

Crossing Borders Photo Essay Seminar Questions

Special Instructions: Project the photo essay so all may view the photographs referenced in the discussion. Provide printouts or shared computers for students to view the essay as they discuss.

Bridge:

- Write about a time when you (or someone you know) had to push yourself to or beyond your limits.
- List what items you would carry with you (and what you would carry it in) if you had to travel hundreds of miles by foot.

Opening Question:

- What photo had the biggest impact on you as a viewer? Why?

Core Questions:

Connections:

- What connections do you make between this photo essay and the novel *Refugee* (Gratz)?
- What other refugee situations come to mind when viewing this essay?
 - How do you think these refugees experiences may be similar or different?
 - How does this photo essay help us to understand their situation better? What do you understand better about their experience after viewing this essay?
- Photographs 8 and 9 emphasize the litter resulting from huge crowds of people moving through the area.
 - Why do you think there is so much litter in the wake of the moving groups of people?
 - What can you infer about the impact the massive crowds of migrants have on small towns like Rigance?
 - If these crowds were traveling through your town and past your home, what would you think or do about the situation?
- Jazbec shares, "When you find yourself, as a reporter, among the freezing, exhausted people with children, you're simply a human being touched by the suffering." What do you think his statement means?
- Which photographs do you think are the most effective at connecting the viewer to the refugee experience? Why?
- The conflict in Syria continues today, but there are far fewer refugees reported now than in 2015. (over 1 million in 2015, about 270,000 in 2017). What do you think could be a reason for this change?

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/15/what-current-scale-migration-crisis-europe-future-outlook>

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Artist's Purpose/Media Analysis:

- Why might Ciril Jazbec have chosen a photo essay rather than a written article to communicate the refugee experience?
- Photographer Ciril Jazbec says, "One night I was travelling with a group of about 3,000-4,000 migrants, a great deal of whom were whole families. They were tired and trying to cope with the cold. In such moments, it's hard to come up with words." Select a photograph that includes a family. What information or qualities might a photograph communicate to a viewer that a written piece may not convey?
- Ciril Jazbec writes, "It's difficult to understand the refugee crisis from the safety of one's home—the images seem so foreign and distant."
 - Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
 - Do you think his essay effectively brings the crisis closer to home for his audience? Why or why not?
- Photographs 2, 12, 17, and 29 show police involved with the migrating people. Does their presence seem to be helpful or harmful? Give evidence from the images to support your ideas.
- Photograph 23 shows a group of people playing soccer. What other images are in the photograph and what messages do they communicate to you?
- What solutions to the refugee crisis were presented or suggested in the essay? Are there potential solutions you could envision for the refugee crisis?

Perspectives

- Photograph No. 14 shows Marija, a resident of the small Slovenia town, Rigonce, looking out her window at refugees passing by. What do you think she might be thinking?
- Do you think the residents of the small towns the refugees pass through have a responsibility to help the refugees? Why or why not?
- Jazbec says, "One wonders where all of these people are going to end up and what the future holds for them." What has happened or do you think will happen to these people?
- Which difficulties, challenges, or dangers facing the refugees were most striking to you? Why?
- What do the images in photos 19 and 21 make you think about or feel?

Closing Question (Whip-Around):

- If you were to use one word or phrase to summarize the feelings of the refugees depicted in this essay, what would it be? Why?
- What is the most perceptive comment you heard today during the discussion? Why did it stand out to you? How did it benefit your understanding of the meaning of this essay?