

SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL REFUGEE STUDIES

Spring 2017

ER&M 221/WGSS 222

Wed 9:25-11:15

Location LC210

Instructor: Quan T. Tran, Ph.D.

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Office Location: Rm. 205, 35 Broadway

Office Hours: W 11:30-2:00; Th 10:00-12:00 & by appointment

Critical refugee studies is an emergent multidisciplinary field of studies that intersects the humanities and the social sciences. It encompasses several strands of inquiry that interrogate the politics of refugees and refugees' impacts. Departing from dominant understandings of refugees as victims, objects of rescue, problems, and crises, this course reconfigures refugees and refugeehood as fluid subjects and sites of social, political, and cultural inquiries and critiques. It also centers refugees as complex historical actors, whose emergences and trajectories make visible not only processes and legacies of colonization, imperialism, war, displacement, state violence, and globalization, but also attempts of emplacement as well as ethical, social, legal, and political transformations. Focusing on events that occurred in the second-half of the twentieth century and attending to the intersections of ethnicity, race, class, gender, and migration, this course is comparative in scope.

REQUIRED TEXT

- Peter Nyers, *Rethinking Refugees: Beyond States of Emergency* (Routledge, 2005)
- Eric Tang, *Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the NYC Hyperghetto* (Temple, 2015)
- Michel Agier, *On the Margins of the World* (Polity, 2008)

FILMS

- Matthew Cassel, *The Journey to Europe* (2016)
- Michael Nash, *Climate Refugees* (2010)

GRADING CRITERIA

Attendance & Participation (15%): Students are expected to attend all classes and participate fully in all class discussions.

Weekly Reading Response (15%): 1-2 paragraphs response to weekly assigned materials. This should be a space to identify main themes, connect, offer a critique, and/or ask questions relating to the assigned materials. *Due under DISCUSSIONS on Canvas by 12pm on Tuesdays.*

Reading Presentations (10%): Students will work in pair to give a 20 minute presentation on the assigned materials of a chosen week. Presentations should highlight major themes, main

arguments, and assess the potentials and limitations of authors' arguments. Presenters may also draw connections between readings, or issues raised in previous class discussions. Presenters should conclude with 2 or 3 questions to initiate discussion. Presenters do not have to submit reading response for the week that they are presenting.

Midterm (25%, 7 double-space page paper, Week 6): Students will analyze an assigned primary source that speaks to one or more themes discussed in the first half of the semester.

Final Assignment (35%, due May 5 @ 9pm):

Option A: Final Paper (1 double-space page proposal, Week 7; 12 double-space page final paper): Students will complete a final paper that explores an aspect of critical refugee studies in depth. Instructor must approve students' topics. Students choosing this option will present their projects during the last week of class.

Option B: Creative project (1 double-space page proposal, Week 7; final project): Students will complete a creative project that addresses a particular aspect of critical refugee studies. Instructor must approve students' projects. Students choosing this option will present their projects during the last week of class.

Option C: Individual service project (10 double-space page final reflection paper): Students will complete a series of short-termed service projects in partnership with Yale Refugee Project, or Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services. **Students choosing this option should sign up with instructor by Week 3.** Students will write a final reflection paper on these volunteer experiences and connect them to relevant themes discussed in class. Students will present a summary of their work during the last week of class.

Option D: Group project (TBD): Students will collaborate on a group project to be determined by the group and the instructor by Week 4/5. Students choosing this option will also write a **5-7 page final reflection paper** and present their work during the last week of class.

COURSE POLICIES

Syllabus Changes

Instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus throughout the semester.

Disability Resources

To receive accommodations for a disability, students must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact the Resource Office on Disabilities as soon as possible at 35 Broadway, Room 222; or call 203-432-2324.

Late Policy

Late assignments and exams will be penalized (- half a point for reading responses and - a letter grade for midterm and final papers).

Electronic Resources

Electronic readings, handouts, and changes to the syllabus, assignments, and deadlines will be posted under ASSIGNMENTS on **Canvas**. Reading materials available in PDF, or on ORBIS are indicated. Students are expected to check the course site regularly.

Classroom Etiquette

All cell phones and electronic devices must be silenced in class. Students and instructor are expected to share ideas and comments appropriately and respectfully. Do not record/post/publish classroom conversations/discussions in any form without participants' consent.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will likely result in failure of the course. ***Students are responsible for knowing the definitions and penalties for Academic Dishonesty***, which include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, academic interference, etc. ***Ignorance about these standards will not serve as an excuse for infractions.*** The Council of Writing Program Administrators Plagiarism defines plagiarism as: “*A deliberate use of someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.*” Plagiarizers are treated as violators of the code of academic integrity.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on Yale campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform the instructor in writing.

