

**CURRENT PROBLEMS IN ANTHROPOLOGY II:
DISPLACEMENT AND REFUGE
Winter 2021**

Instructor: Basit Kareem Iqbal
Email: iqbalb3@mcmaster.ca

Lecture: Mondays, 8:30-11:20 via
Zoom
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9-10 via Zoom

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Course Description

This seminar revisits the concepts of displacement and refuge in order to gain critical traction on what newsmedia calls the ongoing “refugee crisis”. The course will be divided into four units. The first marks out the coordinates of refugee studies in the national order of things. The second unit examines the limits of humanitarian reason. The third unit considers modes of displacement (between mobility and immobility). The fourth unit explores the difficulty and ambivalence of refuge. Reading

ethnography, political theory, journalism, fiction, and film, we will touch on questions of memory and desire, sovereignty and community, tradition and exile.

Due to the delayed start of classes provided by the University, some details and deadlines regarding course content and assessments in the published course outline may be changed. Please check Avenue to Learn for the most up-to-date information for this course. The course outline on Avenue to Learn will supersede previously published outlines until published course outlines are updated.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Express an understanding and appreciation of theoretical and ethnographic approaches to the so-called refugee crisis
- Articulate central positions developed in the academic and public literature
- Critically and effectively communicate key arguments, both orally and in writing
- Locate themes, concepts, and topics from this course in relation to those from other courses

Required Materials and Texts

All course readings will be available on Avenue. There are no books required for purchase for this course. Please rent the following films no earlier than two days before the relevant class, since some of them have timed streaming restrictions. Some of them we will watch during class time, while others I will expect you to have watched prior to class.

- Week 5: Anas Khalaf & Rana Kazkaz, *Mare Nostrum* (2016, 14 min), <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/marenostrum> (\$1.62)
- Week 7: Diana Allan, *Terrace of the Sea* (Film Study Center, Harvard University: Cinema Guild, 2009, 52min), <https://americas.dafilms.com/film/9301-terrace-of-the-sea> (\$2.50)
- Week 8: Arash Kamali Sarvestani & Behrouz Boochani, *Chauka, please tell us the time* ([Netherlands]: Sevrin Productions, 2017, 1hr 30min), <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/chauka> (\$8.00)
- Week 9: Gianfranco Rosi, *Fire at Sea (Fuocoammare)* (New York: Kino Lorber Edu, 2016, 1h 54min), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbTcre_Sbno (\$5.99)
- Week 10: Ziad Kalthoum, *Taste of Cement* (2017, 1h 25min), <https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/Taste-of-Cement/1536623> (\$3.99-- also on Amazon Prime)
- Week 11: Musa Syeed, *A Stray* (2016, 1h 22min), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPZ7aKAVMzY> (\$3.99)
- Week 13: Amar Chebib, *Wajd: Songs of Separation* (Luminus Films, 2018, 1hr 27min), <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/wajdfilm/320938271> (\$4.99)

Class Format

Weekly 3-hour seminar, held synchronously over Zoom (link available on Avenue).

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Three response papers (5% each) – 15%

2. Presentation and discussion facilitation – 25%
3. Term paper proposal/bibliography – 5%
4. Peer review workshop – 15%
5. Term paper – 40%

Course Evaluation – Details

Three response papers (5% each), due weekly

Please upload three short response papers (2 pages, double spaced) to the relevant week's discussion thread on Avenue (weeks 2-12). They will be available there for everyone in the seminar to read; we may read or refer to them in class. These papers are your response to the readings; they are due by 8pm on the Sunday night before our Monday morning class. These short papers should identify 1-2 key passages of the texts and comment on what you find important or significant. That is, you are to practice close reading rather than summary reading. You may choose which texts to write about, so long as at least 2 response papers are submitted before week 11.

Presentation and discussion facilitation (25%)

In the first week of the semester, you will sign up to present on the course readings and facilitate discussion in one of our meetings. This involves a 20-25 minute presentation of the course materials and 35-40 minutes of discussion. Please upload a written version of your presentation and discussion questions to the Avenue dropbox beforehand (that morning is fine).

Term paper proposal/bibliography (5%), due April 5

By 11pm on April 5, please email me a 1-2 page paper proposal, including a working thesis statement, a brief outline of your argument, and an annotated bibliography of at least five sources you will engage.

Peer review workshop (15%), on April 12

The final class session will be a peer review workshop in which you will present and comment on each other's paper drafts or outlines. More details on format will be provided closer to the date.

Term paper (40%), due April 25

You may choose to write your paper (10-12 pages, double spaced) on any theme covered in the course, preferably one that is relevant and of interest to you. You are expected to draw on at least two of our course readings and five external sources. Feel free to build on the analyses you began in your response papers and presentation. Upload it to the relevant Avenue dropbox by 11pm on April 25.

