

NCLC 416 Refugee and Internal Displacement (3 credits, including 1 EL)
George Mason University
Tuesday 7:20pm - 10p.m., Robinson A 123
Spring 2013

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COURSE DESCRIPTION/COURSE GOALS

This course is designed to provide students with deeper understanding about the complexity of refugee and internal displacement in terms of legal, socio-economic, political and cultural aspects. Causes of displacement and its impact on people and societies will be explored. Students will also study and reflect on the role local and national governments, non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as the international community play in addressing problems faced by refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially in terms of relief assistance and humanitarian services. Cases from various parts of the world, particularly Karen refugees and the IDPs in Mindanao will be utilized as tools for learning. A 1-EL component with the Working Group on Displaced Populations (WGDP) at Mason, and a visit-interview with any organization or program that works on refugee or displacement related issues must be completed in order to pass the course. New Century College competencies covered in this learning community are ***communication, global understanding, critical thinking, civic engagement, well being, and group interaction.***

New Century College (NCC) Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate effective writing, speaking, and listening while understanding and communicating to diverse audiences.
2. Students will be able to think creatively and critically using reason and experience to form considered judgments; to synthesize ideas from multiple sources and diverse ways of knowing; to distinguish among facts, opinions, and inferences; and to implement problem solving strategies.
3. Students will be able to collaborate effectively with others, create shared expectations and understanding, negotiate consensus, and manage and resolve conflict.
4. Students will have an informed understanding of various local and global communities and the value of multiple and global perspectives in civic life, leading to their ability to make informed choices regarding personal community involvement, leadership, and social justice issues.
5. Students will be able to articulate, support, and apply their own values through self-knowledge and reflective practices while understanding and appreciating the diverse values of others.

MAIN TEXT

Fuertes, Al B. 2008. *Community-based Warviews, Resiliency and Healing among the Internally Displaced Persons in Mindanao and the Karen Refugees on the Thai-Burmese Border.* Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller.

Note: Main text can be accessed on line in a dissertation format, George Mason University, 2007. (Can be accessed online – ProQuest).

Required Reading

Brookings Institution on Internal Displacement. 1999. *Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/LGEL-5CTJBU?OpenDocument>>
(you may download a copy)

Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. September 1, 2007 (www.unhcr.org).

Internally Displaced People, Questions and Answers. November 1, 2007 (www.unhcr.org).

Lynch, M. 2004. *Forced Back, International Refugee Protection in Theory and Practice*. Refugees International, Washington DC. www.refugeesinternational.org
(you may download a copy)

Marfleet, Philip. 2006. *Refugees in a Global Era*. NY, NY: Palgrave, Macmillan, pp. *Foreword-17; Displacement*, pp. 191-215.

Protecting Refugees, Questions and Answers. February 1, 2002 (www.unhcr.org).

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Academic Honesty and Collaboration

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. This is especially true in New Century College. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

Some projects are designed to be undertaken individually. For these projects, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, you are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.

As in most learning communities, a number of projects in this course are designed to be completed by a study group. With collaborative work, names of all the participants should appear on the work. Collaborative projects may be divided up so that individual group members complete portions of the whole, provided that group members take sufficient steps to ensure that the pieces conceptually fit together in the end product. Group work should reflect the efforts of all group members and all members are responsible for the content and quality of assignments.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious offense. It is important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words (including punctuation) just as they appear in the original, and you must use quotation marks and page number(s) in your citation. If you want to paraphrase ideas from a source, you must still cite the source, using an established citation format.

Format for Assignments

If you have questions about a particular assignment, please ask for further explanation. All assignments must be typed (11 point font, 1” margins), double-spaced, and stapled. You must correctly and consistently use either MLA or APA citation style. As in all classes, you should keep a copy of all papers you hand in. You are responsible for completing individual and group assignments on time. Due dates are clearly indicated throughout the syllabus. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. There will be no-make up quizzes or extra time given for assignments.

