FMST 146: Geographies of Forced Displacements: Approaches Through Feminist and Critical Race Studies

Erin McElroy

Office Hours: Thursdays 11-12:30 and by appointment, Humanities 433. I can generally also meet after class.

Session 1: June 26–July 28

Abstract: Across the globe, formations of forced displacement are spreading rapidly. In this class, we will study geographies of dispossession, from gentrification of the San Francisco Bay Area to forced migrations throughout Europe, employing feminist studies as well as critical race and ethnicity studies frameworks.

Description and Requirements

This class will provide students with an introduction to contemporary topics in feminist studies, critical race and ethnicity studies, and critical geography. By framing such topics through the analytic of forced displacement, and by employing a transnational approach, students will come away with tangible modalities for employing theory.

This class will fulfill Cross-Cultural Analysis (CCA) and Ethnicity and Race (ER) requirements. The transnational approach that it will take in theorizing forced displacement will offer a comparative analytic lens. For instance, students will study the refugee crisis of Europe and urban gentrification in Global South cities, fulfilling the CCA requirement by fomenting analytic conditions for cross-cultural analysis. Students will also study histories of slavery, empire, and settler coloniality that inform current contexts forced displacements of the present, thinking through indigenous and Black feminist geographies. This focus and linkage will fulfill the ER requirement, as students will trace how race, gender, and imperial projects intersect to create contexts of expulsion and dispossession.

We will begin by theorizing the problematics of comparativity in urban studies, then turn to analytics less present in geography to think other ways of relating, such as intimacy, connectivity, and solidarity. We will also discuss military and racialized histories of geospatial technologies to think through contemporary anti-racist, feminist, and decolonial geographies of resistance. How is this work situated within the digital humanities, and how can we use new technologies to not reproduce ingrained cartographic practices of violence? While studying Black feminist spatial struggles, urban racialized gentrification, and Indigenous land battles, we will also attend to queer cartographies, Afrofuturisms, and Native practices of refusal.

Readings
Each student will be responsible for presenting two texts or chapters read for one class. That way, if classes entail more than two readings, students are only responsible for presenting two of them. Students should spend 15 minutes going over the main arguments and concepts introduced, but do not have to engage the class in discussion. Students should also discuss the ways that the two selected texts relate or don’t relate to each other. This will count for 10 percent of students’ grades.

Students will also pick five other texts and write 1.5 to 2 pages on each of them, double-spaced, answering the following questions:

- What is the main argument/idea?
- How does the author support their argument/idea?
- Is there one paragraph or section of the article/chapter that excites, inspires, resonates, or confuses you, and why? (Please choose a part beyond the introduction)

These should be handed in during the class that these texts are discussed. These will count for 30 percent of students’ grades.

**Final Project**

In addition to class conversations, in-class time will be dedicated towards working on final projects, which will be presented during Week 5. This will involve group work. Students will work in two groups that narrate, historicize, spatialize, and theorize one contemporary displacement struggle. We will choose groups and topics during Week 1. These do not have be struggles that we cover in class, but should reference relevant theoretical and conceptual arguments.

Each project should specifically answer the following questions:

- What is the contemporary displacement struggle that you seek to address?
- What are the histories that inform it?
- How are these histories spatialized, racialized, and/or invocative of colonial geographies?
- How might we speculate and/or visualize other futures and spatial imaginaries of or beyond this struggle?

There will be no written components to hand in for the final project, but text can be read aloud and visual technologies can be used in the final presentations. During Week 1, I will introduce story-mapping, visualization, and timeline-making tools that students can choose to use, although visual components can be analogue as well. Projects should reference at least 4 texts read in class. Presentations should be roughly 20-30 minutes, and each group participant should present. Projects and presentations will count for 35 percent of students’ grades.

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend classes, and attendance counts for 25 percent of the final grade.
Schedule and Texts

Week 1

June 26

1a. Introductions

Introduction to the course, contemporary displacements, and visualization methods

June 28

1b. Comparative Displacement and Gentrification?


Choose project groups

Week 2

July 4

2a. Solidarities and Connections beyond Comparativity


July 6

2b. Affective Mapping, Queer Cartographies, and Astrofuturisms


**Week 3**

**July 11**

3a. Black Feminist Geographies of Struggle and Speculation


**July 13**

3b. Technologies of Carcerality, Bio-spatiality, and Biopolitics


**Week 4**

**July 18**

4a. Debt, Surplus, Racial Capitalism


**Guest Lecture by Ozlem Ezer on feminist oral history approach to the Syrian refuge crisis**
July 20

4b. Imperial Duress, Remainder, Haunting


Week 5

July 25

5a. Cartographic Refusals of Recognition


Final Presentation 1

July 27

5b. Freedoms Yet to Come and Staying Human


Final Presentation 2