Weekly Course Schedule and Readings

NB This schedule of readings includes "recommended" readings, which are provided for your interest and assistance—there is no obligation to engage them, but those of you who are presenting or writing about materials from that week will find them helpful.

Unit One: The National Order of Things

Week 1 (January 11)

A Refugee Crisis?

- Introduction to the course and discussion of the following materials (to be read *in class*, no need to read them beforehand):

- Film: *The Displaced* (New York Times, 2017, 11 min), <https://www.nytimes.com/video/magazine/100000005005806/the-displaced.html>
- Callan Wink, "A Refugee Crisis," *The New Yorker*, August 20, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/08/20/a-refugee-crisis>
- Philip Gourevitch, "Alms Dealers," *The New Yorker*, October 11, 2010, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/11/alms-dealers>

Week 2 (January 18)

Refugee Studies

- Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, ed. Marc Robinson (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1994), 110-119
- Giorgio Agamben, "We Refugees," trans. Michael Rocke, *Symposium* 49, no. 2 (1995): 114-119
- Vinh Nguyen, "Refugeetude: When Does a Refugee Stop Being a Refugee?" *Social Text* 37, no. 2 (June 2019): 109-131
- Critical Refugee Studies Collective, "Critical Vocabularies," <https://criticalrefugeestudies.com/resources/critical-vocabularies>
 - Recommended: Peter Nyers, "Emergency or Emerging Identities? Refugees and Transformations in World Order," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 28, no. 1 (1999): 1-26

Week 3 (January 25)

Refugee Management

- Liisa Malkki, "National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees," *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 1, Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference (February 1992): 24-44
- Liisa Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (August 1996): 377-404
 - Recommended: Miriam Ticktin, "Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 255-271

Unit Two: Provincializing Humanitarianism

Week 4 (February 1)

Humanitarian Reason

- Didier Fassin, "*Noli Me Tangere*: The Moral Untouchability of Humanitarianism," in *Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism between Ethics and Politics*, ed. Erica Bornstein and Peter Redfield (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2011), 35-52
- Didier Fassin, "The Predicament of Humanitarianism," *Qui Parle* 22, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2013): 33-48
 - Recommended: Sherene H. Razack, "Stealing the Pain of Others: Reflections on Canadian Humanitarian Responses," *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2007): 375-394

Week 5 (February 8)

Humanitarian Violence

- Debarati Sanyal, "Humanitarian Detention and Figures of Persistence at the Border," *Critical Times* 2, no. 3 (2019): 435-465
- Film: Stephanos Mangriotis, *Blue Sky from Pain* (2016, 14 min), <https://vimeo.com/155027708> (**watch in class)

- Film: Anas Khalaf & Rana Kazkaz, *Mare Nostrum* (2016, 14 min), <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/marenostrum> (**watch in class)
- Kelly Oliver, *Carceral Humanitarianism: Logics of Refugee Detention* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 50-84
 - *Recommended*: Oliver, *Carceral Humanitarianism*, 1-49

Week 6 (February 15)

Reading Week!

Week 7 (February 22)

Humanitarian Space and Time

- Ilana Feldman, "Punctuated Humanitarianism: Palestinian Life between the Catastrophic and the Cruddy," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48, no. 2 (May 2016): 372-376
- Ilana Feldman, "Reaction, Experimentation, and Refusal: Palestinian Refugees Confront the Future," *History and Anthropology* 27, no. 4 (2016): 411-429
- Ilana Feldman, "What is a Camp? Legitimate Refugee Lives in Spaces of Long-term Displacement," *Geoforum* 66 (2015): 244-252
- Film: Diana Allan, *Terrace of the Sea* (Film Study Center, Harvard University: Cinema Guild, 2009, 52min), <https://americas.dafilms.com/film/9301-terrace-of-the-sea> (**watch before class)
 - *Recommended*: Ayham Dalal, Amer Darweesh, Philipp Misselwitz and Anna Steigemann, "Planning the Ideal Refugee Camp? A Critical Interrogation of Recent Planning Innovations in Jordan and Germany," *Urban Planning* 3, no. 4 (2018): 64-78

Unit Three: Displacement

Week 8 (March 1)

Stasis

- Zuzanna Olszewska, "The Poet's Melancholy: Depression, Structures of Feeling, and Creativity among Afghan Refugees in Iran," *Medicine Anthropology Theory* 2, no. 3 (2015): 83-104
- Janet Galbraith, "A Reflection on *Chauka*, *Please Tell Us the Time*," *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media* 18 (2019): 193-198
- Film: Arash Kamali Sarvestani & Behrouz Boochani, *Chauka, please tell us the time* ([Netherlands]: Sevrin Productions, 2017, 1hr 30min), <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/chauka> (**watch before class)
 - *Recommended*: Melissa Gatter, "A 'Nine-to-Five' Emergency: A Politics of Time and Power in Azraq Refugee Camp" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2019), introduction, chapter 4, and conclusion

