

# SOAN 231: Transnational Migration and Diasporic Communities

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SOAN 231, Spring '14  
Days & Time: MWF, 4a  
Location: Leighton 301  
Office Hours: W 2:00-3:30pm

## Course Description

This course examines the social and cultural dimensions of migration and the transnational flows of people and ideas from an anthropological and interdisciplinary perspective. We will use the broader anthropological spirit of understanding the conjunctions of cultural meaning and social change to study diaspora and transnationalism. This course pays attention to how conceptual categories such as transnationalism and diaspora are distinct (or not) from each other. We will also focus on some of the major themes that have emerged in the fields of Migration Studies and Diaspora Studies.

Though subjected to varied emphases and disciplinary investments, the contemporary conceptualization of transnationalism and diaspora involves an understanding of the shifting relations between “homelands” and “host nations” from the perspective of both those who have moved, whether voluntary or not, and the recipient societies in which the dispersed find themselves.

While we are interested in who moves where, when, and why, we are particularly interested in how transnational migration has affected “ways of being” and “ways of belonging” (Glick Shiller 2003) of both those who move and those who stay. We are thus interested in exploring transnational social fields, transnational imagined communities, along with and against diasporic formations, longings and belonging.

This course draws upon theoretical scholarship and case studies from a range of academic disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Indeed, one of our goals will be to appreciate what different disciplines contribute to our understanding of the social phenomena under investigation. However, reflecting the disciplinary background of the instructor, the course will be people-focused, looking at various global “ethnoscapes” (Appadurai 1996) and human experiences.

We will begin by exploring the theoretical and methodological issues that have been addressed in the recent literature on “transnational migration,” “diasporas,” and “community.” We move on to look at case studies of specific transnational migrants and diasporic communities. Finally, we will draw together our assessment of what we have collectively learned about the causes, consequences, and implications of transnationalism and diaspora.

## A Climate of Mutual Respect:

This class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically

sensitive issues that arise in the course content.

### **Student Learning Outcomes for this Course:**

- Students will learn about transnational migration and diasporic communities in our current era of globalization.
- Students will learn how to approach the study of the course's topic from an anthropological and interdisciplinary perspective.
- Students will participate in a discussion-based course
- Students will improve critical thinking skills
- Students' intellectual independence will be fostered
- Students will gain insight on how scholars ask questions
- Students will learn to find and evaluate information through close reading and research
- Students will learn how to use information effectively and ethically to construct arguments
- Students will discover the intellectual trajectory of an important thinker, theory, or concept that is germane to the course's topic

### **Course Format**

Course format will vary but will typically include mini-lectures from the instructor at the beginning of class followed by presentations from class participants, with emphasis on discussion and student participation. The last one-to-two days of classes will be committed to a mini conference in which class participants demonstrate oral communication skills by presenting their final project.

### **Course Requirements**

As a course participant you are expected to complete all readings and think critically about the information contained in the assigned texts; complete four writing exercises as assigned; participate in class discussions; lead class discussion as assigned; formally present findings from final project during the mini-conference; and attend class regularly.

### **Course Readings**

All students should have their own copies of core texts and electronic reading assignments. Please prepare the readings for the days they are shown on the class schedule below. Please bring the assigned texts with you to class on the appropriate days. **Participants in this course should expect to read a minimum of 200 pages of course-related text each week.** Please pay attention to

Textbooks are available at Carleton College Bookstore.

- Braziel, J.E. & A. Mannur, eds. *Theorizing Diaspora*. Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
- Jackson, John L. *Thin Description: Ethnography and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem*. Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Puri, Shalini. *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Inequality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.

Electronic readings available on Moodle, as assigned.

## **Attendance and Participation**

*Attendance:* Class attendance is mandatory and roll will be taken. If you will be absent for religious holiday observances, sports activities, College related obligations, or other legitimate reasons, please make sure I know ahead of time. You are allowed one unexcused absence during the term. Any additional unexcused absences will adversely impact your final grade for the course. You are responsible for acquiring class notes for missed classes.

