A LEXICON OF MIGRATION

OSUN Connected Learning Contest Winner

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Course: A Lexicon of Migration

This course examines the history of migration from local, national, and global perspectives. It also traces the emergence of new modes of border regulation and migration governance as well as novel forms of migrant cultural production and representation. Above all, it aims to provide students with the tools to engage critically with many of the concepts and buzzwords—among them "asylum," "border," "belonging," "citizenship," and "illegality"—that define contemporary public debates.

NOTE: A Lexicon of Migration is a Bard network course, and my course was coordinated with similar courses at the American University of Central Asia, Al-Quds Bard, and Bard College Berlin. My collaborators were Shirin Tumenbaeva (AUCA), Jens Haendeler (AQB), and Agata Lisiak (BCB).

The Image Assignment

This assignment asks students to select an online image that engages with migration in some way, to frame it through three hashtags of their own devising, and to write and revise a reflective statement that relates the image to practices, policies, or discourses of migration.

This task was completed in the first 3-4 weeks of the semester. It offers the students a creative way to draw connections between their own interests and experiences, the early assigned readings, and the semester's opening themes. It also provides a means for students to gain some initial exposure to other students' perspectives, both within their own class and across the Bard network.

Practical and pedagogical value

This assignment gives students the opportunity to approach the course material through and with visual images they cull from the Internet. In my experience, students in Annandale respond to tasks like this one enthusiastically and skillfully. Although we completed this assignment before we went remote, my students and I referred back to it when we were meeting on Zoom. It also lends itself to a connected learning environment.

Students posted their own images and hashtags on Padlet and viewed other students' images and hashtags on the same platform. They submitted their reflective statements over Google Classroom.

The Assignment

A Lexicon of Migration (AUCA and BCA)
Spring 2020

The Image Assignment

Select **a photograph or other graphic** that relates in some way to migration and upload it to the joint network class page on Padlet. You will also add **three hashtags** to your image and write **a 300- to 600-word (1- to 2-page) statement** that explains how it engages with practices, policies, and/or discourses of migration. This portion of the assignment is due by the beginning of class on **Wednesday, February 5**.

Please follow the instructions on Google Classroom under "Assignment 1: Images and Hashtags" (which is in the "Shared Assignments" topic on the "Classwork" tab).

In class on February 5, we will view and comment on the images selected by the AUCA students (perhaps suggesting new hashtags?), while the AUCA students will do the same with our class's images.

On the basis of these discussions and my written feedback, you will submit **a revised 500- to 600-word (2-page) statement** for your image, due on **Wednesday, February 19**.

Some points to have in mind:

You can find your image online, but it can also come from other sources, or it can be one that you create yourself.

Do your best to find a "distinctive" image. (Don't do a Google image search for "migration" and pick the first photo that comes up.) For example, your image can engage with your or your family's lived experiences, with work or research you've done, or with your specific academic interests.

The image doesn't have to relate to the U.S., the Americas, or Central Asia (although those are our geographic foci).

The hashtags should be focused and directly related to your image. (In other words, overly general hashtags like "migration," "border," and "refugee" are off-limits.)

Your statement should provide context for your image. (At the very least, where and how did you find it?)

Your statement should engage in a close, detailed, critical interpretation of the image and the manner in which it represents some aspect of migration.

Ideally, your statement should quote or refer to at least one assigned reading in a thoughtful manner. (We will put more emphasis on this aspect of the assignment when we read the final version of your statement.)

And finally, your statement should pay attention to the requirements of academic writing, including cohesion, style, composition, and mechanics.

Lexicon/Keyword Assignment

We did this assignment in late February and March. We began it before the move to remote instruction and completed it afterward. This assignment was pivotal to the semester as a whole, since it invited students to draw on the assigned readings they had already completed, synthesize them with "outside sources," and advance a position/argument without needing to adhere to the format of a conventional thesis-driven essay. The assignment also invited/required the students to practice collaborative writing and revision.

My AUCA colleague Shirin Tumenbaeva and I had initially planned to schedule a video conference in which the students in our two classes would meet to discuss their keyword entries and consider how they could be organized into a larger lexicon/dictionary. We abandoned this idea once we went remote--the time zone differences were just too challenging. Instead, we asked the students to complete an anonymous peer review of another pair's draft entry. The students were then expected to incorporate this peer feedback, along with faculty commentary, into their final drafts.

