

Lesson Plan for *Outcasts United: an American Town, a Refugee Team and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference*, by Warren St. John

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## I. How to Use *Outcasts United*

The story in *Outcasts United* is familiar enough: an unlikely coach pulls together a ragtag group of outsiders and molds them into a winning team. However, this isn't *The Bad News Bears*, soccer-style. Through a seemingly simple narrative, Warren St. John's *Outcasts United* explores many of the themes that are crucial to this class: teamwork and collaboration; the benefits and responsibilities of membership in a community; the importance of service, and the impact that a small group of dedicated and innovative of people can have.

Each of you will find your own ways to use the book to supplement the other available resources and texts. Rather than trying to “teach the book,” like an English teacher, you should use to the book to prompt important discussion and reflection about topics like

- working together, despite difference
- forming community, despite differences
- service and community engagement
- the increasingly globalized nature of the world—and, more specifically, the Atlanta area.

Hopefully, the story of the Fugees and Clarkston, Georgia, will provide concrete examples to support these discussions, provoke students' curiosity, and generate enthusiasm.

### a. Major Relevant Themes

1. Community
  - i. Homogeneity & Pluralism
  - ii. Civic engagement and different barriers
  - iii. How does the tem come together?
2. Service/Engagement
3. Collaboration
4. Changing Nation/Changing Atlanta
  - i. Your Atlanta vs. this Atlanta: what are the geographic differences/distances? What are the cultural distances?
5. Perception of the OTHER
6. Economic Opportunities that follow demographic changes
7. Parental Expectations and Fears
8. Discipline

### b. A Few Things to Remember

- It is not critical that students master every particular name, political event, or episode mentioned in the book. Instead, the class should focus on broad themes and ideas. Use specific information only to support or provide evidence of a particular theme.
- Focus on the elements and themes that best fit your class/your discipline
  - A course limited to International Affairs students, for instance, will be far more interested in the geopolitical crises through which these boys lived than some other courses
  - Other themes work in nearly all contexts: **collaboration** and **community**, for instance, are central to the learning outcomes of the course

**c. Learning Outcomes**

After reading and discussing <i>Outcasts United</i> , students should be able to articulate	
<b>Community</b>	The difficulties posed and benefits offered by <b>superdiversity</b>
	Multiple similarities between the superdiverse community of Clarkston described in the book and their own experiences living in Atlanta and as a new member of this school's community.
	Commonalities and differences between their experience in the Atlanta area and the experiences of the Fugees and their families.
	At least one strategy offered by the Fugees for building community, despite the difficulties posed by superdiversity, and adapt and apply it to their own plan for becoming a part of this school's community
	Both <b>difficulties</b> posed by and <b>benefits</b> offered by superdiversity
<b>Service</b>	A beginning plan for community service for their first year, including a particular need and existing programs here and in the community that could be used
	Several distinct ways in which service benefits the individual performing it
<b>Collaboration &amp; Teamwork</b>	At least one strategy offered by the Fugees for building camaraderie and successful collaborative work
	A plan to adapt this strategy for their own original assigned group projects
<b>Transition Issues</b>	At least one example from <i>Outcasts United</i> of dealing with transitions and major changes
	Multiple connections between the transitions from the book and their own experiences as new students.

## II. Finding Time in Crowded Calendar

As this is only a one-hour course, you will find it necessary to be creative in the ways you assign the reader and in how you integrate it into your syllabus. However you use the book, keep in mind these recommendations:

- (a) Reserve one full class day for the book. The students do not need to have completed the text by this point, but simply have read enough to be familiar with the significant themes.
- (b) Have time for both open discussion and structured assignments related to the text
- (c) Integrate themes from the book into topics for other assignments. The book and your discussion can provide topics for student presentations (see p. 20-23), and throughout the semester, students can draw connections between *Outcasts United* and their own experiences in journal entries or other reflective writings.

### a. Sample Plan: Dispersed Reading

In this plan, the reading is spread out over the semester; the bulk of the reading is done prior to St. John's visit (Sept. 24-25); following the visit, the students should approach Part III with increased interest.

Early in the semester, the instructor should provide a framework that will guide the students' reading. Either the class meeting immediately prior to or immediately following the visit should be devoted to working specifically with the book.

In other days, however, the instructor should only prompt the students to connect the experiences of the Fugees to other assigned topics or themes by creating opportunities in the classroom or in journal/reflective writing. In these instances, the regular topics and themes of this class should be the primary focus; examples from the book should be used to supplement the discussion and to provide support.

Specific topics for journals and reflective writing could include:

- Transition to a new environment
- Difficulties of living/working with others
- Diversity of campus/Diversity of Clarkston
- Experiences in Atlanta
- Importance of mentors
- Opportunities for service

\* The instructor may wish to provide a specific number of entries that specifically address *Outcasts United*. If the students have to compose ten entries, four or five would be a fair number.

