock industry initiative for the rural poor by threatening to 'expose it' prior to the Beijing Summer Olympics (2008); and (3) a paper about the ontological contradictions and sexed dynamics of private property's emergence during the Neolithic era. In the process of this discussion, Dr. Nast will overview the kinds of decisions made in choosing where to publish, the different sorts of writing projects that there are, the time and energies involved--and how pleasurable writing and publishing can be!

Sponsored by the Departments of INTERNATIONAL STUDIES & GEOGRAPHY

The Dept. of INTERNATIONAL STUDIES presents the 2022 SO
INT Alumni Panel
featuring...

Miriam Keep, Class of 2014
is currently working as a Technical Officer with BRAC International, where she provides technical support to field teams, governments, and multilaterals on the design and implementation of economic inclusion programs across Asia and Africa. Prior to this role, she completed a Fulbright Student Research Grant in Morocco, an MA in Urban Planning from the UIUC (2017), and worked as a Program Officer on a USAID-funded youth employability project in Morocco.

Gabriella Nelson, Class of 2018
serves as a Public Policy Analyst for the Chicago Department of Housing, working as a primary expert on reentry housing and to make housing more accessible. Prior to this, she worked at the Safer Foundation, through policy and legislation, to eliminate barriers and create opportunities for people with records. Prior to that, she was a Trade Officer for the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gabby is also an alumnus of the Fulbright Fellowship Program in Brazil.

Christina Origel, Class of 2017
is a Coordinator at the Society of Thoracic Surgery Directors Association, providing resources for program directors at cardiothoracic surgery residency programs across the country. Previously, she worked as an immigration law clerk at the Law Office of Christine Contreras and as a Community Outreach Intern for EducationUSA. She also completed a two-year Fulbright grant in Mexico, teaching English and mentoring first-year English assistants.

**Wed., 25 May 2022 |
5-6 PM CDT | Hybrid event**

Register online: <https://bit.ly/INTalumni>
OR attend in-person: Arts & Letters 207

Sponsored by the Departments of INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, GEOGRAPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE, & ISLAMIC WORLD STUDIES

**INTuesday, 31 May 2022 |
4:30-6 PM CST | Hybrid event**

The Department of INTERNATIONAL STUDIES presents its
Faculty Speaker Series

THE SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORIES OF OIL IN THE PERSIAN GULF

A talk by Dr. Kaveh Ehsani

The discovery of oil in the Persian Gulf in 1908 transformed the Middle East and accelerated the global transition to oil and gas as primary sources of energy. This talk will focus on the social, political and environmental impact of a century of oil capitalism in this strategic region.

Register online: <https://bit.ly/INTEhsani>
OR attend in-person: Arts & Letters 102

5/17 Faculty Talk: "Ins & Outs of 'Academic Leave' & Publication" - Dr. Heidi J. Nast
5/25 INT Alumni Panel - Miriam Keep, Gabriella Nelson, & Christina Origel
5/31 Faculty Talk: "Social and Environmental Histories of Oil" - Dr. Kaveh Ehsani

& more!
Keep up to date
and let us know
what kind of
events you're
interested in via
our social
media!

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DePaul University
International
Studies Dept,



@depaulINT



INT Studies
Depaul University



Updates from our alumni in China!



KATE GARDNER - BA IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, CLASS OF 2019



SHENYANG

My name is Kate Gardner, and I graduated from DePaul with my degree in International Studies in 2019. I currently live in Shenyang, China, which is a few hours from the North Korean border. The summer after graduating I accepted a teaching position at a school here. I had some previous experience as a teacher during my study abroad program and felt like this was a great opportunity for me to travel, build my savings, and allow time to consider my career goals. I enjoy this job so much and I aspire to teach history in the future. I'm passionate about learning history, and living here has made me reflect on what I've learned and how I've learned it.

When I'm not working (or under quarantine) I study as an apprentice at a tattoo studio here and learn traditional Chinese art styles. This opportunity in particular has allowed me to hear perspectives from people of all walks of life, such as their views of the US and lingering attitudes toward Japan as a result of events in this region during World War II, which surprised me. I've actually had very young students of mine express strong negative opinions of Japan as a country, and have been told that's not a unique sentiment here in the northeast. My tattoo master's wife and I once talked about this, and to paraphrase, she told me "we strongly appreciate the culture of Japan, its art, music, and [aesthetic], but I dared not study the language," to which my senior apprentice fervently agreed.

I arrived in China just after Thanksgiving in 2019, which gave me a little less than two months of adjusting to life before Covid cases started to surge in Wuhan the following January. I'd spent a lot of time trying to prepare myself for living here but no one could have been prepared for a pandemic. As such, I can say my entire time in China has been characterized by it. It's necessary to adjust your daily routine to zero-Covid guidelines, whether cases have decreased or your city is in the midst of a snap lockdown, like what we're experiencing right now.



