

MELLON MIGRATION WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
Kirk Alumni Center, Middlebury College
Friday March 29, 2024

We welcome you to the Axinn Center for the Humanities' Workshop on Migration. This workshop is part of the Center's "Migrant Justice in Vermont and Beyond," an initiative supported by a three-year grant from the Mellon Foundation.

Below you will find a schedule, and a list of attendees along with their organizations, email addresses, and statements. We encourage you to read the statements before the workshop. We asked attendees from local/regional organizations to write a statement describing: 1) the central challenges or issues (if any) related to migration that their organization is tackling and 2) what they hope to get out of the workshop. We asked faculty attendees to write a statement describing their work and teaching related to migration, and the ways in which they hope to engage with community partners in the context of PHL course development.

SCHEDULE:

9:00-9:30	Arrival and Breakfast Buffet
9:30-9:40	Welcome and introduction
9:40-10:40	Participant introductions (2 minutes each) Please mention: who you are; your organization or department; why you are interested in participating in the workshop
10:40-10:55	Break
10:55-11:55	Plenary Discussion: "The state of migration in the state of Vermont" 10:55-11:15 – What challenges do migrants and refugees face when coming to Vermont? 11:15-11:35 – What kinds of resources do migrants and refugees need? 11:35-11:55 – What skill sets do humanists have that can contribute to understanding and alleviating the plight of migrants and refugees?
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Small Group Discussions – "What opportunities might exist for partnerships between instructors and their students and local and state organizations and businesses? What kinds of partnerships/collaborations would be most beneficial to organizations?"
2:00-2:15	Break
2:15-3:15	Small Group Discussions – "Opportunities for brainstorming ideas for creating new courses or developing existing ones to fit within the broad umbrella of migration"
3:15-3:30	Plenary Discussion – Final Thoughts
3:30-4:30	Opportunity to mingle over snacks and drinks

Middlebury Mellon Migrant Justice Workshop

Statements from Attendees

March 29, 2024

Faculty

Molly Anderson

William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Food Studies

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I teach courses about sustainable food systems and the multiple challenges to creating them. Sustainability entails equity, ecological integrity, decent livelihoods, public health and food sovereignty or the ability to choose and actively participate in one's food choices. Migration enters into several of my courses because the US and EU food systems rely on migrant labor, often working under very difficult conditions with little pay and none of the legal protections that other workers have. With students, I explore myths about immigrants that are being used as political weapons in the US, the contributions of immigrants to the economy and society, and ways that immigrants are resisting dehumanizing conditions such as through Worker-Driven Social Responsibility programs. Additionally, as a member of the Middlebury Conservation Commission for six years, I am interested in ways that climate chaos will drive migration to Vermont and how we can best prepare for this. We are very likely to see increasing numbers of immigrants from other parts of the US and other countries entering our state; many of the international immigrants have agrarian backgrounds and can help to produce food if allowed access to land. I'm interested in how to provide stable land access for new and beginning farmers in the face of development pressure from migrants traveling to our state from other parts of the US, seeking refuge from wildfires, drought, hurricanes and other manifestations of the Polycrisis we are living through. I have worked with community-based partners (Addison Allies, Viva el Sabor) to support chefs who are supplementing their household incomes by preparing and selling Mexican and Central American foods. I have supported Justicia Migrante in their efforts to promote the Milk with Dignity program in Vermont.

Markus Gerke

Post-Doc Fellow, Sociology

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Being a sociologist with a research focus in the sociology of sport, my plan is to develop a new class on "Migration and Sport". In my research and teaching, migration has so far been a subtopic among others: My Sociology of Sport class features a session on the relationship between professional sports and migration or on how migration has shaped local sporting culture. Meanwhile, my research broadly focuses on how sport impacts athletes, fans and communities. For instance, a past research project investigated community building and activism among a multi-ethnic group of organized soccer fans.

My interest is in developing a "Migration and Sport" class. This class will feature both discussing broader questions of migration and sport as well as cooperation with local partners: In the more classroom-based component of the class, we will explore how migration has shaped sports and physical culture, how sport influences migration patterns, and how sports are used by migrant communities to foster a sense of belonging, a connection to their countries of origin as well as relationships to their new homes. The community-connected component of the class will see us

collaborate with local partners such as Migrant Justice or Vermont's Somali Bantu Community Association on their sports-related initiatives (e.g. Migrant Justice's annual soccer tournament or SBCA's 'Juba Star FC' soccer program): Students will ideally cooperate with these initiatives in order to understand how sports can be used for social change by migrant communities and in order to find ways of supporting these pursuits, according to the needs of the community partners (e.g. by providing program evaluation or assisting in advocacy).

