

118^{ethn} –Spring 2023

Critical Immigration/Refugee Studies

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Office Hours: Tuesdays: 10-11:30; 2-3 and by appointment.

In person (SSB 228) or via zoom: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/91917832766>

If possible, please let me know in advance if you plan to come to office hours.

Course Description

Much of migration research is oriented toward containment agendas, where migrants and refugees are conceptualized as a problem population to be deported, managed, or saved. Departing from this problem-oriented approach, this course reconceptualizes migrants and refugees as a site of political critique, knowledge formation and social transformation. Such reconceptualization requires approaches that integrate theoretical rigor and policy concerns with migrants and refugees' rich and complicated lived worlds — approaches that fuse the critical and the creative. Through course readings, lectures and assignments, students will acquire a conceptual vocabulary as well as develop a critical and historically informed understanding of some of the most pressing concerns related to migrants and refugees at the contemporary moment.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change; the syllabus of record is kept updated and posted on the course website on Canvas.

Required Texts

1) Espiritu et al. *Departures: An Introduction to Critical Refugee Studies*. University of California Press, 2022.

2) Ocean Vuong. *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. NY: Penguin Press, 2019.

Book description:

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born — a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam — and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known,

all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity.

3) All other course readings can be viewed and downloaded via the course website on Canvas. Other relevant course materials will also be posted there throughout the quarter.

Course Requirements

Assignments/Exams	Grading Scale			
"No Immigration Porn" – 15%	94-100	A	73-75	C
Midterm Exam – 20%	90-93	A-	70-72	C-
Advancing Health Literacy Project – 25%	86-89	B+	66-69	D+
Final Project – 25%	83-85	B	63-65	D
Classroom Engagement – 15%	80-82	B-	60-63	D-
	76-79	C+	0-60	F

1) "No Immigration Porn!" Due date: April 21

Drawing on Héctor Tobar's article, "Avoiding the Trap of Immigration Porn," (Week 1 reading), this assignment asks you to critically analyze how migrants and refugees are visually represented. Choose one photograph from a mainstream news source and one from [this collection](#) or [this collection](#) (or another of your choice), contrast whether and how the two photos engage the beauty and complexity of the lives of migrants and refugees. Further instructions will be posted on Canvas one week before the due date.

2) Midterm – Due date: May 11

The midterm exam will consist of three parts:

- Part I – 1 Short Answer (100-150 words)
- Part II – 1 Short Essay (200-250 words)
- Part III – 1 Essay (500-550 words)

Hybrid format: You will receive a study guide with exam questions one week before the exam date. On the exam day, during the class period, I will post the **selected** exam questions on Canvas. The exam closes at the end of the class period. You may submit the exam from any place during the exam period. You may write and edit the answers in advance and just paste them in, or to write them during the exam period.

3) Advancing Health Literacy Project – Due date: May 26

4) Final Project – "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous: An Art Project"

Art Gallery via Canvas: Monday, June 12, 11:30 a.m. 2:30 p.m.

Further instructions will be posted on Canvas.

Please note: To receive a passing grade in the class, students must complete *all* course assignments.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and original. Each student is expected to be familiar with and abide by UCSD's policy on Integrity of Scholarship, available at <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/policy.html>

Classroom Culture, Accountability, and Accessibility

In this course, we will practice a culture of care, reciprocity, and mutual respect. We will hold ourselves accountable to our own biases and privileges and make space for each other, ensuring all voices are heard and valued.

This course requires y/our dedicated commitment and consistent participation. Part of recognizing that you are valued members of the course means being mindful of our larger collective responsibility and accountability to each other, your classmates, and our community partners. The success of this course is ultimately built on the relationships of trust and care that you nurture with each other and with community partners throughout the quarter.

I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its instruction and design. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of your achievement, please notify me immediately. You may also seek assistance or information from the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#).

Electronic Devices

All phones must be turned off or set to vibrate/silent in the classroom. You may use your laptops (or tablets) to take notes, and to access the internet during class sessions for only instructor- authorized, class-related purposes. Let's respect the classroom as a place of learning and exchanging of ideas.

Readings and Lectures Schedule

Week 1 (4/4 & 4/6) – Introduction: "This Isn't Who We Are"

Héctor Tobar. "[Avoiding the Trap of Immigration Porn](#)." *New York Times*, Aug. 7, 2017.

Kim Phuc Phan Thi. "[It's Been 50 Years. I Am Not 'Napalm Girl' Any More](#)." *New York Times*, June 6, 2022.

Nicole Ostrand. 2015. "The Syrian Refugee Crisis: A Comparison of Responses by Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 3 (3): 255-279.