One example of this is WeChat, and for anyone unfamiliar with the name, it's the country's leading social media and messaging app. Its functions include calling and messaging, location services, mobile payment via QR codes, translation, sharing posts with friends (similar to Facebook, but government-censored), and so on. It was a novelty for me to use a single app for so many different purposes. Now I've come to realize that you can't really function in post-pandemic China without it.

Take this picture for example:



This is a screenshot of my most recent health code that I access through the WeChat app. It's a QR code that shows my basic info and tracks where I've been to recently. It's currently green for several reasons: all of my recent Covid tests have been negative, I haven't been to any areas designated as red zones ("do not travel"), and I have all three vaccine doses. Most importantly it shows that I got tested within the last forty-eight hours, which means I can now leave my complex and enter stores or markets. Due to the recent policy, if I don't have a valid 48-hour Covid test, I'm restricted to my housing community, and vice versa, unable to reenter without it.



The idea of this code turning red or yellow is terrifying for both Chinese citizens and foreigners. In the case it does show up red — whether you or one of your close contacts has been diagnosed with Covid — the municipal CDC calls your phone directly and gives you a notice before you are evacuated to a quarantine hotel or hospital. After that it's a mandatory fourteen day period in isolation, and then at least another seven days at home. Last month this happened to my entire building and we were all taken to various hotels in the middle of the night. Trying to get through that initial phone call at two o'clock in the morning was nerve-racking. My Chinese language ability might be considered decent, but I wouldn't have been able to get through that whole period without being able to contact my neighbors by, you guessed it, our building's WeChat group chat.



This is a photo I took of myself as we were being processed for isolation last month; the CDC team distributed the white suits to every apartment in our building before transporting us by bus. The hotel lobby was completely gutted out except for medical supplies. This picture was shortly before I had to sign a waiver which required me to disclose any preexisting medical conditions and accept the risk of “possible cross infection” during our stay.

Thankfully for us we're now allowed to go outside after twenty-five days, though for many cities the situation doesn't seem to have an end. Jilin, the province just north of us, has been in severe lockdown for over forty days. To be honest I came to this country expecting to use phrases like “where is the train station” or “how do I get to ___” a lot in my free time. By now though, my most frequently used phrases include “nucleic acid test” (核酸检测), “why isn't my passport acceptable” (为什么我的护照不行), and “quarantine hotel” (隔离酒店). One might say my vocabulary list was a lot more optimistic before.



Many of my fellow expats who relocated here well before 2020 have told me that China has been a changing landscape for a long time, and the pandemic was just a catalyst for a lot of foreigners choosing to leave — in addition to heavier visa crackdowns. I don't doubt it at all: you're under a lot of scrutiny when you pull out a passport (for better or worse, though lately it's more of the latter). I'm grateful to have lived here in such strange times, but for anyone considering coming here to work or study, just know it's impossible to ignore the pandemic. It will be evident in every aspect of your routine until Beijing decides to shift away from "zero-Covid." Right now at least, the dire situation in Shanghai and the government's response seems to be changing many people's blanket support of the official narrative. Up until this year many would have said "yes, the policy is harsh, but we feel safe." Now many people agree "it's gone too far." It's refreshing to see criticism before it's taken down.

When I was an INT student, I studied the role of smartphones in modern migration. I focused on how using phones could pose a danger to refugees despite the benefits of having access to maps and instant messaging. In the present, I experience firsthand how technology, health, and policing are all intertwined, all of which are major themes in the INT program. In any context, studying how policy affects daily life is just as important as analyzing the nations that create and enforce these policies. Because in the case of China, even if you follow every zero-Covid rule down to the letter, there are going to be times when your phone just doesn't cooperate, and you're going to find yourself stuck, wondering how your entire welfare has come to rely on a single smartphone application.

Thanks so much for your time. Good luck with the spring quarter, or as you might say here as a term of encouragement, 加油!

Best,
Kate



**TRISTAN BOVE - BA IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES &
CHINESE STUDIES, CLASS OF 2019**



HONG KONG

My name is Tristan Bove, and I graduated from DePaul with a double major in International Studies and Chinese Studies in November 2019. I would say that the most important lesson I learned from INT was to always keep my critical eye focused, but to also know how and when to pull back before becoming cynical. INT teaches you to be critical, but I would say it's more up to you to learn the difference between being critical and being cynical and distrusting. This has helped me immensely in my career and in adapting to living in different countries and cultural contexts. Wherever it is you end up, make sure you are always thinking about what you're seeing and learning from it, but staying open-minded can get difficult, and it can be easy for cynicism to get in the way.