Sue Halpern

Scholar in Residence

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As a journalist who teaches both non-fiction writing and audio documentary at Middlebury, I come to this project from the "public" side of public humanities. Over the years I have worked with students on projects that touch on migration, either directly or tangentially, among them farm workers in Vermont, health inequalities, and housing disparities. In addition, through the Middlebury Fellowship in Narrative Journalism, a program I run in conjunction with Middlebury Magazine, we have documented the experience of Middlebury students who are the children of migrant workers and the undocumented, as well as students who, despite their presence on this well-resourced campus, are, in essence, migrants themselves. (The latter includes a young woman who was smuggled out of Tibet in a box, a trip that took a month, and a young man from South Sudan who made his way to a refugee camp in Kenya at the age of twelve. Neither traveled with an adult relative.) I am hoping to teach a class that bears witness to the lived experience of migrants in our community, using (primarily) audio documentary tools and non-fiction writing, in partnership with organizations such as Migrant Justice and businesses such as Sunrise Orchards. Because this kind of storytelling requires sensitivity, the students will not only read first-person and journalistic narratives about migration, they will also, where possible, talk with the writers of those accounts in order to explore the ethical approaches (and pitfalls) to this work. Ultimately, the work produced by this class will be offered to Vermont Digger for publication, if the subjects agree, and will be showcased, either on campus or at the Vermont Folklife Center. (As a board member of the Vermont Journalism Trust, which publishes Digger, I am part of a cohort that is committed to expanding the coverage of migrant issues in the state.)

Rachael Joo

Associate Professor of American Studies

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I've been teaching courses related to migration since arriving at Middlebury, specifically my course called Immigrant America and Asian Americas. I have also organized a few public events around migration including a panel on immigration and trauma featuring representatives of Migrant Justice Dr. Andrea Green; and lawyer Sarah Rogerson; a talk about immigration and art by Charlene Villaseñor Black; a visit from Jason De León; and an installation of the Undocumented Migration Project's Hostile Terrain 94 on campus. I have consulted the student-run MALT trips on migration—one to work with migrants in Texas through RAICES and one to work with migrants in NYC with Catholic Charities. I have also had my friend Sarah Rogerson, an Immigration Lawyer from Albany Law School give talks about her work in my class and she has also privately consulted students. I have supervised independent projects with students who have worked on issues ranging from Alien Land Acts to a project featuring portraits of life for Latinx migrants in Vermont.

In the course Immigrant America, I have students do final projects on immigrant advocacy groups and some students have presented on groups in Vermont including Juntos, Project Open Hand, Migrant Justice, Vermont Refugee Resettlement, Vermont Immigration Law Clinic, New Americans Clinic at University of Vermont Medical School, and Vermont Adult Learning. While the groups my students focus on range in scope from national to local, the students who seem most engaged and get most out of this project are those who focus on the local Vermont organizations. I'd like to focus more extensively on these Vermont-based advocacy groups in a course and structure service-learning projects into the course so that students are not only asking for information, but also giving back to the organization in some tangible and significant way.

I'm also interested in creating some kind of database or other way of archiving knowledge so that students learn from each other's past experiences and do not burden organizations by asking the same things and acting as though they are the first to "discover" these organizations. I'd also like to find a way that students can convey knowledge to their peers, in a way that is similar to how Juntos operates.

Matt Lawrence

Associate Professor of Sociology; Academic Director, Privilege & Poverty Cluster

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Topics related to migration emerge throughout my sociology courses. For example, readings in my "Inequality and the American Dream" course document the history of immigration to the U.S. and explore why the children of low-income migrants have had greater chances of social mobility than the children of low-income parents born in this country. My "Family in Contemporary Society" course reads research about the relationships between migrant mothers in New Jersey and the children they leave at home in Mexico. Even the "Higher Education and Society" course I am currently teaching will spend time this semester focused on the experiences of international students who move to the U.S. for college. One of the unifying themes across these readings is how migration is intimately linked to questions of finding a home to express rootedness and connection in communities. That interest has shaped my involvement as one of the organizers of the college's next Clifford Symposium which will be held in September on the topic of "Home: Housing and Belonging in Middlebury and Beyond." I am hopeful that the symposium schedule will include sessions and speakers focused on migration's intersections with housing. I am also interested in designing a new sociology course that would complement the symposium themes as they specifically relate to migration. That course could be called "Home" in which case it would deal mostly with housing issues. It could also be a migration-centered version of my existing course on the sociology of the family. The family course could include subjects such as the rise of multigenerational households among migrants, the importance of extended kin networks, and cultural socialization. In either class, I would be excited to incorporate quantitative data and research methods (including interviews and surveys) if community partners have projects requiring those tools.

