

LSJ 425/ANTH 497
Domesticating International Human Rights: Perspectives on Asylum and Refugee Law
Fall 2020/Remote Instruction

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Office Hours: 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.
<https://calendly.com/aosanloo/office-hours>

A Note on Education and Uncertainty in a Time of Pandemic

I suspect many of you would agree that the current conditions for learning about a complex topic such as ours are not ideal. Throughout this course, both in its substance and delivery, we will wade through new fields, ideas, and technologies. Sometimes we will falter but so, too, will we be surprised by the opportunities our conditions create. My hope is that in the spirit of learning together, everyone enrolled in this course will indulge their *esprit de corps*, taste for adventure, and bow to discomfort as a willow wisping in the wind or a blossom budding from its branch. Never has there been a better time to stumble into the void! And, “*it will be a great adventure!*”

Introduction

In the aftermath of World War II, Hannah Arendt wrote, “refugees driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their people.”² Such refugees, she noted, have lost all rights, but at the same time do not want to (or cannot) be assimilated into a new national identity. In that statement, Arendt was referring to a problem she and the world community thought to be a specific, temporary problem. Today there are over eighty million refugees, displaced, and stateless persons in the world, the most ever recorded, and it is one of the biggest international crises of our time. The plight of so many forced migrants has brought renewed scholarly attention to this issue, at once ancient, and yet, completely new – and increasingly representing a new normative identity. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben wrote that the refugee, “formerly regarded as a marginal figure, has become now the decisive factor of the modern nation-state by breaking the nexus between human being and citizen.”³ Today’s refugees occupy a liminal space, giving substance to the theoretical musings on nation-state sovereignty and the emerging space of the supranational, while providing a challenge to the possibility of achieving human rights. To be sure, transnational laws are in force to protect individuals who occupy intermediate spaces, but the nation-state is still the venue through which such individuals must seek recognition and protection. Without such recognition, refugees have scant protection of any kind.

Given much recent scholarly attention to the concept of the refugee, this course examines contemporary refugee crises in the context of globalization, with a concern for the complex underlying conditions that produce ‘the refugee,’ and asks: *Why must we live in a world of refugees?* The topics we explore, including the effects of the nation-state, colonialism, and war, the politics of global capitalism, the idea of refuge and hospitality, and camps, go towards answering that question.

Thus, this course aims to introduce students to the complex issues surrounding ‘the refugee,’ both in international practice and in the U.S., and explores concerns related to refugees through a critical lens that takes into account multiple variables, including, but not limited to, legal, social, economic, and historical.

This year the course will be taught in consideration of a yearlong Mellon-funded Sawyer Seminar on [*Humanitarianisms: Migrations and Care through the Global South*](#).

¹ Canadian legal scholar, John Humphrey, on drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

² “We Refugees,” 1943, 77.

³ “Means Without End: Notes on Politics,” 2000, x.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

As an advanced senior seminar, this course aims to develop critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills. On a substantive level, this course aims to introduce students to the social, legal, political, economic, and theoretical issues emanating from the figure of the refugee in a global and domestic context.

AIMS

This course is an advanced seminar that aims to develop critical analytical thinking, reading, and writing skills. On a substantive level, this course aims to introduce students to the politics of asylum and refugee laws and to trace their histories and effects through critical engagement with the scholarly literature. The conclusion will be a deeper understanding of contemporary issues relating to the refugee crisis today.

Students should have taken at least one upper-level human rights course. In these advanced seminars, I aim to push students to develop their analytical thinking and even work on *their own projects*. In this vein, I hope to help you develop an interesting line of inquiry that you will pursue throughout the quarter.

While many of us feel awkward with this new type of instruction, it does have some advantages, such as: developing your writing and computer skills; cultivating resourcefulness through self-directed learning, time management and problem-solving; improved class participation due to increased response times; and the standard benefits of online learning, such as flexibility and self-pacing. It is no secret that we possess different ways of learning. To assess your learning style, take the [Paragon Learning Style Inventory](#).