Week 9 (March 8)

Passage

- Stefania Pandolfo, "'The Burning': Finitude and the Politico-theological Imagination of Illegal Migration," *Anthropological Theory* 7, no. 3 (2007): 329-363
- Maurizio Albahari, "After the Shipwreck: Mourning and Citizenship in the Mediterranean, Our Sea," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 275-294
- Film: Gianfranco Rosi, *Fire at Sea (Fuocoammare)* (New York: Kino Lorber Edu, 2016, 1h 54min), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbTcre_Sbno (**watch before class)

- *Recommended*: Jason De León, “‘Better to Be Hot than Caught’: Excavating the Conflicting Roles of Migrant Material Culture,” *American Anthropologist* 114, no. 3 (2012), 477-495

Week 10 (March 15)

Im/mobilities

- Film: Ziad Kalthoum, *Taste of Cement* (2017, 1h 25min), <https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/Taste-of-Cement/1536623> and on Amazon Prime (**watch **before** class)
- Aksam Alyousef, “Hagar,” in *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Fiction, Poetry, Essays*, ed. Julie C. Robinson (Toronto: Mawenzie House, 2018)
- Basit Kareem Iqbal, “Ambivalence and Askēsis in Zaatari Camp” (unpublished)
 - *Recommended*: Fazal Shaikh and Teju Cole, *Human Archipelago* (Gerhard Steidl Druckerei and Verlag, 2019)

Unit Four: Spaces of Refuge

Week 11 (March 22)

Fragments of Refuge

- Catherine Besteman, “Refuge and Security Panics,” *Public Anthropologist* 1 (2019): 41-61
- Film: Musa Syeed, *A Stray* (2016, 1h 22min), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPZ7aKAVMzY> (**watch **before** class)
- Coralie Kraft, “Photo Booth: Rooted,” *The New Yorker*, January 28, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/the-plants-that-make-refugee-camps-feel-more-like-home>
 - *Recommended*: Film: Remi Weekes, *His House* (Netflix, 2020)

Week 12 (March 29)

Re-settler Society

- Gareth Chantler, “Canada’s Missing Syrians,” *Open Canada*, May 14, 2018, <https://www.opencanada.org/features/canadas-missing-syrians/>
- Audrey Macklin, “Resettler Society: Making and Remaking Citizenship through Private Refugee Sponsorship” (draft)
- Film: Michèle Hozer, *SponsorLand* (2017, 1hr 28min), <https://www.tvo.org/video/documentaries/sponsorland> (**watch **before** class)
 - *Recommended*: Audrey Macklin, Luin Goldring, Jennifer Hyndman, Anna Korteweg, Kathryn Barber, & Jona Zyfi, “The Kinship between Refugee and Family Sponsorship,” Working Paper No. 2020/4, Ryerson Centre on Immigration and Settlement and CERC in Migration and Integration, https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/centre-for-immigration-and-settlement/RCIS/publications/workingpapers/2020_4_Macklin_Audrey_et_al._The_Kinship_between_Refugee_and_Family_Sponsorship.pdf

Week 13 (April 5)

Voice

- *Refugee Hosts* website: watch one of these two conference panels before class:
 - “Writing Displacements into Literature,” <https://refugeehosts.org/roundtable-stories-of-overlapping-displacement-understanding-local-experiences-and-responses/> or
 - “Translation, Literature, and Precarity,” <https://refugeehosts.org/workshop-translation-literature-and-precarity/>

- Film: Amar Chebib, *Wajd: Songs of Separation* (Luminus Films, 2018, 1hr 27min), rentable at <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/wajdfilm/320938271> (**watch in class)
 - *Recommended:* Sinan Antoon, “Returning to the Wind: On Darwish’s *La Ta’tadhir ‘amma Fa’alta*,” in *Mahmoud Darwish: Exile’s Poet*, ed. Hala Khamis Nassar and Najat Rahman (Olive Branch Press, 2008), 215-238

Week 14 (April 12)

Student Presentations

- Term paper presentations and peer review workshop; wrap-up discussion

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Response papers are to be posted to the week’s discussion thread on Avenue. The written version of your presentation and your final term paper are to be uploaded to the respective dropbox on Avenue. Email me your term paper proposal.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Late assignments will receive a 5% deduction per day late or part thereof—starting 24 hours after the assignment due date. Accommodations will be made for extenuating circumstances.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Please use an MSAF to cover missed work that is worth less than 25% of your grade. An MSAF exception can be requested through your faculty office for work worth greater than 25% (with appropriate documentation).

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in

the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

University Policies

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ADVISORY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law

protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