Joyce Mao

Professor of History

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As a historian of 20th century America specializing in foreign relations and politics, I've engaged with the theme of migration in several aspects of my work. Specifically, I take immigration policy as a key

element of US diplomacy and vice versa, thinking about how federal laws around entry and naturalization have shaped the nation's self-presentation to the world, as well as reflect visions of its present and future. My research and teaching most often engage with state-centered approaches such as Chinese Exclusion, the Immigration Act of 1965, refugee policies, etc. I'm eager to balance that narrative with more humanistic stories, especially as I develop courses. One potential new seminar would explore the confluence of technology and migration to the US. Industrialization, changing labor practices, transportation, capitalist modernization, the surveillance state, the rise of Silicon Valley are pivotal, diverse examples of "tech" that both shaped and responded to human movement. How do the stories of 19th-century workers at regional marble quarries, textile mills, and shoe factories relate to those of 21st-century tech workers, migrant laborers, and asylum seekers? What can those intersections illuminate about the ways migration to the US has changed over time and under what circumstances? Engagement with local institutions and resources would be invaluable for making these big contexts feel immediate and resonant, whether that be via archives, museums, arts organizations, legal aid, or community advocacy groups. I am excited to learn about possibilities via this workshop.

Sujata Moorti

College Professor, Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies

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Since 2007, I have taught the course Mobile Women: Transnational Work Patterns four times with radically different approaches and effects. In its first iteration I crafted the course as addressing a novelty: the migration of women workers from the global south in search of jobs in the global north. This migration was considered to be a reversal of late 20th century pattern of off-shore production practices, wherein jobs from the US moved abroad and resulted in low-wage positions for women in the global south. The catch though was that 21st century migrant workers were seeking feminized jobs, care work associated with the domestic sphere such as those of nannies, child caregivers, maids, domestics. Thus, the focus was on the dynamic generated between women of different nationalities, races, and classes as they each occupied the roles of employer and employee within the intimate sphere of the home. In 2007, I wanted students to work with the migrant farm worker community to understand gender dynamics. However, the political climate of that time as well as the limited resources on campus to conduct community engaged pedagogy deterred me.

In the intervening years some of my students have conducted their senior thesis with migrant farm workers and explored different facets of their work lives and life patterns in Vermont. After a hiatus of ten years, I revisited the course in Fall 2023. In the US, our reliance on migrants to conduct care work and domestic work continues unabated but our understanding of migration patterns, policies structuring movements, and migrant lives is richer and more nuanced. I reconceptualized the course. I brought in some community partners to offer an overview of the Vermont migrant worker community. I also turned to StoryMaps, a digital storytelling platform, to structure my pedagogy and course assessment. Both my students and I were chomping at the bit to engage more carefully and thoughtfully with the gender dynamics structuring these communities. However, I want to undertake this community engagement process carefully, mindful of the ethical pitfalls and the potentially extractive nature of this relationship. I am scheduled to teach the course again in the Fall and would love to brainstorm how to build relationships with community partners and develop a community engaged pedagogy for this latest iteration.

Stefano Mula

Professor of Italian

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In the last three decades Italy has undergone a transformation from a country of emigration to a country of immigration, while continuing to experience a sizable emigration. My first personal experience was that of a migrant, albeit a privileged one, when I moved to France and had a hard time finding an apartment: I was coming from Southern Italy, so I was looked at with suspicion and renters would not accept guarantees from Italy. In recent years I was surprised by the amount of vitriol spewed on people arriving in Italy and looking for a place to live safely. In 2015, during my sabbatical, I volunteered to teach Italian and English to a group of underage migrants, hosted in a private structure in Sardinia (Casa Emmaus, Iglesias). This experience inspired me first to add units on migration to my course on Italian identities, and to invite guests to speak and create a performance related to the experience of both migrants and mediators. The following summer, one of the students from that class went to Sardinia for an internship at Casa Emmaus. I decided then to delve deeper on the issue of migration worldwide. I took part in a Refugee Tales Walk in England, in July 2019, and invited the organizers (whom I had already met at Middlebury in the fall of 2018, when they came to give a talk for the History Department) to speak to my FYSE students in my course on Migration: Politics, Ethics, and Literature, in the Fall of 2022.

