

## EDITORIAL

### Special Issue: *Teaching Migration*

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This special issue of the *Teaching and Learning Anthropology Journal* is focused on teaching migration. As this issue goes to press, the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic have laid bare long-standing inequities related to migration and immigration in the United States. The virus has intensified the humanitarian crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border, spreading rapidly among migrants and asylum seekers in detention centers and encampments (Reznik 2020). Unsafe working conditions, limited access to health care, and “pre-existing conditions” linked to systemic racism place many immigrants at a higher risk of both viral infection and complications (Holmes 2020; Mendenhall 2020). As in previous epidemics, fear of COVID-19 intersects with narratives of race and belonging, and xenophobia fuels discrimination and violence against Asian immigrants and Asian-Americans (Liu 2020). And travel bans and visa restrictions have drawn renewed attention to the role of borders and movement in controlling viruses and the bodies in which they travel (Benton 2020; Ticktin 2020).

In the midst of these ongoing crises, anthropologists have an important role to play. As Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz (2013) notes, anthropologists are well positioned to shape public perceptions of migration, influence policy, and build support for immigrant rights, whether by challenging dehumanizing portrayals of migrants, revealing the political and economic dynamics that have structured migration, or advocating for changes in immigration policy and enforcement. The essays in this volume contribute to these efforts, demonstrating the ways our pedagogical practices can support anthropological engagement with urgent social issues.

In the essays that follow, anthropologists working in a variety of settings in the United States describe teaching strategies, assignments, and activities designed to promote anthropological understandings of migration and immigration. In “Teaching Alex E. Chávez’s *Sounds of Crossing: Music, Migration, and the Poetics of Huapango Arribeño* (Duke University Press, 2017), a Pedagogical Lesson,” Alyshia Gálvez and four of her students, Lizbeth Bravo, Edith Carrasco, Kathryn Chuber, and Daisy Flores, reflect on the learning opportunities offered by deep engagement with book-length ethnographies. Recognizing that many anthropological texts may be

challenging for students and instructors alike, they share successful experiences with collaborative learning strategies that support close reading. At the same time, they examine how connections between Chávez's book and the personal experiences of students, particularly those who are the children of Mexican migrants, enhanced understandings of the book for the entire class. The collaborative approaches described in this article help make anthropological scholarship on migration accessible and meaningful to students who are new to the field.

Other contributions to this special issue share activities and assignments designed to challenge misinformation and stigmatizing portrayals of immigrants. Jennifer Cook and Evin Rodkey both confront myths that underlie common assumptions about immigrants and identify strategies to help students develop more nuanced perspectives. In "'Judging Extreme Hardship': An In-Class Activity for Teaching Critical Interrogation of Discursive Frames in U.S. Im/migration Law," Cook shares an activity in which students "assume the role of an immigration judge overseeing the removal hearing of an undocumented migrant." As they work together to apply immigration law to a specific case, students learn to think critically about dominant constructions of immigrants and develop a deeper understanding of the subjectivity inherent to the application of immigration law. In "Designing an Assignment on Undocumented Migration: It's All about Framing," Rodkey draws on the strategy of "decoupling" to respond to criminalizing narratives that can prevent students from engaging with more complex analyses of undocumented migration. Rodkey presents an essay assignment that guides students through a three-part analysis in which they use textbook concepts and ethnographic evidence to explore the historical and economic processes that shape undocumented Mexican migration to the United States as well as the lived experiences of migrants.

The next essays in this issue present assignments in which students conduct their own interviews with the goal of better understanding and empathizing with the experience of migration. In "Teaching Im/migration through an Ethnographic Portrait Project," Jennifer R. Guzmán, Melanie A. Medeiros, and Gwendolyn Faulkner describe an interview project they assign in introductory cultural anthropology courses. Through this assignment, students learn to apply anthropological research methods to gain a deeper understanding of individual immigrant experiences and the ways these experiences are linked to broader social phenomena. In "Telling Migration Stories: Course Connections and Building Classroom Community," Caitlin Fouratt reflects on the experience of working with students who are often immigrants themselves. She presents an assignment in which students interview others in the class about their family migration histories and analyze these stories using concepts from course materials. Fouratt seeks to "foreground students' experiential expertise," building their academic confidence and promoting a sense of community that can support undocumented, first-generation, and other marginalized students. In this issue's Student Showcase, Idalia

Mora's essay, "The Journey for the American Dream," discusses the family story shared by one of her fellow students in response to this assignment.

Additional contributions to this issue examine teaching and learning about migration outside of traditional classroom settings. In "Project- and Human-Centered Teaching and Learning: Diplomacy Lab and the Expanded Public Charge Rule for New Cabo Verdean Immigrants," Brandon D. Lundy and colleagues describe their experiences conducting a research project through the U.S. State Department's Diplomacy Lab. In response to questions from the U.S. Embassy in Cabo Verde, a group of undergraduate and graduate students examined how the new public charge final rule could impact Cabo Verdean immigrants in the United States. In this example of project-based learning, students developed independent research skills as they engaged directly with the effects of immigration policy on individuals and communities. Daniel Ginsberg's essay, "Offering Informal Education in Public Libraries through Exhibit Design," describes the development of the American Anthropological Association's upcoming public exhibit, *World on the Move*. Like many of the efforts presented in this issue, the exhibit aims to counter misconceptions about human migration, build empathy for the experiences of migrants, and prompt further public conversation. Ginsberg describes how partnerships with public libraries have shaped the design of the exhibit and offer important opportunities to reach diverse, multi-generational audiences and to promote local community engagement.

Finally, Melissa Gauthier reviews the film *Border South/Frontera Sur*, directed by Raúl O. Paz Pastrana and co-produced by anthropologist Jason De León. The film documents the journeys of Central American migrants traveling through Mexico to the United States. Classroom and community screenings offer an opportunity to discuss a variety of issues, including anthropological ethics and methods across the subfields, the violence of the global migration system, and concrete actions that can advance immigrant rights and social justice. This review is published in both English and Spanish.

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