Attendance

If an emergency prevents you from attending class, you should let your professor know promptly or ahead of time when possible and contact a group member to find out what you missed. You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and date changes made in class and for all materials covered in class even if you are not there.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Writing Resources

NCC maintains an Online Writing Guide with information useful to research and writing. It can be accessed at: <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/index.html> The areas covered in the online writing guide include: competencies, choosing a topic, narrowing focus, research strategies and writing, documentation, portfolio & reflective writing, presentations, resumes, collaboration, copyright and plagiarism, and Web resources. Under research writing there is also a segment on "What is a Thesis Statement?" <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/thesis/>

As a component of the writing requirements for this course, you must submit a draft and revisions for at least one writing assignment. A visit to the Writing Center for editing assistance will be required. The following information was taken from the Writing Center homepage at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu> :

“The Writing Center seeks to foster a writing climate on campus and beyond by offering free writing support to George Mason students, faculty, staff and alumni. No matter what your writing abilities are, writing specialists can help you develop the skills you need to become a successful writer...Free services include: One-on-one 45 minute sessions with a writing specialist; online writing lab; one-on-one sessions with an ESL specialist; workshops on such topics as documenting sources, grammar and punctuation; writing handouts on a variety of subjects; a library of handbooks and writing manuals; [and an] online chat with a tutor about papers submitted to the Online Writing Lab.”

Disability Support Services

Any student with documented learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Support Services (993-2474) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) contact her or his instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations.

The following information was taken from the GMU Disability Resource Center’s webpage at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/advising/dss.html>:

“George Mason University is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

To achieve this goal, the university maintains and supports the Disability Resource Center Office which is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The professional staff of the Disability Resource Center Office coordinate services for students with disabilities, determine reasonable services and accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to services and accommodations.”

Library Services

Both Fenwick Library and the Arlington Campus library maintain extensive material on conflict resolution. You are encouraged to make use of these resources during the course of the semester.

Diversity Statement

New Century College, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion or irreligion, age and disability.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

If you have any questions not answered in this syllabus or have any concerns during the course, please feel free to ask your professor in class.

Assignments and Evaluation

1000 points

Class Participation/Engagement/Attendance

250 points

There is a variety of ways you can add to the class, including: sharing of ideas and perspectives, asking questions, and commentary about assigned readings during class discussion, in class writing, evaluations and class activities.

Four Short Reading/Discussion essays (25 pts/essay)

100 points

Written reflections and sharing. Students will submit 4 short essays in which to reflect on class readings, class discussions, and group learning. These assignments are required for successful completion of the course. Students will exchange essays with (a) fellow classmate(s) and engage in some meaningful conversation about their learning. The purpose of the reflective essay exchange is to encourage, to share perspectives, and to suggest additional resources that may be helpful.

Note: Each reflective essay should be at least 2 full pages in length, 11 point font, 1.5 spaced and will integrate specific ideas/concepts, personal insights and experiences or events based on the activity guide questions.

Research Paper and Group Presentation

300 points

(Note: Grades for this project will be group-based)

Your assigned group will be given a list of countries that have internally displaced persons (IDPs) and those that host refugees from other nations. Based on the list of countries provided (other than the Philippines and Burma), you will:

Decide which **topic** you would like to explore for your research project: refugees or internally displaced persons,

Choose which **country** (only one country) you would like to focus your research paper on.

Integrate course materials and outside research in your actual writing. You must demonstrate an understanding of the theories and course concepts you use, including facts and vital information about the subject of your choice. Use both critical and reflective thinking analysis as you approach your topic. You must use, at least, 10 scholarly sources (do not use Wikipedia). The paper should be between 18-20 pages in length.

Note: This research paper will be a work in progress. The whole paper is divided into different components with their corresponding submission dates and points.

Component #1 (2-3 pages/1.5 spaced): *General Information*

Why did you choose either refugees or internal displacement as your topic (give reasons based on your group discussion and deliberation)? What interests you to choose this topic? Which country will you be focusing on and why? What do you intend to accomplish or learn from this particular paper? In other words, what are your objectives? Be specific.