My interest in migration has had an impact on both my research and teaching. I recently published an article on the use of comics to teach migration, and I am currently working on an article on teaching Italian identities in which I stress the importance of the role contemporary migration (both to and from Italy) has on our understanding of concepts such as identity and nationalism. Next fall, I will be teaching again my FYSE on Migration, and my hope is to integrate the syllabus with hands-on experience of migration in Vermont, including interviews/workshops with migrants and cultural mediators.

Linus Owens

Associate Professor of Sociology

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One of my main research interests concerns the politics of place, focusing on squatters' movements in Europe. Historically, these movements focused on housing for citizens, but squatting has evolved in the face of changing political opportunities and social problems, increasingly serving the needs of immigrants and refugees. Squatters' movements offer services the state fails to provide. In my work, I have visited large-scale squatted housing projects for refugees in Paris and Rome, as well as seeing numerous examples across multiple countries of services for migrants inside squatted spaces, such as language lessons, assistance navigating state bureaucracies, and emergency food supplies.

Migration comes up as an important theme in some of my classes, notably *The City and Its People*, where we study migration in the urban context, and *Mobilities*, which explored the social consequences of increased global mobilities, with migrants and refugees being important examples. In the future, I plan to teach a more focused version of the *Mobilities* class centered on the sociology of borders and border crossings. I hope to work with Migrant Justice and Milk with Dignity to deepen our understanding of both the politics of migration and the political activism of migrants. I also take inspiration from Vermont Folklife's collaboration with UVM on their graphic novel on immigration in

Vermont, and would love to explore more creative and public forms of scholarship with my students in the class.

Jerry Philogene

Associate Professor of Black Studies

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My teaching and scholarship revolve around I am committed to the core tenets of a progressive liberal arts education -- pursuit of breadth of knowledge; understanding the political, social, and cultural world in which we live; interdisciplinary critical thinking skills and collaborative engagement with diverse communities. I develop courses that fundamentally highlight my interdisciplinary training in American Studies, Visual Culture Studies, and Africana Studies while paying close attention to the needs of a diverse student body in terms of racial, ethnic, gender expression, and socioeconomic compositions.

In the context of this grant, “Migrant Justice in Vermont and Beyond, I am interested in what seems to me to be a growing Anglo-speaking and French/Kreyol-speaking Black Caribbean migration to Vermont. What are the push and pull factors that are contributing to this migration? What is its history? What are their settlement processes? How do they incorporate themselves (or not) into a white homogeneous space? How do they effect the Black American/White American dynamic of the state? And what is their relationship/collaborations or tensions (if any) with Black Americans?

Sarah Rogers

Visiting Assistant Professor of History of Art & Architecture

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My work on migration centers on the ways in which contemporary artists and museums are responding to the refugee crisis, and the stakes and limitations of those initiatives. How can the study of art works, exhibitions, and curatorial and institutional practices further our understanding of the intersections between racism, migration, and continued neoliberal bordering structures? In what ways do art institutions contribute to the construction of precarious and marginalized subject positions and perpetuate the radical divide between the mobility of commodities and the immobility of human beings?

This semester I am teaching a second iteration of the course, HARC 362: Art, Migration, and Museums, which I developed in relationship to a collection of essays on above questions that I am co-editing. The course is a PHL, partnered with Burlington City Arts (BCA) and in conjunction with the exhibition, Here Now: Art and Migration, which I co-curated with BCA Director Exhibitions, Heather Ferrell.

My hopes for this workshop are to better understand how to forge community partnerships that are socially and ethically responsible and respectful in the brief time frame of a semester. One of the issues with which I struggle is that trusting, knowledgeable, and meaningful relationships—whether it be in the form of a PHL community partner or the possibility of students working with community members on course projects—involves time, energy, and resources, or risk a “parachute in for the course project” relationship. How can we not let logistics prevent PHL courses on migration from achieving a truly collaborative partnership that benefits the community members and organizations of which they are a part?

Erin Sassin

Associate Professor of History of Art & Architecture

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I am planning on teaching a course dealing with the impacts of migration on the communities and urban fabric of Detroit. I am particularly interested in population movement within the city, but also the movement of migrants from Appalachia, the Deep South, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East to various Detroit neighborhoods.

As with migrants in Vermont, Detroiters have been significantly impacted by the effects of gentrification, pollution, and problematic labor practices. I am interested in these parallels and would also like to uncover the relationship between (company) housing and employers here in Vermont and in Detroit (currently and historically).

