**The Global Media Festival Course Modules Template**

**Title of the Course Module:**  
***Neukölln Unlimited***  
**A Case Study of Migration**

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**Issues:** (environmental conservation; pollution; gender equality; migration; economic development; clean energy; water resources; etc.) These issues can be linked with the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

[GOAL 4: Quality Education](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal4.html)

[GOAL 5: Gender Equality](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal5.html)

[GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal6.html)

[GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal7.html)

[GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal8.html)

[GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal11.html)

[GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions](http://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal16.html)

**Topics:** migration; integration; dance; break-dance; documentary genre; contemporary Germany; youth culture; Berlin; hip-hop music & dance; immigrant youth culture; Lebanese German;

**Time commitment**:   
Four thematic units of a total of 5 class days, each 75 minutes (possible to only teach some of the suggested units / parts of the proposed modules), plus 100 minutes for film viewing

**Overview:** Provide a summary of your course module and present the main concepts, issues, examples (cases), and outcomes that motivate this curriculum activity.

**Reading sources:** Our bibliography for reading sources covers some background information about the modules and some of the issues discussed in the units.

The 2010 German documentary feature *Neukölln Unlimited* tells the story of three siblings, Hassan (18), Lial (19), and Maradona Akkouch (14), who strive to obtain permanent residence status in Germany. Faced with the constant threat of deportation to Lebanon, the three teenagers, growing up in Berlin’s Neukölln, a borough notorious for its large immigrant population, set out to use their Hip hop and breakdance skills to avoid this fate.

In this teaching module, *Neukölln Unlimited* serves as a case study to explore issues such as migration, integration, and growing up as a teenager in contemporary Germany, which, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is the most popular country for immigrants after the USA.

**Brief Overview of Units:**

Unit 1: Overview of history of migration in Germany, including social and legal frameworks in preparation for film viewing

Unit 2: Discussion of film

Unit 3: Introduction & analysis of documentary genre

Unit 4 & 5: Transnational Approach / Context of the Topic / Social Sustainability

**Media content:** Describe the media content that will be used to develop this course module and provide a brief synopsis of it.

Excerpt from Georgia Tech library description: *Neukölln Unlimited*. “The siblings Hassan (18), Lial (19) and Maradona (14) are talented musicians and breakdancers growing up in Berlin's notorious Neukölln district. HipHop and streetdance are their language and their passion. Their family is from Lebanon and lives in constant danger of being deported from Germany. To prevent this from happening, and to secure a residency permit for the whole family, Hassan and Lial have a plan: to use their artistic talents to provide the necessary financial support for their family.” DD867.5.L43 N48 2010. Accessed May 31, 2019.

[https://gatech-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=01GALI\_GIT\_ALMA21305986450002947&context=L&vid=01GAL I\_GIT&search\_scope=default\_scope&tab=default\_tab&lang=en\_US](https://gatech-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=01GALI_GIT_ALMA21305986450002947&context=L&vid=01GAL%20I_GIT&search_scope=default_scope&tab=default_tab&lang=en_US)

**Instructions:** The five units are developed around one class prior to viewing (Unit I) and four classes post viewing (Unit II-V)

**Unit I: Prior to Viewing. Module on History of Immigration into Germany, Social and Legal Contexts**

Unit 1 acquaints the students with the broad strokes of the history of migration to Germany during the 20th century, with a special emphasis on the 1950s and 60s and beyond. This period saw increased immigration due to the so-called “guest workers” (*Gastarbeiter*) recruited from Southern Europe during the 1950s and 60s. Towards the turn of the century and beyond, Germany began to see immigration from countries of the former Soviet Union and the former East Bloc, the Middle East, as well as from Africa. This historical overview is necessary for the students to assess the film’s migration component in the later segments. The unit consists of five parts: the introduction, a definition of outcomes for the students, a participatory learning stage organized around a group research activity, a presentation of the findings, and a homework activity to ask the students to provide a larger context and the implications about what they worked on in class.

The introduction activity invites students to get into groups (4 groups in total), and brainstorm their ideas and conceptions of migration as a general concept, and to explore in how far migration connects to their own family history. This activates the students’ schemata of the topic for the ensuing discussion of the film, and asks the students to connect the topic to their own experience. The discussion questions are: “Does your family have any history of migration? Why do people leave their native country? What past migration movements are you familiar with? What time periods come to mind, why did people come to Germany? What does the term “integration” mean in the context of immigration? This segment of 10 minutes ends in a short presentation of group findings by students writing statements into a table on the board consisting of the discussion questions.

