

# Cultural Exchange with Refugees: Learning and Adjusting Together in Portland

## Course Syllabus, Spring 2018

Portland State University in Partnership with  
Portland Meet Portland ([www.portlandmeetportland.org](http://www.portlandmeetportland.org))

**UNST Senior Capstone CRN: 64597, UNST 421-528**

**Mondays, 4:40-6:30, at PSU, PKM (Parkmill) Rm. 291**

**Wednesday, 4:40-6:30 at Portland Meet Portland Office, 1320 SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Portland OR 97233**

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By appointment Mondays 3-4:30 at PSU or Tues -W by appointment at Portland Meet Portland Office

### Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, student should be able to:

- Understand global contexts driving key refugee flows as well as U.S. and policies related to refugee resettlement and civic engagement
- Develop an understanding of language, adjustment and integration challenges for refugees in Portland
- Increase the confidence and ability of students to engage collaboratively and compassionately with newcomers across language and cultural barriers
- Gain insight into inclusion/exclusion in housing, schools and politics of diverse communities in Portland
- Develop presentation and advocacy skills in partnership with refugees in a public presentation

### UNST Capstone Goals:

1. **Inquiry and Critical Thinking:** By the end of this course, you should be able to effectively articulate global-local connections related to war, refugee resettlement and policies of resettlement in the United States and Oregon. You will be asked to think critically about refugee resettlement with perspective of historical and contemporary relevance. You should also be able to consider and distinguish between media presentations of the ‘singular’ refugee experience and realities of more complex refugee stories you witness through this class. Reflections about your values and personal assumptions and on policies related refugee resettlement should inform how you can best to support actions and policies concerning refugees in Oregon and beyond. You will also facilitate 2 formal dialogues with refugee youth on what democracy means to them, how it is challenged by ‘fake news’ and the link between federal policy and local impacts.
2. **Communication:** The on-going interaction across cultural groups and practice of outreach to refugees for their collection in collecting and sharing information for the final Capstone project is designed to increase your cross-cultural communication, advocacy and public presentation skills. The information you will gather for the final project will stretch your comfort with navigating cultural, language and neighborhood differences – this challenge offers an experience that will likely foster great empathy for the fears, discomforts and challenges refugees face on arrival to the United States.
3. **Variety of Human Experience (Diversity):** By the end of this course, you will have compared a number of refugee ‘places’ in Portland reflecting on the comparison to your own established pathways and sites of “living, working and playing”. The goal is to experience first-hand the differences between students’ and refugees cultural and economically based priorities, barriers and opportunities. The opportunity for students to actually walk in the shoes of refugees in Portland and vice-versa is the most powerful way to understand diversity of the human experience.

4. Ethical and Social Responsibility: The goal of this Capstone is for PSU students and their refugee partners to re-examine personal values and beliefs about the “Other” – diverse views of democracy and rights of engaged citizens -- thereby building greater understanding, trust, respect and responsibility for each others’ lives and collective futures in the wider Portland community. The public presentations will require that you ensure refugee voices are heard, even if refugee partners choose not to personally present in front of key stakeholders. As such, you will decide how to include the often unheard voices of refugees in building a vibrant community for all.

## Course Description and General Information:

This course will engage you directly with refugee youth and adults currently living and adjusting to a new life in Portland. This course partners with refugees served by *Portland Meet Portland (PMP)*, a small non-profit organization specializing in cultural exchange and learning in partnership with newcomers from around the globe. **Class will meet on Mondays at PSU and on Wednesdays at PMP office** in east Portland. On day two of class, students will meet their prospective refugee partner (in pairs or individually) and will set up meetings to document with text, photography and/or video three important locations in refugees’ daily lives in East and North Portland. In exchange, Capstone students will introduce refugees to three of their own social, economic and educational spaces - expanding refugees’ awareness of resources and opportunities in the wider community. In addition to the 6 ‘place exchange’ meetings, you will facilitate two dialogue meetings in small groups of 6-8 students and their refugee partners. Dialogues will focus on the importance of civic engagement and views of democracy in America, as well as challenges to democracy based on fake news/media literacy. **The 8, weekly 2 to 3-hour meetings will occur outside of class on days, times and locations decided by you and your refugee ‘match’ partner and with approval of PMP staff and Capstone faculty.** These meetings and locations form the basis of your final community mapping projects. The projects will involve creating community maps and presenting them at small community-based presentations, or at one larger public presentation to offer insight into the diversity of lifestyles in Portland’s rapidly changing landscape. The goal is to strengthen mutual cross-cultural learning, understand contemporary urban and community development and support positive pathways for refugee adjustment and integration.

