

Canvas Common Experience for New School Students

Below are the materials available in the Canvas Common Experience modules

Home Page/Syllabus

This asynchronous common experience for New School students has been created to ensure opportunities for continued learning and to develop a shared foundation for dialogue across programs by addressing issues of particular importance to all students: migration, including climate change, race and genocide. These issues have had and continue to have a profound impact on human history, as well as the arts, culture, and media. The modules include readings, audio and video recordings that should be engaging and instructive for students across all programs, from undergraduate Parsons first year , BPATS, Lang BAs, Jazz, Mannes, and Drama, to graduate programs including media, design, performance, social sciences, and humanities. **All students should follow their faculty/program guidance for ongoing instruction in their courses and keep up with the requirements on their course syllabi even if their faculty honor the ACT-UAW part-time faculty strike. The common experience materials here are provided for additional continued learning during the period of the strike, and students are advised to engage with them.**

The modules are designed using a variety of types of materials so that you can mix listening to a podcast with reading a text and watching a video; others lead you through progressive and deepening exploration of the theme. Modules may be completed in any order, but it's recommended that you complete them in the order in which they are presented here. Students are encouraged to consider how the materials in these modules can inform their overall learning in their program and regular courses. Assignments may be submitted as text, audio, video or graphic. Students should aim to complete at least one module per week.

These modules are intended as a supplemental educational experience to your regular courses for the duration of the strike. This is not a graded course and you are not 'registered', but completion of the assignments ensures continued academic progress during the strike.

- Module 1: Migration and the Environment
- Module 2: Migration and Race in the U.S.
- Module 3: Forced Migration, Violence and Genocide
- Module 4: Migration and Economics

1. Migration and the Environment

Context

Climate change is among the greatest public concerns for the entire globe. The relationship between climate change and migration occupies an urgent space in both academic scholarship

and international action, and has been a major focus of socially-engaged performing and visual artists. Sea level rise and recurring environmental disasters mix with ongoing economic volatility and political unrest to drive migration as people flee sinking islands, drowning lands, raging forest fires and increasingly inhospitable temperatures. As a result, migrants are a uniquely vulnerable population. This module introduces basic issues in climate change and migration and contains readings, videos, explorations of data, and other activities designed to provide a broad perspective on migrants' experience of climate change and some responses to promote climate justice. You are encouraged to reflect upon these issues in the context of your own degree program.

This module provides flexibility in your exploration of the urgent issue of climate change and its impact on humans. Read, listen and watch the following in the order in which you wish to explore, mixing podcasts with readings and videos, then try the recommended activities.

Read

- [Who is an Immigrant?](#): A brief explanation—with lots of graphics—from MigrationPolicy.org
- [New York City, Underwater](#): A three-minute read on New York City in the face of climate change
- [Financial Responses to Climate Change Remain Challenging](#)

Read (choose one)

- [How Experimental Musicians Are Soundtracking the End of the World](#), which explores various ways in which experimental musicians are developing work in response to climate change and other environmental concerns. Listen to the musical samples referenced in this article. How would you develop creative work focused on the climate crisis?
- [Pioneering Orchestras Using Classical Music to Respond to Climate Crisis](#): about how orchestras around the world are using music to respond to the climate crisis.
- [Family Ties: A Catalyst for Change in the Garment Industry](#), including immigrant stories and how they shaped and are shaping the New York City garment industry

Supplemental Readings

- [The Migrant Identity](#): on a photography project in art and activism on migration issues
- [A Climate of Change in Theater](#): how theater artists are responding to climate change, and advocating for climate justice.
- [Theater and Climate Change](#): additional articles in a special issue of the journal *American Theater* on addressing climate change
- [Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice](#): Review what New York City is doing to address climate crisis

Listen (choose two)

- Podcast: [Does Climate Change Cause Migration? It's Complicated](#)

- Podcast: NYT The Daily: The Sunday Read: [How Climate Migration will Reshape America](#)

Watch

- [Indigenous climate action: Video from COP27 Indigenous Peoples Pavillion: Indigenous views on climate action](#)
- [Anote's Ark](#), documentary about the Pacific Island of Kiribati as it faces rising seas (1:15 minutes, requires New School log in)
- [Symphony of Soil](#), 2012, 103 minutes Deborah Koons Garcia, Director/Producer
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Watch (choose two)

- [Oregon Already Has a Climate Refugee Crisis](#) (6 minutes)
- [Beyond Borders: MacArthur Fellows in Conversation](#) about Climate Change, Migration and Representations in Art (one hour)
- The [first episode of El Tema](#), short documentaries on climate change and its impact on the population in Mexico. (Also read this related [blog post](#).)