I first moved to China (Hong Kong) in 2014 when I was in my last year of high school. After that, I took a year to work and travel in mainland China. After college, I returned to Hong Kong where I worked for around a year and a half as a reporter for a non-profit focused on environmental journalism. I've since moved on to reporting with a bigger U.S. outlet and am not in Hong Kong at the moment (my job is remote and I am currently writing this email from Ecuador), but I do plan on returning to Hong Kong or China in some capacity in the future.

Working as a journalist in Hong Kong was...an interesting experience. The company I was with was very small, so not exactly on the CCP's radar of disruptive journalists, but every once in a while, I would still get a stern talking to from my editor for content I chose to include in my writing. I remember once including a short paragraph in one story that mentioned allegations that China was using Uyghur forced labor to manufacture solar panels which caused a mini-commotion in the newsroom that day. Ironically, I've been able to write much more about China in the months after leaving the place.



Right now my brief is pretty broad, but I tend to write a lot about energy flows and geopolitics. Some examples of China-related topics I've reported on recently include embedded economic relations between China and Russia and how the two countries are negotiating their energy dealings right now.

When I first moved to Hong Kong, it was right before the 2014 Umbrella Protests, and I do think the city back then was a much more syncretic, open, and inquisitive place. I remember there being impromptu movie screenings, countercultural concerts, and bookstores and coffee shops filled with, let's say "very open-minded" literature. Since the 2019 protests in Hong Kong and lockdowns during the pandemic, a lot of this has died down unfortunately. The pandemic was definitely used as an excuse to crack down on any sort of public gathering, and a lot of the displays that were considered problematic for China have yet to come back. To be frank though, a lot of the changes have been very subtle and don't really affect people who are not from there. For a visitor or a non-local such as myself it can still be a very fun, eclectic, and interesting place to live if you want it to be, and you could go a long time in the city without really noticing anything is off.

1st photo: A bay next on Hong Kong's rural Lantau Island. If you zoom in, you can see some locals hunting around for shellfish during low tide, and in the background, a section of the Hong Kong-Macau Bridge, the longest open-sea fixed crossing in the world.



A good example of this subtlety is in the second picture I've shared, which I took in one of my favorite local dessert shops in town. It mostly just looks like a normal restaurant, but it was actually a spot where protesters used to gather back in 2019 and early 2020 for small cultural events and meetings. These meetings don't happen anymore, but the multicolored post-it notes you can see on the glass pane are a well-known symbol of pro-independence protesters.

Beginning in 2014, you could find random post-it notes on the subway, pedestrian walkways, and storefronts. Protesters used them to scribble down catchphrases common to the independence movement and criticizing the Chinese and Hong Kong governments (which is currently pro-China). It was an interesting and effective way to remind people that the protests and its ideas were still alive, even if the streets were empty. Nowadays, you can still find sticky notes around the city in the most random of places, some of them with something written on them and others without, but even a blank post-it note has become a powerful and recognizable symbol in the city. I think it's a good indicator of two things: One, Hong Kong still possesses a very strong identity; and two, it is incredibly easy for casual visitors to miss it.



2nd photo:
Sweet Dreamer
Dessert in
Hong Kong.



Living in Hong Kong and China is not easy. It takes time to get used to the food, the language barrier is at times completely unnegotiable, and the landscape has changed a lot in the past few years. Like Kate said, a lot of foreigners have left in recent times, including myself. Part of the reason is COVID rules, but I know many people who have been there for a long time and feel exhausted with how restrictive living there can feel like. But it can also be one of the most rewarding places to live, work, or learn, if one is willing to put in the effort. Learning a bit of the language (the thought of mastering it is, in my opinion, a fool's errand) and doing one's best to understand the stories of the place are important things to keep in mind. Those stories are often being rewritten in China, but a little bit of digging and communication goes a long way. And China is also a whole lot bigger than Hong Kong, Shanghai, or Beijing. It is a massive and diverse country, and while it is certainly not as easy or as comfortable to travel around China as it would be in say Europe, I do think it is one of the most interesting, diverse, and beautiful places in the world to explore.



3rd photo: A local delicacy in Dunhuang, China, known as "donkey face noodles." I was assured it was not really donkey meat, but I cannot confirm what type of meat it actually was. It was really good though.

Know that COVID rules mean that going to Hong Kong right now is only possible if you are a resident or have a work visa to move there (I'm assuming the same is true of China, but I might be wrong). Luckily, it looks like Hong Kong is reducing its quarantine requirements (they are down to one week in a hotel now from three at the beginning of the year), and with people getting fed up with China's COVID-zero policy, as Kate noted, my personal take is that going there as a visitor might be doable relatively soon.

Thank you again very much for inviting us to share our thoughts! And to the undergrads, best of luck for your spring quarter!