## Textbook and Readings:

- *State of the World’s Refugees* (2017) <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/stories/2017/6/5941561f4/forced-displacement-worldwide-its-highest-decades.html>
- *State of the World’s Refugees: Global Report. 2014. Free at* <http://www.unhcr.org/gr14/index.xml>
- Refugee Backgrounders for Syria (2014), Democratic Republic of Congo (2013), Iraq (2008), Bhutan (2007) and Burma (2007). Choose one. Free on line at <http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/backgrounders>
- UNHCR. The 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and Its 1967 Protocol*. <http://www.unhcr.org/4ec262df9.html>

**Other required weekly readings along with assignments** are noted in the weekly outline below and will be posted on **D2L and, if scanned document posted to D2L.**

## Assignments and Grading:

### Course Requirements:

Assigned Reading Reflection Papers:	20%	3 short issue papers (2 pages, single spaced).
Reflection Journal and 3 in-class Essays:	20%	(on-going journal and 3 reflections)
Class attendance, participation & Service Quality:	20%	(group dialogues, mentoring of refugee)
Mentor Team Map Project:	20%	(Presentation maps/portfolios)
Final Public Presentations:	20%	(Midland Library, June 4 and 6)

**Assigned Reading Reflection Papers: 2 written reviews** (2 pages each, single spaced) papers based on the assigned, required readings. Due at week 3 and 8 of class, you will choose and respond to one of several questions based on the required readings (see weekly class schedule).

**Reflection Journal and 3 Reflection Essays:** On-going journal notes are central to documenting good 'journalistic and participant research' data. Your journal should include your observations, questions, thoughts on an on-going basis, to be checked once during the quarter. Additionally, there will be 2 in-class essay response writing assignments probing more deeply into your observations, thoughts and emotions about your service-learning experiences. One additional reflection essay will be based on your attendance to observe a **POD-Cast Dialogue** facilitated by PMP Executive Director, Manuel Padilla (on April 12 or May 11<sup>th</sup>) at the Portland Art Museum.

**Two Democracy Conversations:** 2-3 PSU students (you) will work together in small groups to prepare and engage your refugee matches on two dialogue workshops (1): What does democracy mean? What is the role of the political parties? Why does active engagement and paying attention to the issues in mid-term elections matter? And (2): What is media literacy and "fake" news? What are credible news sources? Why does it matter for Democracy?

**Portfolio Map Project:** This your creation (with input and participation from your refugee partners) of a portfolio representing a map of locations you visited with your refugee partner. It is the product that you will share in the final public presentations. You will receive detailed instructions as teams are formed.

**Final Public Presentations:** The Portfolios will be presented to the community and leaders during Week 10 or 11 of the Capstone. NOTE: These public presentations may occur at times outside our regular class schedule, but dates and times will be established well in advance.

**Late assignments and Incompletes:** All work turned in after the class period of the due date are graded down by one third of a grade (A- paper becomes a B+). No revisions are accepted, so please take time to utilize University resources and plan adequate time to turn in your best work: correct spelling, grammar, clean up technology glitches, etc. There are no incomplete grades for this class. Students' grade may be weighted differently based on work completed or not completed at the end of the term and based on the information available to the Professor at the end of the term.

## **Course Values and Expectations:**

The class is designed to maximize student service-learning, which includes a positive learning experience for your refugee partner through attentive and responsible attention to your volunteer service. Class lectures and readings are enhanced through individual participation in class and with team assignments, community service-learning, guest speakers. It is expected that students engage respectfully with faculty, co-students, community partner staff, and your refugee partners. It is particularly important to **respect** diverse opinions and perspectives and offer as well as receive divergent views in the spirit of building mutual understanding, empathy and trust.

