

**Central American Migration: Displacement, Transit,
Borders, and Refuge.**

Course Number SOC 31997 and LALS 31997

City College of New York

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Time: Monday and Wednesday 9:30 am – 10:45 am

Room: Shepard 20

Office hours: Wednesdays 11:00 to 12:00, by appointment only

Course Description

Migration from Central America has a long history that spans all the way to the 19th century and reached its first peak during the last decades of the 20th century due to civil wars and regional political unrest. In the past decade, and particularly since 2014, these flows have become a source of international attention, concern, and debate in the past decade. The rising number of people leaving their home countries, the change in the composition of those who leave as well as the conditions they face during their migratory journeys have made national and international headlines and have become one of the main issues debated regionally.

This course will explore contemporary international migration from Central America, mainly from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. We will analyze theoretical approaches to displacement, transit, borders, mobilities and refuge. Theoretical texts will be accompanied by case studies, human rights reports and other audio-visual materials in order for students to engage with this contemporary reality.

Course Requirements

- Attendance and participation – 25%
 - o You are expected to attend class and actively engage in class by participating, asking questions, and listening.
- Participation in a Group Presentation – 30%
 - o There will be three group presentations during the semester. Each group will present a general topic of the course by connecting the main ideas from assigned readings and what was discussed in class. Presentations are expected to go beyond assigned class materials and resources in order to enrich the conversation in class.
- Research Paper – 25%
 - o Students are expected to complete a maximum 10-page research paper by the end of the semester. Research papers are semester-length projects that involve summarizing and analyzing texts, doing original research, and reflecting on personal experience. More details will be discussed in class.
- Reading Responses 20%
 - o Each student will complete in two reading responses during the semester, each worth 10% of the final grade. You are responsible for choosing the topic and readings which you consider more interesting in order to do their memos. Memos should be turned in on the day when readings summarized will be discussed before the class start. Reading memos should be a two-page maximum summary of the reading's main arguments, methodology, relevance and criticisms. Try to avoid direct quotes as much as possible and instead explain the arguments, ideas, concepts, and questions with your own words.

Required Book

We will be reading most of this book throughout the course.

Vogt, Wendy. 2018. *Lives in Transit. Violence and Intimacy on the Migrant Journey*. University of California Press.

Also, students are encouraged to explore the following project:

Ecologies of Migrant Care, available in: <https://migration.hemi.press/>

Learning Goals

Some of this course's learning goals are the following:

- To think about migration as a complex phenomenon, connected to many issues, and profoundly relevant for today's reality and to identify some of the economic, political, and social consequences and causes of migration
- Acquire basic general knowledge on the regional migratory context, from Central America to the United States
- Critically approach concepts, ideas, and debates around migration, displacement, borders and refugees
- Understand the differences between groups of migrants, the causes of their migration, the places and spaces they leave and get to, and the consequences that their movement entails
- Understanding texts, critically analyzing them, and developing writing skills

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's words or ideas. Words copied verbatim from another source must be quoted and the source must be cited. When you paraphrase words/ideas from another source, you must acknowledge the original author unless the ideas are common knowledge. If you collaborate with another author to produce ideas or words presented in a written product, you must acknowledge that person's contribution. The CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity appears on pages 313 and 314 of the City College Undergraduate Bulletin: 2009-2011. This policy will be discussed in class.

Violations of the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity—including plagiarizing—can result in academic sanction such as a grade of F for a writing assignment or a deduction of the final course grade.