*Possible Reading Schedule for Plan 1*

Date	Reading	Assignments
<b>Week 2</b>	n/a	Provide students with framework for reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Introduce basic themes, possible connections to topics of this class</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	Complete Part I of <i>Outcasts United</i> (p. 98)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Complete at least one journal entry or reflective assignment in which they draw connections between issues in the article and the topics of this class (see p. ***of this guide for sample topics)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6-7</b>	Complete Part II of <i>Outcasts United</i> (p. 200) *Sept. 24: Warren St. John visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Complete at least one more related journal entry/reflective writing</li> <li>o <b>Class day devoted to discussion and/or in-class exercises related to the book.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 8-9</b>	Complete Part III (p. 300)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Complete at least one more related journal entry/reflective writing</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10-12</b>	Group Presentations	Topics should be drawn from issues & connections that emerge from journals & class discussions. (For examples, see p. 20-23 of this guide.)

**b. Plan 2: Limited Use**

If your plans for this class simply do not provide the flexibility to incorporate full discussion of the text, we ask that you at least encourage the students to read Warren St. John's original *New York Times* piece before his visit. The article is included in the appendix to this guide, and it can be found online at [http://www.fugeesfamily.org/documents/Fugees\\_Family\\_nytimes.pdf](http://www.fugeesfamily.org/documents/Fugees_Family_nytimes.pdf).

### III. Connecting *Outcasts United* with the Reader

We selected *Outcasts United* because of its relevance to so many of the topics and themes of this class. The list below suggests several points of connection between such themes and the specific essays and resources available in the reader.

Topic	Related Reading	Pages
Transition to a new environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell, "Trouble with Parents"</li> <li>• Newman &amp; Newman, "Loneliness"</li> </ul>	82-85 86-88
Defining & Achieving Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sears, "Tips of Becoming Personally Successful"</li> <li>• Travis &amp; Ryan, "What is Wellness?"</li> <li>• Burtchaell, "Major Decisions"</li> <li>• Lore, "How to Get There from Here"</li> <li>• Boldt, "Doing the Work You Love"</li> </ul>	89-95 96-99 103-110 211-215 216-219
Strategies for living/working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James, "Understanding Who is Smart"</li> <li>• Goodman, "Technology Eliminating Conversation"</li> <li>• W&amp;C eBook:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Participating in Small Groups"</li> <li>○ "Leadership and Decision Making in Groups and Teams"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	147-153 197-199  2.c.i 2.c.ii
Opportunities for service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important Resources for Freshmen</li> <li>• Quick Reference Guide to GT Resources</li> <li>• Boldt, "Doing the Work You Love"</li> <li>• Pellegrino, "Having a Degree and Being Educated"</li> <li>• Howe &amp; Strauss, "The Next Great Generation"</li> <li>• Reeve, "To the Graduates"</li> </ul>	30-44 45-46 216-219 241-244 256-260 261-263

## IV. Unit Guides

### Introduction and Part I: Changes

#### MAJOR TOPICS/THEMES

- **Collision of cultures:** the problems that can emerge, including confusion, resentment, and fear
  - **CONFUSION:** differences in cultures and languages make understanding, communication difficult
  - **RESENTMENT:** rapids changes can foster tensions, and newcomers are blamed
  - **FEAR:** newcomers fear their new environs, which they don't fully understand; older residents lack an understanding of the newcomers and thus fear them
- **Community:** What makes a strong community—A strong sense of shared culture? The ability for many cultures to coexist and collaborate?
- **Transitions:** While transitions can be exciting, they can also foster *confusion, alienation, and dissatisfaction.*

#### CRITICAL CONCEPTS AND TERMS

1. **Ethnicity:** Though *ethnicity* and *race* are often used interchangeably, they are not precise synonyms. *Ethnicity* refers to “membership in a particular cultural group”; it is “defined by shared cultural practices, including but not limited to holidays, food, language, and customs.”<sup>1</sup> For example, the Krahn, the Gio, and the Mano are the major ethnic groups involved in the dispute in Liberia; the Hutu and the Tutsis were in conflict in Rwanda during the 1990s.
2. **Refugee:** according to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention (which offers the standard definition accepted under international law) a refugee is “*a person who is outside his or her country or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there for fear of persecution.*”<sup>2</sup>
3. **Exurb:** according to Merriam-Webster, “a region or settlement that lies outside a city and usually beyond its suburbs and that often is inhabited chiefly by well-to-do families.”

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#### CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

**Introduction:** Sets the scene of a particular match; explains what’s compelling about the Fugees

**Ch 1—Luma:** introduces Luma

**Ch 2—Beatrice and Her Boys:** intros refugee experience through Beatrice Ziaty

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<sup>1</sup> “Lesson on Ethnic Discrimination.” *United Nations Cyber School Bus*. 1996. United Nations. 9/15/2009 <<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/discrim/ethnicity1.asp#A>>.

<sup>2</sup> “The 1951 Refugee Convention - Questions & Answers, 2007 edition.” UNCHR.org. 1997. United Nations High Commission on Refugees. 9/15/2009. <<http://www.unhcr.org/basics/BASICS/3c0f495f4.pdf>>.



