

ANTH 4300.400: Migrants and Refugees

Fall 2026 | Online, asynchronous | August 17-December 11, 2026

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Office hours	Zoom or phone by appointment	IA office hours	Posted in Canvas; Zoom or phone
Course format	Online and asynchronous	Department	Anthropology

Communication: Please email Connor or me directly rather than using Canvas messages. Put “ANTH 4300” in the subject line so we can spot your message quickly. We usually respond within 48 hours. If you have a question about an assignment that is due soon, contact us before the deadline whenever you can.

Course note: Much of the original course content was developed by Dr. Alicia Re Cruz and Dr. Jara Carrington in UNT Anthropology. I have adapted those materials for this section.

Course Description

Welcome to Migrants and Refugees. International migration affects millions of people and touches questions of family, identity, law, politics, culture, economics, belonging, and home. In this course, we look at migration and displacement from an anthropological perspective, paying attention to both the larger systems that shape movement and the lived experiences of migrants and refugees.

We will begin with the language and structures used to define migration, including categories such as migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, and undocumented immigrant. From there, we will examine borders, theories of migration, root causes, nation-making, race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship. The final part of the semester uses cases from Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America to compare how displacement takes shape in different places.

Course Objectives

- Assess key concepts related to migration and displacement, including migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, borders, citizenship, and belonging.
- Use a cultural anthropological perspective to understand migration processes and lived experience.
- Apply anthropological theories and concepts to migration policies, institutions, representations, and current events.
- Develop critical thinking skills through discussion, research, and writing.
- Explain how legal, political, economic, cultural, racial, gendered, and social processes intersect in experiences of migration.
- Synthesize course material and outside research in clear, properly cited academic writing.

Readings and Technology

There is no required textbook. Required articles, chapters, videos, and other materials are posted in Canvas or available through UNT Libraries. If a library link is not working, use the citation in the module to search for the reading through UNT Libraries. If you still cannot find it, email Connor or me.

- Regular access to Canvas and your UNT email
- Reliable internet access
- A device that can open PDFs, view course media, and submit Word or PDF files
- Microsoft Word or another program that can create .docx or PDF files

How the Course Works

This is an asynchronous online course, so there is no weekly class meeting. Each lesson module is your roadmap for the week. Unless the assignment page or an announcement says otherwise, weekly discussions are due Friday at 11:59 p.m. Central Time.

- Check Canvas announcements regularly.
- Read through the entire lesson module, not just the assignment page.
- Complete the assigned readings and media.
- Complete the discussion or other assignment by the posted deadline.
- Use the readings and course concepts in your work, and cite information that is not your own.

Participation, Attendance, and Respectful Discussion

In an asynchronous course, attendance shows up through participation. You should be working in Canvas each week, completing the readings and modules, and contributing to the discussions and assignments. Missing graded work means missing those points unless an accommodation, university-authorized absence, or other approved arrangement applies.

Some of the material in this course may challenge your beliefs or opinions. You do not have to agree with every author, classmate, or perspective we encounter. You do need to engage with the material thoughtfully and respectfully. Disagreement is part of learning; personal attacks and disrespectful comments are not.

Late Work and Extensions

As a general rule, late work is not accepted unless you have made arrangements with me in advance, have an approved accommodation, have a university-authorized absence, or have another circumstance that I have approved. If you think you are going to miss a deadline, email me before it passes whenever possible. Depending on the situation, a short extension or partial credit may be possible. Work submitted late without prior communication may receive no credit.

If you have an Office of Disability Access accommodation that includes occasional extensions, follow the notification process in your accommodation and contact me as early as you can.

Grades

There are no exams in this course. Your grade comes from discussion, writing, research, and the final analytic memo. Thirteen discussions are scheduled; I will drop your lowest discussion score, so 12 discussion scores count toward the final grade.