COURSE CONTENT & DELIVERY

I have restructured this intimate, in-person seminar to take into account the uncertain times we are experiencing. In consideration of unequal access to educational resources, I have opted to make this course *asynchronous* with an option for a synchronous weekly meeting. Course content consists of, but is not limited to, readings, discussion, discussion facilitation, webinars, and writing. My aim is to give students, no matter their background or accessibility, an opportunity to learn. Each week, I will deliver content through Canvas using Pages to deliver materials. I will work with you to make this course meaningful and to meet your individual goals as long as they do not compromise the course's learning objectives.

Time-Block Tuesdays: Although we will not hold class meetings on Tuesdays, the time period is available for you to complete some of your course work, either individually or in groups. In addition, I will be available for meetings. I will hold **Zoom office hours** with individuals or groups on Tuesdays between 2:30 – 4:00 pm. To schedule an appointment go to: <https://calendly.com/aosanloo/office-hours>.

Discussion Thursdays: We will hold *Zoom* discussion sessions on Thursdays at 2:30 – 3:20(ish) to build on knowledge gained by independent work. Students should join after having completed the work for the week. Discussion facilitators participating in discussions: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/98331411766>.

Don't know what to do with remote & asynchronous courses?: Think about *your aims* in your educational pursuits. If you want to develop your analytical thinking, writing, and reading, this course will do that. Do the coursework and if you can't make it to discussion, don't sweat it. If you want to develop those things, *plus* enhance your speaking skills and build new ideas, then show up for discussion. Knowledge production is a cognitive feat. By meeting and discussing, we actually create knowledge and new ideas.

ASSIGNMENTS

In an advanced senior seminar, I assume students have some background in the issues we address. The course is designed to inspire you to elaborate new ideas and to engage in critical thinking. Through weekly discussion prompts, I will provide parameters for online and virtual discussions and context for course design and topical trajectory. Substantive discussion of readings is left primarily to students.

Given the exigencies of our current times, we will explore new ways of learning collectively through five types of assignments that build on each other: (1) weekly reading and discussion responses (RADR); (2) Webinar reflections; (3) discussion facilitation; (4) a close-reading exercise; and (5) an analytical paper. On the course Canvas site, you will find detailed guidelines for these requirements and more!

(1) Reading and Discussion Responses (RADR) (40%) – To promote critical thinking and enhance knowledge on a subject, students will complete weekly 300-word (minimum) reading and discussion responses (RADR). RADR posts react to readings and aim to prompt inquiry, analysis, and discussion.

Every Friday by 5:00 p.m., I will offer guiding questions in weekly discussion prompts on Canvas to steer both your reading and your RADR posts. As such, these questions are intended to “prompt” your thinking as you read. You are not required to answer any of the questions, but may if you like. Part of your response should be **in conversation with the author**, another should **engage with the discussion facilitation** (see below), and another should **speak to other students** in the thread. This might require you to log in more than once. I have posted guidelines for how to read scholarly articles and complete RADR on Canvas.

RADR posts are due **each Thursday by 12:00 p.m.** I will post the prompt the prior Friday by 5:00 p.m. Thus, you have F evening -Th noon to complete the readings and post your RADR. Each RADR is worth **5-points** (see guidelines). You will have 9 opportunities to complete a RADR, thus, you do not need to post a RADR during the week you facilitate discussion. Your grade for the RADR will be based on total points (8x5), so 40 = 4.0, 39 = 3.9, etc.

