

ANTH 2283F-200
**Refugees and the Displaced: An Anthropological
Approach to Forced Migration**
Department of Anthropology
Course Outline
Fall 2021



Rohingya refugees fleeing into Bangladesh to escape ethnic cleansing in Myanmar. Photo: Kevin Frayer/Global Citizen
<https://www.globalcitizen.org/es/content/rohingya-refugees-turn-to-traffickers/>

Version date: November 16, 2021

Class time: Wednesdays 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM plus one hour asynchronous
Classroom: SSC-2020

Instructor: Dr. Md Rashedul Alam (he/him)
Email: mrashedu@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Online (by appointment)

Credit Value: 0.5

Antirequisite: none

Prerequisites: Any Social Science 0.5 or 1.0 Essay course.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description:

Refugees are one of the most marginalized segments of the global population. Armed conflicts, climate disasters, and discriminatory state policies force millions of people every year to flee into a refuge to escape death, violence and persecutions in their homelands. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that, at the end of 2020, more than 82.4 million people were forced to flee their homes throughout the world. This course intends to explore the structural processes that continue to displace people and transform them from 'humans' to 'refugee subjects.' Based on theoretical arguments and ethnographic evidence, we analyze refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and stateless groups around the world to examine the collective and individual experiences of forced migration and displacement. We take a critical look at the interplay between the humanitarian regime, which has the mandate to protect the displaced populations, and the contemporary neoliberal world. Drawing on academic literature and documentaries, we also situate the refugees within the current political conversations on indigenous displacement, colonial legacy, gender violence, racism, and public health emergencies. The course further critically examines the historical record of Canada towards immigrants, indigenous people, and refugees. One of the crucial goals of the course is to analyze the systemic sociopolitical processes that silence/empower the refugee voices worldwide.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

(Knowledge on the refugee studies)

- Define a refugee, an asylum seeker, an IDP (Internally Displaced Person), and a stateless person based on the UNHCR convention and protocol
- Examine the limitations of the international refugee and humanitarian laws in extending assistance to the growing categories of displaced people
- Analyze the power relations between the humanitarian regime and neoliberal state policies that produce 'refugee subjects'
- Situate multidimensional trauma of refugeehood within the legacy of colonial and racial injustice
- Assess Canada's track record in treating indigenous people and ethnic minorities
- Investigate the gendered dimensions of refugeehood experience

(Skills in refugee research)

- Formulate critical research questions to investigate the historical and legal narratives of refugee studies
- Identify the preconditions behind an effective research collaboration to ensure an ethical representation of the refugees
- Execute ethnographic methods and practices in refugee research
- Identify avenues and organizations that are critical to refugee advocacy and activism
- Interpret how power structure, ethics and positionality in refugee research and advocacy often misrepresent and silence the displaced populations

Course Structure:

This course consists of a 2-hour of in-person class and 1 hour of asynchronous activity every week.

In-person class: The weekly 2-hour in-person class on Wednesdays includes the following components:

- a) There will be a discussion-based lecture on the class readings each week. A *Lesson* will appear on OWL's course site every Thursday (by 10 AM), including a short list of **reading questions** and **keywords** for each source to help you explore critical arguments in the literature and prepare for the class. Analyzing these reading questions and keywords will also be crucial in preparing for the exams.
- b) There will be a **short quiz** on the class readings at the beginning of each class (except for week 1, 7 & 13). The key goal of the quiz is to motivate students to read the scholarly literature assigned for the course.
- c) The in-person classes also include a **class activity** to encourage students to be creative and collaborate with their peers. The class activity ranges from forming buzz groups to analyze the readings to students roleplaying as a refugee advocacy group to decolonize the asylum system.

Asynchronous class: The course includes an asynchronous hour every week, which consists of 2 activities:

- a) A **documentary** is assigned for every week (except for week 1, 7 & 13), which is related to the class readings. The weekly *Lesson* on OWL's course site (published by 10 AM, every Thursday) will feature the documentary, including a short list of questions and keywords to help students navigate the documentary and pick up the key points. Students have the entire week to watch the documentary, but they are encouraged to watch it before the in-person class on Wednesday to make class discussions more

active and engaging. Please note that these documentaries are considered “course materials” and it is mandatory to watch them. You may refer to them in answering questions on the midterm and final exam.