SCHEDULE

Part 1: Rethinking Refugees

Week 1 (1/18): Introduction

- “The Refugee Project” <http://www.therefugeeproject.org/#>
- “Text of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” and the “1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” selections <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>
- Hannah Arendt, “We Refugees” in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile* (Faber and Faber, 1994), pp.110-119 (PDF)

Week 2 (1/25): Critical Refugee Studies

- Yen Le Espiritu, “Toward a Critical Refugee Study,” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, Vol.1, No.1-2 (2006), pp.410-433 (PDF)
- Michel Agier, *On the Margins of the World*, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5.
- Peter Nyers, “Introduction: Body Politics in Motion” in *Rethinking Refugees*, pp.ix-xviii

Week 3 (2/1): Reimagining Refugees

- Avery Gordon, “Her Shape And His Hand” in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 1-5 (ORBIS)
- Peter Nyers, “Emerging or Emergency Identities?” and “Fearful Subjects: Reason and Fear in the UN Refugee Definition” in *Rethinking Refugees*, pp.1-24 and 43-68

- Kim Huynh, “Refugeeness: What’s Good and Not So Good About Being Persecuted and Displaced?” *Local-Global*, Vol.8, No. November 2010, pp.52-74 (PDF)
- In class screening: Michael Nash, *Climate Refugees* (2010)

Part 2: Becoming and Staying Refugees

Week 4 (2/8): Processes and Narratives

- Al Jazeera, “Rohingya in Arakan, Burma! The Hidden Genocide,” *Al Jazeera*, December 9, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KG2kdcMZG0>
- Brent Renaud and Craig Renaud, “Between Borders: American Migrant Crisis,” *Times Documentaries*, October 3, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/americas/100000003901101/central-america-child-migrants.html>
- “Exile without End: Palestinians in Lebanon,” *CBC News*, November 2010, <http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/shatila/>
- Clementine Wamariya and Elizabeth Weil, “Everything is Yours, Everything is Not Yours,” June 29, 2015, *Matter*, <https://medium.com/matter/everything-is-yours-everything-is-not-yours-d6f66bd9c6f9#.451pggnah>
- “Inside Dadaab: Growing up in the World’s Largest Refugee Camp,” *CBC News*, May 12, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-may-12-2015-1.3070544/inside-dadaab-growing-up-in-the-world-s-largest-refugee-camp-1.3070667>

Week 5 (2/15): Legacies of Colonialism, Nationalism, War, and Militarism

- Maria Garcia, “The Wars in Central America and the Refugee Crisis” and “Refugees or Economic Migrant? The Debate over Accountability in the United States” in *Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States and Canada* (University of California Press, 2006), pp.13-43; and 84-118 (ORBIS)
- Mekuria Bulcha, “Historical, Political and Social Causes of Mass Flight from Ethiopia,” in *Refugees and Development in Africa*, ed. Peter Nobel (Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1987), pp. 19-36 (PDF)
- Yen Le Espiritu, “Militarized Refuge(es)” in *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)*, (University of California Press, 2014), pp. 24-48 (ORBIS)

Week 6 (2/22): Resettled?

***Midterm due @ beginning of class

- Eric Tang, *Unsettled*

Part 3: Compassion, Human Rights, Freedom and Humanitarianism

Week 7 (3/1): Refugee Love/Hate

***Project proposal due @ beginning of class

- Peter Nyers, “Human Hospitality/Animal Animosity: Canadian Responses to Refugee Crises at the Millennium” in *Rethinking Refugees*, pp.69-96
- Gil Loescher and John A. Scanlan, “Congress and the Choice of Victims” and “Calculated Kindness” in *Calculated Kindness: Refugees and America’s Half-Open Door, 1945-Present* (The Free Press, 1986), pp.85-101; and pp.209-219 (PDF)

- Aihwa Ong, “Refugee Love as Feminist Compassion” in *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (University of California Press, 2003), pp.142-167 (ORBIS)
- Matthew Vickery and Kelly Lynn, “Malaysian Volunteer Offers Refugees a Taste of Home on Greece’s Shores,” *Mashable*, November 7, 2015, <http://mashable.com/2015/11/07/refugee-volunteering-greece-food/#f2iYIJ7zeuq2>

Week 8 (3/8): Human Rights for Whom?

