



**Mapping Freedom for Immigrants' Core Values
Throughout the Immigration Detention Syllabus**

Freedom for Immigrants is pleased to present a collection of quotations and suggested readings drawn from Freedom for Immigrants' [Immigration Detention Syllabus](#) that speak to the role of [our core values](#) in how we approach our work and mission.

Read below to learn more about why our core values are critical to our support for people in immigration jails and prisons and our fight to end immigration detention.

- 1.) *We are dedicated to abolishing immigration detention while supporting the organizing and power-building initiatives of those of us who are most impacted. We support policies that advocate for improved conditions of confinement provided that they do not conflict with our goal of ending the detention system in its entirety.***

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Abolition](#)":

- "The ignoble history and contemporary practice of immigration imprisonment demands a **wholesale reevaluation of its wisdom as a central means of regulating migrants, migration, and conduct inextricably tied to migration...**
- Rather than advocate for reforming civil immigration detention, as several scholars, policy makers, and advocates have done, I propose a vision of migration and migrants whereby **deprivations of liberty are not simply unusual, but intolerable.**
- By contextualizing immigration imprisonment—whether civil or criminal—within its **racist origins and exploitative contemporary embodiments**, I propose that imprisoning migrants should become taboo."
- García Hernández, César Cuauhtémoc, [Abolishing Immigration Prisons](#) (March 8, 2017). Boston University Law Review, Vol. 97, No. 245, 2017; U Denver Legal Studies Research Paper No. 17-05.
- "There are actions that make sense up front, like opposing changes to visiting regulations for family members or for attorneys and their support staff. These actions help **make sure that people who are locked up are treated as human beings.**
- However, there are also reforms that in the end make the long-term goal of getting rid of the prison industrial complex impossible. For example, in response to the terrible conditions that most prisoners across the country live in, abolitionists might focus on strategies that first look at how we can **let people out of those cages instead of ones that just build better cages.**
- **Building new cells and prisons helps to extend the life of the prison industrial complex** as a system. This goes directly against a long-term

abolitionist goal of eliminating the system. It also just gives us one more prison to close down in the end."

- [Critical Resistance](#): An international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex and [The Abolitionist Toolkit](#). Part 4: Common Sense, Frequently Asked Questions, Tools for Framing Abolitionist Arguments in Terms of What We Want.

- "In the years ahead, as we grapple with the yet unfulfilled promises of immigration reform and prison reform, the success of our efforts will rest in remembering the history to which we respond.
- Since the era of emancipation, the rise of immigration control and mass incarceration has created a **racialized caste of outsiders** within the United States.
- Bigger jails with better food and improved health care—while immediately needed—will never address the **larger and deeper problem of alienated citizens living in states of internal exile**, both within and beyond the prison walls."

- Hernández, Kelly Lytle, "[Amnesty or Abolition: Felons, Illegals, and the Case for a New Abolition Movement](#)," Boom: A Journal of California 1.4 (Winter 2011), 54–68.

2.) We are a coalition of people who have directly suffered the injustices of immigration detention and people in solidarity. We are guided by the experiences and leadership of those who are or have been on the inside. Forging meaningful person-to-person connections is transformative and foundational to our movement.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Resistance, Hunger Strikes, and Solidarity](#)":

- "To you who know that we exist, that the results of the work we do arrives to the warmth of your homes, to be enjoyed at your dinner table... We trust in these efforts, the solidarity and the struggle that emanates from every corner of this fruitful territory. Our disposition, our willingness, our voice clamors: Not one more!
- **Two million families destroyed do not deserve a bleak and uncertain future**, it is not justified with laws and twisted arguments that leave orphans and hearts torn apart, it is a disgrace that an advanced democratic society, at the vanguard of anti-discrimination, and vigilant in respecting and following human rights does not put an end to a **lacerated wound that threatens all of society with gangrene...**
- With satisfaction, we recently learned that parts of the international community greet us in solidarity with this movement that fights for the full rights of immigrants. Their encouraging messages motivate and boost the call

for full immigrant rights. Their messages of encouragement encourage us to remain standing and not to let our guard down. We are also encouraged by those immigrant "guests" detained in Texas and California, to them we send fraternal greetings and note that their struggle is ours, it is the same, and that **together, with the support of residents, citizens, and all the community we will win.**"