Yumna Siddiqi

Associate Professor of English

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I have taught Literature of Displacement several times, focusing on postcolonial literature about migration, diaspora, exile and refugees. Here is an abbreviated description: Spurred variously by force, necessity and desire, migrants leave their homes and homelands with deep regret and with hope. Our focus will be on postcolonial literature and the migrations precipitated by the establishment and break-up of the European empires. Postcolonial writers address the historical forces that shape these migrations: settler colonial displacement and forced migration, decolonization and neo-colonialism, globalization, warfare, dispossession, uneven development, political violence, religious conflict, and environmental catastrophe among them. They experiment with narrative form and poetic language to explore the experiences of undocumented immigrant workers, exiles, refugees and well-to-do migrants. Their characters grapple with the challenges of migration, rethinking gender and sexuality, contending with racism, and negotiating work and civic spaces as "outsiders." We will examine constructions of identity, history, community and place in literature of migration, and explore how these constructions hinge on the workings of colonialism, globalization, class, gender, race and sexuality.

I would like to connect the material of the class to migration and Vermont, and transform it into a public facing humanities lab in which students engage actively with migrants--be they diasporic subjects, migrant workers, refugees and/or exiles—and their narratives.

My ongoing research is on postcolonial literature, migrants and the city. Here is a link to an article, part of a book in progress: [Mobility in the City: Rawi Hage's Novels of Urban Migrants](#).

I am presently coediting with Masha Salazkina a volume entitled Teaching Migration in Literature, Film and Media, to be published by the MLA as part of their Options for Teaching series in the spring of 2025.

Community Partners

AALV

Nathan Virag, Immigration Lawyer, nvirag@aalv-vt.org

Michele Jenness, Legal Coordinator, jenness@gmavt.net

Association of Africans Living in Vermont (“AALV”) helps new Americans from all parts of the world gain independence in their new communities through a range of integration services, including bridging case management, workforce development, behavioral health awareness, legal services, and interpreter services programming. With support from our multicultural, multilingual staff, our clients are able to smoothly transition to living and working in Vermont.

The legal services program provides pro bono assistance and representation in a wide array of immigration issues, including: Adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence, Asylum, Citizenship, Family Reunification, Temporary Protected Status, Victims' Visas, Violence Against Women Act Petitions, Work and Travel Authorization. Our legal Staff also works with clients facing criminal charges in order to mitigate the immigration consequences of a criminal conviction and informs clients of their rights and responsibilities under U.S. law.

AALV hopes to establish new connections during this conference with other organizations serving new American populations in Vermont. Through collaboration with partners, we can provide better services to our communities by identifying the different types of services each organization offers and ensuring that each need is met. Additionally, AALV would like to establish new partnerships with students in order to help them become involved with our organization and gain a deeper understanding of immigration law.

ACLU

James Duff Lyall

Executive Director

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From the ACLU’s perspective, the central challenges we face—specifically related to our advocacy for immigrants’ rights—fall into three main categories. First, we work to defend those rights from attack at the local, state, and federal levels. That includes filing legal challenges to vindicate rights violations by local police acting outside of their legal authority, as well as constitutional rights violations committed by largely unaccountable federal agencies like ICE and Border Patrol.

Secondly, we and our allies work to oppose anti-immigrant legislation and advance proactive legislation—also at the local, state, and federal levels—to protect immigrants’ rights and create a more just and humane immigration system.

Third, we try to challenge harmful narratives and dehumanizing messaging with public education that centers the lived experience and humanity of immigrants and immigrant communities, and that emphasizes the root causes of global and regional migration to advance real, lasting, and humane solutions.

We share the stated goals of the workshop: to make new introductions and connections; to educate ourselves on our local partners’ priorities and concerns; and to explore ways in which we might

collaborate on shared interests with our friends in academia as well as other partners and community members. We are very grateful for the opportunity to join this important conversation!

Addison Allies Network

Veronica Ciambra

Co-Founder and Coordinator

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When people arrive in Vermont, they have nothing. We provide some cash and clothing, but it is challenging as more people arrive to keep up with needs of the people already here and people arriving. The toll that this journey takes on people emotionally is an obvious burden for people migrating. Also, people are emotionally impacted by being away from family with no hope of visits to or from family. We are not equipped to deal with the emotional and trauma issues people face.

People associated with us have gotten involved in what the government considers “trafficking”. They earn money by picking people migrating to the US at the border and drive them to locations to work. The people doing this are not criminals and are getting payment but are not the “big players”. Because the whole scheme of people coming here because there are jobs is so convoluted, it is damaging to all of us, especially the people migrating, but it adversely impacts society as a whole. The people migrating are limited in what they can do and how they can contribute. This is harmful to a way a community should be able to function.