*Participation:* At the college level the role of the instructor is to construct a context for learning. Knowledge is not transmitted from professor to student, but rather actively created during classroom encounters. Learning—and the development of the course—depends on student engagement. Participation in class discussion is a critical component of the course's success. The more engaged you are in class discussions, the more you will learn and grow from this course. Discussions and in-class activities depend on you reading the assignments. I will look for evidence of you having read the assigned texts.

You should come to class prepared to engage your fellow classmates in critical dialogue, raise thought provoking questions, and provide interesting insight that could add to others' understanding. Participation will count as part of your grade in this course as noted below.

1. Attendance and preparedness:
  - Be present and punctual
  - Books/articles should be out at the beginning of class
  - Disengage laptops: front row only, if necessary for notes
  - Power down cell-phones. **Any cell-phone use during class will be counted as an absence.**
2. Participation during class:
  - Note taking
  - Listening to your colleagues
  - Contributing comments based on the reading
  - Giving your classmates a chance to speak
3. Integrating:
  - Carrying over themes between classes
  - Connecting coursework from other classes
  - Making connections to events and activities outside of class
  - Demonstrating attentiveness through written work

## **Writing Assignments**

You will have four writing assignments for this course: discussion leader presentation script and questions, Critical Book Review, and Anthology Assignment. All assignments are due on the day assigned by 1:00pm. All assignments must be submitted electronically on Moodle unless otherwise instructed.

## **Oral Presentation**

Each student will serve as a discussion leader at least one time during the term. Discussions leaders should: (a) plan to read the assigned readings for their session well in advance, (b) write a critical summary of the readings in which they synthesize the issues and draw connections to other theoretical

readings and case studies, (c) meet with the instructor at least two days before the class session to strategize, and (c) email the instructor four final discussion questions to be posted to Moodle 24 hours before the discussion session. Others should plan to do the assigned readings and come prepared for engaged and informed discussion.

In addition to leading discussion, each student will be responsible for presenting the findings of his/her final project at the end of the term. Students will give a 10-minute presentation of their process and findings to the class.

### **Carleton College Disability Policy**

Carleton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodation must place documentation on file with the Coordinator of Disability Services who will then inform faculty about student accommodations. College policy is that faculty can and should wait for this notification before making course modifications for students. Disability Services contact information: Andy Christensen, Coordinator of Disability Services – email: [anchrist@carleton.edu](mailto:anchrist@carleton.edu); phone: ext. 4080.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Students are directed to the Carleton College Handbook concerning issues of standards and policies that govern conduct at the College in general as well as in this course. Please pay close attention to the rules concerning plagiarism, and consult me during office hours if you have any questions about what does or does not constitute plagiarism.

**How to contact LaToya:** During my office hours (listed at the top of the syllabus) I have set aside time to meet and talk with students. Feel free to drop by in groups or as individuals to ask questions about the readings and class discussions; talk to me about your individual projects, assignments, and grades; and/or any problems or concerns about your performance or difficulties in relation to class. You can also bring your personal passions about anthropology to me and I would be happy to help you explore them. If the listed times conflict with other commitments in your schedule, please email me for an appointment. I myself occasionally have conflicts and cannot be in my office at those times. In the event of this, I will make an announcement in class and/or post a note on my door. Finally, **I use email for brief communications and appointment setting, but not to carry on extended conversations.** When you want to discuss your grade, your paper topic, attendance concerns, and so forth, please schedule a meeting.