- b) There will be a **short test** every week (except for week 1, 7 & 13) where you will answer 4-5 questions (e.g., multiple choices, true or false, fill in the blanks) about the documentary of the week. You need to visit OWL’s weekly lessons to watch the documentary video and take the test. The deadline to complete the test is Wednesday (10:30 AM), before the in-person class. It is advised to take the test right after you finish watching the documentary.

Course Materials:

- Class readings will be posted on the course website on OWL.
- A *Lesson* will be published every Thursday (by 10 AM) on OWL’s course site, including the documentaries, questions for the asynchronous short test, and a list of questions and keywords for each source of the week.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Assignment	Weight
a. In-class weekly quiz	10%
b. Short test	10%
c. Midterm	25%
d. Essay	30%
e. <u>Final exam</u>	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

In-class weekly quiz (10%):

There will be a short quiz at the beginning of each class (except for week 1, 7 & 13) based on the main ideas and arguments of class readings. The quiz includes 4-5 questions in the format of True or False, Fill-in-the-Blanks or Multiple Choices. You must read all class materials to answer the quiz questions. There will be no make-up quizzes. If you submit a *Self-Reported Absence Form* for a class that includes a quiz, you **MUST** inform the instructor before the class. The instructor will arrange a make-up quiz for you.

10 quizzes (10 X 1%) = 10% of the final grade

Short test (documentary analysis) (10%):

Students are required to watch a documentary every week (except for week 1, 7 & 13) in the asynchronous hour of the class, followed by a short test. There will be 4-5 True or False/Fill-in-the-Blanks/Multiple Choice questions in the test about the documentary of the week. A *Lesson* including the documentary and short test will be available on OWL's course site every Thursday (by 10 AM) and will expire at 10:30 AM on Wednesday, before the in-person class. There will be no make-up tests.

10 short tests (10 X 1%) = 10% of the final grade

Midterm (25%):

The midterm covers lectures, readings, and documentaries from week 2 to week 6. The exam format is mixed. Besides True or False, Fill-in-the-Blanks or Multiple Choice questions, there will be 4-5 short answers (double space, half page) and 1-2 long answers (double space, 1 page). There will be a brief review session on the midterm in week 6. If you submit a *Self-Reported Absence Form* for the midterm day (week 7/Oct 20), you **MUST** inform the instructor right away. The instructor will arrange a make-up midterm for you.

Essay proposal:

Please note that students are required to submit an essay proposal related to the course themes, e.g., displacement, forced migration, refugees, statelessness. The proposal must include the research topics along with a brief background, research questions/arguments, and a minimum of five anthropological references that you have reviewed and plan to use in the essay. The length of the proposal should be 1 page (double space), excluding the references. The essay proposal will not be graded. The fundamental goal of this mandatory activity is to provide feedback on students' research and writing plans. The deadline to submit the essay proposal is week 9/Nov 10, but you can submit as early as October 6 to get early feedback. You must submit the essay proposal through OWL's *assignment* tool.

Essay (30%):

Submit your essay on the last day of the class (Week 13/December 8). Please keep in mind the following particulars while writing your essay:

- The length of the papers should be between 2400-2600 words, excluding the references. Don't write more than the maximum limit or less than the minimum limit.

- Use at least 7 scholarly references (Wikipedia is not a scholarly reference, do not use it).
- All essays must be submitted to OWL's *assignment* section to be reviewed by the originality checker software Turnitin. If Turnitin detects a 20% or higher similarity percentage on your paper, you must revise and resubmit the paper within 48 hours. There will be no penalty for that. Students whose papers receive less than 20% similarity score will get 1 bonus mark.
- Submit your essay on time; 2% of your essay grade will be deducted for each day you are late in submitting the paper without Academic Consideration. Late submissions will not be accepted after December 13, 2021 (5 days following the due date).
- If you submit a *Self-Reported Absence* for the last class (Dec 8), you must submit the essay within 48 hours, so by Dec 10. You will not be penalized for that.
- Include an essay title, your name and student number, course number, instructor's name, and submission date on the cover page.
- Use standard fonts (e.g., Times New Roman), size 12, double space, page number.
- Please revise and proofread your essay before submission.
- In-text citation and references are required. You can use any standard citation styles (e.g., APA, Chicago, MLA), but be consistent. Don't mix two citation styles in your essay.
- The introduction of your essay should clarify your research questions along with a brief background.
- Elaborate your research arguments in the body of the essay with references from scholarly literature.
- Summarize your key points in the conclusion and contextualize them with your research questions/arguments.
- A detailed guideline on essay writing will be provided later in the class.