Activities (choose one or more)

- [Explore displacement](#): Choose one country to go in depth or explore several
- [Explore Esri Storymaps](#)
- [Migration Policy Institute](#)
- [OKALA Practitioner](#) Educational materials presentation,

And you may enjoy

- This three-minute recording of Ludovico Einaudi's *Elegy for the Arctic*, available in [this article](#) (scroll to the bottom).

Reflection Questions/Assignment

Choose two of the following questions and provide a response, either written or recorded. You may submit your response by uploading a document (.doc, .pdf files accepted), recording media, or writing directly in the text field provided.

- What is the relationship among the issues of climate-induced migration, the environment, and your program of study?
- What are our obligations—on the local, state, federal, institutional, personal levels—to address climate change?
- What are our obligations—on the local, state, federal, institutional, personal levels—to “climate refugees?”
- Reflect on notions of displacement and movement at the level of self and community - how might these aspects frame ideas for art and design practices
- What are some ways that you could apply your creative practice to climate advocacy?

- If you read [Theater and Climate Change](#) and you were developing a theatrical response to climate change, what ideas would you foreground? What would your theatrical event look and feel like?
- If you reviewed [what New York City is doing](#), what do you see as the strengths and what new ideas do you have about what else should be done?

2. Migration and Race in the U.S.

In 1940–41, working in Harlem, American artist Jacob Lawrence produced an epic series of 60 paintings depicting the migration of African-Americans from the rural South to cities in the North in the wake of World War I. Rendered in a style he called “dynamic cubism” and influenced by Mexican muralism, these paintings reveal the injustices, hardships, struggles as well as the hopes and accomplishments of African-Americans in the early 20th century and their lives in the industrial, urban North. The series not only offers a major artist’s portrayal of an important episode in American history but engages themes of migration, the environment, labor, racism, freedom, and dignity that are deeply relevant nearly a century later.

This is a very rich module with lots of additional readings, recordings and video to complement your exploration of Lawrence’s work. As you begin your exploration, keep these questions in mind:

- The Great Migration had a significant influence on the culture, communities, and development of New York City. What have been the effects on your field(s) of study? How do they continue today?
- Each of us has histories of new places and geographies. How do these materials relate to your understanding of your own cultural, historical, and migratory legacies?

To start you off, begin here:

- **Read** the [Introduction](#) to Jacob Lawrence Migration Series and at least three letters from [Migrant Life](#)
- **Then virtually view and explore** [The Migration Series](#) via the Phillips Collection or [The Migration Series](#) via the Museum of Modern Art

Next:

- **Listen to these two short clips:** Poet Langston Hughes reading [A Dream Deferred](#) followed by [E. Ethelbert Miller on Langston Hughes](#) as the poet of the Great Migration
- **Watch this ten-minute play** commissioned to reflect on themes in Lawrence’s Migration Series: [A Long Arduous Journey](#), by Jacqueline E Lawton

Now move beyond Lawrence’s Migration Series (choose one each from Music and Theater):

Music

- Listen to the music of [King Oliver and his band](#), also in [this recording](#), as well as that of [Oliver's protégé Louis Armstrong](#) and research the ways in which this music reflected the experience of migration. Then watch [footage of Eubie Blake the 1899 Charleston Rag](#) and consider what common musical elements you hear in [King Oliver's](#) and Blake's compositions.
- Archie Shepp was one of several Free Jazz avant gardists who moved from the United States to Europe in the late 1960s, and in 1969 participated in the First Pan-African Cultural Festival in the recently-liberated Algiers. In Algiers, Shepp played alongside indigenous Touareg musicians, and incorporated their musical ideas into his work. Read about the First Pan-African Cultural Festival [here](#), and then listen to [Shepp's Chicago Beau from his Black Gipsy album](#), recorded the year after his performance in Algiers. What musical ideas do you identify that reveal Shepp's personal migration, and contact with Algerian musical traditions.
- Read about composer [Florence Price](#) and listen to her Symphony No. 1 (available [here](#)). Examine how Price combines Western European musical traditions with West African and African-American musical ideas. Explore how this compositional approach reflects a narrative of migration.
- Watch and listen to Anoushka Shankar's performance of [Land of Gold](#). In what ways does this performance give voice to the experience of migration? What are the musical legacies Shankar draws upon, and how has migration informed her treatment of these legacies?
- Listen to William Grant Still's [Afro-American Symphony](#). What musical legacies and ideas does Still draw upon and how do these contribute to the overall impact of the composition?

