

**HIS 516**  
**Theme Seminar: Empire, Modernity & Globalization**  
**Topic: Mobility, Migration and Diaspora**

Mondays, 3:30 pm - 6:20 pm

Professor Mohamad Ballan

Today's world is perhaps the most interconnected and globalized in human history, with people, commodities, and ideas constantly circulating across the planet. This graduate theme seminar explores various questions about migration and mobility, and examines their relationship to the formation of political community and state formation, the articulation of religious and communal identity, inaugurating cultural and political transformations, and in shaping transregional connections and networks throughout world history. This comparative and interdisciplinary approach to the question of migration—which covers a range of historical and geographic contexts from the Middle Ages to the present—will critically interrogate how the study of diasporic and transregional communities is entangled with broader historical processes such as empire and state formation, racialization, and notions of subjecthood and citizenship.

Readings will include at least 10 monographs and various articles that seek to acquaint you with the latest developments in the field and to provide a critical framework to reflect on the concepts of mobility and migration across Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas from the premodern era to the present. Specific topics to be covered include the definitions and meanings of mobility, migration and diaspora; social, mercantile, religious and diplomatic networks; intellectual networks and communities of letters; the role of transregional communities in the emergence, consolidation and decline of empires; borderlands and frontiers; cross-cultural encounters; persecution and toleration of religious minorities; forced migration, including expulsion and enslavement; the relationship between territorial states and diasporic communities; the articulation of identity and processes of racialization; as well as modern historical developments, including colonialism, globalization, and refugee crises.

Requirements include completing all readings before class, regular attendance and active participation, in-class presentations, an in-class written assignment, and a final paper that explores a theme from the course using the texts we have read during the semester, in conjunction with primary source selected in consultation with the instructor. **Prerequisite:** The formal prerequisite to join the class is enrollment in a History PhD or MA program or permission of instructor, but students in other graduate degree programs for whom the subject matter and approach are relevant are encouraged to inquire with the instructor about joining the course.