(Note: Include your group contract, duly signed, when you submit this component. Your group contract serves as your 3rd or 4th page).

Due: February 19

Points for this draft: 25 points

Component #2 (4-5 pages/1.5 spaced): *Background Information about the Subject*

Who are the displaced people in your research? What is their ethnic/socio-cultural-economic background? What causes their displacement? Who causes their displacement? What are the issues/problems involved that resulted to their displacement? How would you/they describe the

kind of life they once have before becoming displaced? – Use the SPITCEROW framework to further enrich your input.

Due: March 5

Points for this draft: 50 points

Component #3 (3-4 pages/1.5 spaced) *Life being displaced*

Where are they being relocated? How would you/they describe their situation (as displaced) physically/materially or economically, relationally, socially, and/or politically? Are there new/emerging problems they now face in their relocation site – what are they? What keeps them going – in other words, what sustains them? Be explicit and be specific with your discussion.

Component #4 (3-4 pages/1.5 spaced) *Assistance*

How are the displaced people in your research being helped? By whom? What kind of assistance are they getting? What is the role of their national government? What is the role of the international community? Be explicit and be specific with your discussion.

Due (#3 and #4): March 26

Points for this draft: 75 points

Component #5 (3-4 pages/1.5 spaced) *Group Reflection and Recommendations*

For this component, you should integrate into your discussion personal thoughts and reflections by members of your group: What does this whole project mean to you? Were you able to accomplish your objectives (identify which ones)- in what sense? If not, why not? What new insights or lessons have you learned from this undertaking? In what ways has the project changed your views about life in general and refugees and internal displacement in particular? How has this project expanded your global understanding and critical/reflective thinking and analysis skills? What about your group collaboration skills? How would you describe your group process or dynamics – in other words, how did you go about doing the project (problems encountered and how did you address them)?

If you are to do another research of the same nature, which country would you work on next and why? What recommendations do you have in light of your research findings?

Due: April 9

Points for this draft: 50 points

Final Paper (include ALL the drafts with your professor's comments) is due on the day of presentation: **50 points**

Group Presentation: 50 points

Total points for this project: 300 points

Group presentation (25 min. presentation and 5 min. open forum): Decide among members of your group how you will present your research paper in a creative, informative and interactive manner. You can use *video clips of your chosen country, power point, hand-outs, present images/pictures of your subject to bring home further your message. Simulations and/or roles plays* are also welcome. Group presentations will be evaluated based on a) how well you convey the content/findings of your research in a concise manner, b) the manner by which you do your presentation, c) shared leadership, and d) audience's response.

Experiential Learning Component of the course (1 EL credit)

Active Membership/Participation Re. Working Group on Displaced Populations (WGDP) at Mason

200 points

(Note: Must complete at least 10 hours of involvement/contribution throughout the semester)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Working-Group-on-Displaced-Populations/104751412922721>
<http://cdpwatch.blogspot.com/>
<http://gmu.collegiatelink.net/organization/displaced-populations/about>

Representatives from the Working Group on Displaced Populations (WGDP) at Mason will provide the class with an orientation about the working group, as well as possible ways and opportunities to be involved. This includes, among others, attendance in at least 2 regular scheduled student assembly meetings throughout the semester.

A 3-4 page report and reflection must be submitted by the end of the semester, which demonstrates active involvement/participation in the WGDP program of activities, and what the experiential learning means to you.

- *Identify and describe in details your involvement with and contributions to the WGDP throughout the semester.*
- *How has your contribution/involvement helped enhance or enrich the mission of the WGDP? Please explain/discuss your response.*
- *What is your reflection on this experience? Any suggestion/recommendation?*

Note: The more you involve, the better the outcome would be.

Due: May 3 at 2pm

VISIT (and INTERVIEW) to any organization or agency in Washington DC that works on displacement issues: refugees, repatriation, asylum, internally displaced persons.

