
Faculty Name Wendy Pearlman

Summer 2018

Fall 2018

Winter 2019

Spring 2019

Project Title Syrian refugees: integration, identity, and the lived experience of exile

Project Description Regardless of when and how the war in Syrian ends, some fraction of the nearly six million Syrians who have fled their homeland will probably not return. What we are witnessing now, therefore, is the foundations of a new Syrian diaspora. Seizing upon the chance to investigate the creation of this diaspora from its beginning stages, I am carrying out analysis of issues of integration and identity among the nearly seven million Syrian who have become refugees outside their country, with a particular interest in those settled in Germany and Turkey, the largest hosts to externally displaced Syrians in the Middle East and Europe respectively. The project pulls upon hundreds of interviews that I have conducted with displaced Syrians from 2012-17, and that I am continuing to collect. To contextualize and make sense of hundreds of interviews that I have conducted with displaced Syrians, I am now doing a thorough study of published sources that provide insight on key topics shaping refugees' current lives and future prospects. These include (1) Host state policies that structure such realms as refugee legal status, housing, education, and work; (2) The kinds of communities that refugees are forming among each other and with other sectors of the host society; (3) The changing ways that refugees understand their sense of self and being in the world as they make sense of ongoing destruction in their homeland and the uncertainty of what lies ahead for them -- both as individuals and as a national collective.

Position Expectations The student role in this research will focus on searching for, finding, summarizing, and analyzing relevant online sources (as much as possible, in German and/or Arabic). It will center on these tasks, to be completed in this order: 1) My plan is to begin by asking my Fellows to search for sources related to Syrian refugee experiences. I will start them out with several suggestions, but also encourage them to follow these sources to others. 2) The students will then do a broad-based search for online forums (namely websites, publications, and social media sites) with content produced by and about displaced Syrians. These will center on reflecting upon Syrians' experiences in general and questions of identity, integration, and belonging, in particular. Students will produce an annotated listing of these sources. I will read it and

then we will discuss, as a group. 3) Upon discussion, the students and I will together choose a small number of forums to investigate in more depth. Students will then do so by doing deep reading/viewing of content over several years. Students' objective will be to create a document listing themes or topics that emerge as the most important and overarching on the forum, identify under each specific articles or entries that relate to that theme, and add their own interpretive commentary about what they see as the larger significance, debates, and connections emerging across these sources. 4) As students produce these "themes documents," we will meet to discuss their questions, ideas, and findings. Accordingly, I will steer them to go deeper into some themes, to investigate other themes that they had not, or to move on to another forum/site and repeat the research focusing on it. Based on my prior experience with undergraduate research assistants, I expect these tasks to take the entire academic year. If they do not, we will adapt and go forward with more sources. As themes emerge that invite more academic investigation or background research, I will ask students themselves to move forward finding and summarizing the appropriate academic or policy-focused books, articles, and studies on the issues in question.

**Skills/Experience
Required**

**What Will the FF
Gain?**

I hope that research assistants will gain the following: 1) Training and sharpening their research and analytical skills by collecting, assessing, and organizing information, and searching for, finding, summarizing, scrutinizing, and synthesizing a range of sources 2) Developing a genuine expertise on the subject matter by deepening their knowledge about refugee studies, the Syrian conflict, and the politics of migration 3) Gaining an inside view on how research evolves into academic publications by participating in the process 4) Ideally, research assistants will also exercise and improve their foreign language capacities by using these languages in research

**Time
Requirement**

- 10 hours/week for fall, winter, and spring quarters - If there is funding, I'd also love to hire a fellow for the summer. This could be from 5-40 hours/week during the summer.