Taking Raymond Williams' book Keywords as their inspiration, the students work with a partner to write and revise a lexicon/dictionary entry that critically examines one prominent term in contemporary migration debates. In my class, some of my students partnered with fellow Annandale students, while others partnered with AUCA students.

Practical and pedagogical value

Despite the disruption of the move to remote instruction, this assignment worked well. The students could conduct research remotely, and they were able to rely on IT to continue the work with their partner they had begun before the campus closed. In particular, the use of Google Docs allowed students to compose and revise their keyword/lexicon entries in real time. Finally, the connected learning environment allowed Shirin and me to collect and distribute the peer reviews quite easily.

The students used Google Docs to compose and revise their entries. They submitted their first drafts, peer reviews, and final drafts over email and Google Classroom.

The Assignment

A Lexicon of Migration
Spring 2020

The Lexicon of Migration (Part 1)

Each of you will contribute to a lexicon, or critical dictionary, of keywords related to migration, displacement, and refuge by collaboratively writing one entry in a shared Google Doc with a partner. By the time you submit your revised version, your entry should be 800-1000 words (about 3 typed pages) in length. It should resemble the style of the entries in Raymond Williams' *Keywords* insofar as you consult the relevant term(s) in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and incorporate at least some of those terms' historical usages in your entry. At the same time, your entries can adopt some of the style, tone, and/or techniques of the "New Keywords" project.

What makes these entries "critical"? They are critical in the sense that they do not merely define the keywords as they are commonly employed in scholarship and public discourse. Rather, they reflect on those terms' tacit or explicit premises, claims, and implications. What does the use of a particular term (like, say, "illegal") say about contemporary mobility practices; institutional efforts to promote, regulate, and/or condemn them; and the people who undertake them? What insights does a particular term both enable and foreclose? In what ways are its common(sense) definition and usage problematic?

The first step in this assignment is to determine the keywords each of you might write about as well as the student you might partner with. Regarding the keywords, the faculty who are teaching "A Lexicon of Migration" in Al-Quds, Annandale, Berlin, and Bishkek have generated the following list. On the next page, **each of you should add your name, circle three keywords you would be potentially interested in writing about, and return the page to me**. Depending on your and your classmates' preferences, I will do my best to narrow your (and your partner's) responsibility to a single, hopefully agreeable keyword.

It is also possible for you to propose a keyword that is not on the list. If you have initial ideas for such a keyword, feel free to write them in. Later, I will ask you to explain why this term would be an important addition to the lexicon and how it qualifies as a keyword in Williams' terms.

Regarding your potential partners, please indicate whether you would be willing to work on your keyword with one of the AUCA students. Your collaboration may well involve some form of virtual communication.

In addition, please note one or at most two students in our class in Annandale with whom you'd be comfortable collaborating.

FYI: the first drafts of your keyword entries are due by the end of the day on Friday, March 6.

LIST OF POTENTIAL KEYWORDS

AGENCY
ASSIMILATION
ASYLUM
BELONGING
BORDER (including "Open Borders," Borderland)
CAMP
CITIZEN / CITIZENSHIP
COLONIALISM / SETTLER COLONIALISM
EXILE
HOME COUNTRY / HOMELAND
ILLEGAL / ILLEGAL ALIEN / ILLEGALIZATION
(IN)VOLUNTARY / FORCED MIGRATION
INTEGRATION
MIGRANT
MIGRANT ACTIVISM
MIGRATION HISTORY
MIGRATION / BORDER REGIME
MOBILITY
PASSPORT
PRIVILEGE
RACE / RACIALIZATION
REFUGE
REFUGEE
REMITTANCES
RESETTLEMENT
RESIDENCE
SOLIDARITY
SOVEREIGNTY
STATE FORMATION / STATELESSNESS
STRANGER
TERRITORY
TRANSNATIONAL
(UN)DESERVING MIGRANT
(UN)DOCUMENTED MIGRANT / MIGRATION

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The Lexicon/Keyword Assignment Part 2

Lexicon entry drafts due Friday, March 13

Working together with your partner, compose an **800- to 1000-word (approximately 3-page)** lexicon entry on a keyword related to migration, displacement, and refuge. You should promptly get in touch with the student you have been paired with (in person or via email, Google Hangouts, Skype, Whatsapp – up to you!) and discuss how to work on the keyword together.

