



NEW JERSEY

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QuickTakes!

Stockton University Offers New Subject Area of Concentration in Migration Studies

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Responding to a critical national issue in need of research, discussion, and thoughtful deliberation, Stockton University has added a new minor in migration studies to provide students with multiple perspectives on migration and its impact in America and around the world.

The migration studies minor will focus on the mechanisms and consequences of different migration processes, including the dynamics of nation-building, contested community borders, and changing regional demographics.

“Although we often focus on people moving across international borders as a result of conflict or disaster, students must also appreciate the patterns of movement and displacement within the United States – for example, labor migration, gentrification, and climate-related change,” said Associate Professor of Criminal Justice Jess Bonnan-White, program coordinator.

The minor will provide a complement to such majors as pre-law, criminal justice, social work, sociology, sustainability, anthropology, economics and cultural studies. Currently, 30 courses in a variety of disciplines, taught by more than 15 faculty members, are included in the program. Several of the faculty have conducted international and domestic fieldwork and teach about displacement from a first-hand view.

“We are lucky to have classes taught by faculty scholars who have witnessed the consequences of displacement around the world,” Professor Bonnan-White said. “For example, the ‘Displaced Persons’ course is taught by Assistant Professor of Social Work Elma Kaiser, who has conducted research among children forced out of their homes and who now live on the streets in Bangladesh. This means our students are not only learning theory but learn from faculty who have contributed to the scholarship on these areas, themselves.”

Other program courses include “Race, Ethnicity and Migration,” “Human Adaptation and Variation,” “Globalization, Migration and Art,” “Race and Politics,” “Introduction to Global

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Literatures,” “Homeland Security,” “Borders and Sanctuary,” and “Tourism and Development.”

“The courses don’t just address immigration, but also internal movement within the United States, such as people leaving New Jersey,” Professor Bonnan-White said. “Even tourism is temporary displacement and towns have to be prepared for that.”

At the undergraduate level there are only four other minor programs in the U.S. that specifically focus on migration studies.

“Stockton is uniquely situated in southern New Jersey to provide students with direct exposure to communities impacted by migration, and to reflect on their own role in creating comprehensive and sustainable public policy,” Professor Bonnan-White said. “This is not a refugee studies program. We are looking at the issue holistically.”

Faculty members are also available to speak with media on topics related to migration. Bonnan-White’s specialty is Homeland Security and Humanitarian Assistance.

A new minor is part of an initiative by Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Lori Vermeulen to promote new programming at Stockton that teaches students to become engaged and effective citizens.