

**ADVANCED SPECIAL TOPICS IN REFUGEE AND MIGRANT STUDIES*****TOPIC: RISKY PASSAGES AND RESTRICTIVE BORDERS******REFUGEES AND THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES*****WINTER 2021-22****PRELIMINARY COURSE OUTLINE****Class day & time:** Wednesdays 1:30-3:30 pm (+1 hour asynchronous)**Classroom:** AHB-1B06**Instructor:** Dr. Randa Farah**Office:** SSC 3423**Email:** rfarah2@uwo.ca**Office Hours:** TBA

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 that discriminate against the poor and people from the global south. “Fortress Europe” symbolizes the restrictive entry for most people considered undesirable and threats to the “national body”. In this geopolitical landscape, place of origin, class, race, national/ethnic identity, or religion or a combination thereof are markers for inclusion or exclusion, of acceptance or rejection, and of mobility or immobility. In contrast, borders-as-bridges facilitate the movement of people deemed “risk-free”, along with capital, labor (when needed), and commodities. Slogans such as “national security” are invoked to mobilize support for this skewed cartography, and used as pretexts to deny entry, deport or detain individuals, most of whom are victims of wars unleashed or supported by the very states restricting or preventing entry. Refugee status and citizenship have become much more difficult to obtain and those seeking refuge are increasingly recast as potential criminals, security threats, or queue-jumpers. Negative perceptions abound, such as the idea that migrants deviously manipulate western humanitarianism, democracy, and “tolerance”. Despite the hardening of borders, the poor and the marginal continue to take perilous journeys to seek safety, and a better life. Many risk death by drowning as they sail high seas in flimsy boats, or cross harsh deserts to avoid guards and sophisticated 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 camps, or in dangerous zones, unable to seek any form of protection or safety from any state.

Drawing on readings, lectures, class discussions, documentary films and visiting speakers, 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, the focus is historical and global, dealing with the fall of empires, and the emergence of the international refugee regime. In another segment we trace the emergence of restrictive and complex borders accompanied by the erosion of refugee rights especially 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. 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.

**Prerequisite(s):** Any Arts and Humanities or Social Science 0.5 or 1.0 Essay course.

**Extra Information:** 3 lecture hours, 0.5 course.

**Please note:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll 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.

**Reading Materials will be posted on OWL.**

### Learning Outcomes

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

- Analyze the historical emergence of borders and increasing state control at a global scale.
- Analyze contemporary borders in relation to the concept of territorial state sovereignty marked by borders.
- Examine borders and borderlands as dynamic zones of social and cultural exchanges.
- Analyze the changing priorities and discourse of the international refugee regime to discourage people from the global south from seeking refuge in rich industrial states.
- 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 borders in order to better comprehend refugee experiences.
- Apply what was learned to analyze other cases for comparative purposes.

### Assignments, Dates and Weights

Assignment	Weight/Percentage	Date
a. Participation	10%	TBA
b. Short test	15%	TBA
c. Short paper	15%	TBA
d. Exam	30 %	TBA
e. Essay	30%	TBA
Total	100%	