Segment two consists of a definition of outcomes that is derived dialogically from the answers provided to the introductory brainstorm activity. The outcomes include: to have a brief historical overview of the main migration movements into Germany at different time periods of the 20th and 21st century; to be familiar with the main reasons why people from all over the world came to Germany at different times; to have an overview on the legal aspects of immigration of the Federal Republic and the different legal statuses of immigrants; to have become acquainted with political debates around immigration into Germany; and to have an overview on the main immigrant communities in contemporary Germany.

The next segment, a group research activity (segment three) followed by a short presentation to the class (segment four), is the heart of the unit. Students will return to their initial groups and prepare 5-minute presentations (3-4 Power Point slides containing visual examples, quotes, or explanations) that are then shared with the class. The first group will study the website of DOMID, the Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany, with the following research task: “Research the history of immigration to Germany from the 17th century up to the 2000s. What were the main periods of immigration and why? What nationalities?” (<https://www.domid.org/en/migration-history-germany>) Group 2 will study the website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) with the task “Research the legal framework for migration into Germany. What different laws and statuses apply?” (<http://www.bamf.de/EN/Startseite/startseite-node.html>) Group three is tasked with navigating the website of the Goethe Institut with the research task: “Research & Present an immigrant story vis-a-vis the issue of “integration.” Focus on the perceived challenges and successes.” Lastly, group 4 will use the Goethe Institut website to research current projects to welcome and integrate refugees: “How are refugees prepared for living in Germany? Introduce two examples of the Goethe Institut’s initiatives.” (<http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/mag/mig/enindex.htm> & <http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/pfv/enindex.htm>). This activity is designed to foster “student experts” in the group that can later engage with their peers in an informed discussion on the topic. During the ensuing forth segment, students present their findings as a group. Every student should contribute to this presentation, e.g. one student could present one slide of the group Power Point presentation. The rest of the class is encouraged to ask questions at the end.

The unit closes with the homework assignment, an essay. In their essay, students are asked to offer their grasp of the entire scope of the unit and provide their individual take on immigration contextualized in the legal and sociopolitical ramifications. The essay question is: “In your view, what were the major steps (successes and challenges) Germany was facing during its transition to becoming an immigration country from the 1950s until today? What successes and challenges did the immigrants face? Comment on both sociopolitical and legal aspects.”

**Unit II: Post-Viewing Discussion and Unit III: The Documentary *Neukölln Unlimited***

The following section will briefly introduce the next two units of our course module on *Neukölln Unlimited*, the second unit on the discussion after the film and the third unit on the documentary genre. In designing our teaching module on *Neukölln Unlimited*, we adapted the BOPPPS model for lesson planning. BOPPPS was developed by Canadian educators in the 1970 to improve teaching effectiveness and increase participatory learning. This particular lesson planning model has been taught internationally to university instructors in so-called Instructional Skills Workshops (Pattison & Day 2006). BOPPPS stands for the six main elements that a lesson plan focused on participatory learning should include: bridge-in, outcome/objective, pre-assessment, participatory learning, post-assessment, and summary. We adapted BOPPPS for the purpose of developing this teaching module on *Neukölln Unlimited* because BOPPPS provides a straight-forward, easily manageable, and sound structure for planning a lesson while also allowing a great deal of flexibility and adaptability. Our BOPPPS lesson plans on *Neukölln Unlimited* can thus be easily modified by individual teachers for different classes, diverse learning environments, and various students.

The second unit of our module takes place after students have watched the film and centers on film discussion and analysis. As a bridge-in activity for this segment, we suggest a brainstorming activity with the film poster (the poster can be found here: <https://www.filmportal.de/en/node/148123/material/592190>). An example question for students with less advanced language skills or from K-12 institutions could be: Which adjectives describe the representation of Hassan, Lial, or Maradona on the poster? We expect that students’ answers provide an opportunity to tease out some of the differences in representation and expectation between the film, its promotional material, and German migration history.

