

“A Fair Hearing for the Immigrant”

(Deut. 1:16)

Practical Insights for Approaching the Topic of
Immigration in the Classroom

Framing the Discussion in the Classroom

Three Principles from Catholic Social Teaching



The Context That Must Be Confronted

“They’re sending people who have lots of problems and they’re bringing their problems with us. They’re bringing drugs, they’re bringing crime, they’re rapists, and some, I assume, are good people.”

-Trump

“Guess what? What I said is peanuts compared to what turns out to be the truth. It’s peanuts.”

-Trump

(reiterating his original comment at a subsequent campaign rally)



The Political Theology of Johannes Baptiste Metz



“When atrocities happen it’s like when rain falls. No one shouts ‘stop it’ anymore.”

-J.B. Metz

(citing Bertolt Brecht)

In Faith in History and Society

The Political Theology of Johannes Baptiste Metz



“Every rebellion against suffering is fed by the subversive power of remembered suffering.”

-J.B. Metz
(In *FHS*)

Marco Antonio
Muñoz:
Honduran
native;
husband;
father of two
boys



The Dangerous (De-Ideologizing) Narrative

Two Recommendations	(per 100,000)	All arrests	Homicide arrests	Sexual assault arrests	Larceny arrests
1) Give more socio-historical context	Natives	3,578	5.4	52	407
	Illegal immigrants	2,149	3.7	41	133
	All immigrants	1,244	2.1	24	89
2) Tie to empirical data	Legal immigrants	698	1.1	13	63

<https://www.cato.org/publications/immigration-research-policy-brief/criminal-immigrants-texas-illegal-immigrant>

Review: On how to “give the immigrant a fair hearing” in the classroom.

- 1) Begin with a Dangerous Narrative that invites empathy (the beginning of solidarity) for the vulnerable in society and the victims of history.**



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2) Tie this narrative to empirical data and broader socio-historical context so as to undercut the ideological use of counter-narratives.

“In the context of crime, victimization, and immigration in the United States, research shows that people are afraid of immigrants because they think immigrants are a threat to their safety and engage in many violent and property crimes. However, quantitative research has consistently shown that being foreign born is negatively associated with crime overall and is not significantly associated with committing either violent or property crime. If an undocumented immigrant is arrested for a criminal offense, it tends to be for a misdemeanor...”

<http://criminology.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264079-e-93>

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3) Present a framework in which the legitimate tensions surrounding the issue of immigration can be surfaced and discussed.

First Principle: People have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families.

Second Principle: A country has the right to regulate its borders and to control immigration.

Third Principle: A country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/catholic-teaching-on-immigration-and-the-movement-of-peoples.cfm>