**Ch 3—“Small Town . . . Big Heart”:** Introduces Clarkston, its history with immigration and refugees

**Ch 4—Alone Down South:** Luma alone, alienated, disaffected, and searching for something to give her meaning and direction.

**Ch 5—The Fugees Are Born:** Emanuel Ransom wants “real Americans”; Beatrice is afraid to let her boys out of the house.

**Ch 6—Paula:** like Ch 2, provides background, sense of what refugees have endured on the way to Clarkston

**Ch 7—“Coach Says It’s Not Good”:** Bien and confusing experience of new environment; Luma builds camaraderie

**Ch 8—“They’re in America Now—Not Africa”:** Confrontation between Chike Chime and Officer Timothy Jordan. Major question: does Chime’s success suggest that he has, in fact, assimilated to American ways? Then why is Jordan so mad? And what should we fairly expect in terms of assimilation?

**Ch 9—Get Lost:** Describes the tension over soccer and municipal fields—first, between Fugees/YMCA and community center/Emanuel Ransom, then earlier dispute between Clarkston & Lost Boys Club. Also, introduces Ediger.

## MAJOR PEOPLE

### **Luma Mufleh:**

- 31-year-old founder and volunteer coach of the Fugees.
- Jordanian by birth, alumnus of Smith College.
- Major influence: volleyball coach
- Decision to stay in U.S. following college alienated her from her family.
- Landed in Atlanta, opening sandwich shop, and began coaching this team

### **Beatrice Ziaty:**

- Mother of Jeremiah and Mandela
- Liberian
- Story used to intro refugee experience, prior to arrival in US
- Terrified to let her boys out of her sight

### **Jeremiah Ziaty**

- Beatrice’s eldest son
- Plays for Under 13 squad

### **Emanuel Ransom**

- Board member of community center
- Wants center to focus programs for “real Americans” (55)

### **Grace Balegamire**

- Plays for Under 13 squad
- father imprisoned in Central African Republic; last saw him when he was 5

**Paula Balegamire**

- Congolese woman
- Mother of Grace (a boy)
- Forced to leave behind husband, Joseph, imprisoned in Central Africa Republic
- Words for Luma's cleaning company

**Bienvenue ("Bien") Ntwari**

- Originally from Burundi; traveled through Mozambique
- Brothers: Alex and Ive; mother: Generose
- Excited to find Grace, who also speaks Swahili

**Chike Chime**

- Nigerian immigrant; legal U.S. resident for 15+ years
- Moved from NYC to ATL to open successful insurance business; clients mostly immigrants & refugees
- Attacked following traffic stop by Clarkston Police Officer Timothy Jordan

**Lee Swamey**

- In response to Lost Boys Club, forbids the playing of soccer at Milam Park/Armistead Field
- Mayor of Clarkston. In St. John's estimation, he fundamentally misunderstand the refugees: views them as a singular, monolithic group, rather than a collection of individuals and cultural backgrounds, and expects them to be willing and able to join into the local community.

**Tracy Ediger**

- Holds MD/PhD, but realizes that she doesn't want to pursue careers in medicine and research
- With sister, volunteers with a Christian group who help refugees with transition. Finds connection with refugees, despite differences in culture and language
- In light of refugees struggles and importance of her work with them, gains perspective: "It made me feel that my questions were not nearly as important as I'd made them out to be"
- In this role, meets Paula Balegamire, and through her, Luma

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**SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION**

*Below are a list of questions can be used and adapted to fit a variety of needs: you can assign them as journal topics to be completed outside of class, as in-class writing assignments, as topics for small group discussions, or as topics for the entire group to discuss together, with the instructor as a moderator.*

*We suggest trying multiple methods: for instance, assign weekly reflective writing assignments to be completed outside of class; then, have the students break down into small groups to discuss their responses. After 15-20 minutes of discussion amongst themselves, come back together as a class and allow each group to present a summary of the issues that arose in their conversations. The following week, use the questions differently.*

*Some of these topics are more personal than others; depending on your students and the dynamics of the course, these perhaps should not be shared with colleagues and peers. In these cases, assign the topics as out-of-class assignments, then introduce new topics for discussion in the next class.*

