

Skidmore College Bridge Experience

AN-236: MIGRATION AND DIASPORA

Cross-listed with International Affairs

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Office Hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anthropological examination of population movements around the globe, including voluntary and forced migration, displacement, diaspora, and refugee flows. Students will analyze the underlying political, economic, and social dynamics of both internal and international migrations, examine the personal and cultural experience of movement in relation to power and violence, and assess international policies and efforts to address mobility. Students will also consider connections between conflict and humanitarianism, urban displacement, the effects of climate change, the formation of refugee identities, and the social and economic relations of diasporas with their home communities.

Prerequisite: AN-101 or LA-101 or SO-101

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop a working knowledge of core anthropological concepts and major debates in the study of migration and diasporas in the contemporary world;
- Understand the complex causes and characteristics of migrations
- Develop a critical understanding of the responses of governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and local host communities to migration and displacement and the historical, political, economic, and cultural contexts that shape these responses;
- Analyze how social characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and age impact migration experiences and how social institutions such as family and education adapt to migration;
- Gain an exposure to how anthropologists connect larger political-economic forces to local communities.
- Learn to think, listen, and write conceptually and critically; learn to communicate ideas orally and in writing; learn how to create and deliver effective presentations; learn how to run bibliographic searches and use a standard bibliographic style; and relate course materials to your educational goals.

REQUIRED BOOKS

- Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- De Leon, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ong, Aihwa. 2003. *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Additional readings posted on Blackboard (labeled “BB” within syllabus)

CLASSROOM POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Attendance: Students are expected to attend every class session and to show up prepared to engage in an active discussion. However, there are times when life gets in our way: we might get sick, need a mental health day, have a job interview, etc. Therefore, I will allow two absences during the semester free of penalty. But use it wisely. Starting on the third absence I will deduct three points per absence from your final overall grade. Exceptions to this rule are college athletic competitions, religious holidays (with advance notice), or emergencies (e.g. hospitalization, family emergencies).

You must arrive on time for class. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period and you will be considered late if you arrive after I have taken attendance. You get two late attendances during the semester free of penalty, but starting on your third late attendance, I will deduct three points per late attendance from your final participation grade. Note that you should be both physically and mentally present—this means demonstrating active listening skills, participating and refraining from causing class distractions.

Class Preparation: Your class preparation is essential to your required active participation in the course. You must complete assigned readings before the class period for which they are assigned. You must come to class with prepared questions and comments regarding the assigned readings. This will help ensure your active participation in class. I will strive for an atmosphere where every student participates and receives constructive and respectful responses from the other students.

Respect: In this class, we will collectively aim to create a safe space for everyone.

- Be sensitive to the experiences of others (which may not be the same as yours).
- Analysis and critical thinking: make arguments based on evidence, try to examine the assumptions inherent in certain arguments and conceptual frameworks, and be open to constructive criticism.
- Be attentive the kinds of privileges and space you occupy in a classroom. How you behave and what you say has an effect and impact on others. A classroom discussion is about dialogue and cooperation. When we speak, we strive to contribute analytical perspectives that are productive and constructive.
- There will be no hate speech, verbal abuse, or personal attacks.
- Do not carry on private conversations with your neighbor when other people are talking.

Technology Policy: I strongly discourage the use of laptops/tablets in the classroom. Research shows that in-class laptop use often limits student learning, and that taking notes by hand enhances the processing of information. If you feel you must use yours to take notes, you must sit in the first row of the room. Using your cell phone and browsing the web during class is strictly forbidden.

Office Hours, Email, and Availability: Office hours are there for you – no need to ask if you can come by. You are always welcome during my listed office hours and also by appointment. Please observe all regular norms of etiquette in your emails to me. There is a 24-hour turnaround on all emails. This means you need to plan ahead. For example, do not email me the night before an assignment is due with a question about the assignment.

Late Submission Policy: Written work due in class must be submitted on time. Work submitted late receives a penalty of ten percent deduction for every 24 hours it is late unless an extension has been pre-approved. Students who are absent or late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need academic accommodation, you must formally request accommodation from *Student Academic Services*. You will need to provide documentation which verifies the disability and supports your request. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. For further information, call 518-580-8150 or stop by the Office of Student Academic Services in the Starbuck Center.

