



# Migration from Central America and West Africa: Human Rights Virtual Field Trips *Syllabus*

March 12, 2021 to May 05, 2021

Mette Brogden, Ph.D.

[metteb@arizona.edu](mailto:metteb@arizona.edu)

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences' Human Rights Practice

## **Course Overview**

The focus of the course is to provide students with on-the-ground investigations of migrant journeys in order to build understanding of the lived experience in various contexts and stakeholder interests. Students will also review literature and media reporting, and have the opportunity to “ground-truth” the state of knowledge and framings of the issue. Students will reflect on what understanding phenomenology can do to deepen understanding of the choices people make in the context of power, institutionalizing processes, and geography. Readings will provide context for studying the issue and investigating the agency of key stakeholders.

## **Course Objectives**

During this course students will:

1. Read articles which provide information about:
  - a. the background and historical context of migrant journeys,
  - b. the ways that scholars and activists have conceptualized, studied, and approached practice concerning migration as a “wicked issue,”
  - c. theoretical tools that can be useful in thinking about human rights in the context of migration.Articles will draw from a variety of disciplines, and may include historical, economic, political, anthropological, sociological, and geographic/ecological approaches to the topic. Students will also review media reporting on the issue.
2. Participate in discussions of migration in several locales. We will focus on two migrant corridors: West Africa to Europe, and Central America to Arizona

3. Assess stakeholder interests, spaces of agency, possibilities for enlarging these, envision projects which could enhance human rights in relation to the migration experience studied.
4. Complete a “thought experiment” with others on how to take pro-active approaches to migration management that respect human rights.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Write detailed field notes, find data, and search in the academic literature, develop research and activist project ideas.
2. Provide a compelling explanation/story of the phenomenology of migration in two areas of the world from a variety of perspectives and using a multi-disciplinary approach.
3. Detail interests, agency, and constraints on entities (people, institutions) impacting human rights during migration.
4. Apply theoretical frames and approaches such as Deleuzian ideas of desire and becoming as a way to investigate actor innovations and possibilities for opening or enlarging spaces of agency toward human rights.
5. Synthesize literature and virtual field experiences to complete a situation assessment by characterizing migration in a given corridor, accounting for how the situation came to be; exploring whether and how it could be different or changed in some way that advances human rights through agent-based desires and actions.

## **Communicating with the Instructor**

I can be available through different modalities, but please first email me to set up a time. I regularly check my UA email. I am available by Zoom or Whatsapp. I will try my best to answer emails within 24 hours of receiving them but if I have not, send me a reminder email.

Please be patient with technical difficulties—they happen, AND I am technology challenged.

## **Appropriate Conduct**

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

Our virtual classroom is a place where everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed respectfully.

**Assignments: these are voluntary, of course, but your experience in this course can be enhanced by doing the following:**

1. **Participation:**
  - a. **Complete readings, view lectures, films and attend or view guest speaker recordings and submit thank you/further questions** in the Discussion thread
  - b. **Make** discussion contributions
    - some in the discussion section of D2L (responding to readings, often) and/or on voice thread, or during happy hours on Mondays at 5:00pm Tucson time, and
    - also in the Voice thread section when you have direct experience with the topic that you can help us all to understand through your sharing.
  
2. **Work with others to complete a “thought experiment” workshop by the end of the course for the corridor you are focusing on (A) W Africa to Europe, (B) Central America to the U.S. or (C) global migration in this century.** We will organize this “workshop experience” during week 2
  
3. **YOUR CHOICE FINAL ASSIGNMENT: Either do A or B below.**
  - a. **Explain migration by answering the following questions for a European or U.S. audience which you specify (a funder, policymakers, or the public such as a faith-based social justice club, or a school social justice club):** what is this phenomenon? How did it come to be like this? Can it be different? How could it be different? The latter two questions can help them envision a project or policy change to enhance human rights within the migration experience. ***The project constitutes a situation assessment/statement of need/problem, and suggestions for practices, projects, and/or policies that will address the underlying issues that cause people to make the dangerous journeys.*** Note: You can use the results of thought experiments to address the latter two questions for your audience. At the end of your “paper” or voice thread (you can do either), add some thoughts about what you could do with this assignment to get the vision out to places where they can be taken up or “joined” by the audiences. You can post this as a voice thread lecture, or write a white paper, or an essay in which your voice “speaks” on paper to your audience.
  
  - b. ***For those of you who want to tackle the wicked problem of migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, you know there are MANY points of entry where a person or group of people could make a difference with sustained effort. Write a final reflection in which you answer the question, “what legacy do I personally want to leave from***

*my work to address the wicked problem of migration?"* IE, what is the *impact* you are after that will be worthy of your efforts?