*Select the topics which best fit the needs of your course and students.*

- i. In Part I, Warren St. John provides a fascinating account of Luma Mufleh’s experiences prior to the founding of the Fugees. Some of you might find something familiar in those experiences. This week, reflect on similarities between your transition and Luma’s. Topics might include:
  - i. Luma’s relationship with her family is strained by her decision to stay in the United States following her graduation from Smith College. While her circumstances are unique—given that her parents are thousands of miles away—similar situations are not uncommon. The transition to college—and to a new city, new friends, and new freedoms—can often cause tension between students and the friends and family at home. For this assignment, reflect on Luma’s transition and draw connections or contrasts to your own experience. What similarities are there? If not, how have you avoided them? And how will you handle transitions like this in the future?
  - ii. Like many of you, the course of Luma Mufleh’s life was heavily influence by an important relationship with a mentor: her high school volleyball coach, Rhonda Brown. Reflect upon experiences from adolescence: did anyone play similar role in your life? Describe your relationship with your mentor, and provide a specific example of moment which is indicative of his/her influence. Finally, explain how this person continues to influence you as you enter a new community.
- ii. SERVICE: Almost immediately upon meeting these refugee boys, Luma Mufleh is compelled to become their coach. What do you think drives her to do this—what does she personally derive from volunteering like this? Connect her experience to service opportunities and projects in which you have participated: what do you get out of these experiences?
- iii. PART I introduces refugee experience, via the stories of Beatrice Ziaty, Paula Balegamire, and their families. Reflect on their hardship: what did you learn about Atlanta, global politics, or people generally from these stories?
- iv. Through research and personal observations, Warren St. John offers a depiction of the rapid changes that the small southern town of Clarkston has undergone in the last thirty years. While Clarkston’s immigrant/refugee population is somewhat unique, drastic change—expansion, decline, demographic shifts, etc.—are not uncommon. How has your community or home town changed in your lifetime? Provide some specific examples.
- v. While political events in other nations and on other continents might not seem relevant to your life, what happens an ocean away can profoundly affect you and your community—as the stories of Beatrice Ziaty and Paula Balegamire suggest. Reflect on your experience as a member of a global community: what international presences have you observed or even interacted with during your time in Atlanta?
- vi. Cultural confusion: The rapid demographic changes that occurred in Clarkston lead to a wide variety of culturally confusing moments—instances in which problems occur or exacerbated by differences in culture and language. Review some of these in Part I and either:
  - i. Explain one situation and provide a solution. What is the misunderstanding about, and what knowledge would help prevent similar situations in the future?
  - ii. Draw connections to similar experiences in your own life. Explain the circumstance, how you resolved it (or should have resolved it), and what insights you drew from it.
- vii. In Ch 7, St. John provides a description of the disorienting experience of entering a new place. Relate this to your own transition to this school: what has been the most confusing moment since your arrival, and how did you handle it? Are you still overwhelmed?

## PART II: A NEW SEASON

### MAJOR THEMES

- **Stereotypes**
- **Fitting in**
- **Allegiance to ethnic/national identity**

### CRITICAL CONCEPTS AND TERMS

1. **Assimilation:** in terms of culture, this is the process by which an individual or group abandons some or all of their cultural practices and adopts some or all of the cultural practices of the dominant group.
2. **Super-diversity** (184-185): the “incredible cultural complexity” evident in places like Clarkston and in “practically every cosmopolitan metropolis in the world”—places like New York, London, Cairo, Mumbai, and Hong Kong. The term was coined by Steven Vertovec, who argues that “top-down efforts to impose contact and understanding between various groups [are] likely to fail,” according to St. John (184). Vertovec offers a three-step process for building more organic connections between members of disparate cultural groups:
  - a. decategorization: list all identities which an individual claims (ethnic, national, gender, religious, etc): consequence--individual, not just a type.
  - b. recategorization: individuals recast themselves in terms of commonalities, not differences.
  - c. mutual differentiation: acknowledgement of interdependence that takes into account various group identities

### CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

**Ch 10—“I Want to Be Part of the Fugees”:** Introduces three teams (Under 13, Under 15, Under 17); discusses different levels of talent, of commitment (boys who work diligently and attend tutoring play, almost regardless of ability). Luma struggles to build camaraderie among U-15s, who display adolescent apathy and antagonism toward authority and, in addition, are pressured by gangs.

**Ch 11—Figure it Out so You Can Fix It:** Tensions build in the U-15 club: The debate over Prince’s hair reveals allegiances to those who share simultaneous pull of nationality and ethnicity within the team. Stereotypes persist, even within refugee community.

**Ch 12—Meltdown:** Frustrated by the apathy of the 15s, Luma cancels their season.

**Ch 13—“How Am I Going to Start All Over?”:** Kanue Biah convinces Luma not to cancel the season; 13s are motivated by the (negative) example of the 15s.

**Ch 14—Alex, Bien, and Ive:** While Ch 2 and 6 describe the circumstances that precipitated refugees immigration, this chapter provides insight into life in home of refugees after they have arrived and into their unrealized expectations of life in the U.S.

**Ch 15—Trying Again:** Conflict with Decatur-DeKalb YMCA officials over the cancellation; Luma holds try-outs and (skeptically) reconvenes the 15s’ season. Fornatee chooses not to try-out again.

**Ch 16—The Fifteens Fight:** To test and to build camaraderie among the new Under 15 team, Luma has them scrimmage the Under 17s. Separated from his Liberian friends, Mandela develops a bad attitude; Fornatee expects to be reinstated, but isn't. Luma becomes concerned about negative influences and potential dangers at Indian Creek Elem., so reaches out to Mayor Swaney.

**Ch 17—Go Fugees!:** The new U-15s play their first game—and win.

**Ch 18—Gunshots:** A member of the U-15 is shot in a dispute with a gang member, further worrying Luma about the potential hazards of the wide-open field at Indian Creek Elementary.