Theater

Read the *American Theatre* article, [Children of the Journey](#), exploring the ways in which contemporary American theater has been shaped by immigration. Then, read one or more of the following plays dealing with narratives of migration. What are the themes these playwrights foreground in their dramatizing of different migration narratives?

- Euripides, [Medea](#)
- Luis Alfaro, [Mojada](#)
- Lloyd Suh, [American Hwangap](#)
- August Wilson, [The Piano Lesson](#)
- Maria Irene Fornes, [Letters from Cuba](#)

Art + Design

Art and design practice has typically engaged with notions of identity, movement through multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary processes. The following examples are points of exploration to engage with how art and design has represented migrant narratives across a range of disciplines - select an area that is of interest to you and possible proximity to your discipline area to explore and respond to. Use the prompts and questions as a lens to reflect on a chosen area across Art/Architecture/Fashion + Technology.

Art

- [Tate Migration art series](#)
- [Profile of London-based Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum](#)
- Cantor Arts Center exhibition: [Migration through contemporary art](#)

Architecture

- Marwan Rechmaoui's [Beirut Caoutchouc](#)
- [Migrating Architecture](#)

Fashion

- [Migration and New York Fashion Week](#)
- [The Great Migration and Fashion shows in Black Communities](#)
- [Exploitation of Migrants in the Fashion Industry](#)
- [Clothes are Hand Made](#)

Technology

- [The Role of Technology in a Global Crisis](#)
- [Technology Migration and the 2030 SDG's](#)
- [World Economic Forum - migration+ technology](#)
 - [Video - Digital Migrant](#)
 - [Shaping the future of Migration](#)
 - [Empowering Refugees through technology](#)

Materiality

- Listen to the story of [The Women of Gee's Bend](#)
- [Gees Bend](#)
- Read about Gee's Bend: [Soul Deep - quiltmakers](#)
- [The role of quilts in the underground railway migration](#)
- [The stories behind African American quilts](#)

Now try one or more of these activities:

Activities (choose one or more)

- [Submit your own art](#)
- [Play the poetry scramble](#)
- [Migrant Stories Worksheet](#)
- [Make a Family Immigrant Map](#) (Word doc)
- ['On The Move' Worksheet](#) (Word doc)

Reflection Questions/Assignment

Choose two of the following questions and provide a response, either written or recorded. You may submit your response by uploading a document (.doc, .pdf files accepted), recording media, or writing directly in the text field provided.

- Consider how the materials you've reviewed relate to and expand your understanding of your own program learning outcomes.

- For all students but especially students who have not lived in the United States for long or who grew up in a different country: Reflect on how the materials looking at the Great Migration relate to your own cultural and historical backgrounds.
- Draft questions the exhibit raised for you or questions you'd ask the artist if you had the opportunity;
- Write a review of the exhibit in modern day and/or in the time period it was produced;
- Research other panel works of a similar scale and compare this work to them;
- Dig deeper into West African storytelling and consider how the work does or does not relate to it.
- Compare the narratives of the Great Migration and Indigenous rights. How have these shaped New York?
- Migration and race is deeply tied to notions of labor and freedom - identify/discuss and reflect on the relationship of these concepts to art and design practices.

Recommended independent excursion to The Museum of Modern Art (admission is free for New School students)

- An exhibition on NYC in the 1920s that includes, e.g., José Clemente Orozco, who has a significant mural in the [Orozco Room](https://www.moma.org/calendar/galleries/5264) at 66 W 12th St.:
<https://www.moma.org/calendar/galleries/5264>.
- An exhibition on Indigenous rights, territorial sovereignty, and environmental memory:
<https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5466>

Note: Entrance to the Museum of Modern Art is free for New School students.

