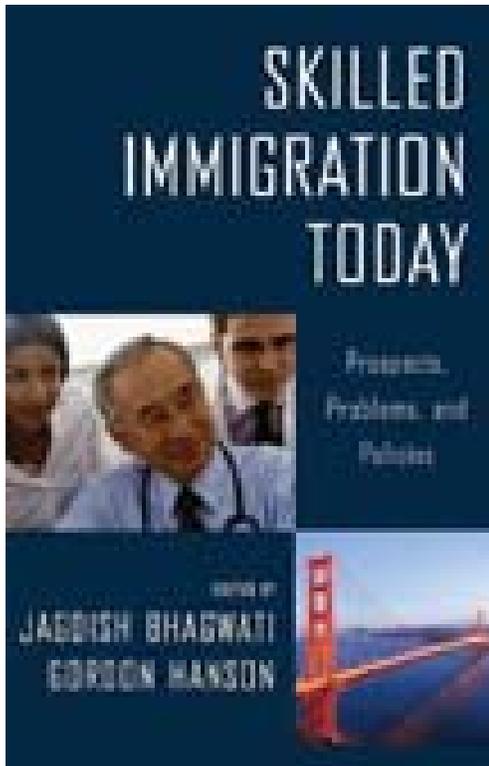


# COUNCIL *on* FOREIGN RELATIONS

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## Teaching Notes

*Skilled Immigration Today: Prospects, Problems and Policies*

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*Skilled Immigration Today: Prospects, Problems and Policies* examines the causes and consequences of the international migration of skilled workers with an eye toward identifying the policy challenges confronting governments in both sending and receiving countries. Skilled immigration into rich countries and competition for talent and professional skills are of major concern among nations today. Comprehensive immigration reform is back on Congress' legislative agenda. Skilled immigration is likely to be included in the proposed reform agenda in the hope that it will bring pro-immigration troops into battle. Though immigration reform in the United States may fail yet again, the specific issue of skilled immigration, and how to redesign it, will remain one of the central issues before the world community.

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How important is the phenomenon? How do the legal immigration systems of rich countries address their needs? How do professional associations that may find such inflows a threat to their members' earnings seek to curtail these? What are the implications on the sending countries, which are generally less developed, of the brain drain phenomenon? How should tax policy be changed in light of the growing phenomenon of skilled migrant flows? These and a host of related policy questions are addressed uniquely in *Skilled Immigration Today*. Bhagwati and Hanson present an informed awareness of the rich history of the phenomenon and several policy initiatives already attempted with sophisticated theoretical analysis. The essays, with an overview that ties them together, are written by today's foremost immigration experts.

This book is suitable for the following types of courses:

- International political economy
- Development economics and development policy
- Comparative public policy and immigration policy

These teaching notes discuss questions and suggestions for further projects, including debate and open writing assignments, which may be useful for students in any of the courses above.

## Discussion Questions

### **Courses on International Political Economy**

1. Why would policymakers in receiving countries have an incentive to restrict inflows of skilled workers?
2. Is it conceivable that countries could negotiate multilateral treaties on migration similar to those that govern international trade?
3. How will ongoing demographic changes in industrialized and developing countries affect the policies that govern international migration?
4. Are there ways that sending and receiving countries can coordinate policy efforts to mitigate negative consequences of international migration on public finances?

### **Courses on Development Economics and Development Policy**

1. How does skilled migration differ in its causes and consequences from unskilled migration?
2. How does the international migration of skilled labor affect prospects for economic growth in sending and receiving countries?
3. What policies in sending countries might improve prospects for the emigration of skilled labor to contribute positively to economic development?
4. How do tax policies in sending and receiving countries affect skilled immigration and how are these policies in turn likely to be affected by migration?

### **Courses on Comparative Public Policy and Immigration Policy**

1. What policies could sending countries enact to make skilled emigrants more likely to return home? Would such policies be desirable?
2. How and why do domestic interest groups in receiving countries seek to manipulate policies governing skilled immigration?
3. What accounts for the United States attracting relatively large numbers of skilled immigrants even though its policies appear biased in favor less skilled entrants?
4. How do policies governing illegal immigration, refugees and asylum seekers, and family reunification affect the migration of skilled labor?

## Further Projects

### Debate

Divide students into four teams, representing the following groups:

- Skilled workers in the United States
- Skilled workers in India
- Policymakers in the United States
- Policymakers in India

Have each group make its case for or against the following policy proposal:

- The U.S. government will expand skilled immigration from India to 500,000 individuals per year (an increase from its current level of about 50,000 per year) under the provision that all immigrants return home within five years of arriving in the United States

### Memorandum to the President of Ghana

Assign students to write a memorandum to the president of Ghana describing how skilled emigration likely affects prospects for economic development in the country, and identify three migration-related policies that would enhance Ghana's prospects for improving living standards in the country.

### Op-ed

Assign students to write an op-ed to the *New York Times* making the case that U.S. policies governing skilled immigration are equally deserving of attention from Congress as policies regarding illegal immigration.

## Supplementary Materials

Desai, Mihir, D. Kapur, and John McHale, "The Fiscal Impact of the Brain Drain: Indian Emigration to the U.S.," *Journal of Development Economics*, 2009.

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Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox, "Attitudes Towards Highly Skilled and Low Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment," Harvard University Working Paper, 2008.

Kerr, William and William Lincoln, "The Supply Side of Innovation: H1B Visa Reforms and U.S. Ethnic Invention," Harvard Business School Working Paper 09-005, 2009.

Orrenius, Pia, *Beside the Golden Door: Immigration Reform in a New Era of Globalization*, 2010 (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute Press).

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