



**Winter 2020**

**HIS4301-B00: History Across Borders:**

## **A Twentieth Century History of Refuge Seeking**

**Professor:** Dr. Meredith Terretta, Gordon F. Henderson Chair of Human Rights, Associate Professor of History

**Course Hours:** Mon. 3:30 – 3:50 pm Thurs. 4:00 - 5:20 pm

### **Course Description**

HIS4301: History Across Borders: The new History Across Borders series (courses and seminars at the 3rd and 4th year) enables students to gain knowledge of historical connections and processes of change that span world regions or bring together fields not conventionally studied together. It provides students opportunities to practice interdisciplinary learning and research, to set Canadian and other national

experiences in a transregional context, and to develop a greater sense of international engagement. The courses offered in the series reflect a cross-border or interdisciplinary approach in research and teaching.

The theme of this HIS4301 is **A HISTORY OF 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REFUGEE**

**SEEKING: Humanity is not living through a refugee crisis with a distinct beginning and an anticipated end. We are living in refugee time. Refugee-seeking is a feature of our collective**

**belonging in today's world. Thinking historically about human displacement and humanity's efforts to mediate it helps us to define refugee time. Will this time threaten or strengthen our**

**common humanity?** Students will analyse written, podcast, graphic novel, and digitally interactive sources, to learn to think historically, locally and globally about refugee-seeking and refugee-hosting patterns as they have emerged globally across the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. These are some of the themes:

- Changing definitions of “refugee” on human, local, global and temporal scales
- The evolving international refugee law regime and responses of state and non-state actors to it
- Local practices in tension with institutionalized humanitarianism
- The agency of refuge-seekers
- The historical emergence and changing conditions of refugee camps from North to South
- Children, youth, memory and intergenerational legacy in the history of displacement
- Resettlement, then and now

## **Required Material**

Itamar Mann, *Humanity at Sea: Maritime Migration and the Foundations of International Law*, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Available as e-book through uOttawa library. Entire book.

Peter Gatrell. *The Making of the Modern Refugee*. Oxford University Press, 2013. Available as e-book through uOttawa library.

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do*, Abrams ComicArts, 2017. Available at Benjamin Books, 122 Osgoode Street. (613) 232-7495.

Other required readings are available on the course Brightspace site, where you will also find other course materials including links to websites. Worksheets are also available on Brightspace, arranged by week.

## **Assigned tasks to assess learning (evaluations)**

Task, Due Date, Grade Percentage	Breakdown of Task	Evaluation Criteria	Skills Learned and Assessed
<p><b>Expert:</b></p> <p>Each student will join a team of 2 or 3 to research and present findings on a particular issue of displacement</p> <p><b>Due date:</b> Sign up for groups on 16 January</p> <p>Various = blog or other digital presentation 48 hours before discussion will take place; and oral presentation on day of discussion in class.</p> <p>Final version due the 9<sup>th</sup> of April.</p> <p><b>50% of Final Grade (each of the 3 presentations in class is worth 10% for a total of 30%; final project is worth 20%)</b></p>	<p><b>1. Select the group you would like to join, select your partner(s) and sign up for it on the Groups page on Brightspace.</b></p> <p><b>2. Prepare a blogpost</b> on the topic and post it to our WordPress blog 48 hours before the class meeting at which it will be discussed. Your post should have a title and an image relevant to the topic. It should identify the geographical and historical context of the issue you are studying as well as main points you will be developing. It should identify the primary and secondary source material guiding your research. To gain full credit, your study should relate to the readings and concepts we are developing in class. You should also ask questions designed to spark debate. <b>Groups must post on the class blog by 11:59 pm two days before the discussion.</b> (If the discussion takes place on a Thursday, the blogpost must appear by 11:59 pm on the Tuesday before).</p> <p><b>3. Lead class discussion:</b> The team will give a brief oral presentation (NO MORE THAN 15 MINUTES), touching on the main points, and then ask for feedback from the class, and moderate the class comments/debate.</p> <p><b>4. Respond to peers' comments/questions on the blogpost:</b> The team should answer any questions posed in the comments section of</p>	<p>Students will be evaluated for the quality of their research, their ability to collaborate, the way they relate their study to the concepts covered in class, and their ability to ask questions/answer questions; for their presentation style and ability to moderate discussion; for their responses to peers.</p>	<p>Develops autonomous research skills; teaches the communication of ideas and arguments in accessible ways; teaches how to think historically about present-day issues such as displacement. Develops the skills of communicating your knowledge and ideas in the blog format as well as orally. Teaches to work collaboratively.</p>

the blogpost.