Best, Tristan



SAAD AHMED - BA IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES & ECONOMICS, CLASS OF 2019



KAOHSIUNG, TAIWAN

My name is Saad Ahmed, and I graduated from DePaul with double majors in Economics and International Studies in June 2019. I moved to Kaohsiung, Taiwan in September 2019 to start my Fulbright grant as an English Teaching Assistant (ETA). The largest city in southern Taiwan, Kaohsiung is home to 2.7 million people—about as big as Chicago. Prior to starting my Fulbright grant, I had been working in the commercial real estate and healthcare industries as an analyst. As an aspiring diplomat, the Fulbright program and living in East Asia were always part of my career goals.

I work five days a week in two elementary schools in Kaohsiung, and teach English class in grades one through six. Coming into this role, I had limited experience teaching or working with children and did not fully know what to expect. However, Fulbright Taiwan and the Foundation of Scholarly Exchange have provided adequate training prior to and during my grant. This training, along with being in the presence of a large cohort of other ETA's in Taiwan, has aided greatly in getting accommodated to living in Taiwan this year.

The majority of primary and secondary school students in Taiwan attend 補習班 (cram school) after the full school day. This allows parents to work later and not only have childcare, but the students also work with certified teachers to complete their homework and receive extra preparation and help for exams. In many rural and suburban areas, however, many families cannot afford for this extra schooling. I have found that the most important part of my job is allowing the children to have exposure to a native English speaker, which is not a common experience for most people in Taiwan.

Therefore, the entire group was subject to a three-day at-home quarantine and four days of self-health-management, in which we are allowed to go outside but advised to avoid crowded places and indoor dining.



However, this policy will be suspended from June for individuals with three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. Despite the rising case levels, self-governing Taiwan has been gradually reopening to the outside world. Over 99.7% of cases in Taiwan have mild or no symptoms, and vaccination levels are very high. My experience in quarantine was fairly relaxing and uneventful. Although these kinds of disruptions to schooling are becoming more common, life in Taiwan has carried on normally.

Throughout the pandemic, Taiwanese businesses and vendors were required to display contact-tracing QR codes (such as the one attached). When diners and shoppers scanned the code, it would generate a text message containing contact information for the individual. In the event a case was discovered to have originated from one of these locations, everyone who scanned the code and sent the generated text message would receive an alert that they were in contact with a potentially-infected patient. However, this program was suspended in May and contact tracing is no longer required. Taiwan's Premier Su Tseng-chang recently called China's COVID restrictions and lockdown "cruel." Compared to the restrictions and procedure in China, as Kate outlined, the reality in Taiwan is far different. The authorities in Taiwan have not enforced strict rules, as there is there is no "zero-COVID protocol."

When I first arrived in Taiwan, I had no Mandarin language skills. However, I started to self-study by using language-learning apps like HelloChinese. Whenever I came across a phrase I did not understand, I would save it in dictionary and translation apps, such as Pleco and Google Translate. I found this to be a particularly productive way to spend time during the mandatory 14-day hotel quarantine required upon arrival (it has since been reduced to a 7-day hotel quarantine). Last semester, I also enrolled in weekly conversational Mandarin classes. However, I have found that the majority of my Chinese speaking ability has developed from speaking with locals.

The neighborhood I live in does not have many other foreign residents, so I have had the opportunity to constantly interact with the local community in Mandarin.



I initially learned how to order food at restaurants, and that soon led to more meaningful conversations, which are sparked by the curiosity of locals wondering why a foreigner is living in their neighborhood. Another widely-spoken language in Taiwan is Taiwanese Hokkien (台語 "Taiyu"), which originated from immigrants to Taiwan from southern Fujian province in China during the Qing dynasty. Taiyu is particularly common in southern Taiwan, where I live. The majority of southern Taiwanese people I have come across speak both Mandarin and Taiyu in daily conversation. Music in Taiyu has also been very popular all over Taiwan for decades. In addition to Mandarin and English, my students also learn Taiyu in school.

The majority of Taiwanese people I have met so far have a profound connection to their Taiwanese identity. While the grandparents of my Taiwanese friends may have considered themselves Chinese, few young Taiwanese identify with the mainland. They prefer the fate of Taiwan to follow the status quo, and have an unfavorable view of the Chinese Communist Party. Taiwan's current government is considered one of the most progressive in Asia. In the 2016 election, women won 43 out of 113 seats in Taiwan's parliament. 7% of seats are held by aboriginal Taiwanese, a group that makes up 1.5% of the population. This democratic period came as a stark contrast to the martial law and dictatorship of Taiwan two decades ago. Viewing the political and economic turmoil of Hong Kong, as well as the repressive direction that China has subjected its citizens to on the mainland, most Taiwanese are opposed to reunification with China in any way.