Class Schedule

1. Wednesday August 28th: Introduction to the course
2. Monday September 2nd - College closed, no classes scheduled
 - a. Jonathan Blitzer, "On the Desperate and Uncertain Trail of the Migrant Caravan," *The New Yorker*, October 26, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/on-the-desperate-and-uncertain-trail-of-the-migrant-caravan>.
- I. DISPLACEMENT**
3. Wednesday September 4th – Displacement from Central America I
 - a. Vogt, Wendy. 2018 "Circulations of Violence", Chapter 1 in *Lives in Transit. Violence and Intimacy on the Migrant Journey*. Pages 46-67.
 - b. PODCAST: Deportation in America. Available in: <https://www.newyorker.com/podcast/the-new-yorker-radio-hour/deportation-in-america>
4. Thursday September 5th (Classes follow a Monday Schedule)—Displacement from Central America II
 - a. Orozco, Manuel. 2018. "Central American Migration: Current Changes and Development Implications." Migration, Remittances and Development Program. Inter-American Dialogue. <https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CA-Migration-Report-Current-Changes-and-Development-Opportunities1.pdf>.
5. Monday September 9th – Displacement from Central America III
 - a. International Crisis Group. 2016. "Easy Prey: Criminal Violence and Central American Migration." 57. Latin America Report. Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group.

<https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/057-easy-prey-criminal-violence-and-central-american-migration.pdf>.

6. Wednesday September 11th – Guatemala
 - a. Cause or Consequence: Reframing violence and displacement in Guatemala. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/201809-guatemala-cause-or-consequence-en.pdf>
7. Monday September 16th – El Salvador
 - a. An atomised crisis Reframing displacement caused by crime and violence in El Salvador. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/201809-el-salvador-an-atomised-crisis-en.pdf>
 - b. PODCAST. Radio Ambulante: Postcard from San Salvador: <http://radioambulante.org/en/audio-en/translation/translation-postcard-from-san-salvador>
8. Wednesday September 18th: Honduras
 - a. Human Rights Watch. World Report 2019, Honduras. Available in <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/honduras>
 - b. PODCAST. Radio Ambulante: No Country for Young Men <http://radioambulante.org/en/audio-en/translation/translation-no-country-for-young-men>
9. Monday September 23rd: Group 1 Presentation: Displacement

II. TRANSIT MIGRATION

10. Wednesday September 25th:
 - a. Vogt, Wendy. 2018 “Introduction”, Chapter 1 in *Lives in Transit. Violence and Intimacy on the Migrant Journey*. Pages 21-45.
11. Monday September 30th – No classes scheduled
12. Wednesday October 2nd – What is transit migration?
 - a. Coutin, Susan Bibler. 2005. “Being en Route.” *American Anthropologist* 107 (2): 195–206.
13. Monday October 7th – What is transit migration II?
 - a. Düvell, Franck. 2012. “Transit Migration: A Blurred and Politicised Concept.” *Population, Space and Place* 18 (4): 415–27.
 - b. PODCAST: Radio Ambulante: Exodus <http://radioambulante.org/en/audio-en/exodus>
14. Wednesday October 9th- No classes scheduled
15. Monday October 14th - College closed, no classes scheduled
16. Wednesday October 16th – Critical approaches to transit migration
 - a. Collyer, Michael, Franck Düvell, and Hein de Haas. 2012. “Critical Approaches to Transit Migration.” *Population, Space and Place* 18 (4): 407–14.
17. Monday October 21st – Group 2 Presentation: Transit Migration

18. Wednesday October 23rd – Session to go over Research Paper Requirements

III. CROSSING MEXICO

19. Monday October 28th - Crossing Mexico I: The Arterial Border

- a. Vogt, Wendy. 2018 "The Arterial Border", Chapter 2 in *Lives in Transit. Violence and Intimacy on the Migrant Journey*. Pages 68-93.
- b. Meyer, Maureen, and Stephanie Brewer. 2010. "A Dangerous Journey through Mexico: Human Rights Violations against Migrants in Transit." Washington, D.C.: WOLA. Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas.
http://www.wola.org/publications/a_dangerous_journey_through_mexico_human_rights_violations_against_migrants_in_transit

20. Wednesday October 30th: Crossing Mexico II: Dangers and Risks in Transit

- a. Amnesty International, 2010. "Invisible Victims, Migrants on the Move in Mexico". London-Madrid: Amnesty International. Available in: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/reports/invisible-victims-migrants-on-the-move-in-mexico/>
- b. Diaz, Gabriela, and Gretchen Kuhner. n.d. "Women Migrants in Transit and Detention in Mexico." Accessed May 10, 2016. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/women-migrants-transit-and-detention-mexico>.

