

## HH3009 Comparative History of Global Migrations

### Learning Objective

1. To introduce key processes and forces underlying migration in world history
2. To enhance students' understanding of different migrations in different periods of global history.
3. To demonstrate how the changing global economy and the rise of the modern nation-state and world-system had impacted on the mobility of people.
4. To highlight how global migrations today are a transmutation of older processes, and how the expansion in people movement has raised important issues about ideas of nation, citizenship, and community in the world today.
5. To allow students to document migrant stories through group oral history/documentation projects

### Content

This course shall examine the global history of migration from a comparative perspective. It shall explore major approaches to the study of migration, and provide a survey of different types of migration in the *longue durée*. It shall compare different diasporas and examine changing institutional and structural contexts governing migration, especially with the rise of the modern nation-state and the international state system. It shall examine different states and regions, and examine the impact of migration on society, politics, and the economies in different parts of the world. The course is structured along both chronological and thematic lines. In the chronological sections, attention is given to the broader contextual factors shaping migration, in as much as it explores the ways in which migrations constituted a part of and impacted on processes of epochal and historical change. In the thematic section, we focus primarily issues of experience, identity, and the infrastructure of different types of migration.

### Schedule and Plan

#### Introduction

*13 August: Introduction*

*20 August: Migration in World History: An Overview of Approaches*

This first seminar surveys the different approaches, past and present, in the study of the history of migration and of world history from the perspective of migration. They also explore possible periodizations of a global history of migration.

*27 August: Migration and Human Prehistory*

Human migration has been a very important part of human prehistory. How has the shape of the world today been shaped by such migrations? How was prehistoric human migration associated with different processes of civilizational processes associated with

early human history, such as tool technologies, agriculture, and linguistic developments? How does knowledge of prehistoric migrations contribute to our understanding of the world today, and the present-day discourses on race, identity, and international politics?

*3 September: Migration and the ancient world*

This seminar examines the major migrations in the ancient world, from the Indo-European migrations, Baltic, Mediterranean, East Asian, and American migrations, focusing on key zones of mobility and contact. It examines ways in which these migrations were fuelled by the creation of more sophisticated and long distance trade networks, and the implications of these migrations for processes of early urbanization, commerce, culture, knowledge, and political formations.

*10 September. Migration and the Pre-modern world system*

For this week, we shall discuss the new processes of migration brought about by and underlying the creation of a Eurasian system of trade, both overland and over the sea. It examines the records of such movement and such environments created by human mobility in the first millennium CE up to the sixteenth century. It examines the roles played by migrant communities in continuing the processes of material, technology, and cultural/idea transfers and mixing. Once again, we will cover case studies from different parts of the world to highlight both comparisons and connections.

*17 September. Migration and early Empires*

The period between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries brought about epochal change in the history of globalization and with it migration. European exploration and commercial expansion created not only new empires in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, but also global trade and migration on a scale hitherto unseen. This seminar examines the new circuits, processes, and experiences of migration, and the impact of these migration on both host and origin societies, as well as on the global commercial and imperial system being created. Mixing and miscegenation and the creation of creole and mestizo communities wielding influence in new colonial port cities

*24 September. Migration and the colonial world-system*

This seminar continues the chronological survey of migration by discussing the patterns, experiences, and environments of migration in the context of a new system of imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The problematization of mixed communities and the hierarchies created by colonial regimes in these new plural societies and dual economies were to lay the foundations for post-colonial societies.

**1 October. Recess Week**

*8 October. Migration, Nation-States, and the Cold War world*

The last seminar in the chronological survey of migration deals with the period after the Cold War, which saw the opening of formerly closed borders and restrictions as well as the opportunities and pressures created by the economic liberalization of China and the post-911 events in different parts of the world. The migration of workers and talents, as well as students, together with the movement of military personnel, auxiliaries, and refugees, coincided with the creation of new strictures and structures for facilitating, screening and restricting the movement of people in terms of security or economic reasons reflected the changing and contested ideologies on migration.