### **Course Grading Distribution:**

Assignment: Discussion Leader, 20%

Assignment: Critical Book Review, 30%

**Due:**

Choose **one** of the two following books for your review:

Shalini Puri's *The Caribbean Postcolonial* or John Jackson's *Thin Description*

Anthology Assignment 50%

Proposal 10%

Due:

Annotated Bibliography 10%

Due:

Introduction to Anthology Draft

Due:

Final Anthology 30%

Due:

### Class Schedule

M March 31	Introduction of participants & course overview
W April 2	<p><b>A New World? A New Paradigm?</b></p> <p>Brazier, J.E. &amp; A. Mannur, eds. "Nation, Migration, and Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>, pp.1-22.</p> <p>Appadurai, A. "Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" in J.E. Brazier &amp; A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA), pp. 25-48).</p> <p>Vertovec, S. "Transnationalism" in M.J. Gibney &amp; R. Hansen, eds., <i>Immigration and Asylum</i>, Vol. 2 (ABC-CLIO, 2005), pp. 603-07.</p> <p>Tololyan, K. "The Nation-State and Its Others" in <i>Diaspora</i> 1, 1 (Spring 1991): 3-8.</p> <p>Van Hear, N. "Diaspora" in M.J. Gibney &amp; R. Hansen, eds., <i>Immigration and Asylum</i>, Vol. 1 (ABC-CLIO, 2005), pp. 135-40.</p>
F April 4	<p><b>Theorizing Transnational Migrations</b></p> <p>Lei, J. "From International Migration to Transnational Diaspora" in <i>Contemporary Sociology</i> 24, 4 (July 1995): 303-306.</p> <p>Glick Shiller, N., L. Basch, and C. Szanton Blanc. "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration" in <i>Anthropological Quarterly</i> 68, 1 (January 1995): 48-63.</p> <p><i>Further Reading:</i> Vertovec, S. and R. Cohen. "Introduction" in S. Vertovec and R. Cohen, eds., <i>Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism</i> (Elgar</p>

	<p>Publishing, 1999), pp. xvii-xxviii.</p> <p>Levitt, P. and B.N. Jaworsky, "Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends" in <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i>, 2007, 33: 129-56.</p>
M April 7	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Theorizing Diaspora</b></p> <p>Clifford, J. "Diaspora" in <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 9, 3 (August 1994): 302-38.</p> <p>Hall, S. "From 'roots' to 'routes'" in D. Massey &amp; P. Jess, eds., <i>A Place in the World?</i> (Oxford, 1995), pp. 206-09.</p> <p>Tololyan, K. "Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment" in <i>Diaspora</i> 5, 1 (Spring 1996): 3-36.</p> <p><i>Further Reading:</i>          -Werbner, P. "The place which is diaspora: citizenship, religion and gender in the making of chaotic transnationalism" in <i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i> 28, 1 (Jan 2002): 119-33.</p> <p>-Brubaker, R. "The 'diaspora' diaspora" in <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> 28, 1 (January 2005): 1-19.</p>
W April 9	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Diaspora and Imaginations of Home</b></p> <p>-Brah, Avtar. "Constructions of 'the Asian' in post-war Britain: culture, politics and identity in the pre-Thatcher years." in <i>Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities</i>. pp.17-48.</p> <p>-Rushdie, Salman. "Imaginary Homelands." in <i>Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991</i>. pp.9-21.</p>
F April 11	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Diaspora, Media, and Nostalgia</b></p> <p>-Naficy, Hamid. "The Poetics and Practice of Iranian Nostalgia in Exile" in <i>Diaspora</i>. v1n3, winter 1991, pp.285-302.</p> <p>-Bandyopadhyay, Ranjan. "Nostalgia, Identity and Tourism: Bollywood in the Indian Diaspora." in <i>Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change</i>. v6 n2, 2008. p.79-100</p>
M April 14	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community</b></p> <p>Anderson, B. <i>Imagined Communities</i>, 2nd ed. (Verso, 1991), pp. 1-7, 44-6, 133-5, 204-6.</p> <p>Baumann, G. "Nation, ethnicity and community" in K. Knott and S.</p>