**Ch 19—Getting Over It:** Offers models for successful management of diversity: Bill Mehlinger and Thriftown; the Clarkston International Church; Chief Tony Scipio and Clarkston Police Department. Suggests all are motivated by self-interest as much as altruism.

**Ch 20—The “Soccer People”:** St. John's interview with Mayor Swaney. Luma earns a victory in the City Council meeting.

**Ch 21: Playing on Grass:** The Fugees get a new home field.

## MAJOR PEOPLE INTRODUCED IN PART II

**Prince:** Liberian; best player on U-15s, but dismissed for refusal to cut his hair

**Fornatee:** Liberian-born; forced to choose between Prince and the Fugees.

**Mandela Ziaty:** Jeremiah's brother. Initially makes fun of Jeremiah for joining the team—wants to fit in with African Americans and play basketball. However, eventually changes his mind. Like Fornatee, struggles with the dispute between Luma and Prince, his fellow Liberian.

**Kanue Biah:** Member of Under 15; Liberian by birth. Lives with uncle and grandmother. Responsible for family's meals. No siblings; team provides family structure. Heartbroken by cancellation of season.

**Natnael:** Member of Under 15; Mandela's close friend.

**Bill Mehlinger:** Owns and runs Thriftown, a grocery store. Saw opportunity in demographic changes, built store from conventional and failing supermarket to a thriving store that caters to culinary habits of a wide variety of cultures.

**Hong Diep Vo:** Vietnamese refugee and Thriftown employee; she suggests the Mehlinger rethink the store's business model and adapt to new customers.

**William Perrin:** Army veteran who helps saving his church by involving members of the immigrant and refugee community; Clarkston Baptist Church becomes Clarkston International Bible Church.

**Tony Scipio:** Clarkston police chief and native of Trinidad. Reform-minded and ambitious, he draws ire of many officers by demanding that they learn about newcomers and adapt their methods to better address cultural misunderstandings.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

1. Apathy and Commitment: Coach Luma Mufleh has demands much of her players. Do you agree with Luma's decisions about playing time and her philosophy of coaching? What would you gain from participation in a group coached or mentored by someone like Luma? What would be difficult about this experience?
2. Mandela and Fornatee, among others, struggle to resolve a contradiction between allegiances to friends and allegiances to the Fugees and Coach Mufleh. Reflect on similar experiences of your own: when have you been pulled in opposing directions, and how do you handle the situation?
3. Each of the three teams within the Fugees program consists of players from many countries and many cultures. In Part II, the unity of the Under 15 team is challenged by the players' frequent identification with teammates who share their nationality or ethnic origins. Reflect on how these allegiances affect the team. Why do you think these players maintain these allegiances? What is positive and negative about such allegiances? And how does Coach Luma handle the challenge to unity?
4. According to St. John, the mothers of African refugee boys dislike braided hairstyles and other styles the associate with African Americans; they have, it seems, taken on prejudices and stereotypes that are familiar within American culture. Reflect on the problems with this sort of reliance on stereotypes: why people turn to stereotypes, and what is the consequence of that reliance?
5. Warren St. John observes that parents' excitement upon meeting him; even though they live in the U.S., meeting an actual American is a novel experience for them. Why are those sorts of lines so rarely crossed? Look for answers both in the book and in your own experience.
6. Bill Mehlinger, the owner and manager of Thriftown, recognizes that the shifting demographics of Clarkston present a financial opportunity; his failing store prospers once he responds to the culinary needs of the international community. Similar opportunities exist in other industries. What is another potential financial opportunity offered by the shifting demographics of the Atlanta area? Draft a plan for a business that could respond to these opportunities.
7. Mehlinger, Church, Tony Scipio, even Luma and all personally benefit by adapting/responding to changing demographics. Reflect on something that you have gained from either engagement with folks from different cultures OR responding positively to a change that you might have initially resisted. How have you benefitted—intellectually, spiritually, financially, academically—from interacting with people who are different from you, or from adapting to changes around you?
8. In St. John's estimation, Mayor Swaney and many longtime Clarkston residents fundamentally misunderstand the refugees: they view them as a singular, monolithic group, rather than a collection of individuals and cultural backgrounds, and they expect them to be willing and able to join into the local community. Identify some specific differences that he fails to recognize, as well as they consequences of seeing the refugee community this way. What are the consequences, more broadly, of considering large populations or groups in this way? Provide a specific example from your own experience.

## PART III: FULL CIRCLE

More than the other sections, Part III focuses on competition and narrating actual soccer games. You might find that this does not yield the same variety of discussion topics that Parts I and II did; however, as you wrap out the book, draw upon the questions offered earlier and revisit topics that you have already discussed—ask the students if their views have changed, given the entire narrative and time to think about class discussion.

### MAJOR TOPICS AND THEMES

- Competition
- Assimilation
- Work available for refugees

### CRITICAL CONCEPTS AND TERMS

**Limnality:** a state of being between two worlds, in which a person “becomes ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification,” according to anthropologist Victor Turner (St. John 221). Adolescence itself is a stage of limnality; refugees and immigrant teenagers possess a “double liminal status” and truly struggle with issues of individual identity.

### CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

**Ch 22—Who Are the Kings?:** Describes Bushi family’s flight from Kosovo to Atlanta; U-13 team comes together.

**Ch 23—Showdown at Blue Springs:** The Under 13s defeat the Blue Springs Liberty Fire in Loganville, GA.

**Ch 24—Coming Apart:** The Under 15s lose to Santos, a team from the Roswell Soccer Club. Mandela grows surlier and is finally removed from the team; Luma lashes out at him. Introduces Jeremy Cole from Refugee Family Services, who discusses the particular problems of adolescent refugees.

**Ch 25—Hanging On at Home:** Describes work conditions for refugees and (legal and illegal) immigrants in Georgia, through the lives of Generose (Bien’s mother): while she works at a chicken processing plant an hour away, her oldest son Alex handles domestic duties. Beatrice worries about Mandela, following his dismissal. Beatrice begins to date a Liberian man, David Faryen.

**Ch 26—The Dikoris:** Introduces Idwar (12) and Robin Dikori (9), Luma’s new “secret weapons.”

**Ch 27—“What Are You Doing Here?":** On the way to a game in Athens, Luma is arrested for driving with a suspended license, bringing up difficult memories of interactions with police for many of the U-13s. As a result, the team falls apart in the first half but hold the opponents scoreless after halftime.

**Ch 28—Halloween:** Luma takes the Under-13s trick-or-treating.

**Ch 29—The Fifteens’ Final Game:** Natnael and Joseph discuss Joseph’s father’s death; the U-15s lose, closing out their season.

**Ch 30—My Rules, My Way:** The U-13s beat the Georgia Futbol Club of Lawrenceville, and Luma signs them up to play in the Tornado Cup.

**Ch 31—Tornado Cup:** The 13s and 15s scrimmage; St. John contrasts Fugees with other teams and families at the Torando Cup. The 13s win their first, lose their second, and finally tie Concorde Fire, thus losing the tournament. After that, the 13s and 15s work to raise money to enter a tournament in Savannah; Clarkston revokes the team’s right to use Milam Park and Armistead Field.

**Epilogue:** Luma reconciles with her parents and with Mandela. Beatrice and Jeremiah Ziaty leave for Iowa; Generose Ntwari and her family move to Fort Wayne, Indiana; others move on to college, other teams, and other interests. St. John’s initial story in the *New York Times* puts the Fugees in the spotlight: the town is pressured to provide fields; equipment, uniforms, money, and a bus are donated, and a movie deal is signed. Two teachers are hired, and twelve players now attend the Fugees Academy full-time.

### MAJOR PEOPLE INTRODUCED IN PART III

**Qendrim Bushi:** Kosovar by nationality; Albanian by ethnicity; Muslim by faith. Plays on U-13 team. Grandson of once-famous goalie and author of soccer text. Extended family scattered “from Norway to England and to Australia”; father, Xhalal works at Decatur-DeKalb Farmers’ Market.

**Jeremy Cole:** Youth Services Coordinator for Refugee Family Services, an aid group in Stone Mountain. Macon native, earned MA in religion from UGA. Later converted to Islam.

**Alex Ntwari:** defender on U-15; older brother of Bien, Alex cares for sister Alyah and handles domestic chores while their mother works.

**Idwar and Robin Dikori:** Luma’s “secret weapons,” survivors of genocidal efforts launched on the Nuba Mtns. of central Sudan by an Islamist regime in capital, as well as a car accident that killed their mother and three of their siblings.

**David Anderson:** Coach of the Athens Gold Valiants; struggled to find direction, then found coaching.

### TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

1. St. John cites anthropologist Victor Turner, who describes both adolescence and immigration as stages of *liminality*, that is, “a state of being between two worlds,” in which a person “becomes ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification” (St. John 221). Reflect on your own experiences with liminality: how did you face this confusing period, and what did learn from that difficult period?
2. In Part III, St. John describes the trying labor conditions for many refugees and the difficult work schedule for Generose Ntwari. Like many of the parents depicted here, Generose sacrifices much for her children. Reflect today on the notion of sacrifice: has anyone in your family sacrificed something to help you get here? What personal sacrifices have you had to make, or would you be willing to make, for family members?



- Summary: Coach Luma Mufleh demands much of her players. Do you agree with Luma's decisions about playing time, philosophy of coaching? What would you gain from participation in a group coached or mentored by someone like Luma? What would be difficult about this experience?

## IV. In-Class Group Work

### a. Group Work: Cross Cultural Exchange

**Intended Learning Outcome:** To articulate benefits and challenges posed by cultural diversity, as well as strategies for effective collaboration and community development in diverse populations.

**Setup:** This is a “jigsaw” activity. Divide the class into teams of 4-5 students, and have them devise a team name. Next, hand each student a playing card; each suit should be represented within each group.

