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**Can you tell us about your latest research project?**

[NC]: Early in my career, I was fortunate to meet and work with Filipino and Indonesian migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, which has given me the opportunity to build relationships with them and other migrant workers over the last few decades. These relationships have allowed me to research different migrant issues, especially related to my interest in gender. This has led to work among migrant workers who become refugees or asylum seekers and/or their relationships with asylum-seeking men from other countries. My latest book, *Born Out of Place: Migrant Mothers and the Politics of International Labor*, looked at migrant workers who have had children while they are abroad working, overstaying, or seeking asylum. As of late, I have written articles drawing a lot on experiences involving migrant mothers and their children; with the most recent article about the concept of “excluded belonging,” which refers to the process that migrant workers go through in attempting to stay with their children as long as possible but knowing that they are in a precarious position with the bureaucratic, legal and political factors shifting and often stacked against them.

I am currently working on another article, as part of a bigger book project, that has to do with the new Indonesian passports introduced to migrant workers in Hong Kong. In the process of renewing passports and linking identification with biometric data to verify “true identity,” the Hong Kong government treats irregularities in paperwork, often information about names or birthdates, as immigration fraud, even though the women often have little choice and often little knowledge of the problem, given that these documents are usually produced by brokers, recruiters, and officials in their home country.

**How would you characterize a sociocultural anthropologist’s perspective on migration?**

[NC]: There are a million ways in which anthropologists can study migration—even within my area as a sociocultural anthropologist. Personally, for me, the most compelling approach is through ethnography; the experience of doing the work with migrant workers face-to-face on the ground. Being able to follow these workers as they go about their lives -- over decades -- holding their children or waiting in lines as they try get services that they need, gives you a special, humanizing view into their experiences and a much wider context from the bottom-up. A lot of researchers think about theoretical work first and then develop a plan for research, but I tend to do the opposite: start with experiences, ideas or stories born out of ethnographic study and then work up. It is where much of my passion comes from; to me, many of my research subjects have become friends and family.

**Given that you gravitate towards ethnographic writing, how do you approach teaching this technique to students?**

[NC]: Currently, I am teaching an undergraduate ethnographic class called “Writing Culture” (also, offered in the Fall.) In examining the poetics and politics of ethnographic writing, I have my students write smaller pieces using different theoretical approaches to effectively “try on” various writing styles. It challenges the notion that you write in one, distinct way and allows students to consider differing voices and theoretical positions. I have always had a fiction-writing envy, so gradually I’ve tried to incorporate and encourage new writing styles that are more fictional in tone, trying to make writing more readable and engaging to a wider audience.

**Do you have any migration-related books or documentaries you would recommend?**

[NC]: I have a favorite cluster of films by ethnographic filmmakers Sine Plambeck and Janus Metz: *Love on Delivery*, *Ticket to Paradise* and *Heart Bound: A Different Kind of Love Story*. They are very global studies focused and ethnographically sensitive; imparting a multi-sided, insightful approach that is sensitive about the lives those involved. And because I enjoy reading fiction, I always look to share great works that have some tie-in to my work. I recommend Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* (2017), which is a multigenerational novel about Ghanaian people and slavery connected between generations on different continents. Another, Ellen Wiles’ *The Invisible Crowd* (2017), is a novel about one asylum seeker in Europe and his journey. It’s very ethnographic in style including bits of documents and different people’s perspectives and points of views.