This bridge-in activity and short plenary discussion could, for instance, lead into the following participatory group activity: *In your groups, please portray one of the three, Hassan, Lial, or Maradona. How does the film categorize these three, what do we learn about them and their desires and challenges/problems?* A more challenging, perhaps subsequent participatory group activity could be: *Students receive a still frame from the film that portrays one of the protagonists in a prominent scene. They collaborate on writing a monologue that represents the protagonist’s conflicts and challenges in the film.*

To further complicate their knowledge and experience of watching the film and the issue of migration, we envisioned the following homework for students: students should film an interview with a family member or friend on their cell phones, asking the following question: *What is your own or your family’s experience with migration?*

The engagement with and recording of familial migration history prepares students for the third unit, which centers on the genre of documentary film. The objective of this unit, which can be modified according to its audience’s skill level, should be: By participating in class and completing their homework assignment, students will be able to 1) define the genre of documentary film; 2) explain why genres matter for our understanding of films; and 3) analyze *Neukölln Unlimited* within the context of documentary filmmaking and its genre-specific characteristics and conventions. In order to accomplish these goals, students will 1) define the genre of documentary film via group work; 2) apply their knowledge about the documentary genre to their analysis of *Neukölln Unlimited*, and 3) engage further with the topic at home.

One of the standard works on the documentary genre is Bill Nichols’s *Introduction to Documentary*, which can also be used in K-16 classes. Nichols writes in his attempts to define the genre of documentary film: “What we know, and how we come to believe in what we know, are matters of social importance. Power and responsibility reside in knowing; the use we make of what we learn extends beyond our engagement with documentary films to our engagement with the historical world that such films represent” (Nichols 2017, 28). Nichols points us to the fact that we have to think and explore documentary films with our students with the following aspects in mind: 1) Our “desire to know” as members of the audience; 2) What do we gain by watching and learning information? 3) Who are we? Why do we want to know? 4) Who is the voice speaking in the documentary? 5) Which information does the (generally male) voice of the documentary present to us? 6) What exactly do we learn and “to what use do we put the knowledge a documentary film provides”? (Nichols 2017, 28).

Two participatory activities that will force students to explore these issues are:

1. An in-class group discussion after watching a minute-long clip from an interview with the director of *Neukölln Unlimited*, Agostino Imondi, which is publicly available through the SPAG Media Festival (Show clip, 6:17-7:33 minutes only   
   <https://smartech.gatech.edu/xmlui/handle/1853/58388?show=full>). In the clip, Imondi talks about his motivation for making a documentary about Hassan, Lial, or Maradona. Students should discuss Imondi’s comments and the film in relation to Nichols’s definition of documentary films. Why should we care about the relationship that exists between a single documentary such as *Neukölln Unlimited* and the genre of documentary? How might our knowledge of the documentary genre influence the way we watch *Neukölln Unlimited* and understand it? How might this knowledge shape our understanding of migration and integration?
2. To write a short comment in response to the following quote from German film director Christian Petzold whose films generally feature elements from different film genres: “I have the feeling that I make films in the cemetery of genre cinema, from the remainders that are still there for the taking” (Petzold 2008). Students should consider how Petzold’s view of genre cinema adds to and challenges their own understanding of genres.

This last exercise guides students back to the broader topics the film addresses, and that our next two modules examine, for instance the film’s transnational approach and questions about social sustainability.

**Unit IV: Module on Nation Building and Transnationalism and Unit V: Social Sustainability**

The following section covers the last two teaching units of the module. Unit IV starts with a presentation by the instructor who introduces the history of nation building, concepts of modern nation states, and transnationalism to the students. Among those concepts is Benedict Anderson’s ground-breaking study *Imagined Communities* (1983) in which he analyzes nationalism and connections between “imagined communities” and the media. According to Anderson, print capitalism and the media participate in the creation of national self-identifying characteristics. They also play a role in the continuation of stereotypes that attach themselves to national characteristics. The class looks at the rules and regulations at what point someone can attain citizenship in Germany and in the U.S. and will discuss the following questions: 1. What is the concept of a “nation”? 2. Since when do we group people into nations? 3. What does citizenship mean? 4. Who is (not) granted citizenship? 5. How selective are nations in who is granted citizenship? 6. What is transnationalism?

