Overview

This course is an introduction to the causes and consequences of forced dislocation as a global issue. It covers formally recognized refugees as well as people, such as internally displaced persons and asylum seekers, who are in refugee-like circumstances. There is a dual focus on understanding the personal experiences of refugees and on examining the efforts on their behalf at national and international levels.

This course meets the George Mason University Global Gen Ed requirement. Specifically:

*Learning Outcomes:*

The goal of the global understanding category is to help students see the world from multiple perspectives, reflect upon their positions in a global society, and be prepared for future engagement as global citizens. While it may include a historical perspective, global understanding courses focus primarily on a contemporary understanding of one’s place in a global society.

*Courses in this category must meet a minimum of three of the following learning outcomes:*

1. Identify and articulate one’s own values and how those values influence their interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.
2. Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies.
3. Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies.
4. Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

The course also meets requirements for two GLOA concentrations - Human Security (HMSC) and International Development (IDEV).

Requirements

Class attendance is crucial for this course. Three absences are allowed. Other absences will result in reductions of three points each out of the possible points for class participation.

Weekly task assignments must be turned in on the first day of classes that week—which is Tuesday for this course. They should be brief: no more than a page. Typed is better but not required if you can really write very legibly. You can miss one of those assignments without penalty. Extra credit of 5 points (of the possible course total of 100 points) if you do all eleven of them. Late assignments will be accepted, but at half credit (unless prior approval). Be prepared to talk in class about what you did for that week’s assignment.

One long paper is required. It can be of any topic relating to refugees (refugee lives, refugee policies, a particular refugee crisis) but the topic requires preapproval. The paper should be about ten pages typed double-space...
(about 3,000 words plus notes and references). We will discuss details in class. You will need to talk about your paper in class, but there will not be formal presentations.

**Texts** The two required texts are:


Other online sources will be needed for various of the weekly tasks. The following may be of particular use for the “check the news on . . .” tasks that begin on October 29.

**UNHCR:**

State of the World’s Refugees
[https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5100fec32.pdf](https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5100fec32.pdf)

Other selections from the UNHCR web site including program reports, news on refugee crises, members’ policies, and legal documents may also be valuable

Haines, Howell, and Keles: “Maintaining Refuge”
[http://anthofrefugees.org/](http://anthofrefugees.org/)

This is a collection of short essays by anthropologists. They are recent enough to still be “news” and have good global coverage.

Google news feed on “refugees”

**Grading – possible points for each course requirement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly task assignments:</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First examination:</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second examination:</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper proposal</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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</tbody>
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The final grade will be calculated as follows:

- >= 93.00 A
- 90.00 - 92.99 A-
- 87.00 - 89.99 B+
- 83.00 - 86.99 B
- 80.00 - 82.99 B-
- 77.00 - 79.99 C+
- 73.00 - 76.99 C
- 70.00 - 72.99 C-
- 60.00 - 69.99 D
- <= 59.99 F
Other matters

You really are expected to come to class on time and stay in class until it ends. The university catalog, for example, reminds you that: “Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they are registered. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation.”

Make-up exams require prior approval.

You are subject to the university’s honor code which prohibits cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Plagiarism includes presenting someone else’s work as your own and includes using material from a book or website without quoting or citing the reference. Infractions are reported to the university’s honor system for action. They are not resolved directly by the instructor.

Use of electronic devices is not allowed in class.

Any academic accommodations for students with disabilities should be arranged through the Mason Korea central office.

Academic Resource Center:

The Academic Resource Center, GMUK is in the business of looking at your papers, projects and problems to improve your academic achievement in the area of Writing, Communication, Mathematics, Accounting, Statistics, and Economics. You are invited to utilize the faculty and student tutor services at a variety of stages in your academic activities, checking to see that your project specifically meets the directions specified by your instructor. While tutors are helping you in your writing or projects, they do help you become conscious of particular error patterns that emerge in your work.

For more information, please contact Professor Eunmee Lee, Director of Academic Resource Center (eelee45@gmu.edu, office #638).
Schedule

Classes will be a mix of short lectures, film, discussion, and task reports.

NOTE: “Read” and “Due” refer to the first class of the week -- Tuesday

Aug 27 & 29  
Course introduction; general discussion of human mobility
Read: Betts and Collier, Introduction
View in class:  
https://www.ted.com/talks/david_miliband_the_refugee_crisis_is_a_test_of_our_character?language=en

Sep 3 & 5  
Refuge and opportunity; refugees, immigrants, and migrants
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapters 1 and 2
Global Trends in Forced Migration  
https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/
Task 1: In David Miliband’s TED talk, what is the single most important idea and what is the single most important weakness of that idea? Why?
View in class:  
https://www.ted.com/talks/pope_francis_why_the_only_future_worth_building_includes_everyone

Sep 10  
Refugees and political conflicts
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapter 3 (Panic)
Nguyen, “This is What the Journey Does”
Task 2: How would you compare the Pope’s TED talk with the talk by David Miliband? Similarities? Differences? Relative strengths and weaknesses?

Sep 17 & 19  
The post WW II world order: Europe
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapter 4 (Ethics)
Nguyen, “Introduction” and “Refugees and Exiles”
Task 3: Identify the key legal rights for refugees in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sep 24 & 26  
The post WW II world order: Asia, Africa, and the Middle East
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapter 5 (Havens)
Task 4: Indicate two of the strongest and two of the weakest rights for refugees in the Convention and Protocol. Why that choice?
https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10

Oct 1  
First examination

Fall Break
Oct 10  
*Introduction to the institutional framework*
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapter 6 (Assistance)
**Due:** Paper proposal

Oct 15 & 17  
*International organizations (public and private)*
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapter 7 (Recovery)
Task 5: Find the website of one important international organization dealing with refugees. What’s the key message?

Oct 22 & 24  
*National and local organizations (public and private)*
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapter 8 (Institutions)
   Nguyen, “The Ungrateful Refugee”
Task 6: Find the website (or other information) of one country’s refugee-related organization (public or private). What’s the key message?

Oct 29 & 31  
*Asia*
Read: Nguyen, “Flesh and Sand” and “A Refugee Again”
Task 7: Check the news on Asia, select a particular refugee issue, why it is important, and what are the positive and negative aspects of it.

Nov 5 & 7  
*Europe*
Read: Nguyen, “Common Story,” “Guests of the Holy Roman Empress,” and “God’s Fate”
Task 8: Check the news on Europe, select a particular refugee issue, why it is important, and what are the positive and negative aspects of it.

Nov 12 & 14  
*Africa*
Read: Nguyen, “The Road,” “New Lands,” and “To Walk in Their Shoes”
Task 9: Check the news on Africa, select a particular refugee issue, why it is important, and what are the positive and negative aspects of it.

Nov 19 & 21  
*Middle East*
Read: Nguyen, “Am I a Refugee?” and “Last, First, Middle”
Task 10: Check the news on the Middle East, select a particular refugee issue, why it is important, and what are the positive and negative aspects of it.

Nov 26 & 28  
*The Americas*
Read: Nguyen, “The Parent Who Stays,” “13 Ways,” and “Succulent Food”
Task 11: Check the news on the Americas, select a particular refugee issue, why it is important, and what are the positive and negative aspects of it.

Dec 3  
*Final thoughts and discussion*
Read: Betts and Collier, Chapter 9
   Nguyen, “Refugee Children” and “Second Country”

Dec 5  
*Second examination*

Dec 15  
*Final paper due* (by email in Word, double-spaced)