ENGAGING GLOBAL HUMAN DISPLACEMENT

Centre for Global Studies
Huron University College

pre-requisite: 0.5 Centre for Global Studies course at the 1000-1099 level, or permission of the Centre for Global Studies

September – December, 2018
Room# HC – A1
Fridays, 11:30am – 2:20pm.

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GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

Persons participating in this course will study ways in which human beings experience displacements in the post–World War II world, primarily as "displacement" is rendered meaningful in relation to the modern social and political movement to subject persons to a global order of sovereign states and the borders that are generated and practiced to make sense of such state formations. In this respect, the course begins with recognition of the normalcy of human movements and migrations, historically, and how social and political places and spaces are established and formed in such dynamics. And we will move quickly to trace and examine how the historical normalcy of human movement has been rendered problematic and external to the commonalities and ideals of human life, where the modern "human" has been rendered synonymous with the citizen in so many fundamental respects. On this register, we will focus on key practices in the displacement of human movement from society through developments in international law and politics within structures of the League of Nations, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency, the United Nations itself, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Most importantly, we will study how human movement has been rendered an international set of problems and, often, an “illegality” through the primacy given to human rights law and ideals within international political systems. In this
regard, we will pay particular attention to ways in which human rights law, human rights protection, and humanitarian actions serve to subject persons on the move to undermining and de–humanising actions under the law.

Having established a rich understanding of the ways in which contemporary global human displacements are formed and made inevitable by contemporary states' systems and by girding international law within a human rights mandate, we will devote the majority of the weeks in this course to examining, in some detail, what it is that people experience within international formations of displacements from territory, citizenship, and legal personality. These studies will focus on practices and experiences of encampment, detention, detainment, and deportation of persons deemed "refugees" and "asylum seekers." We will study the emergence of "statelessness" and how this particular condition differs from that experienced by refugees and claimants of refugee status or asylum. We will examine how discourses and aesthetics of displacement, refugees, stateless persons, and so-called "illegal migrants" are generated. We will also study the impacts and stakes of such discursive and aesthetic formations, considering how things could be otherwise. We will certainly examine how it is that displaced persons and their advocates are establishing alternative discursive conditions for the global engagement of displacement. And we will complete our investigations with studies of how persons in displaced conditions are trying to re–claim autonomy in their movements and assert and affirm the right to movement outside of logics of states' borders and dichotomies of emplacement/displacement.

**Learning Objectives**

A core learning objective for all students in this course is to gain a rich, complex, and critical understanding of the subject matter and stakes of refugee studies and contemporary studies in human displacement generally. This course aims to give students the opportunity to learn the modern historical, political, and legal conditions under which human displacement makes sense as a subject of study. In this work, they will be able to trace out how the contemporary regime of human rights engaging displacement in the world today is complicit with and fundamental to mass displacements of persons on the planet and the violences that are experienced in these displacements. Students will be able to critically analyse the cultural production that makes "the refugee," "the stateless person," and "the illegal immigrant" thinkable and difficult to avoid. And students will be given the opportunity to learn how it is that many persons within conditions of displacement and their advocates generate rationales of resistance to state orders of emplacement/displacement and argue forcefully for the right to move.

Students will gain substantial experience and exercise in learning how to develop and communicate interpretive analyses of study and research materials. Students will gain experience in this course in developing their own sites and problems of research and analysis, through the development of narrow forms of analysis. And students will gain deep practice in the development of all aspects of major academic research papers.
Methods of Class Instruction and Class Dynamics

During the three hours that we meet as a class each week over the term, the main methods of instruction will involve the interplay of lectures and class discussions. The form of this interplay will change from meeting to meeting, as needed and desired.

