DePaul Migration Collaborative

DMC

Advocating for Justice, Educating for the Future

Newsletter

WHO WE ARE: The DePaul Migration Collaborative engages scholars, practitioners, students and alumni to find solutions to society’s most pressing problems in the areas of migration, mobility and human rights.

Website: DePaul Migration Collaborative | College of Law | DePaul University - Chicago, IL

Events

DMC Events

10/22 @ 4:30 pm Justice in View: Critical Pedagogies of Immigration Court Watching and Lessons from the Immigration Research Hub

Location: Zoom or John T. Richardson Library JTR 111
RSVP: HERE

Non-DMC Events

10/15 @6pm Virtual Immigration Workshop: Filing Police Reports

Learn how to file police reports if you experienced or witnessed misconduct from federal immigration agents.
RSVP and Learn More: HERE

10/20 @6pm Bombshell Screening and Discussion

Location: Lincoln Park Campus- Schmitt Academic Center SAC161
Trailer & RSVP:HERE

10/23 Expert Advocacy: Academics and (Non-Legal) Professionals Supporting Immigrants Today

Location: Zoom
RSVP: HERE

10/24 Community Trauma & Healing Workshop @10am

Location: Concord Missionary Baptist Church
RSVP: HERE

News

DMC Welcomes New Solutions Lab Grantees and New Partnerships

The DePaul Migration Collaborative is excited to announce our 2026-2027 Solutions Lab Grantees Dr. Maria Ferrera and Dr. Nyssa Snow-Hill! Both will be working to expand support and immigration services. Learn more about their anticipated work below!

Sustaining the Healers: Building and Evaluating a Supported First-Case Pathway to Grow the Forensic Evaluator Workforce

Maria Joy Ferrera, PhD, LCSW, is a professor within DePaul University’s Department of Social Work and co-director of the Center for Community Health Equity (CCHE), a partnership between DePaul and Rush University to promote health equity. She is co-founder of the Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health (CIMH), a collaborative, community based and research informed initiative that is a partnership between immigrants regardless of status, mental health practitioners, community organizers, researchers and allies. Ferrera is on the Steering Committee of The Midwest Human Rights Consortium (MHRC) , a network of medical and psychological professionals providing critical evidence needed to fairly determine asylum claims. As a licensed clinical social worker, she conducts pro bono mental health forensic asylum assessments for MHRC. Partnering with the MHRC, this project strengthens the volunteer forensic evaluator workforce by piloting a Supported First-Case Pathway. This project builds MHRC’s workforce sustainability and involves a mixed-methods study identifying what retains volunteer evaluators. Findings will inform the development of a practice brief for organizational partners and a comprehensive clinician support program that addresses retention, wellness, and peer consultation needs.

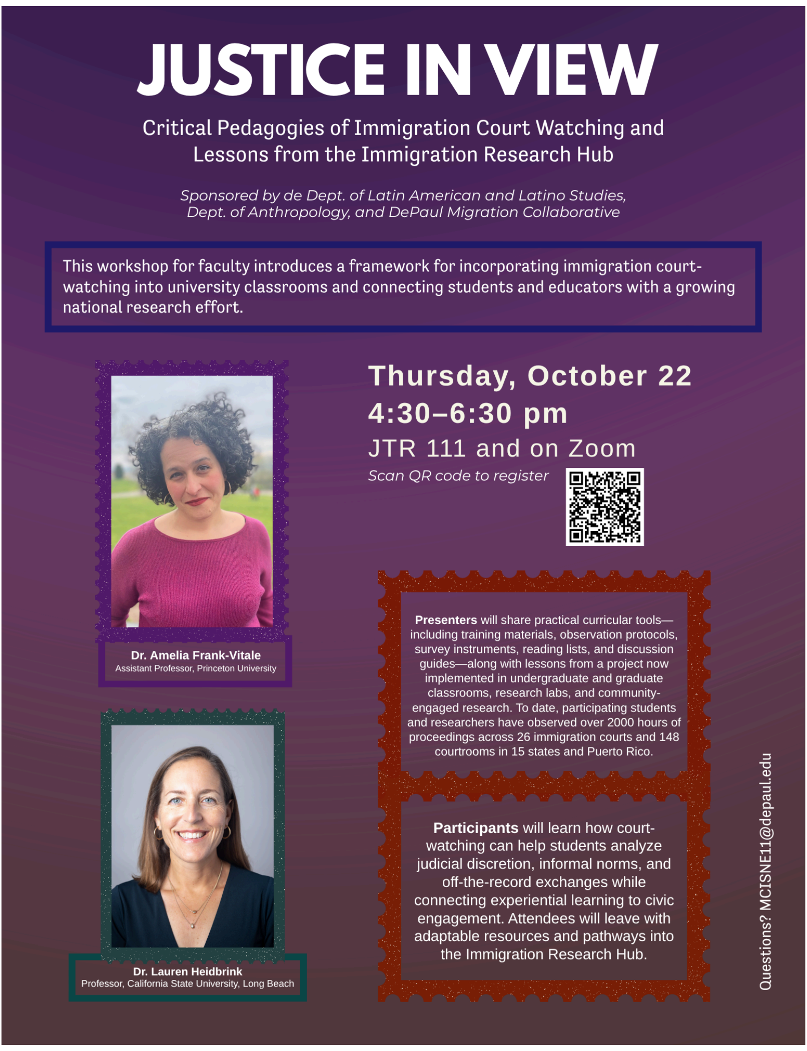
Exploration to Sustainment: An EPIS Study of Chicago's One System Initiative