100 points

Check online for existing organizations (government and non-government) that work on displacement issues (there are tons of them). Identify one organization that you would like to visit to see for yourself their office and program setting – in addition to what appears on their website. Schedule a visit to their office and set for an interview with a program staff to learn more about their work. Come up with a set of thoughtful and informative questions for the interview. This project can be done alone or with others in class (maximum of 3 persons). For the latter, the grade will be group-based as well.

A 3-4 page report of the visit, including analysis and interpretation of the result of the interview, will be submitted towards the end of the semester. A transcript of the actual interview (your interview notes) will be attached to your report. Your report and analysis/interpretation must contain the following:

Due: May 3 at 2pm

Actual Visit and Interview

- When did you conduct the visit and interview? What did you observe about their office/program (description of the visit experience)?
- Name/position of the person(s) you interviewed.

Lessons learned

- What new discoveries/insights/perspectives did you learn from your visit and interview? Be specific.
- Explain specific course concepts/theories from our reading and class discussions that best apply or relate to your experiential learning. In what sense?

Self-awareness and discovery

- How has the experience expanded or enriched your views/outlook/perspectives on displacement issues?
- Describe that part of the experience which you find most gratifying/most fulfilling/most inspiring?
- Describe that part of the experience which you find most challenging/most difficult.

Attendance during Final Day

50 points

- Course Summary
- Community Celebration
- University/Class evaluations

Total

1000 points

Note:

- **Bonus points for using recycled paper or both sides of a paper in all your drafts: 15 points**

Grading Scale

980 – 1000 = A+	600 – 669 = D
930 – 979 = A	Below 599 = F
900 – 929 = A-	
870 – 899 = B+	
830 – 869 = B	
800 – 829 = B-	
770 – 799 = C+	
700 – 769 = C	
670 – 699 = C-	

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Weekly Schedule of Activities

January 22 (Week 1)

Welcome/Community-building Exercises

Introduction

Presentation of the Course Syllabus

Sharing of expectations/Setting up of community guidelines

- Group assignment for the Research Paper project

Who are the Refugees? the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)?

Understanding the Nature and Dynamics of Displacement: settings/causes/effects

Assignment for next week:

Visit www.unhcr.org (The UN Refugee Agency) – 15 points towards class participation.

- Write a 2-page report. Describe the information found on the website: What does it tell you about refugee and the overall displacement issue? Which item in the website do you find most interesting and why? What are the major lessons learned from this assignment?

January 29 (Week 2)–

Who are the Refugees? the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)?

Understanding the Nature and Dynamics of Displacement: settings/causes/effects

SPITCEROW and the Dynamics of conflict

Reading Assignment for Today:

Protecting Refugees, Questions and Answers. February 1, 2002 (www.unhcr.org)

Note: Type in *Protecting Refugees, Questions and Answers*

Internally Displaced People, Questions and Answers. November 1, 2007

(www.unhcr.org). Type in *Internally Displaced People, Questions and Answers*

Handbook for Applying . . . pp. 1-19

Due: 2-page UNHCR report.

February 5 (Week 3)

Considerations and Pressing Questions

Reading Assignment for Today:

Marfleet, Foreword –pp. 17

Fuertes, “Introduction,” pp. 1-31

Guests: Orientation Re. Working Group on Displaced Populations (WGDP)

Due: Reflection 1 (Answer only one)

- What new concepts/ideas/events have you learned and what new insights have you gained from today’s reading assignment and last week’s class discussion? Reflect on them. What do they imply to you?

- What questions or points of clarification on refugee and internally displacement do you have based on today’s reading?

- Why study refugee and internal displacement issues? What do you think is its relevance in today's world, that is, from the perspective of a North American college student or of an international student at Mason?
- What is the significance of SPITCEROW in the study of refugee and internal displacement? Please explain and reflect on your answer.

February 12 (Week 4)

The IDPs in Mindanao

Reading Assignment for Today:

Lynch, "Survivor Stories...", pp.7-12

Fuertes, "Background Information (IDPs in Mindanao)," Ch. 2, pp. 73-107.