(2) Discussion Facilitation (10%) – Each week, student facilitators will introduce the reading through a discussion post that offers background, key arguments, and questions for discussion. These facilitation posts will be sent to me by **11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and I will post them on Canvas by 12:00 p.m.** The goal of discussion facilitation is to enhance the overall intellectual experience of the class. Facilitators may provide theoretical depth, historical background, or a different point of view. They will also help us develop a better sense of the intellectual ‘genealogy’ of this field. I am happy to work with you to develop your facilitation. Additional guidance is provided in the Guidelines folder. **I will circulate a facilitation sign-up sheet in the first week and ask you to sign-up to facilitate a reading. Many of you will facilitate in pairs. You will need to work together to determine how you will facilitate and send one document.**

(3) Webinar Reflections (10%) – This course is offered in conjunction with a year-long seminar that I am leading, [*Humanitarianisms: Migrations and Care through the Global South*](#). During this quarter, you will have three opportunities to learn about the research of five scholars working in this field. Webinars are slated to take place during our class time (on Thursdays from 3:30 – 4:30 on October 8th, November 12th & December 3rd). They will *also* be recorded to allow you to view them asynchronously. Students will need to view at least two seminars and submit a 300-word reflection on the cutting-edge research happening in this field currently. For full credit, simply submit your reflections any time before the end of the quarter.

To summarize:

Fridays by 5:00 p.m.: I will post prompts to steer the next week's reading;
Tuesdays by 11:00 a.m.: Discussion Facilitators send me their facilitations including questions;
Tuesdays by 12:00 p.m.: I will post discussion facilitations on Canvas;
Tuesdays at 2:30-4:20 p.m.: Time-blocked to complete course work and meet in office hours;
Thursdays by 12:00 p.m.: RADR posts due (except for discussion facilitators); and
Thursdays at 2:30-3:30 p.m.: Drop-in to Zoom for in-person Discussion.

(4) **Mid-Term Close Reading Exercise (20%)** – A 5-7-page close reading is required by the **sixth week of the course, on Friday, November 6th**. The mid-term exercise is intended to give you an opportunity to take two articles from our course and examine them with close analytical scrutiny. Additional guidance will be provided. To give you ample opportunity to complete this assignment, I have not assigned any other reading the week that the midterm exercise is due. Instead, during class, we will workshop our mid-terms.

(5) **Analytical Paper (20%)** – A 10-12-page analytical paper is required. Papers should focus on a specific issue and contain analysis using readings and other class materials. They may include analysis of a theme from the course. Ideally this paper should grow out of your interests emerging over the quarter. You may build on your mid-term, RADRs, discussion facilitation, and Webinar reflections. I am pretty flexible about the nature of the writing requirements and am happy to work with you to develop meaningful and unique project, as long as it results in a critically engaged paper. As with everything else, I offer guidance in the Guidelines folder. **Papers are due by Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. (Please note: I will not be able to accept papers after this date as I will not have time to read, grade, and calculate final grades by the date grades are due in the Registrar's Office.)**

GRADING

All of the grading in this course is based on the university's 4.0 scale. Thus, you have no need to convert grades from a different scale. This way, you will be able to keep track of your grade as we move through the course. Each assignment will be weighted in the following manner:

8 Reading and Discussion Responses (each one is worth 5 points for a total of 40 points)	= 40%	of grade
2 Webinar Reflections (each one is worth 5 points for a total of 10 points)	= 10%	"
Discussion Facilitation (10 points)	= 10%	"
Mid-Term Close Reading Exercise	= 20%	"
Analytical Paper	= 20%	"

TEXTS

The texts for this course are articles and excerpts from two books. I will provide readings in weekly files on our course CANVAS site. You are not required to purchase anything. Each week's files will also contain additional materials, such as supplemental readings and reports that you can consult at your leisure. Readings are multi-disciplinary. Some of you will find some readings more challenging than others. Not everyone will find the same ones challenging. That's what makes discussion so interesting! So just do your best and try to get *something* out of each reading. Also, feel free to pose questions, either on the discussion board or in Thursday discussions. Use my guidelines (see below) to help you.

GUIDELINES

On the Canvas site, I have created a folder named “Guidelines” where you can reference guidelines to improve your **reading** (IRAC Method), **note taking**, and **writing**. In addition, you will have guidelines for doing the assignments: **RADR posts**, **discussion facilitation**, **mid-term close reading**, and **analytical paper**.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Electronic reading and writing versus paper and pen - A recent [study](#) has shown that students learn better when they take hand-written notes on paper. Another [study](#) has found that reading content on tablets leads to skimming and interferes with understanding complexity. If you have the means, I recommend printing. Either way, I recommend the old adage, “read with pen in hand,” even if it is an electronic stylus on a screen!