The key thing that is going to drive the learning processes in our course is direct conversational engagements with one another. While I will spend a good amount of time each week making lecture–like presentations to engage and supplement what is learned in assigned readings, the whole purpose of these presentations is not only to inform but is also to bring about and provoke strong, useful, and important discussions with one another over our studies. Thus, not only is it imperative that all class members attend our classes, it is absolutely crucial that everyone complete per assigned readings for each week before coming to class. Our lectures and discussions in class will not be aimed at simply covering what is already written in the assigned readings. Rather, our lectures and discussions will aim to use these readings as bases for our discourse in class, so that we may take questions, observations, challenges, and insights that are raised in these readings a great deal further. Therefore, it is expected that students in this course attend all classes, except when ill or engaged in a personal emergency of sorts, of course. And, all students are expected to have truly read and studied the readings that are assigned for each week, before those classes are held.

Most students in the class are likely to use computers or other conservative electronic devices for the purpose of taking notes in class. And this is fine. However, students are encouraged to instead employ the technological innovation of using paper and pencil or pen. Many students find themselves easily distracted by the internet capabilities of their electronic devices in the classroom (which becomes all too obvious to the person teaching the class). And the physical practice of taking notes with a keyboard device has the tendency to generate a kind of "taking dictation" dynamic, where students are more prone to simply write down words and sentences that are said in class rather than developing their own thoughts, questions, inspirations, and insights. While students are encouraged to take down notes that document information and cases that are reviewed in class, it really is the latter set of practices that should be emphasised overall in one's notes. And, using paper and pen or pencil tends to allow for a more interactive learning experience. In any event, students are encouraged to engage in technologies and manners of note taking in class that allow them to be most focused and engaged with the actual dynamic of class lectures and discussions and that allow them to be most fully engaged at an intellectual level.

READING MATERIALS

For each week of this course, a variety of readings are assigned to students, mostly in the forms of academic journal articles and book chapters. All of the journal articles can be found through the Library's online catalogue and downloaded in electronic form. Electronic versions of these journal articles are available also on the online OWL course.
The book chapters assigned for students' readings are all drawn from the following six books:


We will be reading only a few chapters from T. J. Demos' book, and *Migrant Image* is available to everyone as an electronic book online through the Huron University College Library's online catalogue. The other five books listed above are available for purchase at the Western University Bookstore, and a copy of each is available for two-hour loan from the Reserve Loan section of Huron University College’s Library. Please note, though, that only a few copies of Jansen's *Kakuma Refugee Camp* have been brought in to the University Bookstore, as this book is very expensive. Most students will probably want to simply borrow and read the copy available on Reserve Loan, as, again, may be done with all five books.

Below, you will find a full schedule of the readings assigned for each week's classes from journal articles and these books.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION**

**Oral and Aural Contributions to the Learning Environment:**

Given that so much of the learning process in this class is going to take place through dynamic discourse and debate with one another in class, in relation to required readings and problems, questions, and cases raised in the classroom, active participation in the classroom is a key assignment in this course. All students in the class are expected to make strong efforts to participate in discussions and debate in the classroom, through the term. And all students are expected to make strong efforts to
contribute positively to each other’s learning experiences. Thus, a significant portion of each student’s final grade in this course is dependent on these efforts.

To participate and contribute successfully in our class meetings over the term, it is important that each student attempts to: respond effectively to questions posed by the professor and classmates in discussion; participate actively in class discussions, by contributing ideas, questions, observations, challenges, and points of insight; listen attentively to each other; encourage the participation of others; show respect for each other’s statements, questions, and ideas; and demonstrate caring for each other’s contributions and efforts to learn.

In order to participate successfully in the manners above, it is necessary for all students to keep up with required readings, having not simply reviewed these readings but to have also studied carefully and reflected on the significance of these readings. Students should come prepared to develop and respond to questions and discussions based on what we have all read and learned from the required readings.

To participate in and contribute to the learning processes of our weekly class meetings with one another, it is necessary also for students to attend the scheduled classes. Without doubt, most members of the class will need to miss a class over the term, due to illness, personal matter, or schedule conflict with an important event. However, any student who misses more than three hours of class time over the term, without official academic accommodation, will be considered to be in poor attendance, and her or his participation grade will attract a poor to failing grade as a result.