Due: Reflection 2 (Answer only one)

- What is your response to the Survivor Stories? What made you think/feel that way? What are your personal reflections on the stories? Which of the survivor stories speaks to you the most? In what sense?
- In a nutshell, how would you describe the current life condition of the IDPs in Mindanao as presented in our text? Do you see yourself going through a similar situation (either literally or metaphorically)? If given a chance, would you like to work in an internally displaced community? In what capacity?
- Which aspect of the community life among the IDPs in Mindanao did you find compelling, disturbing, inspiring, challenging? In what sense?
- What new concepts/ideas/events have you learned from this week's reading? Explain and discuss your response.

February 19 (Week 5)

The Karen Refugees on the Thai-Burmese border

Reading Assignment for Today:

Fuertes, "Background Information (Karen refugees)," Ch. 2, pp. 107-131.

Due: Component #1 of Research project
(group discussion)

February 26 (Week 6)

War/armed conflict causes displacement
Natural disaster causes displacement

Reading Assignment for Today:

Fuertes, "War and Displacement," Ch. 3, pp. 132-172.

Due: Reflection 3 (Answer only one)

- What are some of the common and unique characteristics between the war or armed conflict in Mindanao and that in Burma which caused massive displacement of its own people? What is your reflection and/or analysis of such characteristics?
- Which specific statement(s)/line(s)/paragraph(s) from the reading stood out or speak to you the most? In what sense?

- Just what do you think about war in general?

March 5 (Week 7)

Socio-economic, religio-cultural and political implications and considerations of displacement

Reading Assignment for Today:

Fuertes, "People's Warviews," pp. 200-210.

Marfleet, "Displacement," pp. 193-215

Due: Component #2 of Research project

(group discussion)

Due: Reflection 4 (Answer only one)

- What can you say about the different categories comprising "warviews," especially as they relate to the IDPs in Mindanao and the Karen refugees? Just how intense and massive is the impact of war and displacement on the IDPs in Mindanao and the Karen refugees?

- Choose one section that Marfleet discusses in Displacement chapter: discuss new insights and lessons learned using your own word, and make reference to the reading.

March 12 (Week 8) – Spring break (NO CLASS)

March 19 (Week 9)

Displacement and People's Resilience (Individual and Societal)

Reading Assignment for Today: (Read either one of the following readings or both)

Fuertes, Ch. 7, pp. 304-352 and 389-394.

OR

Fuertes, Ch. 7, pp. 353-394.

March 26 (Week 10)

Displacement and Storytelling

Reading Assignment for Today

Fuertes, "War and Displacement Narratives," pp. 186-200.

Due: Components #3 and #4 of Research project

(group discussion)

April 2 (Week 11)

Displacement and People's Sense of Identity (Individual and Collective)

Reading Assignment

Fuertes, "Effects of War and Displacement on People's Identity," Ch. 6, pp. 233-268.

April 9 (Week 12)

Displacement, Human Rights and Justice/The Role of NGOs, Local Governments and the International Community

Reading Assignment for Today

Lynch, “Human Rights: International Protection...,” pp. 13-17 and “State Responsibility and Practice,” pp. 17-24.

Handbook for Applying... pp. 26-48 and pp. 49-60

Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. September 1, 2007

(www.unhcr.org). Type in Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Due: Component #5 of Research project

April 16 (Week 13)

(Cont.) Displacement and the Role of NGOs, Local Governments and the International Community

Reading Assignments for Today:

Fuertes, “The 3Ds in Helping...,” pp. 397-442.

A 3-5 min. Individual sharing of visit and interview.

April 23 (Week 14)

Group Presentation #1

Group Presentation #2

Group Presentation #3

Group Presentation #4

Due: Final Paper

Note: Include in your final submission ALL the drafts from various components which you have submitted before with your professor’s comments.

April 30 (Week 15)

- Community Celebration
- Culminating Activities
- University/Course Evaluations

May 3 Friday (in lieu of Week 16 meeting):

Submission of WGDP Reflection Paper and Report of your visit and interview Re. displacement-related organization (Place hard copies on my faculty mailbox, 4th floor, Enterprise Building).

Note: You have until 2pm to submit your paper.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH – AI