COURSE SYLLABUS

Migration and Identity

Instructor:
Name, title: Dr. Ana Mijić, M.A.
Department: Nationalism Studies
Central European University
Semester/term, year: Winter Term 2024
Course level (MA, PhD): MA
# Credits (# ECTS Credits): 2
Office hours by appointment

Course Description

This course provides a critical examination of the relationship between migration and identity. Beginning with the “transnational turn,” which compelled researchers to reconsider their approaches to a wide range of topics related to migration, including ethnicity (going beyond the “ethnic lens”) and nationalism (moving beyond methodological nationalism), we will explore the various forms of migration and their effects on identity. We will discuss the processes of categorization of “migrants,” “guest workers,” “refugees,” and “expats,” and examine how these categories are constructed by researchers and in politics. We will also consider the implications of these categorizations for agency and power in the context of migration. This will encompass a discussion of issues related to citizenship and the challenges faced by migrants regarding their legal status and access to rights.

We will explore potential tensions between external categorizations and self-identification and, in the process, delve into the question of belonging. This exploration will involve an examination of concepts such as “diaspora,” or “hybridity.” We will adopt a critical approach to identity research, recognizing the limitations of essentialist approaches and emphasizing the need to explore the complexities of identity formation and transformation in the context of migration. Additionally, we will examine the methodological challenges of transnational migration research and stress the importance of reflecting on one's own positionality as a researcher within the process of analysis. We will also delve into the role of power dynamics, biases, and ethical considerations in research both with and on migrants. This examination will encompass the challenges and opportunities of reflexive research and how it can help address the limitations of traditional migration research.

Overall, this course provides students with a comprehensive understanding of migration and identity, equipping them with the skills and tools to engage with these complex and pressing issues in contemporary society.
Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

✓ Critically analyze the complex relationship between migration and identity, and identify the different forms of migration and their effects on identity.
✓ Understand the process of categorization of “migrants,” “guest workers,” “refugees,” “expats,” and other groups, and critically assess how these categories are constructed by researchers and politics.
✓ Identify the implications of categorizations on agency and power in the context of migration, including issues of citizenship, legal status, and access to rights.
✓ Recognize potential tensions between external categorizations and self-identification, and analyze the question of belonging by examining concepts such as “hybridity” and “diaspora.”
✓ Analyze the limitations of essentialist approaches to identity research and explore the complexities of identity formation and transformation in the context of migration.
✓ Understand methodological challenges in transnational migration research and the importance of reflecting on one's own positionality as a researcher.
✓ Analyze power dynamics, biases, and ethical considerations in research with and on migrants and identify the challenges and opportunities of reflexive research.
✓ Develop critical thinking skills and apply them to contemporary issues related to migration and identity in various settings, such as politics, media, and everyday life.
✓ Develop research skills and the ability to design and execute research projects related to migration and identity.

Course Requirements

(1) **Regular preparation and active participation (30% of the final grade).** Your attendance, preparation, and active participation in class are required. You must come to class having carefully read all the assigned material and prepared to discuss it by also constructively engaging with other student’s points. Laptops and tablets are only allowed for displaying course-related materials (e.g. readings, notes, presentations). If you are not able to attend a class (due to illness, emergency care obligations, etc.) you should contact me in advance. Under these circumstances, and with my approval, you should answer the week's guiding questions in writing and email them to me within one week of the missed class.

(2) **Oral presentation (20% of the final grade).** Each student will be expected to give a short (max. 15 minutes) presentation (as a part of a group) addressing one of the topics listed in the course schedule. Presentations should provide a summary and critical review of one or two of the listed readings. In addition to the presentation, two or three discussion questions should be prepared for discussion during the class. These questions should be uploaded to the learning platform no later than 10 a.m. on the day of the respective session.
(3) Final Paper (50% of the final grade). Students are expected to write an 3000-3500 words long essay. Throughout the term, a range of essay topics will be presented to the students, allowing them to choose a question that aligns with their interests and engages with the key themes of the course. The essay will require students to demonstrate their understanding of the complex relationship between migration and identity, critically analyze the implications of categorizations, and apply their research and analytical skills to contemporary issues related to migration and identity. The essay will also serve as an opportunity for students to showcase their ability to reflect on their own positionality as a researcher and engage with ethical considerations in research with and on migrants. Students should choose the topic of their final paper and discuss it with the instructor by Week 10.

**Note:** In order to receive a passing grade, your performance should be at least 50% for each type of assessment. You will receive interim feedback on your class attendance and participation in Week 6.

**Grades:**

- A   > 90 points
- A-  81 – 90 points
- B+  75 – 80 points
- B   66 – 74 points
- B-  60 – 65 points
- C+  51 – 59 points
- F   < 51 points or performance below 50% on any form of assessment.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (11.01.24). Introduction.

Discussion of the syllabus and the assignments

Week 2 (18.01.24). Questions of/Approaches to Migration Research

Background reading

Mandatory

Caroline Brettell and James Frank Hollifield, eds., Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines, Fourth edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2023);
Introduction.

Optional


Week 3 (25.01.24). Introduction: Identity, (Belonging), and Migration

Background reading

Mandatory

https://doi.org/10.5949/UPO9781846314537.003.
Optional


Week 4 (01.02.24). Beyond Methodological Nationalism and the Ethnic Lens?

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 5 (08.02.24). No class

Week 6 (15.02.24). Processes of Categorization and Power in the Context of Migration

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 7 (22.02.24). Beyond Assimilation / Discussions on Integration

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 8 (29.02.24). Diasporic Identities

Background reading

Mandatory


Optional


Week 9 (07.03.24). A Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Identity and (forced) Migration – Lecture

Background reading


Week 10/1 (14.03.24). Guest Lecture by Victoriya Sereda: In Search of Belonging

Background reading


Week 10/2 (15.03.24). Guest Lecture by Anna Babka: Homi Bhabha’s Concept of Hybridity

Background reading

Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994).

Week 11 (21.03.24). Translocational Positionalities

Background reading

Mandatory

Optional


Week 12 (28.03.24). Conclusion – Discussion and Evaluation