Academic Integrity: “I did not realize I plagiarized” or “I did not know that was plagiarism” are not valid excuses for plagiarism. Plagiarism is representing another's ideas, sentences, and works as one's own. Give credit when using another person's work. This includes using information directly from the web or

representing papers available on the web as your own work. Be wary of drawing on resources on the web. All cases will be reported to the Dean. For further information on academic integrity, please see the following:

- [Academic Integrity Handbook](#)
- [Ethics of Scholarship](#)
- [Academic Integrity Checklist](#)
- [Definitions and Guidelines](#)
- [Documentation and Plagiarism](#)
- [Academic Honor Code](#)

Title IX: Skidmore College considers sexual and gender-based misconduct to be one of the most serious violations of the values and standards of the College. Unwelcome sexual contact of any form is a violation of students' personal integrity and their right to a safe environment and therefore violates Skidmore's values. Sexual and gender-based misconduct is also prohibited by federal regulations. Skidmore College faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. If a student chooses to confide in a member of Skidmore's faculty or staff regarding an issue of sexual or gender-based misconduct, that faculty or staff member is obligated to tell Skidmore's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Deputy Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator will assist the student in connecting with all possible resources for support and reporting both on and off campus. Identities and details will be shared only with those who need to know to support the student and to address the situation through the college's processes. If the student wishes to confide in a confidential resource, The Counseling Center Staff, Health Services, and Victim Advocates are all options available.

COURSE FORMAT, ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

Methods used to cover class material include lectures, in-class activities, films, and most importantly class discussion. The lectures will be used to introduce key concepts during each week's topic and are expected to be participatory. Films may be used as texts to enhance the course material. Periodically we will split-up into smaller discussion groups to review and analyze material more thoroughly. Students may be occasionally asked to reflect on films, classroom discussions, and readings in the form of in-class response papers. In order to achieve this cooperative learning experience, readings must be done as assigned and brought to class.

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- **Participation (10%):** Participation is an integral part of this course. We seek to construct a discourse in this class and we cannot do so if you do not participate. Your informed views on issues matter. Successful class participation is that which reflects a familiarity with the material for which you are responsible and contributing insightful comments that link class material to your experiences or your classmates' contributions. Behavioral signs of engagement are expected and I will look for signs of active engagement in class. These include but are not limited to: maintaining an alert posture and expression; listening attentively; engaging in class activities; taking notes; asking constructive questions; and making regular thoughtful contributions to class discussion. Do not engage in disruptive behavior. During class time, do not engage in cell phone or electronic communication, or work on class assignments. Signs of disengagement and disrespect will affect your grade negatively.
- **5 Reflection Papers (25%):** Over the course of the semester, you will write five reflection papers (~500 words) that illustrates your thoughtful *reflection* with the key ideas and arguments in the assigned reading (and *not* a summarization). At the end the reflection, include one discussion question that you could ask your peers to facilitate classroom discussion. Its purpose is to direct the conversation to a salient point from the reading. Your question should be carefully chosen and thoughtfully worded. Include the bibliography of the readings following the [Chicago Manual of Style Author-Date system](#). Any in-text citations must also follow proper citation conventions. You will submit on Blackboard, and you must be present in class to earn credit. Single-space your paper and use Times New Roman 12-point font.
- **1 Discussion Leader (10%):** You will be assigned into groups to present and lead class on the readings for one class. The group will be responsible for moderating and facilitating discussion for

half of the class session, asking questions, and commenting on responses. Your presentation and discussion leadership will be assessed on a number of factors, including:

- *Preparedness and command of the assigned materials:* do the presenters demonstrate a solid command of the material itself, including background on the authors and/or other relevant context? Are they able to field questions from other students about the material with ease?
- *Creativity of presentation:* does the presentation integrate previous insights gained from semester readings and discussions? Does it provoke the audience to consider new angles or applications of the readings?
- *Presentation structure:* Are discussion questions designed to provoke meaningful intellectual engagement with the readings and with each other? Do the presentation and other activities follow a logical flow? Are the presentations and discussion well-designed to fill the allotted class time?
- *Pedagogical creativity:* Is the discussion and/or other activity fun? Does it help the class to think more productively about how these articles apply to our own ethnographic projects or enhance our understanding of anthropology? Does it go beyond a simple seminar discussion?
- **Group Podcast Project (35%):** We will be working together with MDOCS to develop a 10-15min conversational podcast on your group's chosen theme. Over the course of the semester, we will have in-class workshops on how to develop a podcast. A portion of this grade will also be a group presentation of the podcast toward the end of the semester.
- **Final Exam (20%):** In-class exam taken toward the end of the semester

At the end of the semester the cumulative percentage grade will be translated into a letter grade as follows:

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	68-69
A-	90-92	C+	78-79	D	63-67
B+	88-89	C	73-77	D-	60-62
B	83-87	C	70-72	F	59-below

The following information will help you better understand the criteria for graded material:

- A= exceptionally thought provoking, original, creative in both content and manner of presentation, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials which are fully supported with examples from class material.
- B= presents a solid understanding of the subject matter and an ability to handle the issues and materials encountered in the subject with only minor errors.
- C= demonstrates an adequate understanding of the subject matter with central ideas present, but too general, repetitious and not clearly supported or integrated with evidence and details.
- D= a minimally acceptable performance with a confusing central idea and lacking details. Parts of the assignment are missing and/or incomplete.
- F= shows lack of effort and minimal comprehension of material with major mechanical errors, no thesis, and misuse of key concepts.

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

Week 1 (Sept 2-6) Framing the Issues and Constructing the Field

How have migration and displacement become constructed as anthropological domains of knowledge? From what context did the field of refugee studies emerge, and what are its impacts on refugee policy? How do our preconceived notions about territory and identity shape the way we think about and analyze people who are classified as being “uprooted” from their homes? What are the impacts of geopolitics on the state responses toward migrants and refugees? What is transnationalism? What are the strengths and weaknesses of using the concept of “diaspora” for analysis of migratory experiences?

Meeting 1

- Introduction and course overview

Meeting 2

- [BB] Black, Richard. 2001. “Fifty Years from Theory to Practice” *International Migration Review* 35(1): 57-78.

Week 2 (Sept 9-13)

Meeting 1

- [BB] Malkki, Liisa. 1992. “National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees.” *Cultural Anthropology* 7(1): 24-44.

Meeting 2

- [BB] Glick Schiller, Nina, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc Szanton. 1995. “From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 68(1): 48-63.
- [BB] Soysal, Yasemin Nuhoglu. 2000. “Citizenship and Identity: Living in Diasporas in Post-War Europe?” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23(1): 1-15

Week 3 (Sept 16-20) Institutional Responses and “Durable Solutions”

Who is a refugee? How do humanitarian institutions respond to the “problem” of refugees? What are the durable solutions to refugees? Why have camps been the preferred, temporary solution by many governments, even though they may be a poor solution? What is the impact of the end of the Cold War on refugee policies? How do refugees exert their agency through self-settlement? How do refugees construct and rebuild their lives in places completely different from their home countries? What are the impacts on the host community?

Meeting 1

- MDOCS Podcast Orientation
 - We will cover the scope of project expectations (e.g. time consumption), DOClab resources, and play some podcast samples (from both Skidmore students and mainstream media)

Meeting 2

- [Online] UNHCR. 2005. “Refugee Status Determination: Identifying Who is a Refugee.” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. <http://www.unhcr.org/43144dc52.html>. Please read:
 - “Chapter 1: Determining who is a Refugee” 4-18
 - “Chapter 2: Eligibility Criteria – Inclusion under the 1951 Convention” 28-48
 - “Chapter 3: Eligibility Criteria – Exclusion” 70-85
- [BB] Chimni, B.S. 1998. “The Geopolitics of Refugee Studies: A View from the South.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 11(4): 350-374.