- “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (PDF)
- Inderpal Grewal, “Gendering Refugees: New National/Transnational Subject” in *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 158-195 (ORBIS)
- Emma Larking, “Introduction,” and “The Right to Have Rights and a New Law on Earth,” in *Refugees and the Myth of Human Rights: Life Outside the Pale of the Law* (Ashgate, 2014), pp.1-12 and pp.151-168 (PDF)
- Bonny Ibhawoh, “Defining Persecution and Protection: The Cultural Relativism Debate and the Rights of Refugees” in *Problems of Protection: The UNHCR, Refugees, and Human Rights*, pp.61-78 (ORBIS)
- Giorgio Agamben, “Beyond Human Rights,” *Open 2008, No.15*, pp.90-95 (PDF)
- A. N. Paik, “Testifying to Rightlessness: Haitian Refugees Speaking from Guantanamo,” *Social Text*, Vol.28, No.3 (2010), pp.39-65 (PDF)

Spring Break (3/10-3/27)

Week 9 (3/29): The Paradoxes of Humanitarianism & Freedom *

- Peter Nyers, “On Humanitarian Violence” in *Rethinking Refugees*, pp.25-42
- Anne Hammerstad, “A Humanitarian Star” in *The Rise and Decline of a Global Security Actor: UNHCR, Refugee Protection and Security*, (ORBIS)
- Mimi Nguyen, “Introduction: The Empire of Freedom” in *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages* (Duke University Press, 2012), pp.1-32 (ORBIS)
- Liisa Malkki, “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization,” *Cultural Anthropology* 11(3), 377-404 (PDF)

Part 4: Transforming the Local, National, International, and Global

Week 10 (4/5): Agents of Change

- UNHCR, “Refugees Who Have Made a Difference,” <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c74-page4.html>
- Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Jorge Pérez-López, “Refugee Remittances: Conceptual Issues and the Cuban and Nicaraguan Experiences,” *The International Migration Review*, Vol.31, No.2 (Summer 1997), pp.411-437 http://www.jstor.org/stable/2547226?seq=3#page_scan_tab_contents
- Sarah Dryden-Peterson, “‘I Find Myself as Someone Who is in the Forest’: Urban Refugees as Agents of Social Change in Kampala, Uganda,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19(3), pp.381-395, <http://jrs.oxfordjournals.org/content/19/3/381.full.pdf+html>
- Peter Nyers, “Evasive Maneuvers: Refugee Warrior Communities Recast the Political” in *Rethinking Refugees*, pp.97-122

Week 11 (4/12): Refugee Landscapes

- Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos and Peter Mwangi Kagwanja, “Refugee Camps, or Cities?” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol.13., No.2 (2000), pp.205-222 (PDF)
- Shirin Jaafari, “Refugee Camps Are Surprising Hot Spots of Innovation,” Public Radio International, October 22, 2014, <http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-10-22/refugee-camps-are-surprising-hot-spots-innovation>
- Agier, *On the Margins of the World*, Chapter 3
- Suvendrini Perera, “oceanic corpo-graphies, refugee bodies and the making and unmaking of waters,” *Feminist Review*, Vol.103 (2013), pp.58-79 (PDF)
- Refugee Nation, www.refugeenation.org

Week 12 (4/19): Emerging Cultural Forms

- Niz Jabour, “Iraqi Memories. A Personal and Poetic Exploration of Homecomings, Departures and Arrivals from a Theatre Director Who Fled Iraq in 1987 and Returns Home Again” in *Refugee Performance: Practical Encounters* (University of California Press, 2013), pp.1-13 (ORBIS)
- Michael Balfour and Nina Woodrow, “On Stitches” in *Refugee Performance: Practical Encounters* (University of California Press, 2013), pp.15-34 (ORBIS)
- Cathy Schlund-Vials, “Lost Chapters and Invisible Wars: Hip-Hop and Cambodian American Critique” in *War, Genocide, and Justice: Cambodian American Memory Work* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012), pp.149-180 (ORBIS)
- Quan Tue Tran, “Remembering the Boat People Exodus: A Tale of Two Memorials” *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, Vol.7, No.3, Fall 2012, pp.80-121 (PDF)

Week 13 (4/26): Student Presentations and Wrapping Up

- Peter Nyers, “Rethinking Refugeeeness: Dangers and Prospects” in *Rethinking Refugees*, pp.123-132

Final Exam Week: Final Assignment/Project Due Friday, May 5, 2017 @9pm.