

# R'OURSE

## Advancing Refugee Justice Through an Academic Institution

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### BACKGROUND

R'Course is 1 unit, student-led course that enables students to teach other students.

A tool of the institution, R'Course could be used to create a platform for students to empower other students and their own community through engaged scholarship and research.

A student of the course, Michelle Gonzales, believes "everyone has such different journeys that it is worth learning something from someone else's unique perspective. Basing on this philosophy, the Critical Refugee Studies course builds upon democratic pedagogy of teaching.

The introductory course focuses on the deconstruction of refugee identities. Incorporating art and music, the course examines five examples of forced migration affecting refugees of color and LGBTQ refugees.

In this social justice orientated course, students learn about the refugees' challenges in adapting to their new home in the U.S. Students will design a community project that will address the needs of our refugee community.

### PLANNING PROCESS

1

This course is a collaborative project between UCR and Gloeally Connected, a refugee nonprofit. The course planning process involved stakeholders from both the community and the university.

2

Flyers of course were printed and shared among students programs: African, Asian Pacific, Undocumented, Native American, Middle Eastern, and LGBT Student Programs.

3

To finalize the syllabus, students voted on the top five refugee topics from a list of seven. Students were encouraged to co-present weekly topics.



Figure 1. This model provides students with the academic background and enables them to apply their knowledge to create a community project.

### STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 10 students are in the course. Out of these students:

- Everyone identified as immigrants or descendants of family members who are immigrants
- 44% are from the humanities, 33% natural sciences, and 22% engineering
- 40% are freshmen, 50% junior, and 10% senior

### COURSE IMPLICATIONS

- For students, the course:**
- Cultivates a space to share knowledge
  - Creates a network of individuals with similar social justice interests
  - Empowers them to apply their knowledge to design a project
  - Enables them to spark local changes within their community

- For the community, the course:**
- Uses resources of the institution to raise awareness about forced migration
  - Acts as a liaison to connect students to the community
  - Produces a project that benefits community members
  - Invites local refugees to share their stories

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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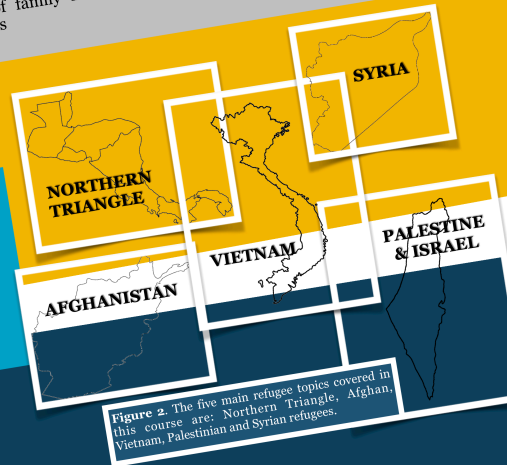


Figure 2. The five main refugee topics covered in this course are: Northern Triangle, Afghan, Vietnam, Palestinian and Syrian refugees.