**Discussion:**

This is an interactive course and students will have ample opportunity to participate in discussion and debate of the concepts we cover. Discussion is also the opportunity for you to engage with your peers' work and offer constructive feedback. Discussions will be formally evaluated. The dates of graded discussions are (highlighted in pink on the syllabus):

16 Jan

23 Jan

30 Jan

6 Feb

27 Feb

12 Mar

19 Mar

**20% of Final Grade**

**Occasional Take-home Quizzes:**

**Due dates:**

16 Jan

13 Feb

5 Mar

26 Mar

2 Apr

**Discussion online and/or in class.**

Online discussions are structured as blog entries and comments on others' blogs. Your contribution to these discussions is vital to foster a sense of community in our class and to facilitate engagement with the topic. Try to contribute your own ideas, how they relate to past and present day issues of displacement, and critically engage your peers' presentations and questions.

If you don't comment online, you have another chance to contribute in class.

You are welcome to do both.

Contributions will be assessed for their quality as well as quantity. Be sure to show your familiarity with the material being discussed, and your ability to relate to the readings/concepts we are covering in class in order to get full credit.

Develops the skills of communicating your knowledge and ideas orally; and offering constructive feedback on the ideas of others. Great for learning how to make points persuasively in professional settings.

Complete the worksheets/quizzes in the quiz or assignments area of Brightspace. Answers must be submitted on the day the readings are listed. LATE QUIZZES OR ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE PENALIZED 10% PER BUSINESS DAY.

You may answer concisely (quality counts over quantity), but ensure that your answer precisely addresses the question. As you read, get in the habit of looking for the author's main argument(s). Try to research the author's identity as it may help you to situate him/her in the landscape of human rights scholarship. Be aware of the kind of evidence or persuasive techniques the author is using. Evaluate how

Quizzes are designed to help you absorb the assigned readings or oral material and to critically engage them.

**30% of Final Grade**

the readings fit together and how they address the course topic. If readings seem to contradict each other, or challenge something you have read in earlier weeks, you should take note of that. Reading with these questions in mind will facilitate your absorption of the material and make the worksheet easier to complete.

## Course Calendar

Date of Mtg	Topic	Assignment (due at time of class mtg)	In Class Activity
<b>Mon 6 Jan</b>	Introduction: Refugee Time		
<b>Thurs 9 Jan</b>	WWI & Interwar Refugees	P. Gatrell, <i>Modern Refugee</i> , pp. 1-51	
<b>Mon 13 Jan</b>	The Birth of a “Refugee Problem” in Interwar Europe	P. Gatrell, <i>Modern Refugee</i> , pp. 52-81	
<b>Thurs 16 Jan</b>		<b>Quiz on Reading Due</b> ; In class Group and Topic Selection; Guidelines for Preparing Presentations and Projects	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Mon 20 Jan</b>	Mid-Century Crises an “Durable Solutions”	P. Gatrell, <i>Modern Refugee</i> , pp. 89-117	
<b>Thurs 23 Jan</b>		Groups 1, 2, 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical/geographical context;</li> <li>• Humanitarian solution/practice/activism;</li> <li>• Legal arguments/contestation/international law</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Mon 27 Jan</b>	Jews, Palestinians, and Displacement	P. Gatrell, <i>Modern Refugee</i> , pp. 118-147	
<b>Thurs 30 Jan</b>		Itamar Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 1-20 Groups 4, 5, 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical/geographical context;</li> <li>• Humanitarian solution/practice/activism;</li> <li>• Legal arguments/contestation/international law</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Mon 3 Feb</b>	H.S. Exodus, Transnational Governance and the Rights of Sovereignty	Itamar Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 21-42  H. Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation State and the Rights of Man,” <i>Origins of Totalitarianism</i> , pp. 290-302	
<b>Thurs 6 Feb</b>	The Rights of Encounter (Refugees and the Founding of Israel)	Itamar Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 42-55 Groups 1, 2, 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement options/outcomes</li> <li>• Representation of refuge seekers</li> <li>• Political stakes</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion</b>