Required format: minimum 4 pp, single spaced, Calibri 11 point font, space between paragraphs.

**ZOOM HAPPY HOURS:** These will be held every Monday from 5-6:30 or so Tucson time. Zoom links will be provided in the announcements on the home page earlier in the day on Thursdays. So when you are ready, go to the home page and click the link.

**SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE!** WE RELY ON GUEST SPEAKERS AND SOMETIMES THE SPEAKER EVENT CHANGES, AND/OR NEW READINGS COME OUT AND/OR INSTRUCTOR MINI-LECTURES ARE ADDED. SO BE SURE TO CHECK HOME PAGE DAILY AS I CATALOG CHANGES THERE, AND THEN YOU WILL SEE IT IN THE WEEK'S CONTENT.

## Course Outline and Readings

### PRE-WEEK AND WEEK 1: OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS:

#### Phenomenology of the Decision to Migrate: Push pull factors; deep causes of migration (MARCH 12-21)

##### In this pre-week and week 1....

We learn about each other, get an overview of the field; ethnography as a method of understanding phenomena; wicked problems, writing field notes, levels of analysis in understanding migration, and readings that will introduce the topic. We begin to think about the question, why do people make the decision to undertake extremely dangerous migration journeys to try to reach the U.S. or Europe?

##### Instructor Lectures on Voice Thread:

- (a) **Intro to course**, the D2L space and how we will use it, the virtual field trips we will be undertaking, how to tackle the readings, and a review of course assignments.
- (b) **How to do field notes, analyses, and assignment completions for the course:** Pouring oneself into field notes; ethnography as a method of understanding phenomena; units of analysis in understanding the human rights theme/issue, and how to break this "wicked problem" into processual phases [phases in migration] and structural elements. "Bookending" a migratory pathway, there is a contributing community (from which people are migrating) and a receiving community (which migrants are trying to reach). Five "populations" are thus implicated and impacted in the migratory pathway: (1) migrants themselves; (2) the direct participants in the journey who facilitate and/or extort (e.g., coyotes, cartels, border agents, way-station helpers), (3) people who are in the communities/countries of origin

(families, community members who will see the loss of one of their own, local, regional and state governments and businesses and churches), (4) people who are living in the pass-through/temporary station communities; and (5) people who are in the communities where migrants arrive, and have existing institutions, governments, business, cultures and social practices.

Also, an intro to theory constructs and framing the four human rights practitioner questions.

**Guest speaker:** Rashid Iddrisu (Wari) Founder/CEO of World Institute of Africa Culture and Traditions (WIACT) in Sawla, Ghana [www.wiactghana.org](http://www.wiactghana.org) and Founder, Social Worker for Cultural Environmental Human Development Association (CEHDA) which operates in Barcelona and Ghana.

Mr. Iddrisu is from the Gonja tribe (Ka Gbar nyi Bia) in the Savanna region of northern Ghana. He is the son of a Savanna region Ghanaian farmer, and speaks eight African languages as well as English, Spanish, and Catalan. As a young man, he decided to migrate to Europe (1998) to seek economic opportunities, and after three years finally arrived in Barcelona. His experience as a migrant en route and after arrival to Barcelona is documented in Chapter 10 of the 2016 book, *Understanding Migrant Decisions: From Sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean Region*. In 2001, he initiated a hunger strike in Barcelona among sub-Saharan African migrants to protest a draconian law that prevented migrants from getting papers so that they could work. The strike led to a massive migrants' revolution in Spain and resulted in 15,000 irregular migrants getting documents. He founded the NGO CEHDAGHANA to address the very difficult circumstances of African migrants in Barcelona, and to help youth in Ghana resist the lure of migration to Europe based on false expectations about opportunities that would await them upon arrival. A citizen of Ghana who also holds permanent resident status in Spain, he travels between Sawla, Ghana and Barcelona to support the communities of the Savanna region in Ghana, and expat African migrants who are a long way from their homelands.

