INTD 497
Theorizing Refugees:
Citizenship and Displacement in the Middle East
Winter 2017

Class time: Tuesdays, 11:25-2:25pm
Room: Leacock Building 116
Instructor: Professor Diana Allan
Office hours: Thursdays 2:45-4, Leacock Building, Room 922
Email: diana.allan@mcgill.ca

Course description: How does anthropology study those defined as exceptions within the political order of citizenship? Refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and “illegal aliens” challenge this order at its core. We engage anthropologists, political theorists, legal scholars and sociologists who explore the political implications of such others, as well as the theoretical and practical implications of the terms themselves. Readings trace the theoretical evolution of the refugee from state threat and abject other in need of containment and therapeutic care to agent of political change, ranging from studies of citizenship and exclusion, humanitarianism and the biopolitics of refugee management and control, to “experience-near” ethnographies of refugee life and forced migration. We examine how people experience displacement, confinement and exclusion; how home, community and belonging are (re)configured; and the lived experience of exile. While the geographic focus of the course will be the Middle East and North Africa, with particular attention directed at Syrian and Palestinian refugees, case studies will be drawn from other areas as well.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand how anthropology and related disciplines approach the study of displacement and forced migration
- Recognize and evaluate the ways refugee status, and the experience of belonging and exclusion shape societies and human subjects
- Critically analyze, from an interdisciplinary perspective, scholarly debates about forced migration, citizenship, belonging and exclusion in the Middle East and other contexts
- Develop and present persuasive oral and written analyses of the topics under discussion
- Conduct independent research and writing that explores the themes of the course further

The teaching methods used to achieve these objectives include:

- Brief lectures to introduce key terms and theoretical debates
- Class discussions;
- Student presentations;
- Audiovisual materials;
- Guest lectures;
- Guided reading and independent research.

** iPods and cell phones are not allowed in class; use of laptops and iPads should be limited to accessing class texts and course-related materials only. Hard copies are preferred.**
INTD 497: Theorizing Refugees: Citizenship and Displacement in the Middle East

Texts

There is no course reader for this class. All the texts for this course are available as e-books (with unlimited access), and the articles and additional readings will be accessible through the course website. For those of you like to hold texts in your hands, I have ordered two of the ethnographies we will be reading during the second half of the semester, which are available at Paragraphe Books.

—Miriam Ticktin, *Casulties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (University of California, 2011)

Course Requirements

*Attendance and participation*: Active participation counts towards the final grade and are expected of all students. Because this is a seminar rather than a lecture course, students are expected to come to class having closely read all the assigned texts and prepared to speak about them. Identify striking passages that warrant deeper analysis, note questions that the texts raise, and draw connections with the films. Students will be expected to bring texts with them to class (if you come without texts, it will be assumed that you haven’t read them). Hard copies are preferred.

Each week students must post brief comments and questions generated by readings and screenings on MyCourses. This must be done by 9am on Thursday morning to allow discussion facilitators to review comments before class. Students should also review each other’s postings before class. *This will count towards the participation grade.*

*Leading Discussion*: Each week 3 students will be responsible for leading discussion. Students should work together in advance of class to come up with questions and ideas to address collectively. *Presentations should not summarize the texts, but critically engage with them; they should draw connections with previous readings and films, and the overarching themes of the course.* Presenters should also engage with the commentaries and questions posted by their peers on MyCourses. Presenters should identify the particular themes they wish to address in the seminar; develop creative strategies for facilitating discussion and stimulating debate (where relevant, drawing on case studies beyond assigned readings, audiovisual materials, etc.); and a clear timeline for the activities. The presentations should run for approximately 1 hour and must include at least 30 minutes of facilitated class discussion and/or small group activities. All group facilitators will receive the same grade. A laptop and power point projector will be provided.

*Reflection papers*: Over the course of the semester students are required to write two short reflection papers on the weekly readings. Students will be graded on the overall clarity of their writing; their critical engagement with the literature; and on the strength of their analytical skills. The reflection paper should be 2-3 pages double-spaced and are an opportunity to draw connections with previous readings and the themes of the course, pose questions, express frustration or pleasure, and hone analytical skills. *Reflection papers should not simply summarize the argument, but should critically engage with it.* For weeks where there are three or more assigned readings, students should treat a minimum of three; where relevant, students may draw on additional sources. *Papers must be submitted in class on January 31st and March 7th.*
Final Paper and in-class workshop of research proposal: Each student will design, research, and write about a topic of their choice that engages the ideas of the course. Papers should not exceed 15 pages double spaced, 12 point font and should be not less than 10 pages. The paper must have a clear thesis, identify key terms, and draw on both empirical and theoretical materials from the course. Topics should involve independent research in related areas, and might focus on particular cases, debates, institutional actors or ethnographic studies in the field of forced migration. (For students wishing to conduct field research and interviews for the final paper, please consult me to discuss the IRB/ Human Subjects approval procedure).

