SYLLABUS – FALL 2010
SC 099 The Sociology of Migration

Time: MWF 2:00 – 2:50
Location: 300 Campion

Instructor: Adam Saltsman
Department of Sociology
Office: McGuinn 410 D
Office hours: Monday 12:30 – 1:30pm; Wednesday 12:30 – 1:30pm

Sociology 099 and the Core Curriculum
The Sociology of Migration is a part of the Core Curriculum. As such, it raises questions central to the study of society, employs an inter-disciplinary approach, and challenges students in personal, ethical and spiritual ways.

1) The Long Standing Perennial Questions: The movement of people from one place to another is central to the foundation of all civilizations and the social order that we know today. As such, migration is a rich topic for raising and answering the most fundamental, perennial questions of sociology. What is a social system and how does it change as a result of migration? How does migration affect the relationship between people and the state? Between various states in the global system? To what extent can our current forms of domestic and international organization be understood as systems of stratification and social domination in terms of how migrants move, are considered, and handled?

2) Historical Perspective: Our approach in this course is to answer these questions through a historical and case-based methodology: specifically, the examination of case studies of different forms of migration in various parts of the world over the last two centuries. We rely on in-depth studies of migration to the United States during the last century as well as the massive build-up of displaced persons in the Global South.

3) Cultural Diversity: This course examines migration as it relates to race, nationality, and class. We explore in detail how migrants are perceived and dealt with by various states and their publics, in the context of colonialism, neoliberalism, and globalization. This course also examines the role of religion in migration and the relations between migrants and their host-countries in terms of transnational social, ethnic, religious, economic, and racial links.

4) Methodology of the Discipline: The course explores work that draw on comparative, historical, economic, and case study methods. Students mainly read qualitative material but there is attention to quantitative data and assessment of debates about the accuracy of data on migration and its impact on society.

5) Creating a Personal Philosophy: Migration involves personal issues that are deeply challenging: about ethics, legality, economic exploitation and ethnic and religious issues. Students are encouraged to reflect personally about the material they read and to bring their own values and spirituality into frequent small group discussions and short papers. The course inevitably leads students to challenge not
only their longstanding view of immigration, but their deepest personal and moral commitments.

6) **Writing Component**: Because of the challenging nature of the material, students will have opportunities to write about their own evolving perspective on immigration. Students will have the opportunity write a research paper about one case study, and also write essay-based mid-term and final exams.

**Course Overview & Objectives**
We begin the class by considering migration a continuum between voluntary and involuntary movement within and across borders. Beginning the semester with a focus on voluntary migration, we will first look at the conceptual framework for recent decades’ debate about immigration. Recognizing the sensitivity about migration at this time, we give special attention to the diversity of perspectives contributing to the polemical discourse in the United States and elsewhere on the topic. We consider migration in terms of gender, race, and the state and we look at the role of undocumented migration in contemporary society. Moving towards a consideration of involuntary migration, we will consider human smuggling and trafficking, the legal protection of and humanitarian assistance to refugees, and displacement in a variety of contexts.

**Course Goals & Requirements**
(1) A solid understanding of major debates in the study of migration, and

(2) Hands-on experience doing some empirical research on the topic of migration.

**Assessment of your final grade will be broken down as following:**
1. Participation/attendance: 10%
2. Group project/class presentation: 25%
3. Midterm take-home exam: 30%
4. Final take-home exam: 35%

**Readings**: Readings for this course are available online. They may be accessed through the course Blackboard site or directly from the O’Neill library course reserves website. In addition, the four books listed below are on sale at the BC Bookstore. These will also be available on two-hour reserve at O’Neill.

**Class attendance** is mandatory. Since I don’t want to waste too much time taking attendance, I will not take roll every day. Instead, I will take attendance at intervals during the semester and give occasional pop quizzes. If you are not there for one of those classes, you will not be penalized, but after that, unexcused absences will impact your final grade.

**Academic Honesty**: Students are expected to comply with the standards for academic honesty outlined in the University Catalogue (http://www.bc.edu/integrity). Any plagiarism or cheating will result in a CLASS grade of “0” and notification of the academic dean.

**Books to Purchase**


**Course Website:** There is a Blackboard Vista site for this course (cms.bc.edu). This site includes a link to online course reserves, a copy of the syllabus, and a site for posting assignments. All readings and assignments will be available through the “Course Materials” link on the homepage of this course’s blackboard site, though you will also be able to access most—but not all readings—through course reserves. Those readings not available through course reserves are marked as being available via the Course Materials link.

**Syllabus key:**
CR = Course Reserves
CM = Course Materials folder found at the blackboard vista site for SC099

**Course Schedule**

I. Introduction & Basic framework  
**Week 1: Sept. 8 & 10**

**Readings:**
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CM)
5. Convention on the Rights of the Child
6. International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

**Assignment #1: Due Monday, September 13th (Assignments folder)**

**Week 2: Sept. 13, 15, 17**

**Readings:**


Optional reading:
*Rethinking Migration*, Ch. 1 “A Cross-Atlantic Dialogue: The Progress of Research and Theory in the Study of International Migration”

II. Perspectives on Migration:
Week 3: Sept 20, 22, 24

Readings:

2. Bacon, David. 2008. “The Right to Stay at Home: Transnational communities are creating new ways of looking at citizenship and residence that correspond to the realities of migration” *Dollars and Sense*. September/October. (CM)


5. *Working the Boundaries*, Ch. 2

Optional reading:

Week 4: Sept. 27 & 29, Oct. 1

Readings:
III. Global circuits and the feminization of migration

Week 5: Oct. 4, 6, 8

Readings:
1. Rethinking Migration: Chapter 6 “Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation”
6. Media articles on Arizonan immigration laws (TBD)

Optional reading:

IV. Undocumented migration, the state, and identity
Week 6: Oct. 13 & 15 (OCTOBER BREAK – NO CLASS ON MONDAY OCTOBER 11TH)
Readings:
1. Working the Boundaries. Ch. 6
2. Rethinking Migration: Ch. 2, 9 & 10

Optional reading:
1. Working the Boundaries. Ch. 3
2. Rethinking Migration, ch. 5: Freeman, Gary. “Immigrant Incorporation in Western Democracies”

V. Race and Migration
Week 7: Oct. 18, 20, 22

Readings:
1. Black Identities. Chapters 1, 3-5, 8

Group presentations on Arizonan immigration law

VI. Political violence and forced migration
Week 8: Oct. 25, 27, 29

Readings:

Optional reading:
Midterm due: October 25

Week 9: Nov. 1, 3, 5

Readings:

Optional reading:

VII. Encampment and the International Refugee Regime

Week 10: Nov. 8, 10, 12

Readings:

VIII. Experiencing displacement

Week 11: Nov. 15, 17, 19

Readings:
1. Transforming Displaced Women in Sudan, Ch. 2-4

IX. Resettlement as a durable solution
Week 12: Nov. 22 (THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS ON NOV. 24TH OR 26TH)

Readings:

X. Urban displacement, protracted displacement, and disaster-induced displacement

Week 13: Nov. 29, Dec. 1 & 3

Readings:

Week 14: Dec. 6 & 8

Wrap-up: Readings TBD
Final due: December 8