## Required Readings:

Manz, Beatriz. 2008. The continuum of violence in post-war Guatemala. *Social Analysis* 52:3, pp. 151-164

Central American Migration: Root Causes and U.S. Policy. *Congressional Research Service*. June 13, 2019

Agran, David. 2020. Perfect Storm: The Pull and Push Factors Driving the Central American Migration Crisis. *Texas Public Policy Foundation*

Burell, J.L and E Moodie. The post-cold war anthropology of Central America. *Ann Rev Anthropology* 2015. 44:381–400 (please read intro and pp. 391-end closely; the other parts you can scan because it is a really tight lit review that gets a little wearisome)

Migrant Caravan Embarks from Honduras, posing a challenge to the regions. NYTimes Jan 15, 2020 [NY times article Migrant Caravan](#)

'It Is Our Fault': El Salvador's President Takes Blame for Migrant Deaths in the Rio Grande. NYTimes July 1, 2019 [President of El Salvador](#)

**NBC News: Climate change is devastating Central America, driving migrants to the U.S. Border (2018 report). PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU WATCH embedded video [climate change devastating farmers in C Amer, forcing migration](#)**

[https://thecorrespondent.com/235/europe-is-the-promised-land-and-nothing-will-convince-these-migrants-otherwise/31078335695-31614e0c?pk\\_campaign=newsletter-login&pk\\_medium=Weekly&pk\\_source=mail](https://thecorrespondent.com/235/europe-is-the-promised-land-and-nothing-will-convince-these-migrants-otherwise/31078335695-31614e0c?pk_campaign=newsletter-login&pk_medium=Weekly&pk_source=mail)

## Recommended:

Gebrewold, Belachew and Tendayi Bloom, 2016. Conclusions and recommendations in *Understanding Migrant Decisions from Sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean Region*. pp. 219-231.

**Assignments:** check the assignment space on D2L

## WEEK 2: PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE MIGRANT JOURNEY

### In this week....

we spend time with the idea of intense discouragement over seemingly unchangeable phenomena, and listen to Donna Haraway's ideas about "staying with the trouble". We start our investigation and field research into the phenomenology of migration journey. The stages of the journey, the stakeholders, the attribution of agency and complex agency, emergent policy and practices meant to discourage migration...will all be explored through readings, lectures, films and online recordings. We will start searching for opportunities we see to promulgate positive change for those impacted by migration and its history in this corridor. Is change possible? In what way, how? How do HRTS practitioners "stay with the trouble" in this era and what is anticipated to come...

### Lectures on Voice Thread

**William Simmons:** The Phenomenology of the Journey and States of Exception

**Brogden:** Intro to the Thought Experiment Assignment and how you will set up to do this.

**Guest speaker, Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup>:** Javier Osorio at Noon.

### Recommended reading:

**Osorio, Javier. 2015.** The contagion of drug violence: Spatio-temporal dynamics of the Mexican war on drugs. *J of Conflict Resolution* 59(8): 1403-1432. **This is a quantitative study testing hypotheses statistically using big data sets and mathematical equations (a lot of them)**

to develop the analysis, but still you can get some interesting understandings of WHY the war on drugs that was initiated during the Calderon administration had the paradoxical effect of increasing violence and vulnerability.

### Readings, Films, online listening

### REQUIRED:

**Haraway, Donna. 2016.** Selections from: *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (read Acknowledgements pp. xi-xv, Introduction pp 1-8, and Chapter 7: a curious practice) pp. 126-133).

### Central America to USA corridor:

**De Leon, Jason. 2015.** *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail.* Introduction, Chapter 1, Epilogue and Appendix A as thorough reads; Chapter 2 first half also as careful read; second half as deep a dive as you wish--scan or read carefully.

**Stone-Cadena, Victoria and Soledad Alvarez Velasco. 2018.** Historicizing Mobility: Coyoterismo in the indigenous Ecuadorian migration industry. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 676:194-211.

**Triandafyllidou, Anna. 2018.** Migrant smuggling: Novel insights and implications for migration control policies. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 676: 212-221.

**Palacios, Simon Pedro Izcara. 2017.** Migrant Smuggling on Mexico's Gulf Route: The actors involved. *Latin American Perspectives* 44(6): 16-30.

[Mexico Breaks Up A Migrant Caravan](#), 1.24.2020, NYTimes

### W Africa to Europe Corridor

**Maher, Stephanie. 2018.** Out of West Africa: Human smuggling as a social enterprise. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 676: 36-56.

**Mengiste, Tekalign Ayalew. 2018.** Refugee protections from below: Smuggling in the Eritrea-Ethiopia context. *Annals* 676: 57-76.

**Meyers, D.T. 2016.** No safe passage: 'the mapping journey project' *JOURNAL OF GLOBAL ETHICS*, 2016 VOL. 12, NO. 3, 252-259 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17449626.2016.1247109>

**Suggested film** for those who have not seen the film or much information about deaths in the Sonoran Desert, and how U.S.-based responders are working with Mexican and Central American authorities to identify remains and notify families who remain in home countries. Film: **Who is Dayani Crystal.** You can get it through UA library.

