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Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis [Paralegal Studies]

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Understanding the Global Refugee Crisis

Paralegal Program

Business and Technology Department, LaGuardia Community College

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This assignment was designed to meet the criteria of the Global Learning competency and Written ability rubrics. Although it was created for the Paralegal Program, it was not made to fit one specific course as we are unsure where it fits best in the program. As we continue to experiment with placement, we have piloted this assignment in two different courses (BTP203 and BTP205) with similar results. It was designed for students to complete outside of the classroom as homework with minimal in-class instruction as the content of the assignment did not truly fit in the courses that held it in the Paralegal Program. This assignment was scaffolded with the first part being worth 5 points. The final writing assignment was worth 15% of the final grade with a draft for feedback. This version is the culmination of three semesters piloting and simplifying the material. While the assignment focuses on laws impacting refugees, it is flexible enough to fit into other courses in other disciplines. With minor adjustments, this assignment is well poised to serve as a foundation for assignments on current events, racism, history, economics, ethics, humanities, philosophy, women's studies, literature, etc.

In this assignment students are asked to explore the refugee crisis which is on-going and developing. This assignment was developed before Covid and before the addition of Ukraine to the figures from The United Nations Refugee Agency. Data suggests that 84.2 million people are displaced worldwide and “despite COVID-related movement restrictions and pleas from the international community for a ceasefire that would facilitate the COVID-19 response, displacement continued to occur – and to grow. As a result, above one per cent of the world’s population – or 1 in 95 people – is now forcibly displaced.” The assignment asks students to understand the term “refugee”, the causes behind the mass displacement around the world and the kinds of difficulties refugees face. The dimensions of the global learning rubric are addressed by looking at multiple perspectives and responsibility. The responses from host countries are varied and under scrutiny in this assignment as well. Students are asked to consider the reasons host countries respond the way they do. The article “Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Germany, the United States, and Japan: Who Should Be Prioritized in Light of International Obligations?” by Rachel Morico provides some insight into the concerns that stem from cost, fear, cultural differences among other things. Finally, students are asked to consider social responsibility and the ethical implications of current actions (or lack thereof) and what can be done to address this humanitarian crisis.

Learning Objectives

- Introduce students to the Global Learning competency by exploring the causes and ethical issues around the global refugee crisis

- To have students consider the implications of society's response to the issues faced by refugees.
- Reflect on any experience with refugees or as refugees.
- Engage students in researching laws and the purpose of those laws in response to refugees from multiple countries.
- To have students consider perspectives and responsibilities of multiple parties including refugees, host countries, individuals and society as a whole.
- Enable students to build research and writing abilities by drafting an essay response on the topic of the refugee crisis.

Assignment

Part One: Introduction to the topic

Part one of the assignment asks students to learn what a refugee is and why exactly the situation is deemed a crisis. Before jumping into the topic, thirty minutes was allotted in class time to discuss the purpose and benefits of Global Learning assignments, especially because it did not fit into the content of the class. This part has been piloted in-class which can be in one hour to allow for assignment explanation as far as needs for Paralegals, video viewing, group discussion and sharing out. In piloting this as independent homework, students were provided two video sources and the UN Refugee Agency website to aid independent research to answer the same discussion questions. Fifteen minutes was allotted for discussion to their responses in the following class.

YouTube video sources:

- Understanding the Refugee Crisis in Europe, Syria, and around the World 9 minutes and 20 seconds. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVV6_1Sef9M
- Refugee Crisis: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO) 10mins and 31 seconds. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZsOISarzg>
- ABC News: What's next in the Ukrainian refugee crisis? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2u7M1Wmb6iA>

Web Source

- <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/> The UN Refugee Agency

Discussion Questions

1. Summarize what it is to be a refugee.
2. Why do people become refugees?
3. What is your own experience with refugees if any?

4. Why are refugees considered a crisis?
5. Why are refugees feared?
6. Are all fears valid? How could fears be addressed?
7. What is the difference between a refugee and a migrant?
8. Whose fault is it that there are so many refugees?
9. Who should be responsible for refugees? Explain.
10. Other thoughts and comments

Part Two: The Essay

Reading: Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Germany, the United States, and Japan: Who Should Be Prioritized in Light of International Obligations? By Rachel Morico 2017
(available online Academic Search Complete)

Part two is the written portion of the assignment and requires students to read a peer-reviewed article on varying countries' responses to refugees. It is a longer reading and students would benefit from it being broken into three parts (perhaps by country) and discussed in class to summarize.

The essay prompts students to follow the Global Learning rubric dimensions and allow for students to identify issues, consider multiple perspectives, consider their own experiences as refugees or living near or among them locally and consider ethics and solutions. Students were given an opportunity to submit a draft for feedback.

Assignment: 4–5-pages (12-point font, 1-inch margins, double spaced) research paper using APA citation within the body of the essay and on the Works Cited page to be graded against global learning rubric and writing abilities [here](#).

Refugees: A Global Crisis

This is the suggested structure for your paper, but feel free to organize in a way that makes sense to you. You will have one draft and you are required to visit the Writing Center prior to your first submission.

To introduce your paper, using facts from sources provided and any additional sources, summarize the problem of refugees. What does it look like? Why is it a crisis? What concerns do countries face when addressing an influx of refugees? What problems do refugees themselves face in trying to find new lives? Explain and be sure to cite sources including videos. Be sure to make the issues of refugees clear, the crisis of a sole refugee and the crisis of refugees as it impacts nationals globally.

Next, explain your own opinion on the refugee crisis as they relate to the issues you present in your introduction. Can you personally identify with or relate to refugee issues? If so, explain. If

not, what are your personal attitudes towards the refugee crisis and where did you develop these ideas?

For the body of your paper, introduce and summarize the reading “Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Germany, the United States, and Japan: Who Should Be Prioritized in Light of International Obligations?” by Rachel Morico. Doing some of your own research, compare the process a refugee must go through in the U.S. and one other country (Germany or Japan). Explain the similarities, differences and justifications for these steps. What national priorities do these responses/processes indicate? What are the attitudes of people living in the countries with an influx of refugees? Are they welcome? If not, what are the primary reasons? Do you think these are good reasons? Explain.

How do you think these issues should be addressed globally, as a nation, and within our communities? Are there actions you would like to see in our communities? Globally? Who should take responsibility in improving this crisis? What are the consequences to ignoring these issues within our communities, within the US, and globally?

Conclude by considering and researching existing efforts and potential solutions that you think should be explored to improve this situation: For example: The issues of stereotypes and how we can perpetuate change in attitudes via social media coverage (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, hashtags, etc.). Look into current efforts and consider further steps you would want to see taken.

You are entitled to any opinion, but it must be based on research (and experience where relevant). The research should be referenced and cited and must include the research material provided to you.