Ten Weekly Critical Reading Studies:

Over the twelve weeks of class meetings that we will have over Weeks Two through Fourteen (which does not include our Reading Break, of course), as indicated in the Class and Reading Schedule below, students are expected to submit a minimum of 10 short weekly writing assignments related to assigned readings. In each week, each student is expected to submit what I am referring to as a "critical reading study" in which per engages directly and substantially with the readings assigned for study in that week’s class. Students are welcome to submit these assignments in each of the 12 weeks we meet after our introductory class, but only the best 10 that they submit will count toward their grade for this component of the course assignments and grades. In any event, students are expected to submit these assignments in at least 10 of these twelve weeks, as each weekly critical reading study will be graded out of a total possible 2 points, and the set of such assignments that students submit over the term will account for 20% of their final grades. Each weekly critical reading study that a student submits should be 300 - 400 words in length. And these weekly critical reading studies should be submitted at the beginning of each class to which the readings addressed are assigned.

When asking you to write a "critical reading study" each week, what I am asking you to do is to offer a critical engagement with the range of readings assigned to you to study in preparation for that week’s class. In this regard, you are asked to write a short consideration of what you determine to be the key issues and questions raised within
and between the respective readings assigned for that week. The point is not to simply identify and summarise points, ideas, and questions raised in these readings themselves. You certainly may and should point to central issues. However, the larger and more central objective in writing these critical reading studies is to offer a critical assessment of the overall significance of information, arguments, ideas, questions, and debates presented in the readings and how these elements bear upon one another between the readings. So, you should think about writing these short critical reading studies as mini essays, in which you try to identify one or more key points of insight that you have developed into the readings, based on your study of them and consideration of their interrelations with one another, and in which you discuss and evaluate these one or more points of insight in relation to what you have learned from the readings themselves.

Each critical reading study will be evaluated in terms of the following criteria:

- how well it shows knowledge and understanding of the assigned readings;
- how well it demonstrates critical understanding of the relations between the assigned readings;
- the depth of critical insight it shows with respect to the problems, questions, and information that are presented and discussed in the assigned readings;
- the significance of the points raised;
- the quality of reasoning displayed;
- and the quality and style of writing.

These critical reading studies will be returned the following week with very brief commentary and a grade. I will also be sure to address in class the general problems and success that students display in their work on these assignments from week to week. And students are always welcome to speak with me outside of class time to discuss the development of their skills in writing these assignments.

Descriptive Essay — Critically Presenting and Discussing a Contemporary Event/Problem of Displacement

For this first short essay, students are expected to offer a brief critical presentation and introduction to a contemporary event or problem of human displacement in the world that they wish to work on in their essay assignments for this course throughout the term. The main point of this essay assignment is for students to describe and offer a critical review and assessment of the scope and significance of this event. Students should strive to richly describe the breadth and depth of the event or problem of their choosing, showing an understanding of some of the key questions that are at stake in this matter. Through their descriptions and critical assessments of these events or problems, students should display an awareness of main scholarly journal articles and books through which we may begin to develop a strong understanding of these events or problems, and these materials should be listed and briefly discussed in an annotated bibliography.
As an essay, each student should develop per assignment around a central thesis statement in the introduction. In this thesis statement each student should take an evaluative position regarding what per takes to be the core points of contestation at issue in the event or problem. And each student should support this thesis statement by building arguments and points of analysis from the research materials per has read and studied to this point.

The descriptive essay will be evaluated in reference to the following criteria:

- how well the assignment is prepared and structured as an essay;
- how effectively the essay presents a rich introduction to and understanding of the event or problem under consideration;
- how well the essay presents an effective evaluative thesis that thoughtfully identifies key points of contestation in the event or problem under consideration;
- how effectively the thesis statement is supported through arguments that review, critically consider, and analyse evidence available in research materials;
- how well the essay demonstrates fair, accurate, and insightful understanding of the research materials engaged and referenced;
- how well the essay’s conclusion reflects on the significance and findings of the discussions in the body of the essay;
- the quality and style of writing.