	<p>McLoughlin, eds., <i>Diasporas</i> (Zed, 2010), pp. 45-49.</p> <p>Webner, P. "Complex diasporas" in K. Knott and S. McLoughlin, eds., <i>Diasporas</i> (Zed, 2010), pp. 74-78.</p>
W April 16	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community and Diasporic Identities</b></p> <p>-Boyarin, Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin. "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Diaspora." in J.E. Braziel &amp; A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA,), pp. 85-118).</p> <p>-Jules-Rosette, Benneta. "Identity Discourses and Diaspora Aesthetics in Black Paris: Community Formation and the Translation of Culture." In <i>Diaspora</i>. 9.1:200. pp. 39-58.</p>
F April 18	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Diaspora and Violence</b></p> <p>-Axel, Brian Keith. "The Diasporic Imaginary" in <i>Public Culture</i>. v14 n2 Spring 2012. Pp.411-428.</p> <p>-Sa'di, Ahmd H. "Castastrophe, Memory and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a Component of Palestinian Identity." In <i>Isreal Studies</i>. v7n2, summer 2002. Pp.175-198.</p>
M April 21	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guest Visitor Dr. Percy Hintzen</b></p> <p><i>Caribbean as a Diasporic Space</i> Puri, Shalini. <i>The Caribbean Post Colonial: Social Equality, Post Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity</i>, (New York) pp. 1-17, skim 19-81</p>
W April 23	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Diasporic Hybridity</b></p> <p>Puri, Shalini. <i>The Caribbean Post Colonial: Social Equality, Post Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity</i>, (New York) pp.83-139</p>
F April 25	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Post-Nationalism and Belonging</b></p> <p>Puri, Shalini. <i>The Caribbean Post Colonial: Social Equality, Post Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity</i>, (New York) pp. 171-223</p>
M April 28	Jackson, John. <i>Thin Description:</i>
W April 30	Jackson, John. <i>Thin Description:</i>
F May 2 <i>Puri Book review due</i>	Jackson, John. <i>Thin Description:</i>

M May 5	Mid-Term Break—NO CLASS
W May 7	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gender and Diaspora</b></p> <p><i>Intellectual Hegemonies and the Construction of Diaspora women:</i></p> <p>-Chow, Rey. “Against the Lures of Diaspora: Minority Discourse, Chinese Women, and Intellectual Hegemony.” in J.E. Braziel &amp;A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA,), pp. 163-183).</p> <p>-Ifekweunigwe, Jayne O. “Returning(s): Relocating the Critical feminist Auto-Ethnographer.” in J.E. Braziel &amp;A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA,), pp. 184-206).</p> <p>-Campt, T. and D.A. Thomas, “Gendering diaspora: transnational feminism, diaspora and its hegemonies” in <i>Feminist Review</i> 90 (2008): 1-8.</p> <p>-Al-Ali, N. “Diasporas and gender” in in K. Knott and S. McLoughlin, eds., <i>Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities</i> (Zed, 2010), pp. 118-22.</p>
F May 9	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sexuality and Diasporic Subjectivity</b></p> <p><i>Jackson book review due</i></p> <p>-Manalansan IV, Martin F. “In the Shadow of Stonewall: Examining Gay Transnational Politics and Diasporic Dilemma.” in J.E. Braziel &amp;A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA,), pp.207-228).</p> <p>-Gopinath, Gayatri. “Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora: South Asian Sexualities in Motion.” in J.E. Braziel &amp;A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA,), pp. 261-279).</p>
M May 12	
W May 14	
F May 16	
M May 19	
W May 21	
F May 23	
M May 26	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cultural Production and Diaspora</b></p> <p>Hall, Stuart. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” in J.E. Braziel &amp;A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA,), pp. 233-246).</p> <p>-Mercer, Kobena. “Diaspora Culture and the Dialogic Imagination: The Aesthetics of Black Independent Film in Britain. in J.E. Braziel &amp;A. Mannur, eds., <b>Theorizing Diaspora</b>. (Malden, MA,), pp. 247-260).</p>

W May 28	
F May 30	<i>Film</i>
M June 2	In Class Presentations
W June 4 <b>Last Day of Class</b>	In Class Presentations