

“QUESTIONING THE FAMILIAR IN FLIGHT AND MIGRATION” DESCRIPTION OF COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

From mass migration in late antiquity until the so-called European Refugee Crisis of 2015, people always have been on the move. Therefore, migration is not an invention of modern times. Through ever-accelerating dynamics of globalization, closing interdependences on a global scale, the development of more effective instruments of research, as well as increasing media coverage through all sorts of media channels, i. e. news broadcasters and social media platforms, however, we have to comprehend and analyze migration as a highly complex phenomenon today more than ever.

During the four-week Summer School in June 2019, we are going to ask not only who migrates, which motives there are for migration, which actors and dynamics shape the process of migration, and which effects (mass) migration has on the host societies. We are also going to raise questions about how integration is moderated, how new relations between immigrants and locals are formed and which obstacles and challenges arise. How do political, religious and civil actors, such as local authorities, political programs, formal institutions, (non-profit) organizations and/or informal neighborhood associations meet those challenges and find solutions (and for whom are those solutions profitable)?

THE “REFUGEE CRISIS OF 2015” AND THE REFUGIUM FESTIVAL IN EICHSTÄTT

Since records began in 1953, the number of asylum applications by refugees arriving at Germany’s borders reached its first peak in the mid-90s. The number decreased in the early 2000s before raising again as of 2010 and reaching its highest level in 2015 and 2016, when the officials registered nearly 500.000 and 750.000 applications of (asylum-seeking) refugees.

In the wake of this “refugee crisis”, as this period has been called afterwards in European and German public, the intercultural festival Refugium took place in Eichstätt for the first time. Since then, for one weekend in summer, the campus of the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt becomes a place of encounter, intercultural exchange, and offers the opportunity to forge relations and form intercultural bonds between immigrants and locals, foreign cultures and local traditions.

SCHEDULE OF SUMMER SCHOOL 2019

The Summer School is thematically and empirically conceptualized around the Refugium festival taking place from June 21 to 22 2019. For the festival, its key actors, main objectives and practical accomplishments will be the central field that ISEP students and students of the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt will approach together in their empirical social research. To provide initial input, the Summer School 2019 starts with two block seminars (June 3 to 7) each theoretically or methodically focused.

The theoretical seminar covers theories that aim to explain the sources, motives and processes of migration and different theoretical approaches, which shed light on a variety of perspectives on migration as spatial movement of people. We will focus on several themes, like disintegration, assimilation, alienation, integration, xenophobia and the idea of a multicultural society. We will outline different perspectives on migration and integration as highly complex phenomena and processes with the focus on obstacles, challenges, effects and consequences of (mass) immigration, which affect not only host societies but also immigrants themselves. Conflicts arising

between different practically informed approaches, employed by state officials, local authorities, (non-profit) organizations as well as informal neighborhood associations aiming to meet the challenges at hand, will inform the theoretical-sociological investigation. In the center of the colliding interests, the refugee emerges in the role of “The Stranger”, a figure introduced to Sociology by Georg Simmel (1908) and elaborated by Alfred Schütz (1944).

In the methods seminar, we will raise the question what qualitative empirical social research is and gain knowledge about its main features, such as openness and adequacy, comparing them with epistemological principles of quantitative approaches. In this context, we will deal with crucial phases of the circular research process, containing the development of research questions, methods of generating and analyzing data as well as “grounded theories” about the identified field. With regard to our empirical case study, the Refugium, we will methodically focus on different forms of interviewing, like guideline interviews and other related types of interviews with the aim of revealing participants’ knowledge and interpretations, e.g. of the festival, of its contribution to the process of integration, of foreignness, etc. As interviewing is conceived as part of ethnographic fieldwork, the students will also get familiar with this specific style of research, including strategies of participant observation, writing field notes and observation protocols. Complemented by central characteristics and methods of Grounded Theory, the seminar introduces to MAXQDA, a software program for the organization and – in our case – interpretive analysis of qualitative research data.

In the following three weeks (June 10 to 29) the students will apply the previously acquired theoretical and methodical competences by developing concrete research questions and integrating them into their instruments, handling them in interview situations with preselected participants involved in the organization and accomplishment of the Refugium. In both the data generating and analyzing process, the students receive assistance by the lecturers and mentors so that they are able to develop theoretical concepts and present their findings in a final presentation at the end of the Summer School.

In taking this course, students will accordingly gain knowledge on key theories and concepts of migration, in particular, flight migration, and integration from a sociological point of view. Furthermore, they will understand how these theories inform empirical social research by learning about qualitative research methods and applying them in their own small-scale research projects. Finally, the program enables students to independently conduct their own qualitative empirical study and comprehend how sociologists approach the complex phenomenon of migration today.

LECTURERS

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