

**Sample Syllabus
(Summer Course)
Instructor: Elektra Kostopoulou**

**Migrants and Refugees in the Eastern Mediterranean:
The Residue of the Past in Battles for the Future**

Course Description:

Between the years 2013-2016 more than two million people have attempted to cross the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, seeking refuge in the European Union. The often-morbid outcome of these journeys, as well as the lack of coherent relief strategies regarding survivors, have inspired many to describe this as the worst humanitarian crisis of our century: one that has reshaped radically demographic realities in the broader region, triggering reactions that range from xenophobia and isolationism to new forms of solidarity. In more ways than one, population displacement in the Eastern Mediterranean has become an issue of consuming international concern. This course has a twofold goal:

- a) To provide a mechanism of analyzing the complex dynamics that have shaped the issue by reference to past influences, present contingencies, and potential future developments.
- b) To create an opportunity for students to engage with migrants, refugees, volunteers, NGOS and state actors in Greece on the ground; appreciating their various agonies, beliefs, and perspectives; and providing service in the frontline by converting their empathy and knowledge into action.

A. The coursework is organized in three interrelated sections:

Historical Background of the Greek-Turkish Frontier.

This section uses the Greek-Turkish frontier as a point of reference in discussing changes and continuities in population movements, global affairs, cultural/demographic politics and international law, between the 20th and the early-21st century.

Legal Regimes and Individual Experiences of Displacement.

This section focuses attention on legal regimes, individual experiences, and shared patterns of relocation on the regional and international level regarding displacement in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 21st century. It juxtaposes conditions and demographic realities between, on the one hand, non-EU member states (notably Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan); and, on the other, the two EU member-states reached first by populations attempting these crossings (Italy and Greece).

Global Justice, Displacement, and Policy Making.

This section explores the major theories on international migration, integration, and policy making from a comparative perspective, introducing students to the theoretical debate on the

contextualization/conceptualization of displacement and to international reactions regarding the rise of neo-isolationism, mobilization of state/non-state actors, and emergence of global solidarity movements.

B. Service:

Parallel to completing their coursework students will volunteer for two weeks at the PIKPA shelter in Leros island, Dodecanese, Greece. This is a shelter for vulnerable groups—mainly families with young children, women, and unaccompanied minors— that came to life in 2014. It is operated mainly by the local organization Leros Solidarity Network (LSN), in close collaboration with foreign solidarity groups and volunteers, under the supervision of the Greek state. At the shelter, students will be expected to participate in regular volunteer activities such as food/garment distribution and to take shifts. Moreover, they will participate in shared educational initiatives together with interested refugees/ migrants/ locals. These could include: guided tours in some of the island's sites; movie/reading/music theater initiatives; sport initiatives; crafts; vocational training or language lessons.

Transportation/Accommodation/Nourishment:

Students will travel directly to Leros island by plane with one stop in Athens. They will stay in hotel rooms or apartment buildings in walking distance from the shelter and will be offered three meals a day.

Course Objectives:

By taking this course, students will be able to:

- Contextualize current refugee/migrant phenomena by reference to the historical trajectories/ legal frameworks that have shaped population movements in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- Assess the strengths and constraints of different theoretical approaches to the reality of displacement.
- Engage actively with realities on the Greek-Turkish frontier by communicating directly with activists, NGOs, and refugees/migrants themselves.
- Discuss how gender, class, age, ethnic origin, or religion influence the experience of displacement/ reactions in potential host countries.
- Explore the interdisciplinary possibilities of the course in coming up with new strategies to improve experiences on the ground.

Course Requirements:

At the end of the course, students will build on the discussed literature to submit their own focused project proposal regarding local, national, supranational, and global actions that can be taken to address displacement in the Eastern Mediterranean. Students are thus invited to form a bridge between the specific material of the course and their own field of expertise in a quest for interdisciplinary methodological queries and proposed actions.

Coursework Outline

Week 1: Theme A

Historical Background of the Greek-Turkish Frontier

Readings:

- Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Renée Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998).
- Onur Yıldırım, “The 1923 Population Exchange, Refugees, and National Historiographies in Greece and Turkey.” *East European Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 45–70.
- Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Primary Sources/Diplomacy and International Law:

- Helmer Rosting, “Protection of Minorities by the League of Nations,” *American Journal of International Law* 17 (1923): 641.
- League of Nations, *Measures to Help Refugees* (1925).
- The UN Charter (1945).
- The 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol.
- Greek refugees in Aleppo (1945).
- Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Turkey (2016).
- The Turkish Constitution (1982).
- The Greek Constitution (1975).

Primary Sources/Greek and Turkish Literature:

- Stratis Myrivilis, *Mermaid Madonna* (1939).
- Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *A Mind at Peace* (1949).

Week 2: Theme B

Legal Regimes and Individual Experiences of Displacement in Greece/Italy/Turkey/Lebanon/Jordan

Readings:

- Heath Cabot, *On the Doorstep of Europe: Asylum and Citizenship in Greece* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).
- Nicholas Harney, “Precarity, Affect and Problem Solving with Mobile Phones by Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants in Naples, Italy,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 26 (4), 541-557.
- Suat Kolukirik and Hasan Hüseyin Aygül, “Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey: Sociological Aspects of an International Migration Movement,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 69–82.

- Matthew R. Stevens, “The Collapse of Social Networks among Syrian Refugees in Urban Jordan,” *Contemporary Levant* 1, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 51–63.

Voices of Displacement in Global Literature:

Gazmend Kapllani, *Short Border Handbook* (2006)

Kossi Komla Ebri, *Neyla, a Novel* (2004)

Emine Sevgi Ozdamar, *Mother Tongue* (1994)

Rawi Hage, *Cockroach* (2008)

Week 3: Theme C

Global Justice, Displacement, and Policy Making

Readings:

- Susan Bibler Coutin and Erica Vogel, “Migrant Narratives and Ethnographic Tropes Navigating Tragedy, Creating Possibilities,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, June 26, 2016, 891241616652193. doi:10.1177/0891241616652193.
- Alexander Betts, “Survival Migration: A New Protection Framework,” *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 16, no. 3 (2010): 361–82.
- Francesca Ippolito, “Establishing the Common European Asylum System: ‘It’s a Long Long Way to Tipperary’,” in Ademola Abass, ed., *Regional Approaches to the Protection of Asylum Seekers: An International Legal Perspective* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 113–144.
- Ilker Ataç, Kim Rygiel, and Maurice Stierl, “Introduction: The Contentious Politics of Refugee and Migrant Protest and Solidarity Movements: Remaking Citizenship from the Margins,” *Citizenship Studies* 20, no. 5 (July 3, 2016): 527–454.

Initiatives:

The Za’atari Project

The Refugee Education Challenge

Pilosio Building Peace

Natakallam: A different kind of Arabic learning

The PIKPA shelter

Service Outline

Week 1: Volunteer at the shelter (regular shifts, food and garment distribution, engaging with the residents/volunteers etc. on the ground).

Week 2: Volunteer at the shelter/ Participate in and organize educational actions for mixed groups of refugees, migrants, locals, and foreign volunteers.

Week 3: Volunteer at the shelter/ Present your own ideas, proposals on possible actions and active engagement.