Living in Taiwan as a American has been a rewarding and insightful experience. While there can certainly be an initial language barrier, locals are warm and welcoming to foreigners. Walking around Taiwan feels safe, and public transportation is convenient and affordable. Although tourism has not opened completely, it is likely to open back up in late 2022.

Best,
Saad



Iraqi Artist Bassim Al-Shaker Paints His Own Revolution

The Chicago-based artist on growing up in Iraq during the war and how his paintings endangered his life — and led to international acclaim.

BY DIANE BOU KHALIL FOR BORDERLESS MAGAZINE

Bassim Al-Shaker was 19 years old when a group of militia men kidnapped and tortured him at his barbershop in Iraq for drawing the Venus de Milo. The violence roused him to the dangers of being an artist in his native country, but he refused to give in to such threats, eventually becoming a professor of fine arts in Baghdad.

Now 35 and living in Chicago, the Iraqi artist is internationally recognized for his oil paintings that draw on his experiences growing up before and after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. These works are powerful allegories of the war that distill the complexities of revolution, immigration and freedom through realist, often unflinching imagery. His pieces have been exhibited around the world, from the 2013 Venice Biennale to several galleries in Chicago, where Al-Shaker earned his Masters of Fine Arts in 2021 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.





Since moving to the U.S. in 2013, Al-Shaker has continued to raise his international profile. This March, he will be in a group show at Zolla / Lieberman gallery and in June he will participate in the world's biggest contemporary art show, Documenta, in Kassel, Germany, where he will debut a documentary based on his life that he produced, animated and is featured in.

Borderless Magazine spoke to Al-Shaker about his immigration experience and how he defines himself through his love for art and creativity.

[Editor's Note: This story contains paintings depicting violent imagery.]



I have been painting since elementary school. My uncles are musicians and my father is a painter. Seeing my family around famous musicians in the Arab world sparked my dream to become an artist. But I took my own path. Art is sometimes seen as a technical thing: You paint something and sell it. But I look deeper into painting as a form of therapy. I needed to speak about myself and speak to others through painting.



Bassim Al-Shaker, "Halal," 2019, oil on canvas, 24" x 20"

Many of my paintings are driven by the situation in Iraq, the place I grew up with all my friends and family. In October 2019 there were massive protests across the country against corruption, high unemployment and foreign interference, and to fight for basic public services and rights. Hundreds were killed and thousands were injured by the government and militias. My oil painting "Parliament Nightclub" and the series "Halal" were inspired by the protest and caused a lot of hate messages through social media because they highlight sectarianism. But if my paintings don't cause problems, it is not a painting.



The painting “Halal” shows people sitting around a dinner table: One religious Shia clergy, one Sunni clergy, then Qassem Soleimani [before he died] and a politician for the Iraqi government who works for foreign countries. This painting is not only about the protests but also the militias in Iraq. More than 22,000 people were injured, and the government and sectarian groups allowed the casualties and deaths. The body you see in the middle of the table, although shaped in a woman’s form, is not a man nor a woman — there are no breasts on it, and actually there is hair on the head. This body represents their dinner. The militia kills both men and women without discrimination. The person laying on the table is wearing a mask with smoke coming out of their head, representing the tear gas that has caused thousands to die.

The October protests inspire me to paint, but so do the layers in me, made of my life experiences I faced until today. The revolution is already in me.

Life in Iraq was amazing. By the age of 15 I was a barber, owned my salon, and I was getting my Bachelor of Art at Baghdad University’s College of Fine Arts. But once the 2003 war happened, the lifestyle quality went down too quickly, and I could not handle living there anymore.

One night at my salon in 2007, around 10 p.m. a group of Mahdi militia men wanted to cut their hair. As they walked into my salon they noticed my drawing board with Venus de Milo, which I was practicing for a college exam. When they saw the nude drawing, they all of a sudden wanted to fight. They beat me, abused me, put me in the chair and started cutting my hair, and they eventually dragged me down the street. Eventually the group of guys were arrested by the American army.





*Bassim Al-Shaker, "Alone,"
2020, oil on
canvas, 18" x 24"*

After the incident at my barber shop, they threatened to kill me if they found me painting. I reached a point where I was unable to paint in my own home. Those groups of men are not just bad people but jealous people. They are uneducated about real life and don't know anything except how to murder and hurt others.

I always tell my friends in Iraq, if people do not paint or do art, I feel very bad for them. I put all my feelings of negativity, stress and energy into art. There is something I can take from inside me and put outside, which clears my inside. A lot of friends here in the U.S. ask me if I go to therapy after all I went through. Art is my therapy, which is why I was painting so much in Iraq during and after the 2003 war. Before 2003, art was seen as something nice and likeable. But after, this conservative, extremist mentality came out, and art was seen as haram. But I do what I want, fuck everything. Period.