Students are required to submit a 2 page paper proposal for their final paper in class on March 21, and to present their research topics in class for peer review. The proposal should include 1) a justification of how it relates to course themes; 2) an annotated bibliography of texts. *The final paper is due in the last class on April 11.*

Absence: Each student is permitted one unexcused absence. Additional unexcused absences will lower the class participation grade by 3 points. Excused absences require advance approval and a letter of explanation. Students will be responsible for all work missed.

Grading and Assessment:

25%  Participation in class  
15%  Two short reflection papers  
20%  Group facilitation of seminar  
  5%  Paper proposal and bibliography  
35%  Final research paper

Important dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 January</td>
<td>Course begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 January</td>
<td>First reflection paper (due in class)</td>
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<td>7 March</td>
<td>Second reflection paper (due in class)</td>
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<td>21 March</td>
<td>Proposal for research paper topic (TWO copies due in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 April</td>
<td>Last class, final papers due</td>
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**Please note this syllabus may be subject to change**

Week 1: January 10  
Introduction: Defining refugees and forced migration in the Middle East  
Screening: *Nakba Archive Excerpts*

PART I – FRAMINGS

Week 2: January 17  
Boundaries of community: Citizenship and exclusion  
Required reading:  
INTD 497: Theorizing Refugees: Citizenship and Displacement in the Middle East


Screening: The Displaced (2014)

Week 3: January 24
The national order of things: Anthropology and the study of people in and out of place

Required Reading:
— Georgina Ramsay, “(Im)possible Futures: The containment and Control of Refugee Futures” (Draft paper – Futures and Ruins Workshop Duke, 2016).

Week 4: January 31
Humanitarian regimes


Optional:

Week 5: February 7
Camps: biopolitical containment


In-class screening: *A World Not Ours* (2012), dir. Mahdi Fleifel

**Week 6: February 14**

**Representing refugee experience**

**Required Reading:**

**Optional:**

In class screening: *Terrace of the Sea* (2010), dir. Diana Allan.

**PART II – CASE STUDIES**

**Week 7: February 21**

**The protracted displacement of Palestinians in Syria**

**Week 8: February 28**

**NO CLASS**

**Week 9: March 7**

**Included or excluded?: Palestinian citizens of Israel**

**Required Reading:**

**Optional:**
INTD 497: Theorizing Refugees: Citizenship and Displacement in the Middle East

In-class screening: *Port of Memory* (2010), Kamal al-Jafari.

**Week 10: March 14**
**Syria — Guest Lecture, Wendy Pearlman**


Screening: *Houses without doors*, Avo Kaprealian (2016)

**Week 11: March 21**
**Sahrawi refugees and the Western Sahara**


Screening: *Lost Land* (2011), Pierre-Yves Vandeweerd

*Paper topic and tentative bibliography due. (Please bring two copies to class).*

**Week 12: March 28**
**The Problem of Europe - I**


**Week 13: April 4**
**The Problem of Europe – II**


**Optional:**


Week 14: April 11
Refugees and forced migrants as agents of political change

Required Reading:
—Sophia Balakian, “Money is your government: Refugees, mobility and unstable documents in Kenya’s Operation Usalama Watch.” ASR Forum on surveillance in Africa

Optional:
—Bridget Anderson, Nandita Sharma and Cythia Wright, “‘We are all Foreigners’: No Borders as a practical political project.” *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement*, edited by Peter Nyers and Kim Rygiel (Routledge, 2012).

Writing Guidelines

*Format:* Hard copies of written work should be submitted to me during class. All written work should conform to these guidelines: one inch margins, double spacing, and 12-point, Times New Roman font. Include your name, date and title on the first page of your paper, and number and staple your pages. Proofread your drafts carefully before turning them in.


*Late submission:* Late work will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made in advance.

*Academic Integrity:* The work you submit for this course must be written by you; all sources must be appropriately acknowledged. Please review McGill’s Academic Integrity Code: [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information.

*Language:* As per university policy, written assignments may be submitted in French or English.

*Special Needs:* Requests for academic accommodations for students with disabilities must be made during the first three weeks of the semester, so that arrangements can be made. For more information, please contact the McGill Student Disability Services.

*Major legal agreements and standards:*
**Other useful resources:**
Canadian Council for Refugees: www.ccrweb.ca
Forced Migration On-line: www.forcedmigration.org
Forced Migration Review: www.fmreview.org
Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: www.irb-cisr.gc.ca
International Committee for the Red Cross: www.icrc.org
International Crisis Group: www.crisisweb.org
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: www.idmc.org
MSF Virtual Refugee Camp: www.refugeecamp.org
Norwegian Refugee Council: www.nrc.no
Refugees International: www.refintl.org
Relief Web: www.reliefweb.int
UNHCR: www.unhcr.org
University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre: www.rsc.ox.ac.uk
Women’s Refugee Commission: https://womensrefugeecommission.org
http://reliefweb.int/organization/womens-commission-refugee-women-and-children