<b>Mon 10 Feb</b>	Out of Class Activity	Study the UNHCR Refugee Convention of 1951 and note how it is or is not being applied in the case of displacement you are examining: <a href="https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html">https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html</a>
<b>Thurs 13 Feb</b>	Out of Class Activity	Quiz due
<b>Mon 17 Feb</b>	No Class: Reading Week.	Work on Researching, Writing Up, and Preparing your Presentations
<b>Thurs 20 Feb</b>	No Class: Reading Week.	
<b>Mon 24 Feb</b>	What is a Human Rights Claim?	I. Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 56-78  Thi Bui, <i>The Best We Could Do</i> , pp. 1-210
<b>Thurs 27 Feb</b>		Groups 4, 5, 6: <span style="float: right;">Discussion</span>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement options/outcomes</li> <li>• Representation of refuge seekers</li> <li>• Political stakes</li> </ul>
<b>Mon 2 March</b>	From Survival to Freedom	Itamar Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 78-101 Thi Bui, <i>The Best We Could Do</i> , pp. 211-end.
<b>Thurs 5 March</b>	Out of Class Activity	Quiz due
<b>Mon 9 March</b>	The Haitian Challenge	Itamar Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 102-133 H. Arendt, "We Refugees." On Brightspace. Edwige Danticat, <i>Brother, I'm Dying</i> , pp. 3-26; 206-243. Renee Shea, "A Family Story: Danticat Talks about her Newest—and Most Personal—Work," pp. 187-193,
<b>Thurs 12 March</b>		Groups 4 (PART 2) and 1 (PART 3): <span style="float: right;">Discussion</span> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugee perspective/stories/agency</li> <li>• Economic benefit/cost (to host)</li> <li>• Argument</li> </ul>
<b>Mon 16 March</b>	Class Cancelled	Work on readings/presentations
<b>Thurs 19 March</b>	Moral Risk and Moral Blackmail in the Pacific	Itamar Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 134-162. <span style="float: right;">Discussion</span> Dina Nayeri "The Ungrateful Refugee" <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/04/dina-nayeri-ungrateful-refugee">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/04/dina-nayeri-ungrateful-refugee</a>
<b>Mon 23 March</b>		Groups 2, 3 and 4 (PART 3) <span style="float: right;">Discussion</span> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugee perspective/stories/agency</li> <li>• Economic benefit/cost (to host)</li> <li>• Argument</li> </ul>
<b>Thurs 26 March</b>	The Mediterranean	Itamar Mann, <i>Humanity at Sea</i> , pp. 163-186 <i>This American Life</i> , Episode 592 "Are We There Yet?" <a href="https://www.thisamericanlife.org/greece/#air-force-base">https://www.thisamericanlife.org/greece/#air-force-base</a>

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**Quiz due**

**Mon 30  
March**

Imagination and the Human Rights Encounter

Itamar Mann, *Humanity at Sea*, pp. 187-226  
*This American Life*, Episode 593 “Don’t Have to Live Like a Refugee.”

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/593/dont-have-to-live-like-a-refugee>

Detention of Lone Kids in Greece (HRW Report):

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/04/11/european-court-slams-greeces-police-detention-lone-kids>

**Thurs 2  
April**

Present-Day Borders & Camps

**Quiz due**

Refugee Agency in Camps: Is it Possible? Elizabeth Holzer, “What Happens to Law in a Refugee Camp?” *Law and Society Review* 47.4 (2013): 837-872.

Safe Third Country Agreement (U.S. and Canada); U.S.-Mexico Border

*This American Life*, Episode 688 “The Out Crowd”

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/688/the-out-crowd>

Work on final versions of project (to be turned in on 9 April)

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**Online Resources:**

IOM: <https://www.iom.int/>

UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/>

International Justice Resource Center: <http://ijrcenter.org/refugee-law/>

Timeline of Refugee Protection: [https://academic.oup.com/jrs/pages/history\\_of\\_refugee\\_protection](https://academic.oup.com/jrs/pages/history_of_refugee_protection)

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/>

Refugee VR: [http://www.redlineinteractive.com/case\\_studies/refugee-crisis/](http://www.redlineinteractive.com/case_studies/refugee-crisis/)

Climate Migration: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-12-11/un-compact-recognizes-climate-change-driver-migration-first-time>

**Group Topic Selection:**

<b>Locations</b>	<b>Historical Periods</b>
Europe	Interwar
Mediterranean	Postwar (1940s-1950s)
Africa (Kenya; Uganda; Ghana)	1960s
Europe	1970s
Australia (Pacific)	1980s
Middle East	1990s
S. Asia	2000s
Southeast Asia	Present
Americas: Canada; U.S. southern border; Central America	
Caribbean	