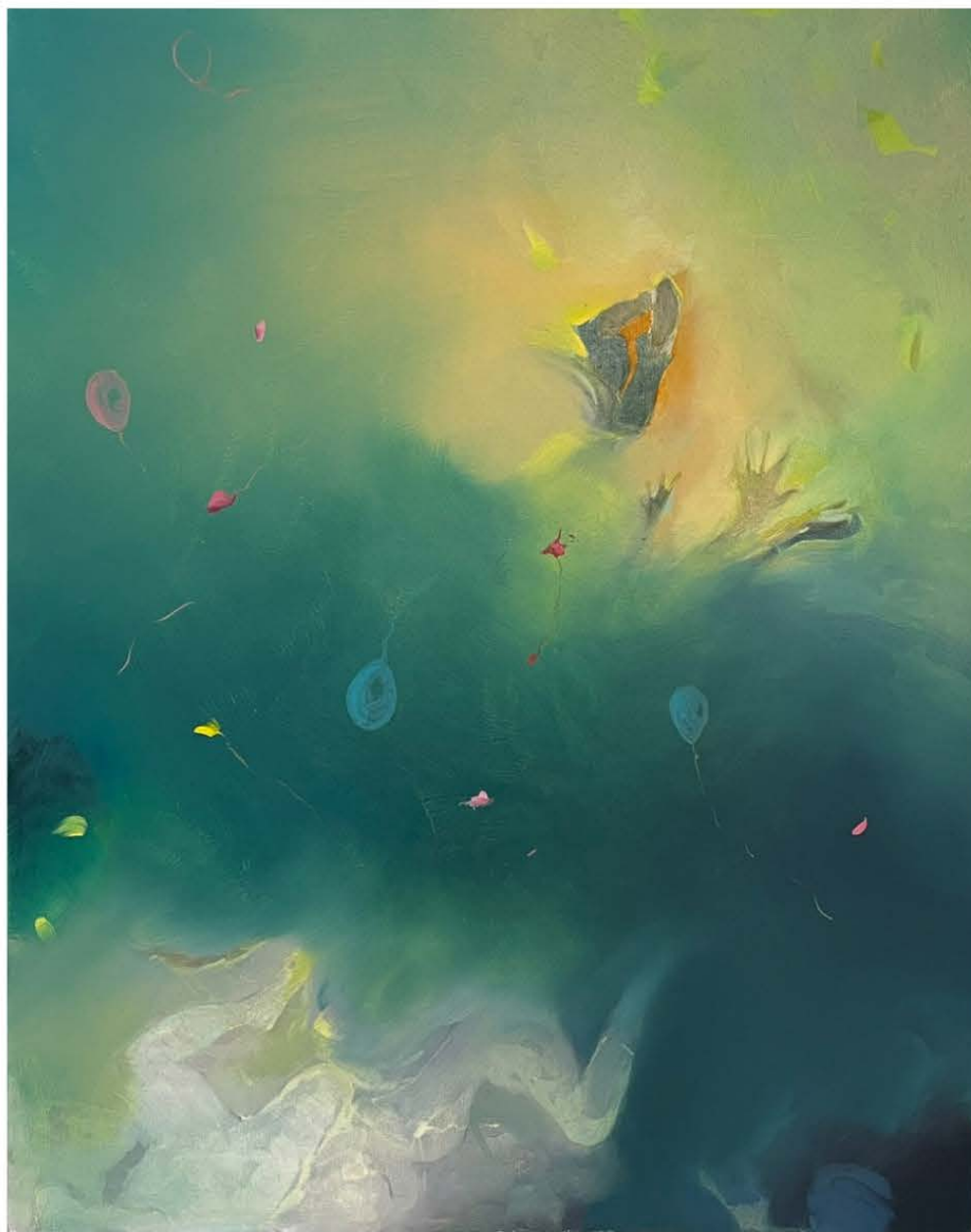
Bassim Al-Shaker's "Symphony of Death" paintings (2019) are from a larger series that explores themes of corruption in religion and politics around the world, and how both can be used to justify killing people. The artist stood in front of these paintings because "when I completed them I felt that they were missing me; the negative things that have happened in my life are because of these issues with religion and politics."



In 2013, I was getting ready to go to Italy because I was chosen to represent Iraq at the 55th Venice Biennale. My brother informed me that the group of men who beat me up were out of jail and furious. That same night at 12 a.m., one of my friends knocked on my door very hard, telling me, "Those militia men who beat you and hurt you think you are the one who called the American army to arrest them, and they are now planning to kill you." I left home that night and just waited in hiding for a month until my flight for Italy.



