

Carleton University
Migration and Diaspora Studies
Arthur C. Kroeger College of Public Affairs

MGDS4900/5900B
Special Topics in Migration & Diaspora Studies:
Migration, Diaspora and Artistic Expressions
Summer Term : May 06, 2024 – Aug.6 2024

A detailed weekly breakdown and list of required readings will be posted on Brightspace.

Instructor: Zainab Amery

Virtual Class: Tuesday - 18:05 – 20:55

Virtual Office Hours: Virtual office hours by appointment on zoom

Email: Zainab.Amery@Carleton.ca

Please allow 24 hours for responses during the week

"Migrants must, of necessity, make a new imaginative relationship with the world, because of the loss of familiar habitats. And for the plural, hybrid, metropolitan result of such imaginings, the cinema, in which peculiar fusions have always been legitimate. . . may well be the ideal location." —Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (1992)

Course Description:

The United Nations estimates that globally one out of every seven people is an international migrant who moves by choice or by force. Despite this, migration continues to be one of the most contested issues globally. The Tate Gallery in the UK, in its curated multifaceted migration art exhibit and program asks, “Where do art and migration meet? What does art have to say about belonging... does it have the ability to have a real influence on how we think about migration and belonging. Can stories spark debate about the future of migration policy?”¹ This course will explore these questions and examine how migrant and transnational communities conceive of, express, and represent their experiences in migration, settlement and belonging. Exploring how transnational and diasporic artists confront and critique ideas of identity and belonging, their changing relationships to “home”, new locations and national identities through public and private spaces, collective memory, nostalgia and how these are represented through artistic productions. Concepts such as transnationalism, transnational media, diaspora, refugees, undocumented, identities, and imagined worlds will be addressed through the representational use of the arts. The course will be guided by the following questions: What do the arts have to say about migration and belonging? Who gets to tell the migrant narrative? What happens to identity when one moves to another place? How does imagery in the arts shape the social, political, political, and cultural visions of migrants, migration, and diaspora? Can the arts change these visions? What memories does one have of the nostalgia of their native country? How does one re-establish their identities in a new place and how does it influence their sense of belonging?

Emine Yeter, (2016) argues that “In the context of a dehumanising rhetoric around immigration and increasing compassion fatigue, the success of the visual arts is in its ability to encourage empathy by means of storytelling is undeniable. Rather than solidifying the divisive political boundaries between 'them' and 'us', contemporary art brings the two closer together, acting as a mirror to universalise the

¹ Talking Point. 2012. *Where do art and migration meet?* Tate Gallery

migrant experience”². If in fact the arts have such a major influence on shaping not only our identities, sense of belonging but also on policy making, it is indeed an important avenue to examine in the context of migration, diaspora and belonging.

Though the course will be online, the class will explore questions through class discussions based on prepared readings, guest speakers (artists, writers, and film makers), presentations, online field trips to art exhibitions and through film screenings.

Course Learning Objectives:

Through a combination of guest speakers, literary texts, visual mediums and individual presentations and research, students will:

1. achieve a working knowledge of the interdisciplinary scholarship on migration, transnationalism, and the arts.
2. awareness of the impact of the migrant experience on, memory and perception, and the ways in which this has been evidenced artistically;
3. expose students to current research and theory drawn from inter-disciplinary sources of artistic productions by migrant and diasporic individuals and communities.
4. understand the various ways that people construct meanings, relations of belonging and identity in their lives.
5. understand the current debates about where home is and how it is defined.
6. develop an understanding of the interplay between policy, migration and the influences of artistic production and ethnographic experiences in contributing to transnational and diasporic identities.
7. present analysis, both orally and through written assignments.

Course Structure and Methods

The course will initially be conducted online through Brightspace and Zoom as a blend of asynchronous content and synchronous discussions, as assigned within the scheduled course time. As this is a weekly seminar, it is expected that students will be present remotely on audio and video for the duration of each session. Students may miss one session with no explanation. Further unexcused absences may result in a lower participation grade. Students are expected to log into Brightspace and their email regularly to check for announcements, activities, and assignment information and updates. Announcements will be posted to the course Brightspace whenever necessary. If there is any other information, I think is important, I will also send it to your email address you have in Carleton.

It is your responsibility to check your email regularly. If you are having trouble with this course or its material, you should contact me via email as soon as possible to discuss any issues and arrange an appointment. Any changes to the delivery of the course, the content or speakers will be done in consultation with the students where possible and posted on the course website. Online activities and in-class activities are designed to build on each other. All assignments are to be submitted through Brightspace in **Microsoft Word**.

Active participation and completion of all coursework is required in this course for you to be successful. It will have a combination of lectures, films, and presentations. It requires reading, critical thinking, and active participation. There will be approximately 40-50 pages of required reading for each 3-hour class. Students are expected to have read the material in advance and come prepared with thoughtful insights and

² Yeter, Ermine. 6 November, 2016. On Contemporary Art and Migration. *Compass*. Retrieved <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/article/on-contemporary-art-and-migration-msc-guest-blog>

questions related to the topic under discussion and be prepared to ask questions and participate in discussion. The success of the class lies in the participatory nature of all individuals. Consequently, the most stimulating discussions will happen when you complete the assigned readings, come prepared to participate not just listen when we meet synchronously.

Computer Technology Requirements: Reliable Internet access is required. You will need a smartphone, tablet, or laptop with a working camera and microphone. EDC suggests that headphones with a microphone are preferable. Audio and video are required to participate in the Zoom environment. Some of the documents in this course will be available to you in PDF form. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your device, you should download it before the start of the course.

Computer Help: Should you have computer hardware and/or software problems, you can contact IT Services for any assistance with technology issues at: call ITS Service Desk at 613-520-3700 or email ITS Service Desk at its.service.desk@carleton.ca. Unfortunately, computer issues cannot be resolved by me (I wish). I am NOT a computer technician, nor am I an expert on most software. We also have to be patient with each other since we are dependent on our WIFI and telephone data plans to keep us connected.

Reading (s)/Textbook (s):

All course readings are available in Brightspace through **Library Reserves/ ARES**. Readings have been selected by the course instructor and compiled using online sources (noted by the hyperlinks), library journal sources (Access online) and PDFs. If the link disappears, please notify me immediately as I maintain copies of all the materials and can make them readily available. Please note that I reserve the right to make changes, should it be necessary, in consultation with the class. As this is an online course, it is important to keep up with the readings.

Course Requirements & Methods of Evaluation:

Assignment	Weight	Due Date and Specifics
Two arts reviews of one of the selected texts, film, or a virtual museum	20%	1 st review – June 4 th 2 nd review – July 9 th
Research Proposal and annotated bibliography	15%	2 pages double spaced, font 12, long with an annotated bibliography which must use 3 sources (max 4 pages plus title page and references. Due June 18 th at 11:59 pm.
Seminar Reading presentation	15%	Individual readings to be assigned during the 1 st class.
Participation	10%	Attendance at 10 seminar presentations and participation
Final Paper	40%	Due August 6 th , 2024, at 11:59 pm in the Brightspace dropbox
Total Grade	100%	