Course work	Counted	Points	Total
Weekly discussions	12 of 13	30 each	360
Film analysis	1	100	100
Final project proposal	1	100	100
Final analytic memo	1	200	200
Total			760

Grading scale: A = 90-100% | B = 80-89% | C = 70-79% | D = 60-69% | F = below 60%.

Canvas is the running record of your assignment scores and feedback. Please check your grades regularly and let me know promptly if you think something was entered incorrectly.

Assignments

1. Weekly Discussions - 30 points each

The weekly discussion boards are where we work through ideas together. For each discussion, you will write one original post and one substantive response to a classmate.

- Original post: 450-600 words, worth 20 points, and includes an open-ended discussion question tied to the readings or lesson.
- Response post: at least 150 words, worth 10 points.
- Your posts should use the course material rather than relying mainly on personal opinion or outside information.
- Cite the readings, lesson material, definitions, statistics, quotations, paraphrases, and outside information you use. Missing required citations may cost up to 5 points and may also create an academic integrity issue depending on the circumstances.
- If you do not submit the response portion, you lose the 10 response points.
- Your lowest discussion score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

A good discussion question is open-ended, can be answered using course knowledge and evidence, and asks the class to think about a meaningful point from the lesson rather than speculate.

2. Film Analysis - 100 points

Choose a film about some aspect of migration or displacement and write a 600-800 word analysis using at least one anthropological theory or concept from the course. Briefly summarize the film, but spend most of the paper analyzing how it represents migrants or displaced people and how it portrays migration, borders, belonging, deservingness, agency, race, gender, class, or another relevant theme. The selection should be a film rather than a TED Talk or similar short-form presentation.

Format: double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, in-text citations, and a references or works cited page. Submit through Canvas by Wednesday, September 30 at 11:59 p.m. Central Time.

3. Final Project Proposal - 100 points

The proposal is your plan for the final analytic memo. It gives you a chance to narrow your topic, identify a specific place or population, and begin finding appropriate sources before you write the final project. Full instructions and the rubric are in Canvas. Due Friday, October 9 at 11:59 p.m. Central Time.

4. Final Project: Analytic Memo - 200 points

For the final project, imagine that you work for the International Organization for Migration and your supervisor has asked you to brief them on a specific migration or displacement issue in a specific place. Your job is to explain what is happening, why it matters, and what the available research tells us.

- 1,250-1,500 words.
- Briefly describe the issue or situation.
- Provide the relevant historical and cultural context, including root causes.
- Define and use at least two anthropological concepts from the lesson content or course readings.
- Discuss possible courses of action or implications where appropriate.
- Include at least five research-based resources. Academic sources, country-condition reports, reports from international or human-rights organizations, and credible think-tank or watchdog reports are appropriate. News articles may be used, but they do not count toward the five research-based sources.
- Use one citation style consistently and include a references or works cited page.

The final analytic memo is due Saturday, December 5 at 11:59 p.m. Central Time through Canvas. There is no final exam in this course.

Extra Credit

Two optional extra-credit opportunities are available to the entire class during the semester. The instructions, deadlines, and point values are posted in Canvas. Because those opportunities are already built into the course, I generally do not offer individual substitute extra-credit assignments.

Academic Integrity and Generative AI

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in academic penalties or university sanctions.

For this course, do not use ChatGPT or another generative AI tool to write, rewrite, summarize, generate citations, or otherwise produce any part of graded work unless I specifically tell you that AI use is allowed for

that assignment. If I authorize an AI tool for a particular task, follow the assignment instructions about what is allowed and how to acknowledge it. Accessibility technology used through an approved accommodation is not prohibited by this policy.

A confirmed violation on an assignment will normally result in a zero for that assignment. More serious or repeated violations may be referred for additional action under UNT procedures. Assignments may be submitted through Turnitin for similarity review, but I do not treat an automated report as a substitute for reviewing the work and the circumstances myself.

Please cite facts, statistics, quotations, paraphrases, ideas, and arguments that are not common knowledge. If you are unsure whether something needs a citation, ask. It is always better to ask for help than to guess.

