MIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Intensive PhD/postgraduate class

29 June – 2 July 2026

Moskovska street 6A, Sofia, Bulgaria

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum -- Bulgarian Academy of Sciences



Photo: Paolo Ruspini, Sofia, June 2025

Dr. Paolo Ruspini
Associate Professor
Roma Tre University – Università degli Studi Roma Tre
Department of Education,
Rome, Italy
Email: paolo.ruspini@uniroma3.it

Educational objectives

The course develops from an observation of the current multimodal nature of contemporary migration, the significant refugee flows triggered by crises and conflicts in various regions on the margins of the European continent, the scale of South-South migration, and the extensive scope of internal migration in some vast areas of the globe.

From a theoretical perspective, a transnational approach allows for the analysis of migration phenomena as a continuum between countries of destination and origin, observing the transnational practices of migrants and diasporas, as well as the social transformations generated by migration flows. The crisis of the multicultural model will be discussed from a comparative perspective considering the inclusion policies adopted in different national contexts.

In line with the "Dublin Descriptors" the expected learning outcomes are listed below.

The course aims to foster curiosity and interest in migration phenomena, cultural diversity, and their management through a process of self-reflection and discussion based on bibliographical, ethnographic, and audiovisual materials. Students will be invited to present their experiences and reflections to refine their positions on the perception and reality of contemporary migration, and on the role of policies and practices of government and non-government actors responsible for managing it at the local, national, and international levels.

Upon completion of the course, students will:

- have become familiar with the complexity of migration phenomena and their management in contemporary societies

- have developed the ability to self-reflect and re-elaborate their experiences and knowledge on migration

- be able to critically navigate the various approaches to social inclusion and multiculturalism.

Course contents

The first part of the course, starting from the United Nations' definition of international migrant, will attempt to deconstruct the perception and reality of the migratory phenomena under observation with a brief historical overview starting from the post-World War II period. Emphasis will be placed on the current multimodal nature of international migration and the transnationalism of migrants and diasporas as it unfolds in economic, political, social, and educational contexts. Multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and different models of inclusion will be compared and analysed considering the social and political evolution of contemporary societies.

In the second part, the European framework highlights, through statistical and ethnographic materials, the ongoing conflict between migration control and integration policies, the impact of transnational migration on integration processes, the lack of adequate common migration and asylum policies, and finally the need for appropriate intercultural and intergenerational communication practices. The importance of historical memory and the transmission of knowledge about migration through diversity education facilitate the counteraction of problematization and thus enable the implementation of citizenship and naturalization practices appropriate to the new multiethnic reality and hybrid identities of transnational migrant communities.

Among others, the following topics will be addressed:

- Perception and reality of international migration
- The multimodal nature of contemporary migration
- The transnational turn in the study of migration
- From 'guest workers' to 'long-term residents': a brief overview of the history of immigration in Europe (1950-1989)
- The 'third wave': irregular migration, refugees, and asylum seekers in the post-Cold War era (1989-)
- The Mediterranean model: migration flows and policies in the newer immigration countries of Southern Europe (since the early 1980s)
- Immigration from the East and the EU neighbourhood policies: the pre- and post-enlargement framework
- Comparing models of integration: differentiated exclusion, assimilation, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism
- Immigration, cultural diversity, and integration: what common standard for dissimilar

migration experiences?

- Migration and intercultural communication competences: training needs and integration practices of organizations in the multiethnicity sector

Pedagogical-didactic approach

Students will be exposed to the reality of international migration through statistical, ethnographic, and audiovisual materials. The complexity of current migration contexts will be explored, where possible, through video contributions from key witnesses. The summer course will conclude with an ethnographic fieldwork session in Sofia, supported by the staff of IEFSEM–BAS. Classes will be taught in English.

Course requirements and assessment

Indicative learning activities

In session

Tutor presentation on key readings, other relevant publications and migration related sources (databases, glossaries, videos, etc.).

Elaborating one's own position about the current extent of international migration processes in Europe and beyond through group and plenary discussion.

