This course will focus on displaced peoples and refugees in the Arab World, using three areas as case studies: Sudan, Palestine, and Iraq. By focusing on issues of humanitarianism, agency, and aid, the course is designed to encourage us to re-think how we conceive of displaced people within academic, development, and policy perspectives. We will address agency, citizenship, borders, rights, law, and history, with the intent to include all of these into our perspectives on how we understand displaced people, talk about them, advocate for them, develop policies around them, and manage them.

The selected readings attempt to provide some historical background, but most of you may need more. I'll provide suggested readings to that end. The readings for these three places will not focus on the causes of the refugee movements for the most part, although some do, but we will address that issue in class, in the suggested readings, and it certainly appears in the analyses of many of the authors. Our concern here is more about refugee movements and the meaning of displacement to refugees and how we observers (and occasional participants) understand and respond to those movements.

Many of the authors we read are ones that I think encompass some of the above issues about agency, history, rights, etc., into their analyses and writings. One of the main questions we will be asking throughout this class is how do we take a more holistic perspective (for lack of a better word) that takes into consideration history, culture, agency, respect, security, power relations, borders, etc., into our work in policy and advocacy? And how do we do that without reifying “culture” or “tradition” or without empowering certain elements of society? Some of the other questions we'll be dealing with include the following: What are the roles of governments in dealing with displaced persons? What are the roles of assistance organizations? What are the roles of the displaced people themselves? For each of the geographical areas we will ask how do we generate knowledge about displaced people—what kinds of information do we produce—and to what ends is it used?

I want this class to be interesting, engaging, and useful to you, so I welcome your input at any time. Because this is a graduate seminar, much of it will be discussion-based with short lectures on subjects by me. You are expected to come to class having read all of the readings (and I will call on you if necessary), done the weekly assignment for discussion, and be prepared with critical ideas.

Assignments:

1) Three 6-8-page long papers. The exact details of the assignments will appear in another handout. Each paper is 20% of your grade.
2) Assignments and class participation: 20% of your grade
3) Presentation: 20% of your grade. Details in another handout.
Expectations and Responsibilities:
I expect you to do all of the reading, to participate actively in the class, to be polite and
courteous to me and to your fellow students, and to be intelligent, motivated, and engaged. All
of the work for this class should be original, your own, and not have been turned in for a grade
any where else.

Both you and I are bound by the Georgetown Honor Pledge.

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and
uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To
conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work
together.

http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/site_map.html#The_Honor_System

We both are protected by and enjoy principles of academic freedom.

From the Faculty Handbook:  http://www.georgetown.edu/facultysenate/FacHbk.pdf (p 26)

Academic freedom is essential to teaching and research. Such freedom requires free inquiry, free
expression, intellectual honesty, respect for the academic rights of others, and openness to change. The
rights and responsibilities exercised within the academic community must be compatible with these
requirements. All members of the faculty, in common with all other members of the community, share the
responsibility for maintaining a professional atmosphere in which violations of academic freedom and
responsibility are unlikely to occur. The University endorses the American Association of University
Professors’ 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, with
clarifications that place it in the Georgetown University context (see Section XXI).

January 14 - first day of class
Defining Forced Migration and Refugees/Defining Citizenship and Place
UNHCR document and discussions of it

January 21 –refugees, identity, diaspora, migration, human rights
Our Role
Howard Becker, Chs 1 and 2 (“Telling about Society” and “Representations of Society as
Organizational Products”) from Telling about Society. (UChicago, 2007), pp. 2-29.
Barbara Harrell-Bond. “Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees be Humane?” Human

Rethinking Our Definitions and Asking Questions
Liisa Malkki. “Refugees and Exile: From “Refugee Studies” to the National Order of

Overview with a Focus on the Arab Middle East,” IMR, vol xxvii, no. 1, pp. 4-33.
Current UNHCR report

January 29 –Refugees: Space, Citizenship, Gender, Borders
Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. “Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of
Liisa Malkki. “National Geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of
national identity among scholars and refugees,” Cultural Anthropology, vol 7, no 1,
(1992) pp. 24-44.


http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/research/opendoc.pdf?tbl=RESEARCH&id=40b1ea8a4

MOVIE: The Lost Boys of Sudan (watch on your own prior to this class)

February 4: Sudan – Civil Wars: Hosting Refugees, Creating Refugees


February 11: Sudan – More Civil Wars, Famine and Displacement
Douglas Johnson Ch 5: the beginning of the Second Civil War 1983-5


Pascale Ghazaleh. “Two Miles Into Limbo: Displaced Sudanese in a Cairo Slum” in Middle East Report, No. 225 (Winter, 2002), pp. 2-7

February 18 Sudan – Refugees

Barbara Harrell-Bond, “The Experience of Refugees as Recipients of Aid”
http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid=fmo:2049

February 25 – Darfur
Reports on Darfur and on Peace Accord

March 4 (I will be absent – we will schedule a make-up)
Palestine – Refugees, Laws, and Aid
Article on UNRWA

Background readings:

March 18 – Palestine: Identity and Rebuilding lives
Feldman – Refrain of home

March 25 – Palestine – Contemporary Expressions of Identity and Conflict
Follow up by Sara Roy (as yet unpublished) on Gaza.
April 1 Palestine – Refugees and the Question of Return

April 8 Iraq: History, urbanization, displacement
Selections from Middle East Institute, " Iraq's Refugee and IDP Crisis: Human Toll and Implications" http://www.mideasti.org/publications/iraqs-refugee-idp-crisis

April 15 Iraq: Identities, Conflict, War, and Refugees
Selections from Middle East Institute, " Iraq's Refugee and IDP Crisis: Human Toll and Implications" http://www.mideasti.org/publications/iraqs-refugee-idp-crisis

April 22 Iraq – Analyzing the Present State of Displaced Iraqis and Ways Forward
Selections from Middle East Institute, " Iraq's Refugee and IDP Crisis: Human Toll and Implications" http://www.mideasti.org/publications/iraqs-refugee-idp-crisis