Nyssa Snow-Hill, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at DePaul University and director of the Implementation Science and Advocacy for Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ISAY) Lab. Her research focuses on implementation science, homelessness, housing stability and community-engaged intervention development. She partners with service providers, policymakers, and people with lived experience to improve the implementation of evidence-based programs within housing, behavioral health and social service systems.

Dr. Snow-Hill's work has examined homelessness among youth and adults, substance use, traumatic stress, housing stability, and organizational factors that influence the adoption and sustainment of innovative services. She has led and collaborated on community-engaged research projects focused on intervention development, workforce implementation and systems change. Her research aims to generate practical knowledge that can help organizations more effectively serve populations experiencing housing instability and other complex social needs.

Through the DePaul Migration Collaborative Solutions Lab, Dr. Snow-Hill is partnering with All Chicago to examine implementation of Chicago's One System Initiative (OSI), a citywide effort to integrate shelter services for newly arrived asylum seekers and individuals experiencing homelessness. Guided by the Exploration, Preparation, Implementation and Sustainment (EPIS) Framework, the project will identify factors that shaped implementation of OSI and generate recommendations for communities seeking to develop migration-responsive shelter systems.

Faculty Opportunity: Justice in View Workshop; Open to all faculty- RSVP Today!



JUSTICE IN VIEW

Critical Pedagogies of Immigration Court Watching and Lessons from the Immigration Research Hub

Sponsored by de Dept. of Latin American and Latino Studies, Dept. of Anthropology, and DePaul Migration Collaborative

This workshop for faculty introduces a framework for incorporating immigration court-watching into university classrooms and connecting students and educators with a growing national research effort.

Thursday, October 22
4:30–6:30 pm
JTR 111 and on Zoom
Scan QR code to register

Dr. Amelia Frank-Vitale
Assistant Professor, Princeton University

Dr. Lauren Heidbrink
Professor, California State University, Long Beach

Presenters will share practical curricular tools—including training materials, observation protocols, survey instruments, reading lists, and discussion guides—along with lessons from a project now implemented in undergraduate and graduate classrooms, research labs, and community-engaged research. To date, participating students and researchers have observed over 2000 hours of proceedings across 26 immigration courts and 148 courtrooms in 15 states and Puerto Rico.

Participants will learn how court-watching can help students analyze judicial discretion, informal norms, and off-the-record exchanges while connecting experiential learning to civic engagement. Attendees will leave with adaptable resources and pathways into the Immigration Research Hub.

Questions? MCISNE11@depaul.edu

JUSTICE IN VIEW: Critical Pedagogies of Immigration Court Watching and Lessons from the Immigration Research Hub

Thursday Oct 22 at 4:30 to 6:30 in JTR 111 and on Zoom

This workshop, co-sponsored by the Department of Anthropology, the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies, and the DePaul Migration Collaborative, introduces a framework for incorporating ethnographic observations of immigration court into university classrooms by connecting students and educators with a growing national research effort. Participants will learn how court-watching can help students analyze judicial discretion, informal norms, and off-the-record exchanges while connecting experiential learning to civic engagement. Attendees will leave with adaptable resources and pathways into the Immigration Research Hub.

The curriculum is designed to support careful, ethical, and methodologically rigorous observation in local immigration courts and can be easily incorporated into existing syllabi across the social sciences, humanities, and related fields. Interested faculty should browse through the full curriculum prior to the actual workshop, which can be accessed here: https://justice-in-view.teachable.com/p/Home.