I hope to learn what others are doing in regard to these issues and how we might work more cooperatively to support people who come here to work. I also hope to gain an understanding of the possibilities that will flow from this grant and from organizations working with Middlebury.

Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History

Coco Moseley

Executive Director

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The Henry Sheldon Museum is the oldest community museum in the country, founded in 1882, and largely tells the stories of 19th century life in Addison County. However, for many years, the Museum has painted an incomplete picture, often overlooking our unseen neighbors, including the many immigrants in our community both presently and historically. Vermont is a border state, and as such it is a site of border crossings, historical investigations, and social reckoning. The dividing lines of Vermont, the state borders, Lake Champlain, and Canada, are geographic realities and creations of colonial settlers. The object and archival collections of the Museum contain previously unexplored stories, such as the historical creation of borders and boundaries, to immigrant labor in the 19th century marble industry, and more broadly stories of belonging and exclusion.

As part of this workshop, I hope to be able to connect the historical narratives around migrations and borders with current discussions on Vermont’s border identity, labor practices and stories of immigration and migration. Possibilities exist for explorations of the history of migration and the construction of borders, as well as opportunities for faculty and students to curate exhibits and programs at the Museum. Additionally, the present-day stories of migration to Addison County and migratory rights and justice can further deepen our historical inquiry into the concepts of migration and borders.

The Intervale Center

Travis Marcotte, Executive Director

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The Intervale Center is a farm and food organization. We support farm business development statewide, grow and plant trees for ecosystem restoration, steward a significant piece of contiguous farmland and open space in Burlington and operate food access initiatives that altogether enhance climate resiliency, food security and community. Our farm business programming works with Vermont farms of all production types with an emphasis on farms diversifying the agricultural economy. We seek to enhance farm businesses, so farm owners and workers can thrive, and our agricultural sector will continue to attract new operators and enhance our communities. We specialize in supporting new and beginning farms and farms seeking succession within the family or to a new owner. In Burlington, we work with the AALV New Farms for New Americans Program to support land access and other production activity for producers that bring an array of skill and want to grow food for themselves and the community. One challenge is a lack of land to satisfy all needs among community food producers and commercial farming interests in Vermont's most populated region. We have supported land access outside of Burlington as New Americans seek agricultural opportunity and secure land tenure. This is a small portion of our portfolio, but we are excited to see it grow. Our food access initiatives provide food directly to anyone seeking food and we serve New Americans utilizing these programs to enhance food security. A different but related issue has emerged with the COVID pandemic and climate crisis as people with remote work/financial capabilities leave urban or climate impacted areas of the country and seek land in Vermont. This can impact affordability and farmland access.

I look forward to learning about current trends, concerns and opportunities related to migration in Vermont and to learning from organizations with deeper experience in this area. I am also looking forward to considering with the group where our work at the Intervale Center can evolve as it relates to migration in Vermont and how we might support each other and this project's objectives going forward.

Migrant Health Programs, UVM Extension

Naomi Wolcott-MacCausland

Migrant Health Programs Lead

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Migrant Health Programs develops, coordinates, and implements community based outreach initiatives and services that contribute to health and health equity within designated migrant communities across Vermont. Our flagship initiative Bridges to Health (Puentes a la Salud) was established in 2012 as a health outreach program for Spanish speaking agricultural workers and their families across Vermont. This program empowers individuals to make timely health decisions while assisting them in navigating an increasingly complex and complicated health care system by adapting various components of evidence-based community health worker models to meet identified community needs. Bridges to Health's Community Health Workers (CHWs) improve quality of life at an individual, household and population level by serving as liaisons, cultural brokers, health educators, advocates, patient navigators and interpreters between individuals and community-based organizations to promote health, reduce disparities, and improve service delivery. CHWs also coordinate clinical outreach efforts and collaborate with local health and social service organizations to assist them in enhancing services and addressing systemic barriers to care. With a significant and rapid increase in the number of nonagricultural immigrant worker and families who have moved to

Vermont in the past two years, our program has expanded our services beyond the agricultural workforce to ensure im/migrants across industries have access to the information and support needed to address their health priorities.

Our hope for the workshop is to contribute our perspective and experience related to the current state of migration in Vermont; specifically, the need for investments in a coordinated effort to ensure all in our communities have access to linguistically and culturally appropriate services that contribute to health and wellbeing.

Migrant Justice

Will Lambek

Organizer

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Migrant Justice is a grassroots organization founded and led by immigrant farmworkers in Vermont, primarily by undocumented Mexicans and Central Americans living and working on dairy farms throughout the state. In 2009, following the preventable workplace death of 19-year-old José Obeth, community members began to come together to discuss common problems and envision collective solutions. These assemblies resulted in the formation of Migrant Justice as a group dedicated to organizing the farmworker community to fight for human rights and economic justice.