**Suggested film:** Feature-length film: *La Jaula del Oro* on Amazon for \$3.99 (get subtitled if you are not fluent in Spanish; The UA library has a copy for checkout if you are in town...Check other public libraries)

**Required Youtube film about Open Arms, a Spanish rescue NGO:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5klbQRjJHk>

**Suggested youtube film about migration pathways into Europe:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rLJ-5AR2EQ>

**Suggested readings:**

Farmer, Paul. 2004. An anthropology of structural violence. *Current Anthropology* 45(3):305-325 [very good, readable if you need to understand the "structural violence" construct--it is very widely used]

**Books by journalists:**

*Enrique's Journey* (2007) by Sonia Nazarro (Random House)

*The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail* (2014) by Oscar Martinez (Verso)

*A History of Violence: Living and Dying in Central America* (2017) by Oscar Martinez (Verso)

**Suggested—book by a person who did the migrant journey**

*The Devil's Highway, A True Story* (2008) by Luis Alberto Urrea

**WEEK 3: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF RECEPTION: LIMINALITY, DETENTION, AND REFOULEMENT, RESETTLEMENT--GOVERNANCE IN EUROPE AND THE U.S.**

**In this week....** we look at migrant reception on the U.S. and European receiving countries in terms of governance, policies and practices of institutions and government entities, as well as the reception in local communities and among the public: people who are in the communities where migrants arrive, and have existing institutions, governments, business, cultures and social practices. Reception and governance are two ways to look at coping strategies of populations and their governments to accommodate the arriving or passing-through population of migrants.

We will look at the phenomenology of reception in European countries and the U.S., including policies, policing, protesting, and the economic realities for arriving and receiving communities in the current era. Even solidarity with migrants, as we will discover, is becoming illegal in both Europe and the U.S.

Where is the world going with this phenomenon? Climate change, war, violence, escape...to where? Where will vulnerable people find a right to "be" in the world and get basic and aspirational needs met?



## Instructor Lecture:

### REQUIRED READINGS:

#### Central Amer to U.S.:

<https://www.vox.com/2019/11/5/20947938/asylum-system-trump-demise-mexico-el-salvador-honduras-guatemala-immigration-court-border-ice-cbp>

<https://www.npr.org/2020/02/05/803134436/human-rights-watch-more-than-200-salvadorans-were-abused-killed-after-deportatio> Please google this if you cannot get in through the link [killed after deportation](#)

#### US Mex experience

Cantú, Francisco, 2018. *The Line Becomes a River*. New York: Riverhead Books. He is a former border patrol agent. Book is available online through UA library and is a fast read.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/27/books/review/line-becomes-a-river-francisco-cantu.html>

<https://www.austinchronicle.com/daily/arts/2018-02-14/protest-at-francisco-cant-reading/>

<https://www.sfgate.com/books/article/francisco-cantu-controversy-green-apple-books-sf-12608036.php>

<https://www.bookweb.org/news/protesters-attempt-shut-down-author-event-green-apple-103227>

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/books/article/Contested-terrain-Author-Francisco-Cant-opens-12703828.php>

#### W Africa to Europe

Andersson, Ruben. 2014. *Illegality, Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*, Introduction chapter [/content/enforced/870395-296-2201-7W1HRTS597A201/Illegality, Inc. Clandestine Migration and the Bus... ---- \(Introduction\).pdf](#)

Bendixson, S.K.N. 2016. Refugee crisis: Destabilizing and restabilizing European Borders. *History and Anthropology* 27(5): 536-554.

Bock, Jan-Jonathan. 2018. Migrants in the mountains: Shifting borders and contested crises experiences in rural Germany. *Sociology* 52(3): 569-586

Dines, Nick, et al. 2018. Beyond crisis talk: Interrogating migration and crises in Europe. *Sociology* 52(3): 439-447

**Guest Speaker:** Alexandra Miller, Florence Project, Wed March 31.

**WEEK 4: WELL, HOW DID WE GET HERE? [HOW DID IT COME TO BE LIKE THIS?]  
A CASE STUDY OF GUATEMALA AND SOME ADDITIONS FROM EL SALVADOR**

**Instructor lectures:** This week will be run by Liz Oglesby, and her indigenous contacts in Guatemala. They will add readings later.