Key components of the curriculum include:

1. 1. **Asynchronous training modules** with built-in comprehension quizzes and a certificate of completion that students can submit directly to instructors.
2. 2. **An observation instrument** to guide court-watching. Students receive a copy of their submissions, and faculty and students may use the resulting data for class activities, research projects, and publications. (See IRB guidance in the Instructor Video and Instructor Guide.)
3. 3. **A Student Guide** addressing expectations, ethics, and frequently asked questions.
4. 4. **A suite of instructor materials**, including a sample syllabus, discussion questions, and structured reflection prompts.
5. 5. **Curated resources** for further reading and viewing on immigration courts, law, qualitative methods, and links to quantitative datasets.
6. 6. **Logistical materials,** including guidance on contacting courts, template letters for students, and student agreements.

Access to Healthcare: A Conversation on Systemic Barriers and Migration

DMC
Plain Language, Shared Mission: Addressing Systemic Inequalities in Immigrant Healthcare
DePaul Migration Collaborative

On September 24, 2026, the DePaul Migration Collaborative (DMC) hosted “Plain Language, Shared Mission: Addressing Healthcare Inequities for Immigrants,” featuring 2025–2026 Solutions Lab grantee, Dr. Jay Baglia, his project partner Alice Woo of CommunityHealth and Dr. Jessica Jerome.

Dr. Baglia opened the event by exploring the role of healthcare communication in translating biomedical and legal terminology. He introduced the concept of Plain Language: communication that is clear, culturally relevant, and grounded in understanding and patient autonomy. He then shared his Solutions Lab work, including the development of patient-centered videos focused on diabetes care, Know Your Rights information and volunteer training for those working in the clinic.

Building on this work, Alice Woo, donor and funder relations manager at CommunityHealth, introduced the organization’s unique clinic model and its commitment to providing quality, preventative and responsive care to uninsured Chicago residents. Her presentation emphasized how CommunityHealth’s approach is rooted in trust, safety and dignity. Through this model, CommunityHealth works to address gaps in healthcare access while offering an alternative perspective on what accessible and community-centered healthcare can look like.

Dr. Jerome then expanded the conversation beyond Chicago, taking the audience to Brazil to explore lessons from its universal healthcare system. By comparing Brazil’s healthcare framework with CommunityHealth’s clinic model, she examined how law, policy and practice can work together to make healthcare access more widely available. Her presentation emphasized that meaningful care requires an approach that recognizes healthcare access as an intrinsic right.

Together, the speakers demonstrated how communication, community-based practice and policy can intersect to create more accessible and equitable healthcare systems.

For those who missed out on this insightful presentation, you can email the DMC to request the recording. To learn more about the DMC’s partnership with CommunityHealth, you can read Dr. Baglia’s executive summary on our website.

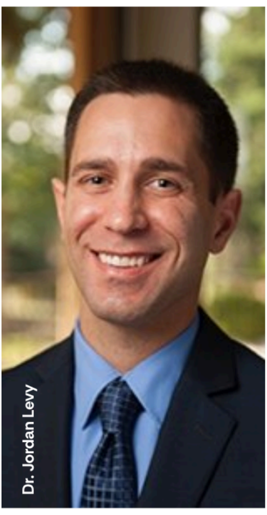
Thank you to all who presented and to the students, Sofia Santos and Miriam Amoako Kankam, who supported this Solutions Lab project through their hard work and dedication.

This event was co-sponsored by the DePaul University College of Communication and moderated by Dr. Kate Barrett.

- Project Article: Press Play: Making health education accessible to Chicago’s migrant community | DePaul University - Chicago, IL
- Executive Summary: "Plain Language, Shared Mission: Addressing Systemic Barriers to Immigrant Healthcare"

DMC Advisory Council Members Embrace Experiential Learning Opportunities

At the DMC, our advisory council members do many things that come from their personal commitment to the betterment of migrant lives. Today, we are highlighting advisory council members Dr. Jordan Levy, Dr. Lien Tran, and Dr. Veronica Llerena! Each have reimagined the ways in which education can be a tool in teaching about the experiences of migrants, developing empathy, and each challenges students to think how their applied skills and education can be a pillar to supporting, uplifting, and contributing to the community of the future.