- A [Hunger Strikers Handbook](#): the story of a 2014 hunger strike at the Northwest Detention Center:

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On the Inside: Stories from Immigration Detention](#)":

- "The beautiful thing about this work is that during the two to three hours one spends carefully listening, one begins a transformative process wherein the **truths and the lies of the system transpire in powerful ways through the voice of the very people affected** by such system..."
- The real power of these assessments is that they become **safe spaces for people to tell their own story and in their own terms.**
- Change lies in our **collective capacity to open more avenues for first person accounts** — and, more importantly, to **translate these accounts into first person movements.**"

- Soerens, Maria-Jose. "[I work with Migrant Detainees. Which Immigration Narrative Do You Want to Hear?](#)" Sojourners.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Youth, Family and LGBT Detention](#)":

- "Just as U.S. constitutional criminal procedure failed to ameliorate the harshness of substantive criminal law, **more robust immigration procedural protections would likely fail to reorient immigration enforcement in a more humane direction.**
- By contrast, a growing movement of immigrant youth offers a more expansive conception of immigration reform. As these immigrant youth lay claim to a "**right to remain,**" infiltrate immigration detention centers, and crash the border, they have reshaped our political and legal discourse, gesturing towards an alternative vision of immigration justice."

- McLeod, Allegra M., "[Immigration, Criminalization, and Disobedience,](#)" *University of Miami Law Review* 70: 556, 2016:

3.) We know that the immigration detention system is built upon a long history of white supremacy, capitalism, and imperialism. It intentionally functions to dispossess marginalized communities and peoples of their homes and their histories.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Race](#)":

- "Immigrant detentions, following 9/11, and immigration law in general continue a historical tradition of racialization of foreign nationals, whereby government policies are used to **mark non-white noncitizens, who are socially and materially vulnerable, with a lesser racial and legal status.**
- **Race and noncitizenship work together.** They are intertwined vulnerabilities that make whole communities susceptible and at times defenseless against incursions on their fragile constitutional status."
 - Hernández, David Manuel. "[Undue Process: Racial Genealogies of Immigrant Detention.](#)" In *Constructing Borders/Crossing Boundaries: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2007:

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Hate](#)":

- "Nativism—an intense opposition to immigrants and other non- native members of society—has been deeply embedded in the American character from the earliest days of the nation. Correspondingly, nativism, overtly or covertly, has always permeated our national discourse. Dating from the Alien and Sedition controversy of 1798 to California's recent Proposition 187, **nativism has long been a driving force in policy making, a particular irony in a country founded and populated by immigrants...**
- **Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it...** How can the imprisonment of Japanese-Americans during World War II illuminate our understanding of the English Only movement today? How has the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty evolved since its dedication and what can it tell us about the American disposition to immigration? What is the new nativism? What are the semantic and rhetorical similarities, if any, between the most shrill nativist voices of the present, such as Pat Buchanan's or Peter Brimelow's in his widely publicized book *Alien Nation*, and National Socialist propaganda in 1930s Germany?"
 - Perea, Juan, [Immigrants Out! The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse in the United States.](#) New York University Press, 1996.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Labor & Economics](#)":

- "...The massive displacement and primitive accumulation unleashed by free trade agreements and neo-liberal policies, as well as state and "private" violence has resulted in a **virtually inexhaustible immigrant labor reserve for the global economy.** In turn, **repressive state controls over immigration and migrant labor have several functions** for the system.
- First, state repression and criminalization of undocumented immigration make these immigrants vulnerable and deportable, and therefore subject to conditions of **super-exploitation, super-control and hypersurveillance.**
- Second, **anti-immigrant repressive apparatuses and social control systems are themselves ever more important sources of accumulation,** ranging

from private, for profit immigrant detention centers, to the militarization of borders, and the purchase by states of military hardware and systems of surveillance.