**Process:**

- Review this initial prompt:

*The rapid demographic changes that occurred in Clarkston lead to a wide variety of culturally confusing moments—instances in which problems occur or exacerbated by differences in culture and language. Today's exercise will provide an opportunity for you to reflect on those moments. For this exercise, you will be asked to leave your team, develop a specialized knowledge, and return to collaborate on a project.*

- The students will leave their teams to temporarily join up with cards of same suit. Give these new suit-groups 10-15 minutes to work on the following tasks together:
  - Hearts:** identify as many instances in today's reading of cultural confusion as you can
  - Diamonds:** identify as many successful cross-cultural interactions as you can find.
  - Spades:** identify misconceptions about that Clarkstonians have about refugee community (as many as you can)
  - Clubs:** identify misconceptions refugees have about Clarkstonians/U.S.
- Following this, have them come back together with their original teams, and provide them with this prompt.

*Identify a specific moment of cultural confusion in the book. Identify the context and the specific lack of knowledge that precipitates the confusion. Finally, and identify one way the people involved overcome it—or, if they didn't, something you think they should have tried).*

**Debrief:** When the students have finished, each group should explain the problem and solution that they discussed. After all have presented their findings, the instructor should summarize common points. Finally, the instructor should present this last question to each group:

*Identify a situation that you have encountered here in which you could or should have applied one of the strategies that we just discussed.*

### 2. Group Work: Developing a Team Despite Differences

**Intended Learning Outcome:** To articulate both specific challenges to community and collaborative work posed by cultural and linguistic difference AND strategies for overcoming these challenges.

**Setup:** Divide the class into groups of four to six. Next, give each large group a box of drinking straws (balloons will also work well).

**Process:** This exercise is a variation on familiar project on team building: each group must build the, free-standing structure they can. However, a few rules will make this more difficult and will prompt the students to think about the unique challenges faced by Coach Luma and the Fugees.

1. Once the groups have been designated, provide them with this prompt:

*For this task, imagine that you are a multiethnic work crew, with very little instructions and even less in common. Your task is to build the tallest free-standing structure you can, using only these straws. However, the members of your team come from different corners of the globe, and each of you has only a limited knowledge of the local language. The common vocabulary is limited to the following words:*

- UP.....Dok
- DOWN.....tyfd
- LEFT.....fround
- RIGHT.....aront
- HIGH.....frong
- LOW.....siddle
- FRONT.....freht
- BACK.....bynk
- AROUND.....atoutd
- TOP.....tos
- BOTTOM.....incer

*During the course of the project, you may communicate only through these words and hand gestures. No other language, written or spoken, can be utilized. You have twenty minutes—begin.*

**Debriefing & Reflection:** Following the assignment, ask students to either write about or to discuss specific challenges that the linguistic differences and affiliations posed to their collaborative work. They should draw specific connections between the assignment and the Fugees’ story. Finally, they should, individually or collectively, provide a narrative of how they either failed to overcome the challenge or succeeded despite the obstacle of language and rivalry.

## V. MAJOR PROJECTS

These can be done in groups or by individual students; they can be conducted in one class period, or they can be longer term assignments that result in more polished final products. Most of them involve some degree of presentation, so they are good way to integrate the book into that element of the course.

### a. MAP PROJECTS

**Learning Outcome:** *To produce an easily accessible visual/multimedia representation of the perhaps presence of perhaps unfamiliar cultures and cultural exchanges that take place at this school*

Programs like Google Maps and Google Earth are free, easy to use, and will help your students create visual records that reflect their readings and discussions. Furthermore, through hyperlinks and digital photos, the students will be able to connect their readings and discussions to supplementary content, including news items, etc. Below are three possible assignments; these can be done as individual projects, but they work best as a small group effort. *Use your Team Leaders to facilitate these projects. The TL should be familiar with the capabilities of Google Maps or Google Earth before the project begins, and their help will ease any technological issues that might arise. However, it is crucial that the TLs do not simply do this component for the students—they can only advise.*

1. **Movement & Migration:** Using Google Maps or another similar program, create a visual record of the MIGRATIONS of at least five members of the FUGEES from their native countries to Clarkston and/or various other locations which figure in their journeys. Label each pinpoint with your last name, the name of the place, and the name of the Fugee—i.e., “Burdell: Smith College (Coach Luma).” In the text box, provide the approximate dates that he/she was there and include links to appropriate resources (like a news article) on that place or the event that precipitated the move.
2. **Global Atlanta:** The presence of such a large refugee population in Clarkston is further evidence of something that you might have already noticed: Atlanta is both a Southern city and a GLOBAL city. For this assignment, create a Google Map in which you note all of the presences of this phenomenon that you experience over the course of a week. This should not simply be a record of your interaction with someone of a different national background, but rather, a map of fixed presences and institutions (buildings, businesses, restaurants, etc.) that provide evidence of ongoing connections between Atlanta and communities and institutions outside the United States. In the title of each entry on the map should include your last name, the name of the institution, business, or event, and the date, i.e., “Burdell: Royal Bank of Scotland (10/01/09).” In the text box, provide a sentence-long description of the place and any relevant links. If you have access to a digital camera (which can be checked out from the library), feel free to embed a photograph or video of that place.
3. **Global Classroom:** *Super-diversity* is a concept critical to St. John’s account of Clarkston and the Fugees (see pages 184-185). Interestingly, this concept easily applies to this community. For this map project, you will investigate this class (or your dorm hall) as a site of super-diversity: create a map that shows the different locations in the world from which you classmates hail, and provide some information about why and how each of these people came to choose this school. In the title of each entry on the map should include your last name, the name of the place, and the name of the person in question— i.e., “Jones: Edinburgh, Scotland (George P. Burdell).” In the text box, provide any relevant links. If you have access to a digital camera (which can be checked out from the library), feel free to embed a photograph or video of that person

