Immigration/Refugees Crisis, Religion, Globalization and the Post-Colonial State

Summer 2016          Location Paris, France
Units: 3 units        July 11-22, 2016

Course Description
The course addresses the on-going global migration and refugee crisis readily documentable on the daily news and extensive policy debates at the local, national, and international levels. At present, the number of people that are on the move from their homeland as immigrants or refugees number over 50 million and are not confined to one region, ethnic, or a religious group but come from populations all over the globe. The visible movement of peoples across national boundaries in search of economic opportunities and higher standards of living, and away from conflict zones, persecution, and violence has transformed countries in Europe and North America.

As a result of this massive human movement, the emerging of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious societies are becoming a daily norm and with it rising tensions that problematizes and seeks to exclude immigrants and refugees on some marked, constructed or imagined difference. In this course, we will analyze the causes and consequences of the movement of immigrants and refugees into Europe and the US. The course will examine the immigration/refugee crisis from a longer historical lens that takes into account the legacy and impacts of colonization, the post-colonial state, the Cold War (Low Intensity Warfare in the Global South) and free trade agreement and privatization in the Global South. In addition, the course will centralize and contextualize the pernicious impacts of globalization and the collapse of economies and states in the Global South that accelerates the rates of migration and instability. More critically and from a religious and spiritual basis, the question of the collective ethical and moral responsibility will inform and serve as the running thread throughout the course and lectures.

The lectures and readings will examine the religious, political, economic, social, racial and security responses that accords differentiated treatment to immigrants and refugees with primary focus on Europe and North America. Also, how are the political and social responses of receiving governments and societies are developed and what forces are acting upon it; the rising tide of securitization and criminalization of immigrants and refugees-including the entanglement of armed conflicts, smuggling, trafficking and terrorism in policy formation; changing conceptions of citizenship and nationality in receiving states; the role played by religious institutions, governmental and non-governmental international agencies in influencing state policies towards refugees and immigrants, and the moral and ethical issues for public policy posed by international population movements.
Learning Outcomes
At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate how religious texts are used both positively and negatively in public debate to address issues of immigration/refugee movements.
2. Compare and contrast regimes and philosophies of immigration based on the historical, political, religious, racial and social forces that inform them.
3. Discuss the problematic of integration.
4. Describe how the concept of race in modern history has emerged as a primary determinant for inclusion and exclusion of immigrants and refugees.
5. Critically analyze the current legal discourses on minority rights in the global north and the shifts that can be ascertained over time.
6. Discuss varied limits of tolerance and entertain and evaluate the question “Who gets to decide?”
7. Demonstrate awareness of the connection between the attacks of September 11 and immigration/integration policies in the Global North.
8. Define the relationship between the right to be different and principles of universal human rights and limits imposed on new citizens in the Europe and North America.