**Student Conduct and The UNST Capstone Student Handbook:** It is the student's responsibility to know what constitutes transgression of University and Capstone policies and to avoid it. Please read both the UNST Student Handbook <https://drive.google.com/a/pdx.edu/file/d/0Bw058DZ7Bzvid2ZodWlla2dRSkRvUjAwZ1IKQUpycUJidVhv/view?usp=sharing> AND the PSU Student Conduct Code (<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/policies-codes-of-conduct-at-psu>). **The most important policies regarding this Senior capstone** are the following: (1) If your refugee match is under 18 years of age, you need to complete a background check through the community partner, Portland Meet Portland; (2) PSU students are not allowed to enter a community member's private residence without permission from PSU Assistant Director of Risk Management, Don Johansen, [johansed@pdx.edu](mailto:johansed@pdx.edu); (3) students must respect particular cultural norms and values and, if unsure, ask

the instructor or PMP staff for clarification. I will gladly discuss any questions and or concerns you may have in advance or at the beginning of the course. **Plagiarism, cheating,** or other academic & community-service dishonesty will be referred to University Judiciaries and may result in an F grade for the course.

**Students with Disabilities or other Accommodations:** If you are a student with a documented disability and registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact the instructor immediately to facilitate arrangements for academic and/or service accommodations. This course also respects all students regardless of race, religion, socio-economic, gender and sexual orientation (LGBTQ). However, some accommodations may be recommended to ensure positive service-learning experience. Please feel free to contact the Professor via email with any questions or concerns.

### **Week 1: Introductions, Class Values and Meeting Community Partners**

Monday, April 2, 2018 (on PSU campus)

- Introductions and Overview of Course Syllabus, themes, locations, and expectations
- Introduce Community Partner Organization (Portland Meet Portland) Origin, Mission and Staff

Wednesday, April 4, 2018 (at PMP Office)

Meet your refugee partner and plan 6 exchange meeting locations and dates for 2 dialogue meetings

- **Reading:** UNHCR. The 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and Its 1967 Protocol*. <http://www.unhcr.org/4ec262df9.html> *State of the World's Refugees* (2017) <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/stories/2017/6/5941561f4/forced-displacement-worldwide-its-highest-decades.html>

### **Week 2: Global Refugee Contexts and European Situation**

Monday April 9, 2018

- Introduction to UNHCR and Global Refugee Context Europe and Canada

**Readings:**

*The Economist*, "Europe's Boat People" May 2015 p. 11. On D2L. pdf file.

*New York Times Magazine* "The Displaced" Nov

2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/08/magazine/the-displaced-introduction.html>

Wednesday April 11, 2018 (at PMP Office)

- *The Economist*, Nov 2016, "Liberty moves North, Canada's Openness" pp 19-22. On D2L
- **Live Pod cast APRIL 12, 6-7 PM at Portland Art Museum (Optional)**

### **Week 3: Refugee Resettlement in the USA Local Models**

Monday April 16, 2018

- System of Resettlement in the USA v Canada

**Readings:** Refugee Backgrounders for Syria (2014), Democratic Republic of Congo (2013), Iraq (2008), Bhutan (2007) and Burma (2007). Choose one. Free on line at:

<http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/backgrounders>

- Faces of Resettlement: Refugees in US Communities (video) <http://www.cal.org/resource-center/publications/faces-of-resettlement>

- *The New Yorker Magazine* Oct 2016. Untangling the Immigration

Debate <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/10/31/untangling-the-immigration-debate>

And in the *New York Times*: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/15/opinion/mike-pences-illegal-treatment-of-syrian-refugees.html>.

In class handout 1 page *NYTimes* "Arriving in the US, Syrian Refugees find a Place they did not Expect"

Wednesday April 18 (PMP Office) Guest Speaker from the Congo (Vincent Chriamwami)  
Resettlement in Portland- challenges of integration

**Readings:** Sottile, L, September, 2015. *Meet the Refugees from the Most Violent Places on the Planet: The New Portlanders* <http://www.wweek.com/2015/09/30/the-newest-portlanders/>

- Steinmann, S. October, 2015. Letter to the Editor <http://www.wweek.com/2015/10/07/inbox-refugees/>
- Team of Dreams, 2015. <http://www.oregonlive.com/portland-somalis>
- Iraqi Refugee in Beaverton Nov 2016. <http://pamplinmedia.com/ht/117-hillsboro-tribune-news/331975-210566-awaiting-news-from-mosul-iraqi-refugee-holds-onto-hope-through-art->