Migrant Justice focuses its work on two major areas: 1) labor and housing rights; and 2) immigrant rights. Much of our work focuses on addressing systemic abuse and exploitation in the dairy industry, as we work to improve labor and housing conditions and create enforceable protections for workers' rights. Likewise, Migrant Justice fights to challenge laws, policies, and institutions that oppress, discriminate against, and exclude immigrants, including in the realms of immigration enforcement, policing, healthcare, education, and housing.

While the historical development and current composition of Migrant Justice is rooted in the Vermont dairy industry, our membership base has grown and shifted over the years to include Spanish-speaking immigrant farmworkers in surrounding states, as well as dairy workers and family members who have moved into other industries such as hospitality, restaurants, and construction.

Our principal interest in participating in this workshop is to collaboratively think through how this influx in resources into Middlebury can be used to materially benefit immigrants in Vermont by advancing efforts to address the root causes of problems impacting the communities.

Open Door Clinic

Susannah McCandless, Communications and Volunteer Coordinator

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Julia Doucet, Clinical and Program Director, jdoucet@opendoormidd.org

As a healthcare organization, the issues that we see vary from the barriers to care that exist to the underlying issues that lead to needing to procure care. These include: the quadruple traumas of migration (failure to succeed in the country of origin, a traumatic journey, isolation from family, language, and culture) and lack of immigration status in their new country. They are in a permanent state of limbo where they have left their culture behind, but are not able to fully integrate and benefit from traditional American systems and federal safety networks.

We are hoping for some clarity about what your vision and expectations of these partnerships are over the life of the grant. Discover the goals of the project and whether they can really result in direct positive effects on the migrant community. We are also excited about creatively collaborating with others who may have unique perspectives on tackling the same issues.

Shelburne Museum

Jason Vrooman

Stiller Family Foundation Director of Education

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In 2023, [Shelburne Museum](#) collaborated for the first time with the Vermont branch of the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) to make it possible for participating families to enjoy festive celebrations at the museum including [Winter Lights](#) and our popular [Free First Friday Evening](#) summer series. Moving forward, museum educators plan to strengthen this connection. We would appreciate thought partners as we craft programming that engages recently resettled families on a deeper and ongoing level.

Curators and educators would also welcome partnership in the reinterpretation of a historic structure: called “[Settlers’ House](#),” it has long been presented through the lens of colonial history. Greater criticality around settler-colonialism—as well as new evidence that “Settlers’ House” was built not by homesteaders in the 1790s but by a French-Canadian fur trapper living in East Charlotte in the 1840s—have invited a reinterpretation of the structure, perhaps as temporary housing for an immigrant.

This work is all being done against the backdrop of the Museum’s plans to construct a new building to steward an important collection of Native American art. As detailed in the webpage for the museum’s [Native American Initiative](#), “Shelburne Museum has approached this project with an abiding awareness of the responsibility inherent in caring for a collection that represents living cultures” and has been working diligently to foster reciprocal relationships with source communities.

Because of the long historical sweep represented by Shelburne Museum’s collections and exhibitions, we have an exciting opportunity to invite the museum’s 100,000 annual visitors (including thousands of Vermont school children) to consider points of connection on the historical spectrum. Curators, educators, conservators, and administrators at Shelburne Museum would welcome partners with whom to think holistically about sovereignty, migration, and other important factors shaping Vermont’s past, present, and future.

Sunrise Orchards

Christiana Hodges, Grower

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Sunrise Orchards has employed H2A visa workers from Jamaica for over four decades and our experience has been very positive. All our employees, foreign and domestic, are immensely important to our business and many have worked here for multiple years, and in some cases, decades. Although the H2A program has worked smoothly for our business and our employees since we began using the program in the 1970s, recently there have been threats to the program, most recently during the Trump administration. A central issue for us is the strengthening of the U.S. commitment to the program since it is a key factor in our ability to harvest a crop each year and without it, we would likely be unable to continue farming.

I am looking forward to sharing our experience and learning from the other participants about the broader world of farm workers in Vermont. Many, and maybe most, Vermonters are unaware of the lived experience of the people who help to produce much of the food in our state and I think projects like this migration workshop and associated college courses could help to strengthen both farm worker protections and the food system in general.

