SO202 A Lexicon of Migration

Seminar Leader: Agata Lisiak  
Course Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:45 am-12.15 pm  
Room: TBA  
Email: a.lisiak@berlin.bard.edu  
Office hours: Wednesdays 1-2.30 pm, Thursdays 10 am-12 pm

As one of the most important features of today’s globalized world, migration remains highly debated on local, national, and international levels. Migration is assigned various meanings and statuses (high-skilled and low-skilled, legal and illegal, documented and undocumented, forced and voluntary, restricted and unrestricted), which are, in turn, contested in multiple ways through grassroots and individual activism, academic and artistic interventions, as well as the work of local and international NGOs. Today, migration affects everyone regardless of their own migratory status, and many contemporary societies – especially but not exclusively their urban centers – have been described as pluralist, post-migrant, or super-diverse. The Lexicon of Migration course critically explores migration from global and local perspectives, emphasizing the role of social inequalities in producing specific forms and taxonomies of migration. The selected readings will help students examine diverse social experiences of migration, as well as a range of related concepts such as belonging, border, movement, citizenship, and solidarity, among many others. Students will familiarize themselves with the UN refugee system, regional and national policies regarding migration, the challenges that emerge from them, as well as the ways in which they are contested. By the end of the semester, students will have gained insight into various histories of migration, migration regimes, and migrant infrastructures. Designed by scholars and educators from across the Bard network (AlQuds University in Palestine, American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan, Bard College in the United States, Bard College Berlin in Germany) and affiliated with liberal arts colleges in the US through the Mellon Consortium grant (Vassar, Sarah Lawrence, Bennington, Bard), the course aims at advancing students’ understanding of migration both in the specific local contexts in which they study, as well as from international perspectives. Through a series of joint assignments, students will have a unique opportunity to engage with their peers and professors from other campuses.

Requirements

Attendance and participation  
Your preparation for class, attendance, and participation are crucial. Please complete the required readings, do your homework, be on time for each class, and contribute regularly to the discussions. Missing more than two sessions will affect your participation grade for this class. Please consult the Student Handbook for BCB’s policy on absences. Attendance and participation make up up 30% of the final grade. A self-assessment rubric will be distributed in class and completed at the end of the semester.

Readings  
You will need a course reader (please purchase it in the library) and a copy of Tayeb Salih’s 1966 novel Season of Migration to the North (a few copies will be available on the reserve shelf in the
library). On a weekly basis, you will be expected to devote about 4 hours to complete all the readings. As you read the assigned texts, please remember to annotate them: write down questions, comments, observations – we will use them as a basis for our class discussions. Please note that several of the readings (marked red in the syllabus) will be shared across the Bard network campuses taking part in this co-taught course initiative.

Assignments
Several assignments will add up to your final grade for this class alongside your participation grade: 1) an image assignment (10%); 2) a visual response to a prompt (10%); 3) a keyword (20%); 4) a 3000-word academic essay (30%). Most of the assignments will be developed in several stages, which will allow you to revise your and your peers’ work. The deadlines listed in the box below refer to the final deadlines. Please make sure to check the syllabus schedule regularly for the in-between deadlines and details regarding the assignments. You will receive grading criteria for each assignment separately.

Policy on Plagiarism and Late Submission of Papers
As specified in The Student Handbook, “Bard College Berlin students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and intellectual engagement in their academic work. Attendance and thorough preparation for class, as well as commitment to the pursuit of excellence in written work, are fundamental requirements of Bard College Berlin’s programs.” Acts of academic misconduct (plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, cheating) will be reported and result in a disciplinary process (please see The Student Handbook for details).

Assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. If I agree to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade higher than a C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Breakdown and Final Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation: 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1 (image response): 10% // 15 February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2 (visual response): 10% // 28 February</td>
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<td>Assignment 3 (keyword): 20% // 29 March</td>
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<td>Assignment 4 (final paper): 30% // 15 May</td>
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How to read this syllabus:

- **HIGHLIGHTED** – readings available online, not in the reader
- **RED** – readings and events shared across the Bard network
- **BLUE** – mandatory guest lectures, workshops, visits
- **GREEN** – recommended off-campus visits funded by the Mellon grant

**ASSIGNMENT 1a:** Find an image that in your mind depicts or engages with migration. Email the image to Agata by 25 January (if you are not the author of this image, make sure to include its source and author). Caption the image, write a 500-word explanation how this image engages with migration, and add 3 hashtags. Prepare to briefly (3 min) present your chosen image in relation to one or both of the texts assigned for 28 January.
Week 1: The Worlds of Migration
28 January

30 January

Week 2: Forced Displacement and Refugees 1
4 February
- The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
- UNHCR Forced Displacement in 2017 (Global Trends Report)

ASSIGNMENT 1b: In-class hashtag exercise.

6 February

Week 3: Forced Displacement and Refugees 2
11 February

ASSIGNMENT 1c: Students revise their original 500-word statement and 3 hashtags and email them to Agata by 15 February.

13 February

Week 4: What is Europe now? 1
18 February
ASSIGNMENT 2a: What is Europe now? – based on our discussions so far, respond visually to this prompt. Take a picture, create a collage, draw, make a short video, etc. in response to the prompt and email it to Agata by 25 February together with a caption and a 500-word description engaging critically with one or more of the themes we have been exploring this semester.

ASSIGNMENT 3a: Pick three keywords from the keywords of migration pool created by faculty and/or add different keywords. Submit the selected keywords to your professors by 27 February, specifying your first, second, and third choices.

*** evening film screening and Q&As: NATURA URBANA by Matthew Gandy (TBC) ***

Week 5: What is Europe now? 2
25 February
Prem Kumar Rajaram, CEU – guest lecture

27 February
EuropeNow Workshop

ASSIGNMENT 2b: Following up on today’s workshop, please revise your visual response and/or the accompanying caption and description and email the final versions to Agata no later than midnight, 28 February. Selected pieces will be featured in a special issue of the academic journal EuropeNow.

Week 6: Keywords of Migration 1
4 March
- Casas-Cortes, Maribel et al. 2015. “New Keywords: Migration and Borders.” Cultural Studies 29(1): 55-87.

6 March
ASSIGNMENT 3b: Get in touch with your peers and start working on your keyword. Your professors will share a google doc with you, which you should use for this assignment. You will also receive a handout that will help you structure your work. Your keyword is due on 17 March.

Week 7: A Borderless World?
11 March

13 March

Week 8: Lands of Strangers
18 March

ASSIGNMENT 3c: For next week’s session, go through all the keywords saved on Google Classroom and think how you would like to arrange them. Bring your ideas to class on 25 March.

20 March

Week 9: Keywords of Migration 2
25 March
Keywords workshop
BCB and AUCA students discuss how to arrange their keywords. Time for final edits. Revised keywords due 29 March.

27 March
A surprise film screening!
HOMEWORK: Find a YouTube video that features music or other sound(s) that engage with migration-related themes in some way. Send the link to the YouTube video to Agata by 1 April.

Week 10: Migration in/and Ordinary Cities 1
1 April

3 April
Off-campus visit (TBC)

HOMEWORK: Go through the YouTube playlist and select one video (other than the one you posted yourself) and write a brief (300-500 words) response that relates the video to one or more of the assigned readings, topics discussed in class, etc.). Email your response to Agata and post it on GoogleDrive by April 9.

Week 11: Migration in/and Ordinary Cities 2
8 April
- Muniandy, Parthiban. 2018. From the pasar to the mamak stall: refugees and migrants as surplus ghost labor in Malaysia’s food service industry. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.

10 April

Guest visit by a Berlin-based migrants’ rights activist (tbc)

Week 12 – SPRING BREAK

Week 13: Season of Migration 1
22 April
- NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

24 April

Fatin Abbas, guest lecture and film screening

+++ weekend visit to Thai Park incl. guest talk by Christian Haid (Saturday or Sunday) +++
**Week 14: Season of Migration 2**

**29 April**
- Salih, Tayeb. 1966. *Season of Migration to the North.*

**1 May**
**NO CLASS – INTERNATIONAL WORKERS’ DAY**

**Week 15**

**6 May**
- Salih, Tayeb. 1966. *Season of Migration to the North.*

**8 May**
final discussion