Espiritu et al, *Departures*, Prologue and Introduction

Week 2 (4/11 & 4/13) – Settler State Power, Borders, and Immigration Laws

Nevzat Soguk. "Border's Capture: Insurrectional Politics, Border-Crossing Humans, and the New Political." Ch. 12 in *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge*, edited by Prem Kumar Rajaram, Carl Grundy-Warr. University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Monika Batra Kashyap. "Unsettling Immigration Laws: Settler Colonialism and the U.S. Immigration Legal System." *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 548: 46 (2019).

Harsha Walia. Chapter 1, "Historic Entanglements of US Border Formation." In *Border & Rule*. Haymarket Books, 2021.

Josué López. "CRT and Immigration: Settler Colonialism, Foreign Indigeneity, and the Education of Racial Perception," 19 U. Md. L.J. *Race Relig. Gender & Class* 2019: 134-165.

Week 3 (4/18 & 4/20) – "We Are Here Because You Were There"

Suketu Mehta. ["This Land Is Their Land"](#) *Foreign Policy Magazine* Sept. 12, 2017.

Suketu Mehta. ["Why Should Immigrants 'Respect Our Borders'? The West Never Respected Theirs."](#) *New York Times* June 7, 2019.

Yen Le Espiritu. "Leaving Home: Filipino Migration/Return to the United States." Ch. 2 in *Home Bound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*, University of California Press, 2003.

*** Thursday April 20: Remote Learning***

Watch [Displacement, Migration, Borders, & Resistance](#) (with Harsha Walia) video and complete Canvas assignment. More information will be posted on Canvas.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE APRIL 21

Week 4 (4/25 & 4/27) – Incarceration, Crimmigration, and Detention

Naomi Paik. "Carceral Quarantine at Guantánamo: Legacies of US Imprisonment of Haitian Refugees, 1991 – 1994." *Radical History Review* (2013) 115: 142-168.

César Cuauhtémoc & García Hernández. "Deconstructing Crimmigration." *UC Davis Law Review* 52 (2018): 197-253.

Harsha Walia. Chapter 4. "Bordering Regimes." In *Border & Rule*. Haymarket Books, 2021.

Lorena Cruz. "Cipotes en Tijuana." *The Critical Refugee Studies Collective*, Dec. 16, 2019.
<https://criticalrefugeestudies.com/resources/blog/cipotes-en-tijuana>

Week 5 – (5/2 & 5/4) – On Fear, Persecution, and Livability

Espiritu et al, *Departures*, Chs. 1 and 2

Ilse Delray, Charles Watters, Cindy Mels, and Eric Broekaert, "'We're All the Same, Coz Exist Only One Earth, Why the BORDER EXIST': Messages of Migrants on Their Way." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 27 (1): 1-20, 2014.

Week 6 (5/9 & 5/11) – Review and Midterm

May 9 – Review and Catch Up

May 11 – No in-person class. Remote midterm.

MIDTERM DUE THURSDAY MAY 11

Week 7 (5/16 & 5/18) – Intergenerational Trauma: Family, Loss, and Love

5/16 – **Remote Learning**

- Read Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*
- Participate in Canvas discussion (more instructions will be posted on Canvas)

5/18 – Discuss Vuong's book in class.

Week 8 (5/23 & 5/25) – For the Love of Family?

Anita Casavantes Bradford. "[Immigrants, Refugees, and American Family Values: A Historical Reckoning](#)" *The Critical Refugee Studies Collective*, July 16, 2018.

Leisy J. Abrego. "The Structure of Trauma Through Separation." Ch. 4 in *Sacrificing Families: Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders*. Stanford University Press, 2014.

Mary Romero. (2008). "'Go After the Women!': Mothers Against Illegal Aliens' Campaign Against Mexican Immigrant Women and Their Children." *Indiana Law Journal* 83 (4): 1355-1390.

Jennifer Kim-Anh Tran. 2021. "On Becoming Tender: Conversations with My Father." *Amerasia Journal* 47:1, 134-143.

Video: Elvia Mendoza, *Nosotros Tambien Migramos*.

SECOND ASSIGNMENT DUE 5/26

Week 9 – (5/30 & 6/1) – On Ungratefulness and Refusal

Tuesday May 30 – Remote Learning

Zoom presentations of group projects to community partners.

Espiritu et al, *Departures*, Ch. 3

Dina Nayeri, ["The Ungrateful Refugee: We Have No Debt to Repay."](#)

Week 10 (6/6 & 6/8) – On Criticality and Creativity

Espiritu et al, *Departures*, Ch. 4., Conclusion, and Epilogue

**Conclusions/Reflections