Final exam (25%):

The final exam covers class lectures, readings, and documentaries from week 8 - week 12. The format will be the same as the midterm. More details will be provided in the class.

Attendance:

The weekly classes include a lecture and group activities. Only a brief segment of the lecture will be posted on the OWL. Therefore, class attendance is crucial. The instructor reserves the right to reward students with a bonus mark who are present in every class.

Weeks, Readings & Tasks:

Week 1/Sept 8:

Introduction to the *Refugees and the Displaced*

- A brief discussion on current refugee situations
- Short film *People of Nowhere*
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiujzFNgHcE>)
- Course overview
- Outlining tasks, assignments, and exams

Week 2/Sept 15:

Concepts, Definitions & Legal Discourses

- Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees
(<https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>)
- Bloch, A., & Dona, G. (2019). Forced Migration: Setting the Scene. In A. Bloch & G. Dona (Eds.), *Forced Migration: Current Issues and Debates* (pp. 1-18). New York: Routledge.

Class activity: Students will roleplay as the immigration board of Canada to decide which given migration situations are eligible for the refugee status based on the UNHCR protocol

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- The Nation of the Displaced
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrSQcEcs8KM>)

Week 3/Sept 22:

A Global Perspective

- Zetter, R. (2007). More Labels, Fewer Refugees: Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalization. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(2), 172–192.
- Summerfield, D. (1999). Sociocultural Dimensions of War, Conflict and Displacement. In A. Ager (Ed.), *Refugees: Perspectives on the Experience of Forced Migration* (pp. 111-135). London: Pinter.

Class activity: Groups of students will identify the limitations of international refugee laws in including more diverse groups of displaced people along with recommended solutions

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- The Empire Files: The Censored Reality of the Refugee Crisis (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xccLCZH0KVo>)

Week 4/Sept 29:

'Refugee Subjects' in the Humanitarian Regime

- Ong, A. (2003). A Hilton in the Border Zone. In A. Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (pp. 48-65). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Trapp, M. M. (2016). You-Will-Kill-Me Beans: Taste and the Politics of Necessity in Humanitarian Aid. *Cultural Anthropology*, 31(3), 412–437.

Class activity: Students will brainstorm to design a model humanitarian organization as an alternative to the UNHCR, which is more refugee-friendly and less submissive to nation-states

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- The Worst Refugee Camp on Earth (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v-OHi3iGQI>)

Week 5/Oct 06:

A Precarious Journey to the Refuge

- Fassin, D., & D'halluin, E. (2005). The Truth from the Body: Medical Certificates as Ultimate Evidence for Asylum Seekers. *American Anthropologist*, 107(4), 597–608.
- Blommaert, J. M. (2009). Language, Asylum, and the National Order. *Current Anthropology*, 50(4), 415–441.

Class activity: Students will work as an advocacy group to decolonize the European asylum process to make it accessible for more displaced groups around the world

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- Refuge: Human Stories from the Refugee Crisis (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6b5H7je4m1A>)

Week 6/Oct 13:

The Fragments of Refugeehood Puzzle

- Besteman, C. (2014). Refuge Fragments, Fragmentary Refuge. *Ethnography*, 15(4), 426–445.

- Arendt, H. (1994). We refugees (originally published in 1943). In M. Robinson (Ed.), *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile* (pp. 110-119). Boston, London: Faber and Faber.

