

HIST30941 Refugees in Modern World History, Semester 1, 2020-21

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Refugees are in the news – but where are they in history? Refugee history is an emerging field, contributing a much-needed historical perspective on the so-called ‘refugee crisis’. This is your opportunity to contribute to refugee history, not only through the conventional means of an assessed essay but also through a poster project, on a topic to be decided by you but with guidance and regular support from me.

This course unit examines the causes and consequences of enforced population displacement during the twentieth century. It examines various sites of displacement and addresses key issues such as the emergence of refugees as a ‘problem’, and the creation of an international refugee regime; the creation, management and lived experience of refugee camps; the journeys that refugees undertook, including repatriation and ‘homecoming’; and refugees’ voices and memories of displacement. Wherever possible, attention is given to refugees’ self-perceptions, how refugees narrated their experiences, and their responses to the attributes of ‘refugeeness’ that are often ascribed to them.

There are some exceptionally rewarding articles and books to consult, along with primary source material, including photos.

‘Refugees in modern world history’ is linked to my major new research project in the History department, entitled ‘Reckoning with refugeedom: refugee voices in modern world history, 1919-75’, and findings from this project will feed into the course unit.

Aims

This course will encourage you to:

1. address the relationship between refugees, governments, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations at different times and in different places, against the backdrop of war, revolution, civil war and state formation during the 20th century
2. analyse the experiences of refugees and displaced persons, and how these experiences have been represented in cultural terms by refugees and by others
3. develop a clearer understanding of the contribution that history and historians can make to the interdisciplinary field of refugee studies
4. facilitate independent study, culminating in a poster presentation (with a ‘dummy run’/rehearsal) on a topic of your choice related to the course unit

Assessment

- One essay, 3,000 words, from a prescribed list; formative feedback on a short essay plan, summative assessment following submission via Turnitin, date to be specified – 50%
- Poster project, for presentation towards the end of the semester, together with a summary report via Turnitin (1,500 words) – 50%

Poster project

The aim of the poster project is to create a visually compelling resource on a topic related to the course unit. It might for example be a short case-study of a transformative moment, a policy debate issue, a humanitarian campaign designed to capture the public imagination around refugees, or a particular cultural product related to forced migration. It is essential to think about your target audience, e.g. young learners; a non-governmental organisation; a refugee audience. Do not assume that only current issues provide the best material for a poster project: there is plenty of rich history content out there. The format is entirely up to you, e.g. Powerpoint or Prezi presentation or similar. Bear in mind you will have no more

than 5 minutes in total to present, plus a couple of minutes for Q&A from the audience, i.e. others on the course unit. You will keep a record of progress and submit a report at the end of the course for assessment along with the presentation.

In previous years topics have included anti-deportation campaigns in Manchester, celebrity humanitarianism, "Refugee Week: a curriculum proposal", Haitian refugees, "Journeys by boat", Kosovar refugees in Manchester, Sahrawi refugee camps, etc.

Dissertations

There is plenty of scope to write your dissertation on a topic related to this course unit. The resources in the UK are extensive and include plenty of digitised content. Previous dissertations have included: Spanish Civil War refugees in France; Palestinian refugees in Jordan; Chinese refugees in Hong Kong; refugees in Cyprus 1974; Sri Lankan refugees.; British government policy, e.g. towards Belgian refugees; Hungarian refugees; Czech refugees; Vietnamese refugees, and others; Individual activists and refugee relief; Non-governmental organisations and religious groups, such as the Society of Friends (Quakers); the role of UK-based NGOs on the Thai-Cambodia border; Campaigns and campaigning, e.g. World Refugee Year (1959-60); Family and community history, e.g. migration to the UK from the Indian sub-continent; and from Iran.

Course Content: indicative topics and themes for discussion

1. Introduction to core themes of the course unit and to assessment
2. Refugees: who, what, where?
3. Refugees, the refugee regime and the 'refugee problem' between the two world wars
4. 'Re-placing' refugees in Europe after 1945; refashioning the refugee regime
5. Protracted displacement and 'development': Palestinian refugees in history
6. Refugees, refugee camps and 'rehabilitation': refugees in South Asia, 1947 and after
7. Refugee odysseys: journeys, exile and 'homecoming' in sub-Saharan Africa
8. Displacement, memory and commemoration
9. Refugees, then and now
10. Poster presentations
11. Feedback session

Teaching Methods

- A mixture of seminar/workshop-style learning plus informal lectures, including opportunities for collective discussion of the poster project
- Content will be uploaded to Blackboard; this will also be the main medium for regular discussion of progress on your poster project and for guidance on the essay.

Indicative Reading

Fiddian-Qasbiyeh, Elena, Gil Loescher, Katy Long & Nando Sigona, eds (2014), *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, Oxford: OUP – reference work
Gatrell, Peter (2015), *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, Oxford: OUP
Loescher, Gil (2020), *Refugees: a Short Introduction*, Oxford: OUP
Haddad, Emma (2008), *The Refugee in International Society: between Sovereigns*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Marrus, Michael (1985), *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press