Required length of Descriptive Essay: 1,000 - 1,200 words, plus annotated bibliography

Minimum number of scholarly sources to be engaged and included in bibliography: 8

Style of reference and bibliography: Chicago Style
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

Due date/time of paper proposal: no later than the beginning of class, October 5th

Manner of submission: in–class, in person, in paper form

Essay Critically Situating Displacement Event in Legal and Political Contexts

For this second short essay, students are asked to continue work on the event or problem of human displacement that they explored in their first essay assignments. And they are welcome to re–use research materials engaged as well further develop lines of commentary or analysis that they developed in that first assignment as well. However, for this particular essay, students are now asked to develop a more pointed consideration and analysis of how the specific events or problems of human displacement are situated within legal and political contexts. In this regard, the emphasis should be placed on the legal context. And, most pointedly, for this assignment students are expected to offer a critical reading and analysis of how the events or problems they are studying are situated within several levels of legal
frameworks, considering international law, regional legal frameworks, and national laws or even local laws.

In the work of this essay assignment, students are certainly expected to address and engage conventions, treaties, laws, and legal norms directly pertinent to issues of displacement, such as legal mechanisms that refer to refugees, stateless persons, displaced persons, and migrants. However, depending on the nature of the displacement event or problem that each student engages, students are very likely to need to also study, address, and analyse further laws and legal contexts pertaining to such domains as (for example): human rights law; environmental law; laws pertaining to gender, sexual differences, and sexual orientation; labour laws; international humanitarian law, etc. The point is to make sure that the essays deal with all of the legal contexts and stakes pertaining to the specific event or problem that is addressed in the essay. And students are encouraged to broaden their core discussions and arguments to address political conflict and contestation with respect to problems and contestations in the legal domains.

As an essay, students should organise their writing of this assignment around a thesis statement that is clearly stated in the introduction. In this thesis statement, students should aim to offer critical insight into the legal and political context in which the human displacement event or problem is enmeshed. And students should aim to take a position in their theses that addresses a particular point of contention they have detected either in the law and politics surrounding their focus of study or scholarly discourse over this matter.

Over the body of the essay, students should engage in close study and analyses of the legal contexts at issue in the event or problem of human displacement being studies, pointing to evidence and developing strong critical arguments with these points of evidence to support their respective thesis statements.

Students should aim to engage and address all of the legal contexts at issue in the focus of their study, directly engaging and referencing the legal instruments pertaining to their cases. And they are expected to engage at least six scholarly sources in this work that address the laws at issue or the legal questions at issue in this matter. Students are welcome to engage some or all of the eight or more scholarly sources that they discusses and engaged in their first essay in the course, as additional sources. And they may introduce and engage new research materials as well.

Required length of Legal & Political Context Essay: 1,200 - 1,500 words, plus bibliography.

Number of scholarly sources to be engaged and included in bibliography:
- all legal instruments of importance to the event/problem studied;
- a minimum of six scholarly sources (academic journal articles or books) that engage the laws and/or legal questions at issue;
- some or all of the eight or more scholarly sources that were engaged in the first essay assignment;
- any other new scholarly sources of use.
Research Paper Proposal

The final assignment required of students in this course is the writing of a major research paper assignment. For instructions pertaining to this research paper, read below. In preparation for writing the research paper, though, each student is also given the assignment of preparing and writing a significant paper proposal. In this paper proposal, students should aim to present the following:

– a clear and detailed description of the scope and field of analysis to be studied and examined in the research paper;
– a clearly and richly articulated research question;
– a presentation and discussion of the rationale behind the research question, indicating the importance and value of taking up this question;
– an outline of the approaches and lines of analysis/study to be developed in the research paper;
– a statement indicating the scholarly objective of the research paper;
– an annotated bibliography of the research sources reviewed so far (at least 12 sources).

Students may use sources engaged in the previous two essay assignments. They may also re-work ideas and lines of argument or discussion developed in either or both of these two previous essay assignments.