21. Monday November 4th – Crossing Mexico III: Constellations of Care

- a. Vogt, Wendy. 2018 "Constellations of Care", Chapter 7 in *Lives in Transit. Violence and Intimacy on the Migrant Journey*. Pages 187-206.

22. Wednesday November 6th – Crossing Mexico IV: Reaching the U.S.

- a. Menjivar, Cecilia. 2006. "Liminal Legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan Immigrants' Lives in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 111 (4): 999–1037.
- b. PODCAST: Radio Ambulante, Zero Tolerance <http://radioambulante.org/en/audio-en/translation/translation-zero-tolerance>

IV. REFUGEES

23. Monday November 11th – Who are Refugees?

- a. The 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol: Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/3b66c2aa10>
- b. Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. Available at: https://www.oas.org/dil/1984_cartagena_declaration_on_refugees.pdf
- c. PODCAST: This American Life: You don't have to live like a refugee: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/593/dont-have-to-live-like-a-refugee>
- d. PODCAST: This American Life: Are we there yet? <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/592/are-we-there-yet>

24. Wednesday November 13th – Central American Refugees Today I

- a. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2015. "Women on the Run." Washington, D.C.: UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/operations/5630f24c6/women-run.html>.
- b. Camila Osorio, "An Asylum Seeker's Journey from El Salvador to Arkansas, and Back Again," August 7, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/an-asylum-seekers-journey-from-el-salvador-to-arkansas-and-back-again>
- c. PODCAST. Radio Ambulante: Sign Here <http://radioambulante.org/en/audio-en/sign-here>

25. Monday November 18th: Central American Refugees Today II
 - a. Leutert, Stephanie, Ellie Ezzel, Savitri Arvey, Gabriella Sanchez, Caitlyn Yates, and Paul Kuhne. 2018. "Asylum Processing and Waitlists at the U.S. - Mexico Border." Mexico Security Initiative MSI. Robert Strauss Center, USMEX, MPC. Available in:
https://www.strausscenter.org/images/MSI/AsylumReport_MSI.pdf
 - b. PODCAST. Radio Ambulante: Newly Arrived: <http://radioambulante.org/en/audio-en/translation/translation-newly-arrived>

26. Wednesday November 20th: Research Paper Workshop

V. MOBILITIES

27. Monday November 25th: From Transit to Mobility
 - a. Basok, Tanya, D. Bélanger, M. Rojas Wiesner, and G. Candiz. 2015. "From Transit to Mobility: Characteristics and Concepts", Chapter 1 in *Rethinking Transit Migration - Precarity, Mobility, and Self-Making in Mexico*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan. Pages 1-27.
28. Wednesday November 27th: The New Mobilities Paradigm
 - a. Sheller, Mimi, and John Urry. 2006. "The New Mobilities Paradigm." *Environment and Planning A* 38: 207–26.
29. Monday December 2nd: Politics of Mobility
 - a. Cresswell, Tim. 2010. "Towards a Politics of Mobility." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28: 17–31.
30. Wednesday December 4th: Immobility and Waiting I
 - a. Schapendonk, J. 2011. "Migrants' Im/Mobilities on Their Way to the EU: Lost in Transit?" *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie (Journal of Economic & Social Geography)* 103 (5): 577–83.
31. Monday December 9th: Immobility and Waiting II
 - a. Hyndman, Jennifer, and Wenona Giles. 2011. "Waiting for What? The Feminization of Asylum in Protracted Situations." *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 18 (3): 361–79.
32. Wednesday December 11th – Group 3 Presentation: Mobilities