*15 October. Cultures, Diasporas, and Heritage (Possible **Visit to Nine Emperor Gods Festival temples**)*

The Second World War and its aftermath brought about new patterns of people movement, with the wars and processes of decolonization, as well as the Cold War empires being created by the different ideological blocs, with their educational, military, and economic campaigns and strategies, not to mention the proxy wars. It also coincided with the emergence of the United States as the main global economic superpower, as well as the new economic might of countries in the Asia-Pacific, such as Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore. Processes of regionalization also brought new pressures to bear on the patterns of migration in different parts of the world and between them. These political, economic, and ideological projects brought about new patterns in the movement of people in different parts of the world, not to mention the refugee movements created by war and natural disasters.

*22 October. Migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

In this week, we move from the chronological to the thematic, and examine issues of culture, identity, homeland and adaptation/assimilation among migrant communities in different parts of the world. The readings, discussions and field trips will try to connect earlier case studies with the issues and topics that have come to the forefront in the discussions of migration today. In terms of readings, we will be looking at areas such as religion/ritual, food, and material culture related to culture, identity, and heritage. For the field trip, we shall go to the Nine Emperor Gods Festival and examine the ways in which this festival reflects such issues of cultural change and adaptation, and the persistence and changes in the identification.

*29 October. Borders, Immigration and Control*

From issues of culture, heritage, and identity, we shall examine the evolving settings of institutions, practices, and material culture that have been created to police and control the movement of people. From issues of citizenship and immigration to questions of refugee and ascertaining their status, these structures reflected the emergence of new ideas about society and mobility (and also sedentism and borders). This seminar shall trace the evolution of these institutions, measures and perceptions.

*5 November. Place/Spaces (Technologies), Representations, and Experience*

In this final week, we shall examine the changing spaces, technologies and experiences of migration, from the ethnic or labour migrant enclaves to the representation of migrant experiences in print and new virtual media. We will also examine the representation of migration and the experiences and issues associated with it in art and other forms of expression and consumption. (Possible field/food assignment in ethnic heritage districts).

*12 November* **Presentations**

**Learning Outcome**

Students will be able to gain a more comparative perspective on the topic of migration, and have the opportunity to understanding different diasporic migrations and their histories. They will gain a better understanding of the long-term history of migration, its dynamics and forces over time, and how modern states, borders, and regimes have re-shaped the movement of people. They will also understand how more recent processes of globalization have created new potential for movement and re-shaped the modern nation-states and international order in different parts of the world. They will also have a chance to document migration stories, and to connect personal narratives to broader global forces.

**Student Assessment**

Students will be assessed by 100% Continuous Assessment.

- a. Class Participation/Seminar Presentations/Discussions (30%)  
The seminar presentations shall be based on readings assigned for each week. They will be evaluated in terms of organization, content, style, and fluency. Depending on the size of the class, presentations will be done by individuals or groups with the marks assigned accordingly. The grade will also include the

student's class participation outside of the presentation and discussion. 3% will be deducted for every class missed without a valid reason with the approval of the instructor.

- b. Group Documentation Project / Presentation (35%)  
The Group Documentation Project will be based on three components: the proposal (5%), the documentation portfolio (20%), and presentation (10%). The aim of the project is for the group to document a migrant or diasporic community, either through the life stories of migrants in Singapore, objects associated with the community, or places, events, and buildings. The emphasis will be on the heritage component and on documentation. It shall focus on collecting oral histories (through videorecordings) and collecting various primary materials (such as photographs, letters etc). The students will be divided into groups to undertake these projects and presentations.
- c. Individual Final Paper (35%)  
Each student shall also complete a final paper of at least 3500 words. The final paper assignment shall constitute of an annotated bibliography (10%) and a final paper (25%). The annotated bibliography shall consist of an introduction and an list of primary and secondary sources with annotations. The final paper has to contain a stipulated number of primary sources.

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