Week 4 (Sept 23-27)

Meeting 1

- Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Read Introduction & Part I)

Meeting 2

- [BB] Crisp, Jeff. 2004. "The Local Integration and Local Settlement of Refugees: A Conceptual and Historical Analysis." *New Issues in Refugee Research Working Paper No. 102*. Geneva: UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit.
- [BB] Hovil, Lucy. 2007. "Self-Settled Refugees in Uganda: An Alternative Approach to Displacement?" *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20(4): 599-620.

Week 5 (Sept 30-Oct 4) Humanitarian Discourse

How do humanitarian actors construct notions of deservingness—who is deserving of asylum, protection, and humanitarian aid? How is humanitarianism imbued with power and inequality? Is there a collective moral responsibility toward migrants and refugees? What does it mean to live and die as a refugee?

Meeting 1

- [BB] Holmes, Seth and Heide Castañeda. 2016. "Representing the 'European Refugee Crisis' in Germany and Beyond: Deservingness and Difference, Life and Death." *American Ethnologist* 43(1): 12-24.
- Group Presentation: Syrian refugees

Meeting 2

- [BB] Feldman, Ilana. 2017. "Humanitarian Care and the Ends of Life: The Politics of Aging and Dying in a Palestinian Refugee Camp." *Cultural Anthropology* 32(1): 42-67.

Week 6 (Oct 7-11)

Meeting 1

- Yom Kippur, No Class

Meeting 2

- Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Read Part II)
- Group Presentation: Somali refugees

Week 7 (Oct 14-18) Experiences in the Diaspora

How do migrants and refugees maintain connections with their family members back home? What are the economic, social, and material ways through which transnational relations are developed and maintained? How do remittances and globalization play central roles in the facilitation of these relationships?

Meeting 1

- [BB] Lindley, Anna. 2009. "The Early-Morning Phonecall: Remittances from a Refugee Diaspora Perspective." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35(8): 1315-1334.

Meeting 2

- [BB] Kunreuther, Laura. 2008. "Technologies of the Voice: FM Radio, Telephone, and the Nepali Diaspora in Kathmandu." *Cultural Anthropology* 21(3): 323-353.

Week 8 (Oct 21-25)

Meeting 1

- Besteman, Catherine. 2016. *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Read Part III and Conclusion)

Meeting 2

- Skidmore Study Day, No Class

Week 9 (Oct 28-Nov 1) Migrations to the United States

What are the human consequences of US immigration policies? How to migrants obtain belonging and membership within the United States, and what are the challenges? What is "Prevention through Deterrence" and how does this policy work in conjunction with the environmental conditions within the desert borderlands? What are some of the stories of the objects and bodies left behind in the desert on the migrant journey to the United States?

Meeting 1

- Ong, Aihwa. 2003. *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, The New America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Read Prologue, Introduction, and Part I)

Meeting 2

- MDOCS Workshop #1 – Audio Recording and Writing for the Ear (Meet in Library 222)

Week 10 (Nov 4-8)

Meeting 1

- Ong, Aihwa. 2003. *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, The New America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Read Part II)
- Group Presentation: Cambodian refugees

Meeting 2

- Ong, Aihwa. 2003. *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, The New America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Read Part III, IV, and Afterward)

Week 11 (Nov 11-15)

Meeting 1

- De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press. (Read Part I: This Hard Land)

Meeting 2

- De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press. (Read Part II: El Camino)
- Group Presentation: Migrants and the US-Mexico border

Week 12 (Nov 18-22)

Meeting 1

- MDOCS Workshop #2 – Audio Editing in Adobe Audition (Meet in Library 113)

Meeting 2

- MDOCS Workshop #3 – In-class editing (Meet at Media Services)

Week 13 (Nov 25-29)

- Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 (Dec 2-6)

Meeting 1

- De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press. (Read Part III: Perilous Terrain)

Meeting 2

- Presentations of Podcast Project (You will play the working draft of your podcasts to the entire class. Guidelines and expectations on a separate handout)

Week 15 (Dec 9-13)

Meeting 1

- Final Exam

Final Exam Week

- Final Version of Podcasts Due