That year, I had also gone to Lebanon for art workshops sponsored by Sada for Iraqi Art, a nonprofit art education project to support young Iraqi artists. Rijin Sahakian, the founding director at the time, knew about me and was concerned about my safety. In Venice, she connected me with Gordon Knox, who was the director of Arizona State University's art museum, which had a residency program for foreign artists. He eventually offered me a residency with a budget, studio and translator.



Bassim Al-Shaker, "Escape to Hell," 2021, oil on canvas, 24" x 30"



After the Venice Biennale I went back to Iraq for 10 days secretly, without anyone knowing, to renew my visa to travel to the U.S. That was the beginning of my new life. I was 24.

When I first came here I knew no English. That delayed me a bit, and it was extremely hard for the first six months. I would learn a specific English sentence and talk to random people on the street on my morning bike ride. I would repeat only sentences I knew and didn't even know what they would say back. I would go to a restaurant, bar or whatever public setting and speak more comfortably and not be shy. After arriving in Arizona, I had three months until my visa expired. Then I was featured in a New York Times article in August of 2013 that got a lot of attention. It was translated into several languages and shared around. Lawyers who heard it contacted the museum telling them they wanted to help me stay in the U.S. The museum chose a law company that eventually did all my paperwork for me for free. So I got extended to stay here through an artist visa, which is one of the hardest visas to obtain, then I got a green card. Today I am a citizen.

But even though I live in the U.S. I am not fully free because I cannot go back to Iraq because of my paintings. I am happy in life and extremely proud of myself. If someone looks at my life today they would not suspect I went through this.

Seeing my art spread everywhere makes me happy.

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How To Find An Immigration Lawyer

When do you need an immigration lawyer? How can you find free legal help for your immigration case? We answer your questions.

By Diane Bou Khalil for Borderless Magazine

Finding an immigration lawyer to help you with your case can be challenging. From sharing your immigration status and family history with someone to paying for legal fees and application costs, the process can easily feel overwhelming and even frightening.

But having access to legal support can make a huge difference in whether or not you win your immigration case. Immigrants who are represented by lawyers are more than twice as likely to obtain relief from deportation, according to an analysis by the American Immigration Council. Yet only 37 percent of non-detained immigrants and 14 percent of detained immigrants are represented by a lawyer in their removal cases.

Want to know how you can get free or affordable legal help on your immigration case? We spoke with three immigration legal experts for tips on finding and using immigration lawyers.



Do I need an immigration lawyer?

“Finding an attorney makes a big difference in the outcome of immigration hearings,” said Samuel Cole, executive vice president of the National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ). Immigration laws are complex and frequently change, so it can be difficult for people without a legal background to navigate their case.

Cases involving deportation or detention can be particularly challenging without an immigration lawyer. Borderless Magazine reported last year that immigrants are five to 10 times more likely to avoid deportation if they have legal representation.

Legal experts Borderless spoke to recommended that you hire an immigration lawyer if you are dealing with:

- Family separation
- Family reunification
- Visas (such as EB-5 investment-based visa, H-1B work visas, F-1 student visas or K-1 fiancé visas)
- Permanent residency
- Employment issues
- Deportation
- Detention
- Application denial
- Naturalization
- Discretionary relief
- Asylum application

Even if your case does not fall into the above categories, it may be worth consulting a lawyer or legal aid group for tips on how to make a good case.



Where can I find free or affordable immigration lawyers?

Unlike in criminal court, the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee a right to counsel for people in immigration court. This means that if you cannot afford a lawyer, the government does not have to provide you with one. Illinois recently passed a law allowing public defenders to represent some people in immigration court. However, this program is very limited.

“The first thing that I recommend individuals do is to reach out to one of the pro bono organizations who represent immigrants, like the National Immigrant Justice Center,” said Cole. “Attorneys who work with them are really the first line of helping people who don’t have an attorney. They just do tremendous quality work for free for the respondents.”

In addition to NIJC, here are some other places you can find free or low-cost immigration legal assistance:

- The Executive Office of Immigration Review’s list of pro bono legal service providers
- The Resurrection Project, which works with 40 organizations across Illinois
- Immigration Law Help
- Illinois Access to Justice

Additionally, the American Immigration Lawyers Association offers a national database of their members that you can search online. AILA has over 15,000 members and is the only legal association in the United States for immigration lawyers.



What if I'm undocumented or don't have an immigration status? Can I still get legal help?

Yes.

Martinez advises people to speak to an immigration attorney about their status.

"There is no status requirement to seek help from an immigration attorney," said Martinez. "But it will affect what you are eligible for."

What should I do once I find an immigration lawyer?

The first thing you should do is book a consultation appointment. Many law offices provide free legal consultations to determine whether a person qualifies for free or low-cost assistance.