Presentation of one's own position about international migration in Europe and beyond through group and plenary discussion.

Follow-up

Revising/focusing/sharpening one's own position about the current size and breadth of international migration flows, the linkage between memory and migration in a transnational setting and the challenges faced by different migrant groups and generations based on the moderated discussions in session.

Approaches to teaching and learning

Independent self-study
Personal experience on the topic
Lecture
Reflection
Moderated discussion
Presentation
Final ethnographic session

General references

Haas, H. de (2023), *How Migration Really Works. The Facts About the Most Divisive Issue in Politics.* New York: Basic Books.

Koser, K. (2009), *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Ruspini, P. (2024), *Memoria e migrazioni*. *Percorsi di ricerca tra Svizzera e Italia in prospettiva transnazionale* (Memory and Migration. Research paths between Switzerland and Italy in a transnational perspective), Milan: Mimesis.

Ruspini, P. (2021), "Transnationalism", in M. Colombo and G. Gilardoni (Eds*), Intercultural Issues and Concepts. A Multi-Disciplinary Glossary*, Europe of Cultures/Dialogues, Vol. 22, Brussels: Peter Lang, pp. 277-92.

Eade, J., Ruspini, P. (2014), "Multicultural Models", in M. Martiniello, J. Rath (Eds) *An Introduction to Immigrant Incorporation Studies: European Perspectives*, IMISCOE Textbook Series, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 71-89.

Recommended readings

Books and scientific articles:

Bade, K. J. (2003), *Migration in European History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Byram, M. (2020), *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* (Revisited edition), Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Haas, H. de, Castles, S., Miller, M. (2019), *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Krase, J. (2011), "Ethnic Crossroads: Visualizing Urban Narratives", in C. Allemann-Ghionda, W. D. Bukow, *Orte der Diversität: Formate, Arrangements und Inszenierungen*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, pp. 93-112.

Richter, M., Ruspini, P., Mihailov, D., Mintchev, V., Nollert, M. (2017), (Eds.) *Migration and Transnationalism Between Switzerland and Bulgaria*, New York: Springer.

Ruspini, P. (2019), *Migrants Unbound*, London: Transnational Press London.

Ruspini, P. (2014), "The Transformative Character of International Migration and its Impact on Integration Practices and Learning Needs", in F. Bignami, M.G. Onorati (Eds.) *Intercultural Competences for Vocational Education and Training. Experiential Learning and Social Contexts for Enhancing Professional Competences*, Milan: Egea, pp. 89-98.

Ruspini, P. (2008), "The Post-Enlargement Migration Space", in C. Bonifazi, M. Okólski, J. Schoorl, P. Simon (Eds) *International Migration in Europe: New Trends, New Methods of Analysis*, IMISCOE Research, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 179-196.

Tyne, H., Ruspini, P. (2021), "International Student Mobility as Transnationalism", in R. Mitchell and H. Tyne (Eds), Language, Mobility and Study Abroad in the Contemporary European Context, London: Routledge, pp. 13-21

Wihtol de Wenden, C. (2013), *Le droit d'émigrer*, Paris: CNRS Editions.

Glossaries and Statistics

Perruchoud, R., Redpath-Cross, J. (2011) (eds.) Glossary on Migration, 2nd Edition, International Migration Law, N. 25, Geneva: International Organization for Migration (IOM). At: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml25_1.pdf

EMN – European Migration Network (2025) Asylum and Migration Glossary, European Commission. Migration and Home Affairs, Brussels: At: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en

Eurostat (2025) Migration and asylum in Europe - 2025 edition, Brussels: European Commission. At: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/migration-2025

Lesson topics and timetable:

This intensive PhD/postgraduate course will include two units per day of 2 hours each for a total of 16 hours.