3. Forced migration, violence, and genocide

Context

According to the UN High Commission on Refugees, there are currently at least 89.3 million people who have been forced to flee their homes, many of them fleeing state-based violence. Further, many of them suffer specific forms of violence and discrimination, lack basic human rights, and are under-age. This module specifically looks to provide an understanding of how state-based violence and genocide are precursors to the movement of people. The module also explores some of the ways these forces have impacted the arts, media, and culture, and how artists and intellectuals have responded to instances of violence and genocide. The module asks us to reflect upon our own obligations and complicities in the violence of forced migration. You are encouraged to reflect upon these issues in the context of your own program.

For this module, please read the first two texts, then choose readings about specific instances of genocide, view the videos, and explore some of the entries in Arts and Exile and Artist Responses to Genocide. After the first two readings, materials can be explored in any order. Finally, do each of the activities in order.

Read

- [What is Genocide?](#)
- [Unpacking the effects of genocide and politicide on forced migration](#)

Read (choose two)

- [The History of Native American Genocide](#)
- [Timeline of the Rwandan genocide](#)
- [The Genocide of Brazilian Indians](#)
- [Armenian Genocide Art as Evidence of its Existence.](#)

Supplemental Reading

- [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#)
- [Native American Boarding School Genocide](#)
- [Migrating through the Corridor of Death: The Making of a Complex Humanitarian Crisis](#)

Video (choose two)

- [Myanmar's Killing Fields](#) and read this companion text: [How Refugees Transformed a Dying Rust Belt Town](#)
- The role of colonialism in the Rwandan genocide - [What led to the genocide](#)
- [Australian Aboriginal Genocide](#)
- [Visual Archive: Documenting Holocaust and Genocide through photography](#)

Arts and Exile (choose one)

- Read Lynn Nottage's play [Ruined](#), which deals with the plight of women during the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as [Nottage's statement on the play](#).
- Explore the work of one of the composers profiled [here](#), who fled Nazi persecution during World War II.
- Listen to and learn about the [Heart of Afghanistan ensemble](#), which has been forced to flee Afghanistan after the Taliban banned all music.
- Read about [The Witness Blanket](#)

Now, explore artist responses to genocide (choose three)

- [Christian Boltanski](#), and [The Genius of Boltanski - Guardian article](#)
- Watch [Art is action](#) on responding to genocide through art
- [Kigali Genocide Memorial](#)
- [Rwandan Memorials to Genocide](#)
- [Alfredo Jaar - Rwanda Art Project](#)
- [Floris Boccanegra - Valentina's Nightmare](#)
- [Native American artists reversing colonialism](#)
- [Eisenman Architects - Berlin Holocaust Memorial](#)

Decolonizing (supplemental materials)

- [Decolonizing Design + Cultural Symbols](#)

- [Traditional Cultural Expressions](#)

Activities (complete in order)

- [Ten Stages of Genocide](#)
- [Asylum in the US Fact Sheet](#)
- [Navigate your way through asylum](#)

Reflection Questions/Assignment

Choose **two** of the following questions and provide a written response. You may enter your response either as a “Text Entry” or you can upload it as a file under “File Upload.” (.doc, .pdf files accepted).

- What perspective does your academic discipline provide on forced migration/discipline?
- What would real accountability for genocide and forced migration look like?
- What is the popular conception of refugees/asylum seekers in the media? Where do these narratives come from? How do they deflect from the root causes (and effects) of forced migration?

Additional reflection questions for Arts and Exile and Artist Responses

- In what ways has Lynn Nottage used theater to discuss and shed light on the horrors of war and violence that would be difficult to comprehend in other forms?
 - In what ways does the composer’s work who you read about reflect the experience of persecution and exile?
 - In what ways does the Heart of Afghanistan ensemble’s music, which draws heavily on Afghanistan’s rich musical heritage, also reflect the experience of migration and contact with western influences?
 - Compare your emotional, physical and intellectual responses to different artist responses. How do you think the artist worked to achieve those effects?
-