Venice International University
VIU Summer School
Migration and Gender: Legal, Sociolinguistic and Literary Perspectives
September 18-22, 2023

Faculty
Sara De Vido, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy
Laurie Shepard, Boston College, USA
Francesco Goglia, University of Exeter, UK

Preliminary Assignments:
Read two short novels: Adua by Igiaba Scego, and On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong
Watch Io sono Li, directed by Andrea Segre
Preview the following two articles which will be reviewed in further detail as a class on the first day:
1. UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), Ioane Teitiota v New Zealand, UN Doc CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016 (7 January 2020)

Brief introductory presentation answering “Who am I? How do I understand the culture (the imaginary) of my country?”

Optional: Watch Bangla directed by Phaim Bhuiyan
Watch Il Vegetariano directed by Roberto San Pietro

Course outline
M1 – Introduction to the Questions of the Course: Law, Socio-Linguistics, Literature
M2 – Migration and Human Rights
M3 – Intersectionality
M4 – Migration, Gender and Questions of Language
M5 – Assimilation and Vulnerability
M6 – Migration, Gender and Sexual Exploitation
M7 – Migration, Human Rights and the Environment
M8 – Citizenship, Self-Actualization and Language
M9 – Feminist Rewriting of a Recent Immigration Case
M10 – Presenting the Recent Immigration Case
Program

Morning breaks: 10:45-11:00
Afternoon breaks: 15:30-16:00
End of the day: 17:30

Monday, September 18
9:00  Registration and Welcome

9:30  Module 1 – Introduction to the Questions of the Course: Law, Socio-Linguistics, Literature
      Sara De Vido, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy
      Laurie Shepard, Boston College, USA
      Francesco Goglia, University of Exeter, UK
      The class will focus on the three different disciplines and the three sets of tools to examine and reflect on the question.

12:30  Lunch

14:00  Module 2 – Migration and Human Rights
      Sara De Vido, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy
      The legal framework defining migration and human rights will be presented, which was established by the United Nations Convention Refugee Status of 1951. The United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) will be also taken into consideration along with regional legal instruments to better grasp the complexity of the protection of refugees’ human rights. Other topics:
      • the legal rights of refugees pertaining to language: the persecution of language, culture and identity as a reason to be granted asylum, and the right to maintain language/culture/identity in the destination country
      • the context of an individual’s human rights as defined by international law, and the demands of family law rooted in local cultures

Tuesday, September 19
9:30  Module 3 – Intersectionality
      The title of the course, “migration and gender,” recognizes migration as a complex nexus of multiple phenomena. “Gender” is a fundamental optic to explore the inseparability and irreducibility of many considerations implicit in any single migration-related decision or act. Topics to be discussed are:
      • intersectionality as a concept fundamental to contemporary legal interpretation
      • the importance of intersectionality to the expression of language, identity and culture, and to understanding the limitations of that expression in minority cultures
      • the ways in which the novel models the idea of intersectionality
      *There will be a class group activity in the second half of Module 3.

12:00  Lunch
Module 4 – Migration, Gender and Questions of Language  
Francesco Goglia, University of Exeter, UK

Questions of language maintenance and revitalization, as well as language loss from a transnational perspective will be introduced. Other topics to be discussed are:
- language as a right
- how language in the migration/diaspora context is often linked to issues of language and culture in the country of origin
- the interface between the conditions attendant on gender and language as a right in the literature of migration

The waterbus leaves San Servolo at 13:20 to visit the island of San Lazzaro as an example of a diaspora working for the preservation of a language/culture. The tour will be from 13:30-15:15. The waterbus leaves San Lazzaro at 15:25.

Wednesday, September 20

9:30 Module 5 – Assimilation and Vulnerability
The class will begin with definitions of assimilation and vulnerability and then explore the two concepts.
Topics to be discussed:
- how assimilation, in the novels, both empowers and makes the subject vulnerable through loss of linguistic and cultural identity
- the importance, in a modern, pluralist society, of the voices from the margins
- narrative strategies in the novels
- linguistic and cultural differences between first and second generations, and the role of cultural contacts

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Module 6 – Migration, Gender and Sexual Exploitation
The class will focus on the concept of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, also reflecting on the Istanbul Convention (2011) on preventing violence against women and domestic abuse and its definitions.
Guest Speaker: Sabrina Marchetti, Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy
Other topics:
- the manifold forms of sexual violence and exploitation
- Practices in a country of origin considered abusive in the destination country
- the linguistic and cultural obstacles to reporting sexual violence in the destination country
*Discussion of Io sono Li

Thursday, September 21

9:30 Module 7 – Migration, Human Rights and the Environment
The class will focus on migration and the environment.
Other topics:
- reasons why are people migrating that pertain to the environment and climate change
- the UN proposal for climate refugee asylum status
12:30  Lunch

14:00  Module 8 – Citizenship, Self-Actualization and Language
The class will address disparities in the law for migrants to attain citizenship; ius sanguinis, ius soli, ius culturae.
Other topics:
• questions of migratory trajectories including return migration, onward migration (newly naturalized Italian citizens who decide to leave Italy, or Latin Americans who acquire Italian citizenship and migrate to Europe, not Italy)
• the acquisition of language in destination country implies a loss of the linguistic and cultural heritage of country the migrant (family) has left
• the destination country’s failure to recognize an individual’s accomplishments and expertise because of linguistic obstacles
• the migrant’s autonomous process of self-actualization

Friday, September 22
9:30  Module 9 – Feminist Rewriting of a Recent Immigration Case
Students will be provided with a clear description of the project as well as the cases in advance of the final assignment, which will be completed in groups.

12:30  Lunch

14:00  Module 10 – Presenting the Recent Immigration Case