Vermont Folklife Center

Kate Haughey, Executive Director, khaughey@vtfolklife.org

Andy Kolovos, Associate Director and Archivist, akolovos@vtfolklife.org

Vermont Folklife has conducted ethnographic and ethnographically-informed oral history research on migration-related topics in Vermont since 1984, with particular emphasis on French Canadian immigration, historic European immigration, resettled refugees, Latin American dairy farm workers, and 60s/70s back-to-the-land in-migration. We focus on documenting remembered individual experience and inherited family and community narratives, providing support to sustain vital cultural practices and traditional arts, and building collaborative, programmatic partnerships with cultural communities that result in audio documentaries, exhibits, cultural performances, festivals, events and publications. Our research recordings are housed in our archive where they are available to researchers by appointment. We strive to engage ethically with marginalized and at risk populations, and emphasize to our public audiences the diversity of—and within—immigrant and refugee communities, and the distinct challenges faced by newcomers when they interface with institutional forces such as health care, education, the job market, housing, and the network of nonprofit social service and humanitarian agencies.

We are grateful to be included in the workshop and are excited at the opportunity to identify opportunities for us to present our work—in particular, the methodological and ethical frameworks of collaborative ethnography and our approaches to, and perspectives on, public cultural work—to students. In addition, we are currently engaged in projects to create classroom resources for educators from our archives. We are particularly interested in highlighting the potential of recorded memory and ethnographic sound recordings to serve as primary sources, and exploring implications for thinking about them in these terms. In addition, we can certainly imagine interest among community partners to participate in classes and events to share their perspectives and practices directly.

Vermont Humanities

Ryan Newswanger

Director of Programs

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The central challenges or issues (if any) related to migration that your organization is tackling is lack of knowledge about the Latin American farm worker community. This community makes dairy and other forms of farming viable in Vermont but largely exists on the margins of Vermont conversations for reasons of citizenship, safety, and language and cultural barriers. Part of our work is to amplify voices from all marginalized communities in Vermont. In time we hope that Latin American immigrants can become “Vermonteños” with all of the rights of other community members. However, we are prohibited from direct political advocacy on matters such as immigration and citizenship policy.

What I hope to get out of the workshop: *The Most Costly Journey* in 2022 was the most popular book in the twenty years we have been offering our one-book, statewide Vermont Reads program. Vermont schools and libraries continue to ask us about the book. This work was especially close to my heart, and I would like to be able to continue our efforts with the Latin American farm worker community through partners such as the Open Door Clinic. I hope that this workshop can spur ideas about how such work might happen.

Vermont Migrant Education Program

Esbey Hamilton

Program Leader

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Migrant Education Programs at UVM Extension are tackling barriers to effective education access for migratory agricultural workers and their children by providing strength-focused learning opportunities, a wide range of support services, and technical assistance for schools and adult education providers. We work closely with Migrant Health Programs to ensure equitable access to healthcare and to develop educational initiatives that support worker and family health and wellbeing.

I hope that this workshop will help me build a broader understanding of statewide efforts related to migration, and the potential to collaborate in ways that will build equitable systems for all. I'm grateful to be part of this discussion on the intersections of humanities and humans.

Middlebury Mellon Migrant Justice Workshop Attendees

March 29, 2024

Conveners

Carrie Anderson, History of Art & Architecture, carriea@middlebury.edu

Ian Barrow, History, ibarrow@middlebury.edu

Marion Wells, English, mwells@middlebury.edu

Chris Star (afternoon sessions), Classics, cstar@middlebury.edu

Community Partners

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Julia Doucet, Open Door Clinic, jdoucet@opendoormidd.org

Esbey Hamilton, Vermont Migrant Education Program, UVM, Esbey.Hamilton@uvm.edu

Christiana Hodges, Sunrise Orchards, CHodges@sunriseorchards.com

Michele Jenness, AALV, jenness@gmavt.net

Andy Kolovos, Vermont Folklife Center, akolovos@vtfolklife.org

Will Lambek, Migrant Justice, will@migrantjustice.net

James Duff Lyaall, ACLU, jlyall@acluvt.org

Travis Marcotte, Intervale, travis@intervale.org

Susannah McCandless, Open Door Clinic, smccandless@opendoormidd.org

Coco Moseley, Henry Sheldon Museum, cmoseley@henrysheldonmuseum.org

Ryan Newswanger, Vermont Humanities, ryan@vermonthumanities.org

Cristian Santos, Migrant Justice, will@migrantjustice.net

Nathan Virag, Immigration Lawyer, AALV, nvirag@aalv-vt.org

Jason Vrooman, Shelburne Museum, jvrooman@shelburnemuseum.org

Naomi Wolcott-MacCausland, Migrant Health Programs, UVM, nwolcott@uvm.edu

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