#### **Week 4: Urban Displacement and Inequality in Portland (First 2-page paper due Monday)**

Monday April 23, 2018 (first 2-page paper due) Guest Speaker, Ben Walsh, Walsh Construction

**Readings:**

- City of Portland, 2012. The Portland Plan: Prosperous, Educated, Healthy, Equitable. On line: <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/>
- Coalition of Communities of Color <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/cc-c-dataresearch/> choose one profile to read
- East Portland Action Plan: Economic Development Assessment (on D2L pdf file)

Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 (PMP) office In-class writing prompt

**Reading:** <http://www.wweek.com/news/2016/09/13/i-moved-to-the-edge-of-portland-to-help-refugees-but-they-cant-afford-to-live-here-anymore/>

In the *Oregonian* on Gentrification: View Video of PDX

gentrification: [http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2015/03/portland\\_gentrification\\_video.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2015/03/portland_gentrification_video.html)

#### **Week 5: Refugee Residential Mobility/School Mobility and English Learning**

Monday April 30, 2018

Challenges for services, jobs & English language acquisition among children, adults

Policy and politics, shifts in programs – do they meet the needs? USCIS example

Wednesday May 2, 2018 (at PMP office) (Refugee Youth Speakers)

English as Power; Inter-generational inversion of Leadership at home and in the community

**Reading:** Excerpts from *Third Culture Kids* (on D2L)

#### **Week 6: Jobs and Economic Self Sufficiency**

Monday May 7, 2018

- Transferring of Degrees – 1<sup>st</sup> generation challenges

Worksource/IRCO jobs

Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> (at PMP office)

Guest Speaker, Worksource Mulu Terefe and or Ahlam Al-Shamari (food cart)

**Reading:**

- Coalition for a Livable Future's Regional Equity Atlas 2.0 Planning Process and Tool Kit (2007). <http://regionalequityatlas.org/maps-analysis/overview> (browse)
- **Live POD-cast dialogue, FRIDAY MAY 11, 6-7 PM** at the Portland Art Museum

#### **Week 7: Community Partners Dialogue on Identity and Discrimination (Second 2-page paper Due WED)**

Monday May 14 (Open Class time to prepare small group facilitation for Democracy Dialogue) as make-up for Pod Casts attendance on April 12<sup>th</sup> or May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Wednesday May 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 (at PMP office or other small group location) (**2<sup>nd</sup> 2-page paper due**)

Small Group Facilitated Dialogue (# 1) with your refugee match on Democracy and Inclusion

**Reading:** Excerpts from *Diasporas in Dialogue: A Manual for Dialogue, Transition and Community Reconciliation*. 2012 Ed. Barbara Tint (On D2L)

### **Week 8: On Refugee Health and Mental Health:**

Monday May 21, 2018 PTSD/Trauma in Refugees (Weaver's Group,) **Readings:**

- Farmer, B. (ed.), 2014. *Walking Together: A Mental Health Therapists' Guide to Working with Refugees*. Lutheran Community Services Northwest and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- Wallis, D. September 28, 2015 On D2L

<http://observer.com/2015/09/the-first-thing-america-must-do-to-help-refugees/>

Wednesday May (at PMP office)

- *The Oregonian* Nov 2014 "Women Weave for Memories of Home" Pdf on D2L.
- Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, (PMP office or small group location) Dialogue #2, Fake News.

### **Week 9: Putting it all together: Your Community Maps**

Monday, May 28, 2018 – NO CLASS Memorial Day

Wednesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> (PMP office)

Meeting with your refugee match to finalize community maps for presentation to leaders

### **Week 10: Final Public Presentations of Community Maps**

Locations in East Portland (Midland Library) TBA. More details to follow.

Anticipate **Monday June 4<sup>th</sup>**, evening at 4:30 --7 pm

And **Wednesday June 6<sup>th</sup>**, evening at 4:30-7-- 7 pm.

### **Week 11: Final Exam Week**

- **All course work due**
- **Last group De-brief and Celebration with refugee partners TBA**

### **Week 12: Grades Due**