Class activity: Reviewing materials for the midterm exam

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- Life in the time of refuge: A virtual reality documentary (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI9A6mQdMCQ>)

Week 7/Oct 20: Midterm exam

Week 8/Oct 27:

The Legacy of Colonialism

- Abu-Lughod, L., & Sa'di, A. H. (2007). Introduction: The Claims of Memory. In A. H. Sa'di & L. Abu-Lughod (Eds.), *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (pp. 1-24). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sengupta, S. (2020). Being Stateless and Surviving: The Rohingyas in Camps of Bangladesh. In N. Chowdhory & B. Mohanty (Eds.), *Citizenship, Nationalism and Refugeehood of Rohingyas in Southern Asia* (pp. 113-135). Singapore: Springer.

Class activity: TBA

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- Stealing a Nation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=170Pvurq97I>)

Reading Week

Week 9/Nov 10:

Refugees, Race & Neoliberalism

- Rajaram, P. K. (2018). Refugees as Surplus Population: Race, Migration and Capitalist Value Regimes. *New Political Economy*, 23(5), 627–639.
- Bhagat, A. (2019). Displacement in “Actually Existing” Racial Neoliberalism: Refugee Governance in Paris. *Urban Geography*, 1–20.

Class activity: TBA

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- Trapped in Greece (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ASpKCnx4D4>)

Essay proposal due today

Week 10/Nov 17:

Indigenous Displacement & Ethnic Violence in Canada

- Denov, M., & Campbell, K. (2002). Casualties of Aboriginal Displacement in Canada: Children at Risk among the Innu of Labrador. *Refuge*, 20(2), 21–33.
- Sugiman, P. (2008). "Days you Remember": Japanese Canadian Women and the Violence of Internment. In M. Hajdukowski-Ahmed, N. Khanlou & H. Moussa (Eds.), *Not Born a Refugee Woman: Contesting Identities, Rethinking Practices* (pp. 113-134). New York: Berghahn Books.

Class activity: TBA

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- Canada Apologizes for Racist Incident 100 Years After Rejecting Komagata Maru Ship of 370 Immigrants
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIZUpTxdYZw&t=906s>)

Week 11/Nov 24:

Refugee Women

- Pessar, P. R. (2001). Women's Political Consciousness and Empowerment in Local, National, and Transnational Contexts: Guatemalan Refugees and Returnees. *Identities*, 7(4), 461–500.
- Esposito, F., Ornelas, J., Scirocchi, S., & Arcidiacono, C. (2019). Voices from the Inside: Lived Experiences of Women Confined in a Detention Center. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 44(2), 403–431.

Class activity: TBA

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- Raghad's Dream: Refugee Voices from Egypt
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkNIOmo00Ag>)

Week 12/ Dec 01:

Representation of Refugee Voices

- Hua, A. (2013). Black Diaspora Feminism and Writing: Memories, Storytelling, and the Narrative World as Sites of Resistance. *African and Black Diaspora*, 6(1), 30–42.
- Cabot, H. (2016). Refugee Voices: Tragedy, Ghosts, and the Anthropology of Not Knowing. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(6), 645–672.

Class activity: TBA

Documentary for the asynchronous segment

- The Importance of Storytelling in Refugee Advocacy (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYcImYH3D1I>)

Week 13/ Dec 8:

Course Review

- Luisa Feline Freier, Soledad Castillo Jara, & Marta Luzes. (2020). The Plight of Migrants and Refugees in the Pandemic. *Current History* (1941), 119(820), 297–302.

Class activity: Reviewing materials for the final exam

Essay due today

Course Policies and Statements:

- All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#)
- Contact the course instructor if you need the class materials in an alternate and more accessible format. More information is available at [Accessibility](#)
- The [Academic Support and Engagement](#) site offers assistance for accessible education, students with disabilities, etc.
- [Health and Wellness](#)
- No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.
- Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.
- All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database

for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

- Please visit the [Writing Support Center](#) and [Learning Development & Success](#) to get support with writing and other academic skills.
- The class lectures and additional materials will be posted on OWL. You can download them for your convenience. But don't share them in public domains or upload them on another website.
- You can use a laptop in the class but turn off/silence your cellphone. Please do not tape/video record the class.

Please regularly check OWL's announcement section to keep up with the modifications and changes

Best of luck with the semester!