



VIU
SUMMER
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PersPective

**Migration and Gender:
a Legal and Literary Perspective**

May 16-21, 2022

**Venice International University
Isola di San Servolo, Venice**

VIU Summer School

Migration and Gender: a Legal and Literary Perspective

May 16-21, 2022

Venice International
University

Scientific Coordinators:

Sara De Vido
Ca' Foscari University of
Venice

Laurie Shepard
Boston College

Tamio Nakamura
Waseda University

The summer school on Migration and Gender offers a legal-literary approach to the ways in which migration influences gender. Gender is a constitutive element of migration. The course will discuss both this idea, and reversing the formula, it will examine the role of migration in shaping gender, understood as relational and performative. A particular focus will be on identity in relation to human rights and law, labor and culture. The course is innovative and will combine the contribution of three scholars, in legal studies and literature.

Literature offers the experience of the individual and a micro-level examination of how migration shapes identity, and fuels vulnerability and marginality, and influences gender performance. Three short novels are currently under consideration: *Adua* by Igiaba Scego, *Buddha in the Attic* by Julie Otsuka, and *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong. *Adua* portrays the evolving identity of a young Somalian woman who is brought to Rome to star in a pornographic film, *Buddha in the Attic* depicts the emotional struggles of Japanese picture brides who migrate to the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, and *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* offers an intimate portrait of a Vietnamese boy being raised in the US by a mother and grandmother whose lives were shattered in the war.

In addition to the individual's story, the literature provides a broad geographical, socioeconomic and cultural background for exploring the many legal questions associated with migration and gender: human trafficking and sexual exploitation of women, girls and LGBTQAI; the lack of appreciation of intersectionality and vulnerability by courts, and the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers when they arrive in the country and seek protection. We will also go beyond a strict analysis of state practice and judgments to explore how gender is a way to understand the underlying causes of discrimination in the recognition of refugee status. Vulnerability will be analysed as institutional and structural, the product of the intersection of systems of advantages and disadvantages: in the course the concept of vulnerability will be analysed in the context of discrimination, to appreciate the impact of the former category as well as the importance of intersectionality in the proceedings before domestic and/or regional courts.

The program is particularly timely in this moment of history, in which migration is transforming societies and shaping gender. The course embraces both questions: migration and gender, and explores their intersection in a creative and dynamic way. Writers and poets have written about what it means to be a migrant in a country that is not the one of his/her origin: the hopes, the struggles, the experience of fragility and marginality. Courts at all levels have started to delve into the legal question surrounding the conditions of recent migration with multiple cases of persecution, sexual exploitation, and vulnerability, and they have done so without always being able to encompass the complexity of intersectional grounds of discrimination.

The course will model the ways in which the humanities and the imagination might inform legal processes or contour legal decisions. This will play out in two ways: first through the integration of literature and law in our class discussions, and second through the students' experiences of rewriting a legal decision from the perspective of what they have learned and discussed. In short, we hope that this course will educate a young generation of lawyers, academics and activists by raising awareness of many issues at the intersection of gender, migration and law.

VIU programs are characterized by interdisciplinarity and interculturalism. It is the perfect place for such an innovative project to start and develop. The course will introduce the gender rewriting for the first time as participatory exercise, combining literature and law.

Faculty

Sara De Vido, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy
Laurie Shepard, Boston College, USA
Tamio Nakamura, Waseda University, Japan

Who is it for?

Applications are welcome from current MA and PhD Students in Sociology, Anthropology, Gender studies, Literature, Human Rights, Law, Labor and Cultural studies.

Methodology and structure

The first four days of the course will be divided into two parts, the first establishing geographical, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds for the novels, and exploring identity particularly as it

expresses migrant issues of vulnerability and marginality; the second dedicated to a broad general understanding of the legal issues surrounding migration and gender. In the final two days, the workshop will propose a gender-sensitive rewriting of a judgment on migration (see for example, Hodson and Lavers (eds), *Feminist Judgments in International Law*, Hart, 2019). This exercise will specifically focus on the often neglected question of how gender is shaped by migration. The rewriting will not necessarily be a legal brief, but could also take the form of poems, short stories, art, videos. The class will be divided into groups to work on these forms of rewriting. The results will be presented in the final day of the course.

Learning outcomes for participants

Students will learn:

- How to read and critically examine novels on the topic of gender and migration;
- How to connect the legal aspects to the literary ones, and how to draw them out from a reading, that is, which questions transcend the particular circumstances of plot or culture;
- How to analyze judgments and decisions from a legal point of view;
- How to rewrite a judgment / decision using a gendered approach.

A list of readings will be provided, for students to prepare before the course starts.

Credits

A Certificate of attendance will be issued at the end of the course.

Number of ECTS credits allocated: **2**

The Program will admit 20 student participants.

Fees

Students of VIU member universities:
€ 350 incl. VAT.

Students of other universities:
€ 700 incl. VAT.

The fees will cover tuition, course materials, lunches in the VIU cafeteria and Social events. Student participants will be responsible for covering their own travel expenses to and from Venice, accommodation and local transportation. VIU Alumni are eligible for a reduced fee.

PhD candidates and post-docs from universities in EU universities may be eligible for Erasmus+ mobility grant support. Candidates should consult the International Office in their own university for information about the calls for applications for funding. VIU will provide any supporting documentation requested for such applications. Contact VIU Erasmus office: erasmus@univiu.org

Accommodation on campus

In shared rooms (triple/quadruple) with other participants: € 308 VAT included for 6 nights with breakfast (municipal tax included). Further information will be available in the Application form.

On-line application

December 1, 2021 – January 25, 2022
via the VIU website

Students will be notified by February 1, 2022, and asked to pay the tuition fee and accommodation fee (if requested) by February 9, 2022.

Applicants must submit the application form, a letter of motivation – which should include a brief description of the candidate's research interests, a curriculum vitae and a photo.

As the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, VIU will continue to monitor the situation, and in the event that it is not possible to confirm the program on the VIU campus as scheduled, other practicable solutions will be evaluated. Applicants and confirmed participants will be informed of any changes.

Venice International University is a consortium of 20 universities, representing 14 countries throughout the world.

The mission of VIU is to foster cooperation among VIU member institutions while facilitating the exchange of knowledge and ideas, by developing, promoting and organizing joint academic, research and training/capacity-building program. Students from non-member universities may participate in selected academic programs. The academic programs at VIU are distinguished by a markedly interdisciplinary approach to the topics, and by the international perspectives that the participants contribute to the discussions. The VIU campus is on the island of San Servolo in Venice, Italy.

Location



Venice International University

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