Exile is the law laid bare.
—Victor Hugo, “What Exile Is”

The best thing that happened to the “new” expatriates was their liberation, finally, from any need to be smothered by what really is nothing more (though it may be something less) than mother love.
—James Baldwin, “The New Lost Generation”

Course Description
Displacement is a condition that defines our times. In 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees claimed that the number of refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people had exceeded 50 million, the highest number recorded in the post-war era. Political theorists are busy debating what to do about this refugee crisis, philosophers have called for an ethics of hospitality, courts are making rulings on the extent of their government’s obligations to non-citizen residents, and economists chew over the benefits and costs of immigration. There is also, of course, a psychical cost associated with the experience of being displaced from one’s home.

Our course will consider both the politics and the poetics of displacement. Part of the course will be spent grappling with the structural differences between a variety of political (and historical) categories: refugees, exiles, D.P. (displaced persons), migrants, émigré, resident aliens, “infiltrators,” and so on. Another part of the course will attend to the lived experience of these conditions through the creative work of poets, dramatists, and other artists. Our goal is to become acquainted with some of these political dilemmas, but also with the lived experience of these fraught human conditions.

Required Books (available in the Western Bookstore, among other places):

**Schedule** (given the fluid nature of a seminar, the readings are subject to change)

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td><strong>Introductions</strong>: Watch Hannah Arendt’s interview 1964 with Günter Gaus on <em>Zur Person</em></td>
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<td>23</td>
<td><strong>Bare Life</strong>: Arendt “The Rights of Man: What are They?” + Agamben, <em>Homo Sacer</em> pp. 1-67</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td><strong>The Camp</strong>: Agamben, <em>Homo Sacer</em> pp.119-188 + “Roma: Europe is Ours”</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td><strong>L’Etranger…</strong>: Derrida and Dufourmantelle, <em>Of Hospitality</em></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td><strong>…And Refugees</strong>: Nyguen “The Refugee Condition” + Honig, “Natives and Foreigners”</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Mother Love</strong>: Read all the papers in the special section of <em>JAPA</em> devoted “Julia Kristeva: Maternal Reliance” (2014); Vol. 62 no 1: pp. 57-111 + Kristeva “Motherhood Today”</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td><strong>Exilic Unconscious</strong>: Euripides, <em>Medea</em></td>
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<td><strong>Resistance</strong>: Satrapi, <em>Persepolis</em> <em>review due</em></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td><strong>The Ties That Bind</strong>: (film in class TBA) + Rancière “Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community” * paper proposal due*</td>
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<td>December</td>
<td><strong>Narrative Returns</strong>: <em>Letters of Transit</em></td>
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<td>Paper workshop + wrap-up</td>
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Assignments:
1. Passage analysis (30%) on-going
2. Film/Book/Website review (20%) due November 11th
3. Paper proposal (10%) due November 18th
4. Paper (40%) due December 16th

1. Passage Analysis 25%—ongoing
You will be required to present your thoughts about one of readings at least once during the term. Pick a concept or a short passage from one of the week’s assigned readings and prepare a brief discussion about its significance. Include the passage as the heading to your discussion and bring copies to distribute to the class. The idea of this assignment is to work closely with the text, unfolding and reflecting upon the significance of the passage you have chosen. You might wish to choose a passage that you believe to be the crux of the author’s argument. Or you might choose to focus on something more obscure in order to speculate on the significance of the outlying idea. I encourage you to choose something that strikes you. Treat this as an exercise of “working through,” or what Hannah Arendt describes as “understanding.” Depending on your choice, you may wish to use the quotation as a way to try to paraphrase or summarize the author’s argument. Or you may wish to deconstruct the logic at work in the passage. Or you may wish to link the quotation to another reading from our course. You are strongly encouraged to frame your work with a few questions. Your discussion of the passage should be no more than 1000 words.

2. Film/Book/Online Project Review (25%) November 11th
Write a short review of a film, novel, book of poetry, or online project of your choice. Your choice should be related to our course (“on exile”) and you are encouraged to bring the conceptual work from the course to bear in your review, but bear in mind that criticism is not the same as theory. You should also craft your review with a specific venue in mind: The New Yorker is not the same as The New York Review of Books, which is not the same as Critical Inquiry. The review should to be no more than 1000 words.

3-4. Proposal + Paper (10% + 40%) November 18th and December 16th
The ubiquitous term paper: this should be an original and exciting piece of writing, thinking, and research that grapples with and makes use of ideas and texts from this class. You may directly tackle aspects of one or more of our main authors’ work, or you may use them as inspiration for research. Choosing a good topic is hard and takes time. Finding dead ends can be an accomplishment. Life is too short to work on topics you don’t passionately care about; good topics possess, inspire, perplex, and thrill the mind and heart. I am soliciting essays that are: (1) theoretically athletic and conceptually fresh (2) open some new terrain of fact and imagination (3) show some adventure in the craft of writing. A sense for the larger historical context of your object and the intellectual stakes of your argument is crucial. A musical quality in the prose is most welcome, as is experimentation with genre. Genres are not questions of format but of worldview. I strongly encourage you to work on your topic throughout the semester and bring up your discoveries, as relevant, in class discussion.
A statement of your proposed topic is due November 18th
Polished drafts are due December 16th, one week after classes end.

Your proposal should include a description of the “archive” or body of “documents” that will form a central basis of your research. This could be something as clear as “Germaine de Staël’s letters” or “the periodicals produced by Germans in exile during the Third Reich” – or something more vague such as eighteenth century travel books, or postcards from the 1960s, or the history of tango. The proposal should be approximately 500 words. Aim for the final draft to be approximately 5000 words (20 pages).

Statement on Academic Offences (scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Complete bibliography of the readings
——. “We Refugees” (1947) In Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile, ed. Marc Robinson (Bostom: Faber & Faber, 1994)
Ariella Azoulay, “Mother Tongue, Father Tongue: Following the Death of the Father and the Death of the Mother” Sternthal, August 30, 2013, online: http://sternthalbooks.com/journal/
——. “Motherhood Today” online: http://www.kristeva.fr/motherhood.html