The paper proposals will be evaluated in terms of: how effectively and appropriately you establish a scope and field of analysis that relates to the objective of the research paper assignment; how effectively you establish a serious research question and support this research question with an effective and appropriate rationale; how well you establish the importance of this research project and outline an appropriate approach to fulfilling its objectives; how well you identify and establish appropriate objectives for this research paper; how well you are establishing a strong basis of research materials for the fulfillment of the paper; and the quality of writing and style of presentation.

Required length of Paper Proposal: 600 - 800 words, plus annotated bibliography.

Number of scholarly and primary sources referenced in proposal and bibliography: no less than 15

Style of reference and bibliography: Chicago Style
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html
Research Paper

Each student is required to write and submit a major research paper that seeks deeper insight and understanding into the event or problem of human displacement that per has been engaging in the previous essay assignments in this course. In this respect, the core focus and scholarly objective of this assignment should seek to investigate new terrain and/or to at least develop a much deeper understanding and level of insight into one or more issues raised or encountered in the research students have conducted so far for the previous essay assignments. This research paper assignment may not be a mere elaboration on previous work. Students may certainly use ideas and lines of arguments introduced in the earlier essay assignments for this research paper, but their research papers should seek, primarily, to investigate the matters at issue far more deeply and broadly. And, while students may use and engage research materials in this research paper that they addressed in their previous two essay assignments, they should also be engaging a minimum of six new scholarly sources that they have not yet engaged. And, altogether, it is expected that a minimum of 15 scholarly sources and primary documents would be engaged in this assignment and included in the bibliography.

In the development of these research paper projects, students should aim to focus on a key issue or point of contestation in the event or problem of human displacement on which they are working in their assignments in this course. Having developed general understandings of the issues pertaining to these events or problems and gained a strong sense of the legal and political contexts in which they emerge, the task now is to identify a more specific line of inquiry that is of particular concern and interest and to subject it to critical exploration, analysis, and evaluation.

A large part of the work of these projects should be put into the development of a serious problem or question that ought to be addressed in terms of the focus of interest. In this respect, students should aim to express a high degree of understanding of the stakes of the problems they are addressing in their respective papers. And each student should anchor per paper around a clearly articulated and significant thesis statement that responds directly and substantially to the research question and that provides a direct guide for the arguments of the body of the paper to follow. The body of the paper should indeed be formed from a series of arguments that each directly support the thesis statement and that are built from direct consideration, examination, and critical assessment of the evidence and insights that are derived from the research materials from which the student draws. Finally, the paper should end with a conclusion reflecting on the significance of and implications following the success of the thesis around which the paper is built.

Research papers will be evaluated in terms of: the pertinence of the project to the concerns and aims of the course; the significance and value of the research problem around which the paper is built; the clarity and significance of the thesis statement
presented, as a direct response to the research question; how well the thesis is supported by clearly articulated and developed lines of argument and analysis; how well the lines of argument and analysis are supported by analytical engagement with research materials, the studies and ideas of others, and critical evaluation of these things and other evidence; the success of the paper in supporting the thesis; the soundness of the conclusion that is reached; the significance and value of the research materials that are drawn on in building the paper; and the quality of writing and style of presentation.

– number of substantial sources to be engaged, referenced, and included in the bibliography: a minimum of 15 scholarly sources
  – no less than six of the scholarly sources engaged by the student in one or both of per previous two short essays in the course;
  – no less than six new scholarly sources

– required length of research paper: no less than 2,500 words, plus bibliography

– Style of reference and bibliography: Chicago Style
  https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

– due date/time of research paper: no later than the beginning of class, December 7th

- manner of submission of research paper: in person, in class, in paper form

**EVALUATION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

**Marking/Grade Point Scale**

All grades achieved in course assignments and requirements are presented in numerical form along with letter-grade equivalents, with respect to the following grading system:

90 – 100 (A+) excellent and extraordinary in meeting and exceeding at least most requirements;
80 – 89 (A) exceptionally accomplished work, exhibiting well-developed critical skills, and an approach that is highly thoughtful, credible, insightful, and grounded in appropriate and solid analysis and/or research
70 – 79 (B) good to very good work, displaying strong analysis, effective approaches, and demonstrating a high degree of success in meeting requirements for the assignment;
60 – 69 (C) competent work, meeting basic requirements;
50 – 59 (D) fair work, minimally acceptable but not fulfilling all requirements;
0 – 49 (F) unsatisfactory work, not meeting basic requirements

Final grades will be calculated on a combination of grades achieved by students in their assignments. The distribution of the components adding to a final grade in this course is as follows:
– oral & aural contributions to the learning environment 10%
– ten weekly critical reading studies (2% each) 20%
– descriptive essay 10%
– legal/political context essay 15%
– paper proposal 5%
– research paper 40%

Significant improvement in the quality of students’ assignments over the course of the term may be taken into consideration in the calculation of their final grades.

A Note on Due Dates/Times of all written assignments: All written assignments in this course, including the weekly critical reading studies, are due no later than the times and days indicated above. Any assignment submitted after the due date and time specified for it will be considered late and, normally, will not be accepted for grading. Late assignments will be accepted and graded only where students have received a recommendation for Academic Accommodation.

CLASS & READING SCHEDULE

Week One, September 7: Normalities and De–normalisations of the Global Movements of Persons
readings: – from Haddad, The Refugee in International Society:
"1. The refugee 'problem','" pp. 1–19
"2. Who is (not) a refugee," pp. 23–46

Week Two, September 14: Externalisations of Movement and Normalisations of Displacements in Law (prior to 1948)
readings: – from Haddad, The Refugee in International Society:
"3. The refugee and the international states system," pp. 47–69

Week Three, September 21: Producing Displacements in Law — Palestinians, Israel, and UNRWA
Week Four, September 28: Producing Displacements in Law — 1951, UNHCR, the Regime of International Human Rights
readings:  – from Haddad, *The refugee in International Society:*
  "6. Refugees and international protection in the Cold War era,"  
pp. 128–161  
  – from Agier, *Managing the Undesirables:*
  "Introduction: From Vulnerable to Undesirable," pp. 1–8  
  "1. Refugees, Displaced, Rejected: The Itinerary of the Stateless," 
pp. 11–35  
  "2. Encampment Today: An Attempted Inventory," pp. 36–59

readings:  – from: Agier, *Managing the Undesirables:*
  "3. An Ethnologist in the Refugee Camp," pp. 63–70  
  "5. Experiences of Wandering, Borders and Camps: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea," pp. 87–115  
  "8. In the Name of the Refugees: Political Representation and Action in the Camps," pp. 147–160  

Week Six: Reading Break (no class)

Week Seven, October 19: Contemporary Practices of Encampment
readings:  – Jansen, *Kakuma Refugee Camp* (passim)

Week Eight, October 26: Renderings of Statelessness
Week Nine, November 2: Contemporary Practices of Detainment, Detention, and Deportation

readings:  

Week Ten, November 9: Politics of Flight, Assessments, and Asylum

readings:  
– Oliver, *Carceral Humanitarianism*

Week Eleven, November 16: Discursive Productions of "The World of Refugees" — Data Extractions, Technology, and Simulacrum

readings:  

Week Twelve, November 23: Conflicting Aesthetics of Displacement — From Simulations to Interventions

readings:  
  – "6 The Right to Opacity: On the Otolith Group's *Nervus Rerum*," pp. 144–159

recommended: attempt playing UNHCR's *Against All Odds*  
http://www.playagainstalldods.ca/
Week Thirteen, November 30: The Autonomy of Migration
readings:  – from King, No Borders:
   – "Introduction," pp. 1–23
   – "1. What is no borders politics?," pp. 24–50

Week Fourteen, December 7: Affirmations of the Right to Movement
readings:  – from King, No Borders:
   – "Conclusions: so what is a no borders politics?," 126–154
   – "Afterword," pp. 155–159

The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.