Academic Integrity - Academic misconduct, such as plagiarism and cheating, are serious violations of the University of Washington’s [Student Governance Policy](#) and are subject to disciplinary action by the University. Students are expected to know and follow the [University of Washington Student Conduct Code \(WAC 478-121\)](#). Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to the University’s regulations. For more information, see the University of Washington’s [Community Standards and Student Conduct website](#). For information about the University’s plagiarism policy, see [here](#).

Safety and Wellness - The University offers many different kinds of support services, including the Counseling Center and Hall Health Mental Health Clinic. If you are concerned about yourself or a friend who is experiencing emotional distress and/or may be at-risk for suicide, you can call SafeCampus at [206-685-7233](#) (SAFE). They will provide 24/7 risk assessment and help connect you to appropriate resources.

Access and Accommodations - Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have a letter from [Disability Resources for Students](#) indicating that you require special accommodations, email it to me. If you have not yet established services through DRS but have a condition that requires accommodations (including, but not limited, to mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you can contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) & DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state laws.

Religious Accommodations - Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Faculty Syllabus Guidelines and Resources. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form available at <https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>

Excellence in Diversity - In this course, as with the rest of the University of Washington, we consider diversity to be integral to excellence in education and seek to learn from one another’s unique perspectives. As such, we value diverse experiences and strive to create welcoming and respectful learning environments, while promoting access, opportunity and justice for all. For additional resources and tips for remote learning, check out these pointers on internet etiquette or [Netiquette](#).

Schedule of Weekly Readings and Assignments

Readings and class content are subject to change. Complete bibliographic information is available on Canvas.

Week	Class	Topics, Readings & Assignments
I	Oct 1 st	<i>Syllabus Overview</i> <u>Read:</u> Syllabus, Ismay , Vine <u>To Do:</u> Review assignments, due dates, and resources on Canvas; Mark key dates in your calendar
2	Oct 6 & 8	Introduction: <i>Why do we have a world with refugees?</i> <u>Read:</u> 1951 Convention, Bem, Henkin, Donkoh <u>Explore:</u> The Great Climate Migration <u>Due:</u> RADR #1 Sign-up for Discussion Facilitation
3	Oct. 13 & 15	Hospitality: Refugee between Persecution & Nation-State <u>Read:</u> McNevin, Derrida <u>View:</u> McNevin Webinar <u>Explore:</u> UNHCR website <u>Due:</u> RADR #2 Webinar Reflection #1
4	Oct. 20 & 22	The Refugee between Nation-State & Camp <u>Read:</u> Arendt, Agamben, Turner <u>Explore:</u> 10 Largest Refugee Camps <u>Due:</u> RADR #3

- 5 Oct. 27 & 29 **Refugee Identity: *Subjectivity* and *Agency***
Read: Malkki, Behrman, Mayblin
Due: RADR #4
- 6 Nov. 3 & 5 **Paper Workshop**
Read: Peer Review (optional)
Due: **Friday, Nov. 6**
- 7 Nov. 10 & 12 **U.S. History & Practice: *Processing* Asylum**
Read: Anker, TBA, Ghezelbash
View: [Seeking Asylum](#) (24m film on US asylum process)
Due: RADR #5
- 8 Nov. 17 & 19 **Another Refugee Regime: Palestinians' *Protracted* Crisis**
Read: Feldman, Peteet, Akram
Explore: [UNRWA website](#)
View: Feldman & Ballinger Webinar
Due: RADR #6
Webinar Reflection #2
- 9 Nov. 24 & 26 **No class meeting: Thanksgiving Break**
Read: Review previous RADR and Midterm
To Do: Start developing paper topics through:
Brainstorming, peer discussion & review
Due: RADR #7 (post a paper topic abstract and
peer review one other student's abstract)