Office of Disability Access

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website.

Office of Disability Access: disability@unt.edu | 940-565-4323 | disability.unt.edu

Emergency Notifications

UNT uses Eagle Alert to notify students quickly about severe weather, campus closures, fires, chemical spills, violence, and other health or public-safety emergencies. If the university closes or normal operations are disrupted, check Canvas for course-specific instructions, contingency plans, or deadline changes.

Student Support

Resource	What it is for
UNT Writing Center	Help with academic writing at any stage, including online appointments.
UNT Libraries	Research databases, articles, books, citation help, and research support.
UNT Food Pantry	Food assistance for currently enrolled UNT students; current locations and hours are posted online.
UNT IT Help Desk	Technical help with UNT systems and Canvas access: 940-565-2324 or helpdesk@unt.edu .
Dean of Students	Support when personal, family, or emergency circumstances affect your coursework.

Course Schedule

The schedule below reflects the Fall 2026 UNT academic calendar and the deadlines currently listed in Canvas. Readings and media are listed inside each Canvas module. If I need to change a topic or deadline, I will announce it in Canvas and give reasonable notice.

Week	Dates	Topic / Focus	Major due date
1	Aug. 17-21	Lesson 1: Introduction to Migrants, Refugees, and Displacement	Discussion 1 - Aug. 21, 11:59 p.m.
2	Aug. 24-28	Lesson 2: Anthropology and Migration	Discussion 2 - Aug. 28, 11:59 p.m.
3	Aug. 31-Sept. 4	Lesson 3: Structures of Migration	Discussion 3 - Sept. 4, 11:59 p.m.
4	Sept. 8-11	Lesson 4: Rethinking Borders in a Globalizing World	Discussion 4 - Sept. 11, 11:59 p.m. Labor Day: Sept. 7, no classes
5	Sept. 14-18	Lesson 5: Theoretical Approaches to Migration	Discussion 5 - Sept. 18, 11:59 p.m.
6	Sept. 21-25	Lesson 6: Root Causes of Migration and Displacement	Discussion 6 - Sept. 25, 11:59 p.m.
7	Sept. 28-Oct. 2	Lesson 7: Construction of the "Undocumented Immigrant"	Film Analysis - Sept. 30 Discussion 7 - Oct. 2
8	Oct. 5-9	Final Project Development / Proposal Week	Extra Credit 1 - Oct. 5 Project Proposal - Oct. 9
9	Oct. 12-16	Lesson 8: Constructing the Nation	Discussion 8 - Oct. 16, 11:59 p.m.
10	Oct. 19-23	Lesson 9: Race, Gender, and Sexuality	Discussion 9 - Oct. 23, 11:59 p.m.
11	Oct. 26-30	Lesson 10: Displacement in Europe	Discussion 10 - Oct. 30, 11:59 p.m.
12	Nov. 2-6	Lesson 11: Displacement in Africa	Extra Credit 2 - Nov. 2 Discussion 11 - Nov. 6
13	Nov. 9-13	Lesson 12: Displacement in Asia	Discussion 12 - Nov. 13, 11:59 p.m.
14	Nov. 16-20	Lesson 13: Displacement in Latin America	Discussion 13 - Nov. 20, 11:59 p.m.
	Nov. 23-29	Thanksgiving Break	No classes
15	Nov. 30-Dec. 3	Course synthesis and final project completion	Pre-Finals Days: Dec. 2-3 Last regular class day: Dec. 3
	Dec. 4	Reading Day	No classes
	Dec. 5	Final project deadline	Final Analytic Memo - Dec. 5, 11:59 p.m.
	Dec. 7-11	UNT final examination period / course wrap-up	No final exam in this course Semester ends Dec. 11

Syllabus Changes

I may make reasonable changes to the syllabus or course schedule if something needs to shift during the semester. If that happens, I will announce the change in Canvas and update the relevant assignment or module information. Official university dates follow the UNT academic calendar.