29 June

10.00 – 12.00

Unit 1

Contemporary Migration Trends

This preliminary session represents an opportunity to get acquainted with global migration trends, push, and pull factors of worldwide migration flows and the current changing character of international migration for students who lack pre-knowledge on these issues as well as possible refreshment for those more experienced on this topic. Additionally, it also includes a short introduction to a visual ethnographic approach to urban environments.

Required readings:
Koser, K. (2007) *International Migration: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krase, J. (2011) "Ethnic Crossroads: Visualizing Urban Narratives", in C. Allemann-Ghionda, W. D. Bukow, *Orte der Diversität: Formate, Arrangements und Inszenierungen*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, pp. 93-112.

Ruspini, P. (2014) "The Transformative Character of International Migration and its Impact on Integration Practices and Learning Needs", in F. Bignami, M.G. Onorati (Eds) *Intercultural Competences for Vocational Education and Training. Experiential Learning and Social Contexts for Enhancing Professional Competences*, Milan: Egea, pp. 89-98.

14.00 – 16.00

Unit 2

Transnational Migration: Between Theory and Practice

The concept 'transnationalism' became usual in the last few years. However, the term is neither new nor limited to migration-related phenomena, but refers to a wide range of actions, processes and institutions that cross the boundaries of states or national-communities. The earliest use of this term regarding immigration is probably a famous essay by Randolph Bourne from 1916 in which he described America as a 'transnational nation' composed of, and constantly changed through, immigration from diverse origins. In contemporary debates, the notion of transnationalism has been generally used to refer to migrants' ongoing ties with source countries.

Required readings:

Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E. & Landolt, P. (1999) "The study of transnationalism: pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 22, Number 2, March 1999, pp. 217-237.

Kivisto, P. (2001) "Theorizing transnational immigration: a critical review of current efforts", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, July 2001, pp. 549-577.

Bauböck, R. (2003) “Towards a Political Theory of Migrant Transnationalism”, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Transnational Migration: International Perspectives (Fall, 2003), pp. 700-723.

Vertovec, S. (2004) “Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation”, *International Migration Review*, Volume 38, Number 3 (Fall 2004), pp. 970-1001.

Mihailov, D., Richter, M. and Ruspini, P. (2017) “Social Networks and Transnational Migration Practices”, in M. Richter, P. Ruspini, D. Mihailov, V. Mintchev and M. Nollert (Eds) *Migration and Transnationalism Between Switzerland and Bulgaria*, New York: Springer, pp. 153-180.

30 June

10.00 – 12.00

Unit 3

Migrant Transnationalism and Models of Immigrant Integration

New patterns of circular, transit and return migration in Europe provide a set of challenges for integration policies. Under conditions of globalisation, the growing transnationalism and the role of diasporas urges a redefinition of the traditional notions of integration. Notions of identity are evolving as individuals increasingly ‘belong’ to more than one country and society. Purpose of this session is to discuss current transnational patterns of migration in Europe, the impact of immigration policies and the equation transnationalism-integration.

Required readings:

Bivand Erdal, M. & Oeppen, C. (2013) “Migrants balancing acts: Understanding the interaction between integration and transnationalism”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(6): 867-884.

Mügge, L. (2016) “Transnationalism as a Research Paradigm and Its Relevance for Integration”, in B. Garcés-Mascareñas, R. Penninx (eds.), *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Contexts, Levels and Actors*, IMISCOE Research Series, New York: Springer Open, 109-125.

Ruspini, P. (2011) “Conceptualising Transnationalism: East-West Migration Patterns in Europe”, in C. Allemann Ghionda, W.D. Bukow (Eds) *Orte der Diversität: Formate, Arrangements und Inszenierungen*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag,115-127.

Ruspini, P. (2019) “Migrants unbound? Transnationalism, Immigrant Integration and Return in Europe and Beyond” in P. Ruspini, *Migrants Unbound*, London: Transnational Press London, 7-18.

