

“And When I Walked into the Room, it Felt Like I was Home”: A Bridging Course for Mature Students with Precarious Immigration Status

Paloma E. Villegas, California State University, San Bernardino

Tanya Aberman, York University/TMU

Migrant Students - Precarious immigration Status

Migrant students - Non-permanent resident students, for whom the ability to remain in the country is uncertain and depends on an assemblage of individuals, institutions, and discretionary decision-making.

Most common immigration statuses:

- Refugee Claim
- Refused Refugee Claims
- Limbo due to changes in immigration policy
- Humanitarian & Compassionate Grounds (H&C)
- Temporary Resident Permits
- Non-Status



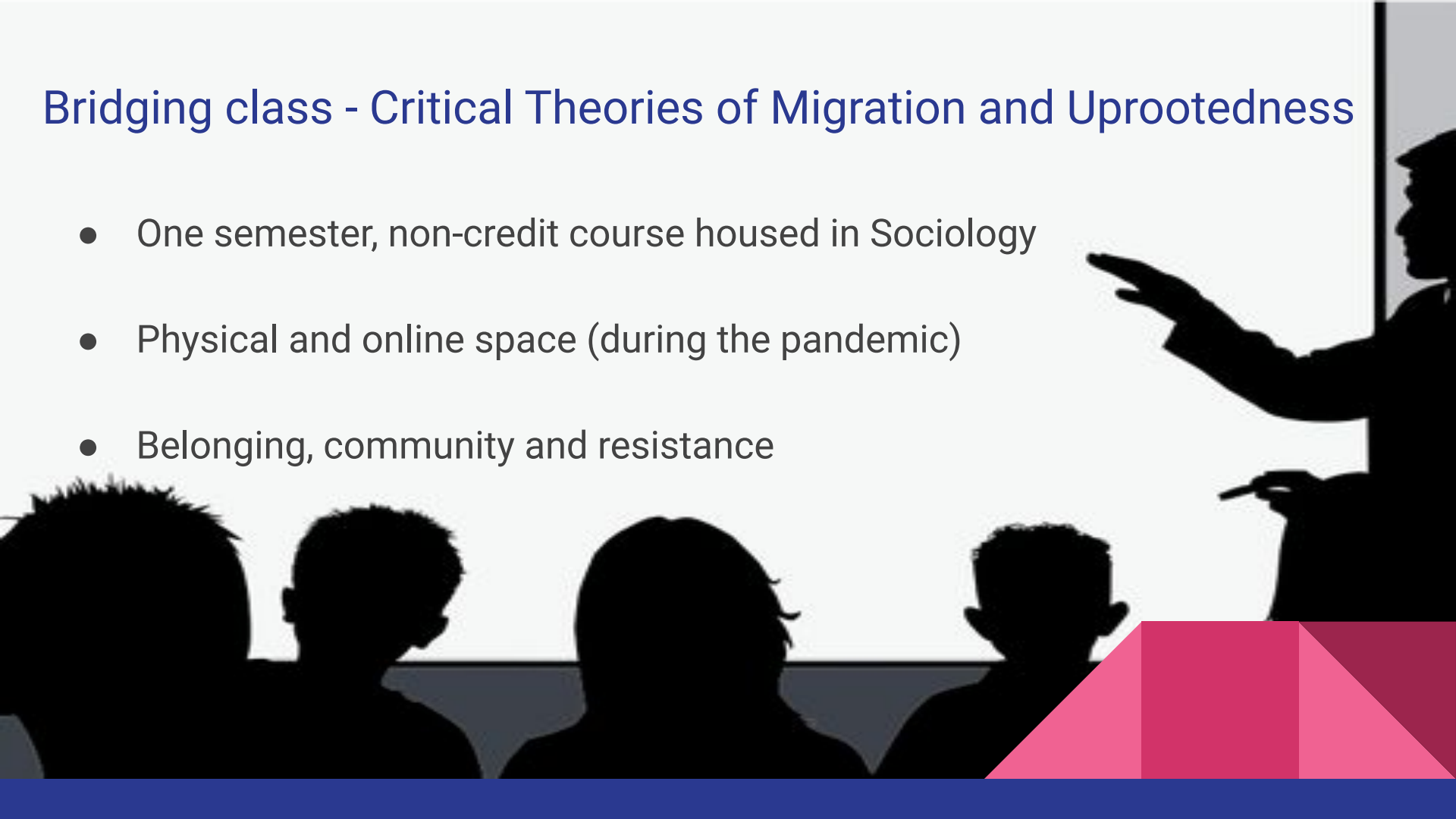


Borders in Higher Education

- Financial - International fees, no access to loans, bursaries or other supports
- Immigration Documents - Study Permits
- Credential Recognition/Official Transcripts
- English tests
- ID/ SIN/OHIP
- Fear of deportation

Bridging class - Critical Theories of Migration and Uprootedness

- One semester, non-credit course housed in Sociology
- Physical and online space (during the pandemic)
- Belonging, community and resistance





Interviews (n=16), 2021-2022

Participants from first 5 cohorts

- All female identified
- Black Caribbean, Latin American (including Afro-Latinx), and African
- Ages between 24 to 54

Our reflections

Counterspaces

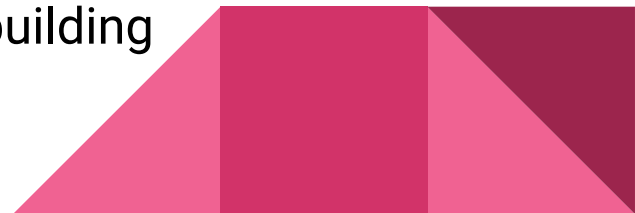
Sites of resistance, reframing and reimagining through counterstories

Spaces of community building

Bridging Course as counterspace

strategic academic upgrading

contributes to students' well-being / community building



Conclusion

Mature students = important subset of migrant students

Bridging courses facilitate transition/return of mature migrant students into HE

And.. they also can produce sense of belonging, hope and community, regardless of whether students enroll in University right away