In this unit, we analyze the term “transnationalism” and its sociological implications. The concept started to become more important with the ongoing globalization of the world and the receding importance of national borders and boundaries between nation states. The class talks about the advantages of capitalist transnationalism, the exchange of goods and ideas, and the disadvantages such as the monopolization of multinational companies that become too powerful and will interfere with the politics of national governments. Students will also talk about diasporas (voluntary and involuntary) and their contribution to the development of transnational interests and economic as well as political forces. What role does transnationalism play in approaching a movie, novel, and piece of art? The students cover the topics of migration and the history of people moving from one continent to another and from one country to another. Students will also discuss anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and the role that religion as a marker plays in the 21st century in response to the on the one hand waning and on the other simultaneously increasing importance of national belonging. The class will interpret statistics about waves of migrants in the 21st century that is larger than any in recent history.

In a group work setting, students discuss and compare the U.S. and Germany’s laws regarding citizenship and discuss what transnationalism means? Why is the term useful to discuss current events and topics in the movie? How could we describe the role of transnational documentary movies? Students are asked to provide some other examples and compare this movie to other movies; they also have to describe the impression that it left on them. The class will then move on to discuss the history of podcast and how the broadband internet has made “audioblogging” possible in the 1980s. In the early 2000s, podcasting became so big that it has entered the new media stream and has taken over many other traditional newscasts. Currently, there are more than 12% of U.S. Americans older than 12 years who regularly listen to podcast on a weekly basis. Students have the assignment to develop a narrative that would summarize the connection and the socio-political context of the movie *Neukölln Unlimited* to discuss national border issues. They are tasked to narrate a 2-minute podcast and post it in Voice Thread on Canvas. It has to be open for comments. Each student has to listen to two podcast and write 5 sentences as a comment on the podcast. What is covered? How did the podcast present the topics of the movie? How did it problematize the movie’s message(s)?

Unit V includes a discussion with the class about podcasts, comments, and impressions of the movie. The main question during this unit is: What is social sustainability? Social sustainability includes such topics as equity, voice, livability, access to healthcare, community development, community resilience, social capital, human rights, labor rights, social responsibility, social justice, and cultural competence, among others. Another approach argues that social sustainability also includes the ecological, economic, political, and cultural sustainability. According to the second approach, all aspects of sustainability depend upon the connection, interaction, and relationship of human beings and the natural environment. Students then have to provide examples of social sustainability. They have to compare different aspects of social vs. economic and environmental sustainability.

The assignment for a short in-class debate as group work after which students have to write brief responses to the following questions: How can you describe the movie in terms of its message about social sustainability? What does social sustainability mean? In what way do equity, voice, equality, access to education, integration into society vs. assimilation play a role in the plot and story of *Neukölln Unlimited*? Students will talk about integration and assimilation in Germany and the U.S. such as laws and rules in regards to language abilities of those who want to remain in the country, take jobs, and eventually acquire citizenship. The class will also look at the controversial concept of “Leitkultur,” which has resurfaced repeatedly in public debates in the last two decades and states that migrants who come from different cultures and religions should use the German standard “Leitkultur” as a guiding principle. What obstacles do the teenagers in the movie have to overcome? How can a society (Germany in this case) improve its approach to include (Muslim) non-citizens into its community? What role does art play in bridging differences? Students have to provide examples of music, song, dance, visual art, T-shirt slogans etc. in their debate. To compare the documentary with other art forms, the class will discuss art installations by Ai Weiwei, for example, the *Berlin Life Jackets* installation (2016) and the documentary movie *Human Flow* (2017)as well as music and theater such as Elfriede Jelinek’s *Die Schutzbefohlenen* (2015), which analyzes the situation of refugees and asylum seekers and of the countries where the migrants seek refuge and asylum.

As the last homework for the final unit of this module, students have to write a letter of ten sentences to a German politician, for instance the Berlin’s mayor, German Chancellor, or someone else. They have to make sure that they follow the German guidelines of writing a letter: formal address, date, closing etc. They are asked to convince the politician in the letter to support Hasan, Lial, and Maradona’s family’s attempt to stay in Germany permanently and list all the accomplishments and contributions of the family to German society. Finally, students are asked to explain in the letter if and how the movie moved them to write the letter.

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DOMID Website (Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany): <https://www.domid.org/en/migration-history-germany>. Provides a concise history of migration to Germany.

Website of the German Ministry for Migration and Refugees (BaMF): <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Startseite/startseite-node.html>. Provides an overview of legal and legislative issues around migration.

Website of the Goethe Institute: <http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/mag/mig/enindex.htm>. Provides examples of immigrant stories.

Website of the Goethe Institute: <http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/pfv/enindex.htm>. Provides an overview on immigrant projects.

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