"During the consultation, intimate personal details will be shared but remain confidential," explained Jane Lombardi, the director of immigrant justice partnerships at The Resurrection Project. The legal staff may ask you about your family history, your immigration history and any sort of criminal background you may have. "This honesty is important because it provides information for the legal representative to know whether you are eligible for any type of immigration benefit. Then you will know the next steps of application, processes and fees."

Cristina Martinez, an immigration attorney at the Syrian Community Network, advises clients to be as upfront as possible with an attorney. "An attorney cannot help you if you lie to them. Sometimes a tendency is you don't want to say something that might get you in trouble. But if you tell your attorney, they'll best be able to guide you as to how to handle that situation."



What kinds of scams and red flags should I look out for when trying to get immigration help?

The Resurrection Project's Lombardi says that people should know that notarios, or public notaries, cannot give you legal advice. While public notaries in Latin American and European countries are highly trained attorneys, in the United States they are used primarily to witness the signing of forms.

To be safe, the Chicago Business Affairs and Consumer Protection agency recommends that you ask an immigration service provider to see their City license before working with them.

Similarly, immigrants should be aware of any business that asks them to pay in advance for legal services.

"If an attorney asks you to pay for future services in case you get deported when you're not currently in deportation proceedings or should immigration reform pass, that is a type of fraud you want to be careful of," said Lombardi.

It's also good practice to get a written contract and keep copies of whatever contracts and documents your lawyer gives you. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, you should get a second opinion.

What do my immigration legal fees cover?

Before you pay a law firm anything, you have the right to know what your legal fees are covering. For example, does your legal fee cover just a visa application or also requests for evidence and coaching you for an interview? There are many steps in immigration cases, so you want to know exactly what you are paying for when hiring someone.



“A respondent or noncitizen can retain a lawyer just for bond hearing. I think the respondent doesn’t always understand that if they’re denied bond, they might have to find a new attorney,” said Cole. “The money they’re paying the attorney is not for the entire immigration hearing, it’s just for a custody hearing for a bond hearing. So you have to ask your lawyer: ‘What is the scope of the representation that the lawyer is undertaking?’”

How do I know if a lawyer is a good fit?

“It’s important to ask around, to talk to people, and to interview lawyers. Not every lawyer is the right fit for everybody,” said Cole.

When hiring a lawyer, it’s important to consider:

The lawyer’s specialty. You want to hire someone whose speciality is immigration and has experience with the issue you are having. Many firms specialize in work visas or deportation proceedings, for example. Ask your potential lawyer how many cases they have taken on that are similar to yours.

The lawyer’s reputation. Make sure the attorney is listed on your state’s bar website and check to see if there are any disciplinary actions against the lawyer. You can also check the public’s reviews on them. Ask about the lawyer’s reputation in your community, if anyone has been in your situation before.

The law firm’s language abilities. Do you need your lawyer to speak your native language or to translate immigration documents? Many law firms have multilingual people on staff.



What rights do I have when working with an immigration lawyer?
When hiring a lawyer, Chicago's BACP reminds immigrants that you have the legal right to:

A full explanation of the services to be performed, that includes an identification of all costs.

A statement assuring you that all your documents will be returned to you upon completion.

A statement that you may rescind the contract within 72 hours.

A formal contract that includes all services to be performed and all costs.
You also have the right to request these documents in a language other than English.

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Borderless Magazine is a nonprofit online publication that is reimagining immigration journalism for a more just future. They cover labor, justice and advocacy issues impacting Midwestern immigrant communities through a lens of equity and resilience.

Check them out at borderlessmag.org.



2022-23 Fall Quarter Course Offerings

Core Classes

INT 100: Introduction to International Studies | Dr. Jacob Stump | T/TH | 9:40-11:10

INT 200: Introduction to Political Economy | Dr. Michael McIntyre | Online-Async

INT 202: Theories of International Relations | Dr. Michael McIntyre | Online-Async

INT 202: Theories of International Relations | Dr. Jacob Stump | T/TH | 1:00-2:30

INT 204: Cultural Analysis | Dr. Laura Gilchrest | M/W | Online-Sync | 2:40-4:10

INT 205: International Political Economy | Dr. Jacob Stump | T/TH | 2:40-4:10

INT 206: Boundaries and Identities | Dr. Heidi Nast | M/W | 4:20-5:50

Department Electives

INT 308/408: Nature, Society, and Power | Dr. Kaveh Ehsani | W | 6:00-9:15

**INT 324/424: International Economic Law from Colonialism to Globalization
Dr. Gil Gott | TH | 6:00-9:15**

**INT 350/450: Society, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East
Dr. Kaveh Ehsani | M/W | 1:00-2:30**

INT 404: Migration and Forced Migration | Dr. Shailja Sharma | M | 6:00-9:15



Welcoming new student reps for the new year!

Amelia Cochran | Jr. Representative



Giorgia Fiorani | Sr. Representative