- Third, the anti-immigrant policies associated with repressive state apparatuses help **turn attention away from the crisis of global capitalism** among more privileged sectors of the working class, such as middle layers in the global South or white workers in the North, and **convert immigrant workers into scapegoats for the crisis**, thus deflecting attention from the root causes of the crisis and undermining working class unity."

- Robinson, William I., and Xuan Santos. "[Global capitalism, immigrant labor, and the struggle for justice](#)." *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 2, no. 3 (2014): 1.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Raids & Policing](#)":

- "As **criminal sanctions for immigration related conduct and criminal grounds for removal from the United States continue to expand**, aliens become synonymous with criminals. As **collateral sanctions for criminal violations continue to target the hallmarks of citizenship and community membership**, ex-offenders become synonymous with aliens.
- **When noncitizens are classified as criminals**, expulsion presents itself as the natural solution. The individual's stake in the U.S. community, such as family ties, employment, contribution to the community, and whether the noncitizen has spent a majority of his lifetime in the United States, becomes secondary to the **perceived need to protect the community**.
- Similarly, **when criminals become aliens**, the sovereign state becomes indispensable to police the nation against this internal enemy. In combating an internal invasion of criminal outsiders, containing them through collateral **sanctions such as registration and removal from public participation** appears critical.
- Although criminal law and immigration law begin with opposite assumptions about the membership status of the individuals that they regulate, **once the individual is deemed unworthy of membership, the consequences are very similar** in both realms. The state treats the individual—literally or figuratively—as an alien, shorn of the rights and privileges of membership.
- This creates an ever-expanding population of outsiders with a stake in the U.S. community that may be at least as strong as those of incumbent members. The result is a society increasingly stratified by flexible conceptions of membership in which **nonmembers are cast out of the community by means of borders, walls, rules, and public condemnation.**"

- Stumpf, Juliet. "[The Cimmigration Crisis: Immigrants, Crime, and Sovereign Power](#)." *Am. UL Rev.* 56 (2006): 367;

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On History](#)":

- "...The violence of border imperialism is a direct result of the **violence of colonial displacements, capital circulations, labor stratifications in the global economy, and structural hierarchies** of race, class, gender, ability, and citizenship status...
- Decolonization is rooted in dismantling the structures of border imperialism, settler colonialism, empire, capitalism, and oppression, while also being a generative praxis that **creates the condition to grow and recenter alternatives** to our current socioeconomic system
- Decolonization necessitates a reconceptualization of the **discursive and embodied borders within and between us** by grounding us in the fundamental principles of mutual aid, collective liberation, and humility—not in isolation, but instead within our real and informed and sustained relationships with, and commitments to, each other and the Earth."
 - Walia, Harsha, [Undoing Border Imperialism](#). AK Press, 2013.

4.) We understand that our service and advocacy efforts, including visitation, can never be politically neutral. We reject any framework that is purely charitable and replicates structural power inequalities at the interpersonal level.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Politics & Law](#)":

- "...**What happens when migrant support and advocacy organisations are 'repurposed' as service providers?** What is the impact of this shift on the ethos, politics and 'cause' of these groups and organisations?"
- Does co-option within the newly devolved landscape of service provision **undermine the capacity of migrant advocacy groups to resist and oppose the very border control regimes and politics of exclusion which they were ostensibly set up to contest?**"
 - Tyler, Imogen, Nick Gill, Deirdre Conlon, and Ceri Oeppen. "[The business of child detention: charitable co-option, migrant advocacy and activist outrage](#)." Race & Class 56, no. 1 (2014): 3-21.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Health & Human Rights](#)":

