Department of Anthropology

3389F/9224B Special Topics in Refugee and Migrant Studies:
Topic: Risky Passages and Restrictive Borders
Refugees and the Contemporary Challenges
2017-2018, Winter Term
(Tentative Course Outline)

Class time: Tuesdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Room location: SSC 3102

Instructor: Dr. Randa Farah
Office: SSC 3423
Email: rfarah2@uwo.ca

Credit Value: 0.5
Prerequisite(s): Any Arts and Humanities or Social Science 0.5 or 1.0 essay course.

Airports, harbours and militarized borders furnished with cameras and detectors are symbols of an era of increasing fear, discrimination, and dehumanization of migrants and refugees. Some scholars use the term “global apartheid” to describe borders as barriers. ‘Fortress Europe’ being a clear example for restricting and controlling the entry of most people from the global South. In this global landscape, place of origin, class, national/ethnic identity, or religion are markers for inclusion or exclusion, of acceptance or rejection, but of mobility and immobility. In contrast, borders-as-bridges facilitate the movement of people deemed ‘civilized’ and ‘risk-free’, along with capital and commodities. National security and the threat of terrorism are slogans invoked to mobilize support for this skewed cartography, and used as pretexts to deny entry, deport or detain individuals, who are often victims of wars and weapons unleashed by the very states restricting or preventing entry. Refugee status and citizenship have become much more difficult to obtain for people fleeing wars, violence, persecution, or natural disasters. Moreover, those seeking refuge, are increasingly recast as potential criminals, undesirable, security threats, or queue-jumpers deviously manipulating western humanitarianism, democracy, and ‘tolerance’. However, the increasing militarization of borders is not hindering many of the poor or those exposed to violence and wars from attempting to seek safety, and a better life. Many take perilous journeys, risking death by drowning as they sail high seas in flimsy boats, or crossing harsh deserts to avoid guards and sophisticated border technologies that aim to catch and trap them, as one does insects or animals in a net. Others remain trapped on borders in detention centers, miserable refugee camps, or within dangerous zones, unable to seek any form of protection or safety from any state. Using readings, lectures, presentations, class discussions and documentary films, the course engages students to critically examine changing and complex borders and what they tell us about the global order, and the effects of these on migrants and their journeys. In the first part our focus is historical and global, dealing with the emergence of the international refugee regime, followed by the contemporary erosion of refugee rights and international protection. We will draw on case studies and ethnographies such as the US-Mexico border, Fortress Europe, and other examples from around the world, including the recent massive displacement of people from the Middle East and North Africa. We will discuss how refugees strategize to adapt to changing border regimes. We will read/hear through stories and documentaries, the voices of refugees as we follow their precarious journeys to desired harbours of refuge, which do not necessarily turn out to be the ‘promised land’ they imagined, and do not always have happy endings.
**Reading Materials:** The reading materials will be posted on OWL. Please note that the dates and number of presentations and documentaries might be slightly modified, depending on the number of students enrolled and available documentaries.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze state control of borders and border policies to inequalities in political and economic power at a global scale.
- Analyze contemporary approaches and definitions of a ‘refugee’ as related to the emergence of nation-states, and concepts of territorial sovereignty marked by borders.
- Examine borders and borderlands as sites to analyze the state from the margins.
- Trace the history of the international refugee regime, the definition of a ‘refugee’ in international law, and the erosion of the right to seek protection from another state.
- Identify and distinguish among various types of borders (solid, fluid, complex) and what these tell us about political, socio-economic and cultural contexts.
- Apply the knowledge acquired on militarized borders in order to better comprehend refugee experiences.
- Identify and learn about particular cases where borders have become restrictive, such as the US-Mexico and European borders and their effects on the experiences of refugees.

**Selected sample of possible readings (might be modified; some will apply only to graduate students):**

Ashutosh, Ishan & Alison Mountz

Bosworth, Mary
2012 Subjectivity and identity in detention: Punishment and society in a global age, *Theoretical Criminology* 16(2) 123 –140.

Burridge, Andrew

Chimni, B.S.

Dauvergne, Catherine

del Valle, Hernan

Derluyn, Ilse, Charles Watters, Cindy Mels, and Eric Broekaert
2012 ’We are All the Same, Coz Exist Only One Earth, Why the BORDER EXIST’: Messages of Migrants on their Way, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 27 (1): 1-20.
Esteban, Valeriano and Ana Maria Lopez Sala

Fassin, Didier and Estelle D’Halluin

Fleay, Caroline and Sue Hoffman

Gerard, Alison and Sharon Pickerin

Griffiths, Melanie

Haggis, Jane & Susanne Schech

Hassan, Ali and Linn Bio¨rklund

Heyman, Josiah McC. and Hilary Cunningham

Infantino, Federica

Ioanna Kotsioni

Jones, Reece

Lippert, Randy and Sean Rehaag

Loescher, Gil

Loescher, Gil and John A. Scanlan

Luke Stobart

Marfleet, Philip

Mittermaier, Verena

Molavi, Shourideh C.

Nethery, Amy, Brynna Rafferty-Brown and Savitri Taylor

Paris-Pombo, María Dolores and Diana Carolina Peláez-Rodríguez

Ramos, Carolina D.

Razack, Sherene

Schindel, Estela

Van Hear, Nicholas

Van Houtum, Henk

Villegas, Paloma E.

Zetter, Roger

ASSIGNMENTS AND WEIGHTS: TBD