Dr. Lien Tran

Dr. Veronica Llerena

Dr. Jordan Levy: College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Anthropology
Dr. Lien Tran: Jarvis College of Computing and Digital Media, Design
Dr. Veronica Llerena : College of Science and Health, Occupational Therapy

Dr. Jordan Levy: Court Watching and Case Aiding

Dr. Levy is a sociocultural anthropologist and Honduras Country Conditions Expert Witness. Through his applied scholarship, Dr. Levy provides research-based reports and declarations to assist immigration courts in understanding the broader political context that could influence the outcome of an asylum case. Dr. Levy began part of his expert witness journey after attending a DMC workshop led by 2023-24 Practitioner in Residence Dr. Elizabeth Kennedy. Outside of teaching, he has provided support to Asylum and Immigration Law Clinic cases, and he is now bringing experts, Dr. Amelia Frank-Vitale and Dr. Lauren Heidbrink to DePaul. Dr. Frank Vitale and Dr. Heidbrink will introduce a new framework to DePaul faculty for including immigration court watching into the classroom curriculum and connecting students and educators with a national research effort.

Dr. Lien Tran: Keys to DREAM

Associate Professor Lien Tran released *Keys to a DREAM: An AAPI Immigrant Student's Story* on August 31, 2026 via her Matters at Play lab. The game is a biographical visual novel in which you meet Dr. Tereza Lee, musician, educator, and activist, whose experience as a poor immigrant student growing up in Chicago inspired the original DREAM Act. Through interactive storytelling, players follow Tereza's journey from 2000 to the present. This is not only a Chicago story but also a DePaul story, as Sasha Gerritson (DePaul board member and alumna) played a pivotal role in Tereza's story. DePaul students also contributed to the game's art, sound, design, and development.

For more information and link to play, visit: https://mattersatplay.com/projects/keys-to-a-dream/

Dr. Veronica Llerena: Weaving the Dream (WTAD) DePaul Summer Internship

Last year, a Vincentian Endowment Fund (VEF)- supported a Communications internship which helped build capacity within Weaving the American Dream (WTAD), a collaborative of families with lived experience of forced migration. Building on that partnership, DePaul University and WTAD piloted a 10-week interdisciplinary internship this past summer for Occupational Therapy (OT) and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) students.

The internship introduced students to the lived experiences of forced migration while they explored community-engaged practices and how professionals can contribute to existing mutual aid networks. Students participated in WTAD activities, built relationships with collaborative members, and reflected on the roles of allied health professional within grassroots, community-based work.

By the end of the internship, students reported increased knowledge of forced migration and mutual aid and a deeper understanding of community-engaged practice. WTAD members valued the opportunity to share their stories and experiences with students and expressed interest in continuing to host students in the future.

In Case You Missed It

Resources and Calls to Action

Resources
IL IMMIGRATION INFO | Know Your Rights

Immigration Resources | DePaul Migration Collaborative | Centers, Institutes & Initiatives | Academics | College of Law | DePaul University, Chicago

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officers on DePaul University Property | Immigration | Services | Office of the General Counsel | DePaul University, Chicago

ReadyNow! -Emergency Alert System for Immigrant Families

IDHS: H.R.1 Noncitizen Medicaid Changes - Action Memo

Calls to Action
Volunteer — IL IMMIGRATION INFO

How to Help MIBFC — Midwest Immigration Bond Fund

Become a Volunteer - CommunityHealth

Share Know Your Rights Information with family, friends, and community members.

Migration News

Without Paywalls
ICE agents told to increase daily immigration arrests amid ongoing pressure | CNN Politics

Trump administration revokes $810M approved by Congress for refugee aid and more | News From The States

Medicaid Cuts to Harm Refugees with Disabilities- Borderless Magazine

Supreme Court to review key part of Trump's immigration policy | CNN Politics

Judge Strikes Down Latest Version Of $100,000 H-1B Immigration Fee- Forbes

UNHCR: In its fourth year, Sudan conflict drives new displacement into Chad as funding falls short | UNHCR

Inside the Texas courtroom where toddlers face immigration judges | CNN Politics

Former immigration judges speak out about firings, future of Chicago's immigration court - WBEZ Chicago

New rule strips asylum seekers of their right to be heard - National Immigrant Justice Center

What we know about the ICE shooting in New York City | CNN

With Paywalls

New Facility at Louisiana Airport to Hold Immigrant Children and Families - The New York Times

Thousands of migrant children in the US could face new deportation risks as legal aid deal expires - The Washington Post

UN refugee agency concerned by Malaysia returns to Myanmar | Reuters

DACA
Refugees
Asylum
Stigma
Wealth
Activism
Resettlement
Citizenship
DACA
Law
ELL
Advocacy
Drugs
Nonprofit
Gentrification
Safety
DREAMERS
Refugees
Welfare
Health
Covid
Law

ELL
Drugs
Welfare
Advocacy
ELL
Housing
Restorative Justice
Community
Religion
Immigration Reform
Poverty
Labor Exploitation
Opportunities
Education
Decolonial Thought
Trafficking
Inequality
Safety
Activism

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