- "...What is needed is a **"rights-based humanitarianism" that goes beyond "private charity or governmental largess."** This approach is **not about discretionary assistance when the mood for benevolence takes us.**
- It is about defending, advocating and securing enjoyment of human rights. It also implies **a shift from seeing beneficiaries of humanitarian aid as "victims" to be pitied, to survivors of adversity**—who often demonstrate unimaginable strength and dignity in the most adverse circumstance."
 - Harrell-Bond, Barbara. "[Can humanitarian work with refugees be humane?](#)" Human rights quarterly 24, no. 1 (2002): 51-85.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Media](#)":

- "Nonprofit organizations serving immigrants should embrace storytelling as a means for social change. More specifically, these nonprofits should create mixed media platforms that privilege the voices of those directly impacted by detention.
- **When some stories are left out while others are repeated, historical structures of social inequality are reproduced.** By uplifting missing voices, we can correct the narrative, shift power dynamics, and help create a more equal world."
 - [Immigration Detention in the Media: Missing Migrant Voices and the Need for Humanistic Storytelling](#), CIVIC (now Freedom for Immigrants), February 2017.

5.) We recognize that the U.S. immigration detention system is the largest in the world and that the U.S. government and prison-industrial complex have played an active role in the development and infrastructure of detention systems in other countries. By changing the ways that immigrants are treated here, we are part of an international movement to transform state and community responses to migration so that immigrants are no longer caged, but welcomed.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On the Border & Global Refugee Crisis](#)":

- "...Detention systems do not operate in isolation, but rather, are **intensified by the growth of related global industries and policies** that become enmeshed in distinct geopolitical landscapes. As one example, detention and deportation are interlocking industries: as use of one intensifies, so too does the other."
 - Mountz, A. and Coddington, K. and Loyd, J. and Catania, R. T. (2012) ['Conceptualizing detention : mobility, containment, bordering, and exclusion.'](#), Progress in human geography., 37 (4). pp. 522-541.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Deportation](#)":

- "At first glance, one of the most ubiquitous paradoxes of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries seems to be the **global persecution, criminalization, and prosecution of immigrants** aimed at restricting the flow of people, **while all other aspects of human life including information, technology, capital, and jobs are flowing across borders** at unprecedented levels.
- On closer examination it is evident that states have enacted increasingly punitive enforcement-oriented immigration policies to **reinforce nationalist ideologies and state power** in an era where borders and boundaries are ever more porous, and where questions abound regarding the potential decline of

nationstates. The effect of these policies has been a greater number of immigrants who are rendered illegal and whose **deportability is a source of power, control, and profit for states and corporations.**"

- Corrunker, Laura. "[Coming Out of the Shadows](#)": DREAM Act Activism in the Context of Global Anti-Deportation Activism." *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 19, no. 1 (2012): 143-168.

From the Immigration Detention Syllabus section "[On Survival: Tools for Building Community Resilience](#)":

- "Throughout the world, states claim their will to control migration but are confronted with the extreme difficulty of developing policies that match this ambition. **The number of people on the move is not going to decrease in the near future, and it will become increasingly apparent that even the most sophisticated and costly measures of control do not truly stop people.** Migrants will probably remain the main victims of this unsatisfactory approach to migration, as they will be exposed to ever greater levels of risk in their crossborder movements.
- It is urgent to think of sustainable migration policies that will enable states to address the challenges of migration coherently.... **In a globalized world, movement of people is not an anomaly to be exceptionally tolerated; it is a normal process embedded in socioeconomic structures and in migrants' transnational lives and identities.**
- There is ample evidence that the **classic migration pattern of permanent settlement does not apply to all contemporary cases** of human movement, and policies should therefore take new practices of circulation into account.... It is an **inspiring vision for the future of migration** and a precious source of ideas to imagine fairer migration policies."
 - Pécoud, Antoine, and Paul FA Guchteneire, eds. [Migration without borders: essays on the free movement of people](#). Berghahn Books, 2007.