There is no one leading cause to the Syrian refugee crisis, but the Arab Spring in 2011 did help jump-start it. Arab Spring was a series of peaceful, pro-democracy movements across the Middle East, leading to wars in Libya and Syria. The anti-government protests in 2011 quickly turned into a full-blown civil war between rebel groups, the Assad regime, and foreign backers. The Syrian civil war has created the worst humanitarian crisis of our time.

In this age, media has become increasingly global. The Syrian conflict and refugee crisis has received a lot of media attention. An endless amounts of new material and new images of refugees and their plight have emerged making the distant suffering of Syrians readily available to the world. The extent of the crisis makes it necessary to be critical of the way refugees are portrayed in both images and narrative. Is it possible that the pervasiveness of the crisis will make people stop caring?

According to data from Polling the Nations released in May of 2017, 28% of the sample size polled strongly support the United States taking in refugees from conflicts in Syria and other Middle Eastern countries after screening them for security risks. Another 31% somewhat support taking in refugees. How can media be more effective at increasing support for Syrian refugees rather than perhaps only inciting fleeting emotions of pity. My research focuses on the way refugees are represented in videos disseminated on online media. A content analysis will be conducted to observe
common themes found in videos of the refugee crisis in order to see if videos contribute to the
phenomenon of compassion fatigue or if they lead to social engagement.