

SOP77062: Statelessness and Forced Migration

Duration: Hilary Term
ECTS: 10 credits
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Module Description

This module explores statelessness and forced migration by considering how our understanding of these issues is shaped by historical patterns of development, conflict, and decolonization, and by ideas of nationality, sovereignty, and citizenship. Accordingly, the module considers both causes and responses to statelessness and forced migration through the prism of political and sociological theory, unpacking central theoretical and substantive issues. In line with the field itself, the module mediates ‘academic’ and ‘real’ concerns by considering key problems in forced migration studies within the context of contemporary forced migration politics. In this regard, particular attention is drawn to the ethical and normative dimensions of theory and research and to the concepts and categories or ‘labels’ deployed. The latter are related to the wider political dynamics and power relations of contemporary global society, which shape the practices as well as the analysis of statelessness and forced migration today. Here, two contending orientations, and the conflict between them, are of central concern: that of upholding the rights of displaced persons, and that of controlling territories and securing borders.

The aim of the module is to develop capacities for a deeper understanding of statelessness and forced migration today and for a critical consideration of the politics and power dynamics bearing down upon these issues and their interpretation.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Evaluate critical perspectives on the politics of statelessness within the contemporary debates about race and ethnicity.
- Critically evaluate the relative insightfulness of competing theoretical interpretations of forced displacement, statelessness and the impact upon the states and people involved.
- Appreciate different ways in which statelessness and forced migration may be linked.
- Reflect different traditions of classification of statelessness and forced migration and demonstrate how different and contradictory policies are proposed and implemented.

Main Topics

Forced Migration

- Theories of forced migration & definitions
- Drivers and root causes of forced migration and displacement
- Questioning categories of forced migrants
- Policies and responses to forced migration: state and international institutions
- 'Restrictionism' and the 'politics' of forced migration

Statelessness

- Defining statelessness
- Historical perspectives of statelessness
- Contemporary forms of statelessness
- Theories of statelessness
- Conceptual boundaries of Statelessness

Working Methods

The module is delivered in two-hour seminar slots consisting of a lecturing input, student presentations, and group discussion. Students are expected to read in advance and participate in class.

Assessment

The module is assessed in two components:

- 3,000 words essay (80%)
- Presentation (20%)

The essay should be submitted to Turnitin on Blackboard. Penalties for late submission apply. Without an authorised extension, the mark given for the essay will be lowered by 10%. The essay will be graded according to the TCD School of Social Sciences and Philosophy Marking Scale.

The presentation will involve description and discussion of a set reading. Each student will be assigned a week on which to present at the beginning of term. The presentation will be accompanied by PowerPoint slides and assessed on the following 3 criteria:

1. Use of reading material:

The presentation should elaborate and show an understanding of the central problem or question and engage with the relevant theoretical and empirical material.

2. Clarity of the presentation:

The presentation should be structured and clear to the audience. It should be concise, provide key points, and be engaging for the audience. Dense paragraphs of text should be avoided.

3. Creative elements and critique:

The presentation should bring in engaging and relevant material from outside the lectures and readings such as video, pictures and other media and can include audience participation. The presentation should also bring the presenters own perspective into the fold and consider important critical dimensions of the material or topic being considered.

Key Readings

The following is an indicative reading list. Required and recommended readings will be provided each week on Blackboard.

- Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, E., Loescher, G., Long, K., & Sigona, N. (Eds.). (2014). *The Oxford handbook of refugee and forced migration studies*. OUP Oxford.
- Bloch, A., & Dona, G. (Eds.). (2018). *Forced Migration: Current Issues and Debates*. Routledge.
- McAdam, J. (Ed.). (2010). *Climate change and displacement: Multidisciplinary perspectives*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Betts, A., Loescher, G., & Milner, J. (2013). *The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): The politics and practice of refugee protection*. Routledge.
- Koser, K., & Martin, S. (Eds.). (2011). *The migration-displacement nexus: patterns, processes, and policies* (Vol. 32). Berghahn Books.
- Blitz, B. K., & Lynch, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Statelessness and Citizenship: A comparative study on the benefits of nationality*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Bloom, T., Tonkiss, K., & Cole, P. (Eds.). (2017). *Understanding Statelessness*. Taylor & Francis.
- Edwards, A., & Van Waas, L. (2014). Statelessness. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*.
- Arendt, H. (1973). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 1951. San Diego and New York.
- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer: sovereign power and bare life* Heller-Roazen D trans Stanford University Press. Stanford CA (first published in Italian in 1995).