You will soon have access to a Google doc on our Google Classroom page. Please use this doc to work collaboratively on your lexicon entry with your partner.

How to develop your entry:

1. Try to use a tone similar to Williams, though you should feel free to put your own "spin" on it. On this count, the "New Keywords" written by Maribel Casas-Cortes and her colleagues may serve as an inspiration and guide.

2. Consider the following: what is important to know about the origins, history, and etymology of your keyword in order to understand its contemporary meanings? You should definitely rely on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), but you can also consult other dictionaries, search the web and Google Ngrams, etc.

3. Reflect on the other, possibly contradictory meanings that your keyword may have. What other terms does it align with and diverge from? As I have already noted, your entry should be "critical" in the sense that it does not merely define your keyword, but also reflects on its tacit or explicit premises, claims, and implications. You and your partner should be highlighting the moments of disagreement and active contestation that characterize scholarly and public usage of your keyword.

4. Include at least three different quotes in which the keyword is used (possibly in different senses and from different contexts), either going back as far as you like or using very recent material. You and your partner may want to cite one or more of our assigned readings—or some other scholarly, journalistic, literary, artistic, or documentary source—in order to illustrate or critique how your keyword has been defined and used. This is perfectly legitimate. I only ask that you include complete

bibliographic information for your source(s) in a "Works Cited" section at your entry's conclusion.

As always, do not hesitate to ask if you have questions.

Keynote Lecture Assignment

Prof. Stonebridge's keynote lecture occurred remotely on March 16th, just after the campus closed. Her talk was valuable because it exposed the students to the conditions of migration and displacement in the Middle East after the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 as well as the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011. Most of the students in the network course--with the Al-Quds students as a notable exception--were not familiar with this history, but they were nevertheless able to make connections with their own reading and lived experience. As it turned out, many of the students submitted their discussion questions just before or just after Bard went remote. Although this was hardly our initial intention, this assignment ended up acting as a kind of "bridge" across the pandemic-induced interruption of the semester.

Keynote Lecture Assignment: in preparation for our network course's keynote lecture with Lyndsey Stonebridge, students initially read a series of short pre-circulated readings that related to the subject of her talk. They then composed a discussion question that my network colleagues and I shared with Prof. Stonebridge before her lecture.

Practical and pedagogical value

The pre-circulated readings and the discussion question helped the students to "invest" in the lecture in advance. They came to Prof. Stonebridge's lecture with some initial orientation and a set of conceptual issues already in mind. In addition, they had the opportunity to read other students' questions.

I posted the pre-circulated readings on Google Classroom. The students submitted their discussion questions on Padlet. Professor Stonebridge's lecture was held (and recorded) on Google Meet.

The Assignment

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Keynote Lecture Assignment

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In preparation for Lyndsey Stonebridge's lecture on Wednesday, March 11, please read the poetry, blog posts, and articles by Lyndsey Stonebridge, Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, and Youssif M. Qasmiyeh. Links to all of these readings are posted under "Keynote Lecture" on the "Classwork" tab on the Google Classroom page.

Then, by the end of the day on Sunday, March 8, please submit one discussion question for Prof. Stonebridge on Padlet. (The faculty across the Bard network have instituted this deadline so that Prof. Stonebridge can take them into account as she prepares her lecture.)

Your discussion question should not inquire about points of empirical information (e.g., how many Syrian nationals have sought refuge in Lebanon since 2011). Instead, your question should engage with the social **processes** these texts examine, the **concepts** they use to analyze them, and/or the **images** and **poetic language** they use to represent them.

A few points to have in mind:

Ideally, your contribution should not simply pose a question, but provide some context. Do your best to explain how you arrived at your question, as appropriate by referring to a specific passage from the texts. In the end, your "discussion question" should be composed of a few sentences or a short paragraph.

It is legitimate for you to ask Prof. Stonebridge to define or elaborate one (or more) terms. But you should do your best to explain what you find confusing about this term and explain why you think it's important to have a sharper understanding. Again, your "question" should be composed of a few sentences or a short paragraph.