14.00-16.00

Unit 4

History and Dynamics of Migration and Migration Policies in Europe

Post-war migration into the western societies since the 1950s was central to the economic reconstruction of these countries and was structured by the development of the European economy that generated demand for migrant workers. The post-war economic boom in Western Europe was sustained by migrants from other European countries and beyond. There was, however, the assumption that this labour migration was temporary and that migrants would return to their countries of origin when economic conditions changed. By the late 1970s it was clear that supposed temporary migration had turned into permanent settlement. The session will provide an overview of three main periods of the European immigration history: (1) Labour migration

between the 1950s and 1973-4 driven to a great extent by the exigencies of west European economic reconstruction; (2) Family migration from the 1970s onwards once labour recruitment was terminated; (3) The 'third wave' of migration developed in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War in 1989 with emphasis on asylum seeking migration and migration defined by state policies as 'illegal'.

This unit will include the research presentation: "Borders, Conflicts and Transnational Migration from Central-Eastern Europe in a Gender and Ethnicity Perspective"

Required readings:

Castles, S., De Haas, H., Miller, M. (2009) "Migration in Europe since 1945", in S. Castles, H. De Haas, M. Miller, *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Sixth Edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, pp. 117-44.

Geddes, A. (2003) "Analysing the Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe", in A. Geddes, *The Politics of Migration and Immigration in Europe*, London: SAGE Publications, pp. 1-28.

Fassmann, H. (2009) "European migration: Historical overview and statistical problems", in Fassmann, H., Reeger, U., Sievers, W. (2009) (Eds) *Statistics and Reality. Concept and Measurements of Migration in Europe,* IMISCOE Reports, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 21-44. At: https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/35302

Ruspini, P. (2008) "The Post-Enlargement Migration Space", in C. Bonifazi, M. Okólski, J. Schoorl, P. Simon (Eds) *International Migration in Europe: New Trends, New Methods of Analysis*, IMISCOE Research, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 179-196. At: https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/35242

1 July

10.00 – 12.00

Unit 5

Memory and Migration: Transnational Migration Networks and Education for Diversity

Emphasis on the transnational dimension allows to move beyond the nation state as unit of analysis and explore the linkages, interconnections of memory, migration, and identity between different localities in Europe and beyond. This session aims at exploring the way migrants' identity and memory migrate, glocalize, transform, multiply over temporal and spatial dimensions.

Required readings:

Mitzal, B. (2003) "Memory and identity", in *Theories of Social Remembering,* Maidenhead, England: Open University Press, 132-8.

Canefe, N. (2011) "Home in Exile: Politics of Refugeehood in the Canadian Muslim Diaspora", in J. Creet, A. Kitzmann (Eds) *Memory and Migration: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Memory Studies,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 156-180.

14.00-16.00

Unit 6

Theoretical and Empirical Challenges in the Study of Migration

Further readings:

Amelina, A., Faist, T., Nergiz, D. D. (2013) (Eds) *Methodologies on the Move. The Transnational Turn in Empirical Migration Research*, London and New York: Routledge and Ethnic and Racial Studies.

Creet, J., Kitzmann, A. (2010) (Eds) *Memory and Migration: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Memory Studies,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Martiniello, M., Rath, J. (2014) (Eds) *An Introduction to Immigrant Incorporation Studies: European Perspectives*, IMISCOE Textbook Series, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

2 July

10.00 – 14.00

Multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in Sofia

After discussing together in class—as a newly established community of learners—the theoretical and empirical challenges ahead in migration studies, an urban fieldwork exercise will take place in the multicultural capital city of Bulgaria. The entanglements of migration, urban space, and transnational practices will be observed on the streets of Sofia. This multifaith, multicultural, and historically rich city will become a kind of "social laboratory" in which migration and minority dynamics manifest through spatial practices, visual markers of identity, economic and cultural interactions, and everyday forms of intercultural communication.

This exercise will give advanced students and practitioners in migration the opportunity to experience firsthand the challenges and opportunities that multiculturalism presents on the ground, thereby allowing them to test and apply the knowledge they have acquired in class. Finally, a guided self-reflective session will support the sharing and consolidation of insights gained from this urban fieldwork experience.