### **Required readings:**

**Saunders-Hasting, 2018.** Red zone blues: Violence and nostalgia in Guatemala City. Ethnography (Online first, currently). </content/enforced/715580-914-2184-7W1HRTS597A201/Red Zone Blues, article in online first, Ethnography.pdf>

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/archbishop-oscar-romero-becomes-a-saint-but-his-death-still-haunts-el-salvador>

**Required film:** *When the Mountains Tremble: Documentary by Pamela Yates*

### **Recommended readings**

Any Book by Carolyn Nordstrom if you are further interested in transnational crime, *Global Outlaws* is a good place to start: her ethnography of illicit global businesses. The previous one, *the Shadows of War*, is a really good read about how how illicit economic activity sets in during war, persists after war, and continues the degradation of a country's sociality and society long after the end of war.

## **WEEK 5: RECEIVING, ARRIVING, TRANSIT COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ASYLUM AND REFUGEE STATUS**

**Instructor Lecture:** The history of migration and human rights starting with the UN Declaration of Human rights; how refugees and asylum seekers have been protected (or not), legal frameworks in the U.S. and elsewhere; getting ready for our thought experiment workshops.

### **Required Readings:**

**Brogden, 2016.** Excerpts from *Refugee Odysseys: An Ethnography of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. after 9-11*. Dissertation submitted to faculty of School of Anthropology, University of Arizona.

**The Divergent Trajectories of the Global Migration and Refugee Compacts:** Implementation amid Crisis  
Published by MPI Dec 2020

**Cole, Phillip. 2016.** Global displacement and the topography of theory. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 12:3, 260-268, DOI: 10.1080/17449626.2016.1247745

**Assignments:** Please see D2L site

**Guest Speaker: Oscar Chacón, Alianza Americas**

## **WEEK 6: SECURITIZATION IS FAILING TO DETER AND/OR STOP MIGRATION, SO, CAN IT BE DIFFERENT, IF SO, HOW? DEEP MIGRATION SOLUTIONS**

**In this week....** we turn to the salutogenic human rights practitioner questions: Can it be different? If so, how can it be different? We look briefly at the failure of securitization to stop migration from the South to the U.S. and Europe, despite ever more attempts. And then we will review some salutogenic approaches that are being undertaken or suggested. What is the goal? What is the vision? What are the deep solutions to desperate irregular migration in this our Century of Migration. What we will do in the future as human rights scholar activists, what are the values, empathy, knowledge, and questions we have considered, and Haraway's work on *Staying with the Trouble*. Mette's take is to look for salutogenic activities and projects that can foster increasingly safe travel and human rights protection for all. And, which will assure that emerging concerns for our collective future will increasingly be fairly addressed so that the poor and marginalized have a place to belong and thrive, and receiving communities also benefit from their renewing energy and socio-economic contributions.

**Lecture:** Instructor lecture

### **Readings**

#### **Required:**

*NYTimes article*, 9.8.2019, Europe Keeps Asylum Seekers at a Distance, This Time in Rwanda

*The European Union is preparing to pay Rwanda to host migrants evacuated from Libya, extending an outsourcing policy that is already under criticism.*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/08/world/europe/migrants-africa-rwanda.html>

Andersson, R. 2016. Europe's failed 'fight' against irregular migration: Ethnographic notes on a counterproductive industry, *J Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42:7, 1055-1075

**DOI:** [10.1080/1369183X.2016.1139446](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1139446)

**Miller, Todd. 2017.** *Storming the wall: climate change, migration, and homeland security*. San Francisco: City Lights Books. Scan pp. 37-105 (about border, security, and climate change) and 223-233 (about salutogenic activities)

**Chavez et al, 2020.** Self-organizing for everyday peacebuilding: The Guardia Indígena from Northern Cauca, Colombia *Security Dialogue* Vol. 51(1) 39–59

#### **Recommended:**

**Osorio, Javier. 2015.** The contagion of drug violence: Spatio-temporal dynamics of the Mexican war on drugs. *J of Conflict Resolution* 59(8): 1403-1432. *mette note: this is a quantitative study testing hypotheses statistically using big data sets and mathematical equations (a lot of them) to develop the*

analysis, but still you can get some interesting understandings of WHY the war on drugs that was initiated during the Calderon administration had the paradoxical effect of increasing violence and vulnerability.

## Films about salutogenesis, required

New roots film (available on Youtube) 2016

[New Roots film, OTOXO productions, Barcelona](#)

*You-Tube videos*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q> "How Wolves Change Rivers"

Eric Whitaker's Ted Talk: [Sleep](#)

**Guest speaker: Todd Miller** on Build Bridges, not Walls; Rashid Iddrisu on Indigenous education and heritage preservation in Africa

## WEEK 7-8 RUNNING THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS AND FINAL PROJECTS

In this week and a half.... we will do the thought experiment workshops through zoom.

**Instructor Lecture: None**