## b. LEARNING ABOUT OTHER COMMUNITIES

**Learning Outcome:** *To articulate the processes by which community develops in a (super)diverse environment like this school, despite significant cultural differences*

Warren St. John's book provides an opportunity to discuss issues of diversity and community; it prompts us to consider the difficulties that people from very different places and different cultures face when they live together, as well as the very tangible benefits of super-diversity. The metro-Atlanta area—and this campus, more specifically—is an ideal location to investigate these issues. Here are a few small-group projects that require students to further consider these issues. Use your TLs to facilitate these projects.

1. **The Global Dorm:** *Super-diversity* is a concept critical to St. John's account of Clarkston and the Fugees (see pages 184-185). Interestingly, this concept easily applies to this community. Super-diversity can be difficult and confusing for many people, who struggle to make find ways to interact with others amid so many cultural differences. St. John identifies three steps toward building connections in a super-diverse environment: *decategorization*, *recategorization*, and *mutual differentiation*.

For this writing assignment, examine a group of your peers here—perhaps your hall in your dorm or a social group to which you belong—and describe where your group is within that three-step process and how you arrived there. You should:

- i. Identify the obvious differences between the members of the group
  - ii. List what you have in common
  - iii. Explain the group identity that has emerged from these commonalities. Do the commonalities simply overshadow the differences? Explain the ways that your group has figured out how to build upon those shared connections while still maintaining you a new identity that addresses
2. **Meeting a New Culture:** St. John emphasizes the diversity of the Fugees: though they function as a team, their members come from a wide variety of cultures—which can pose some difficulties at times. Similarly, this community is comprised of individuals from many distinct cultural backgrounds and many different interests. Social engagement and community interaction at this school often take places in situations that reflect this diversity, both some may prefer to participate through formal and informal groups that share a common cultural background or set of interests.

For this project, you must learn about a community or cultural group at this school to which you do not belong. This could be an athletic team, a student organization, or an informal group. Compose a brief (200-300 word) reflection on this experience in which you address any of the following issues:

- i. How common interests or cultures bring people together
- ii. The differences that exist within this particular group
- iii. Your experience as an outsider in a group
- iv. Things you share or admire about this group,

After this, you should provide your interview notes to the instructor.

## c. COLLABORATION & SERVICE

**Learning Outcome:** *To articulate compelling reasons why they should perform service and to identify specific needs and opportunities for students.*

1. **Service Project:** In addition to telling a compelling story, *Outcasts United* offers a call to service—and an explanation of why service can be personally satisfying. FugeesFamily.org suggests a variety of ways that readers can help, including tutoring, organizing fundraisers, and simply bringing snacks.
2. **Group Presentation – Profile of a Service Organization/Project:** The Fugees Family would not exist without Luma Mufleh and Tracy Ediger; neither is a likely candidate for this sort of work, and, as Ediger points out, neither is superhuman. Both, however, were dissatisfied with the direction of their lives and careers, and, when they saw a need, both decided to commit themselves to serving others.

This assignment connects to the group presentation component of the course. Divide the class into teams. Each team must find and introduce another service project—ideally, but not necessarily, one that either employs some of the resources available to students here or uses some of the skills and capabilities that they hope to gain in their majors here.

This will require a small amount of research: one article should be sufficient. In the presentation, the student groups should:

- i. Briefly introduce the program and its goals
  - ii. Explain what it how it was started
  - iii. Describe the problems it faced
  - iv. Discuss its effectiveness/outcome
3. **Group Presentation – A Plan for Action:** The Fugees Family would not exist without Luma Mufleh and Tracy Ediger; neither are likely candidates for their jobs with the team, and, as Ediger reminds the readers, neither are superhuman. Both, however, were dissatisfied with the direction of their lives and careers, and, when they saw a need, both decided to commit themselves to serving others.

This assignment connects to the group presentation component of the course. Divide the class into teams. Each team should identify a need similar to the needs identified by Mufleh and Ediger and propose a program that will respond to it. Ideally, this should be something from their own experiences. The proposed project does not need to be enormous in scale—instead, it should be small enough that a handful of people could manage it (like the Fugees program).

The proposal should:

- i. Describe the problem
- ii. Briefly introduce the program and its goals
- iii. Explain what it would take to get it started
- iv. Imagine the problems it might face

If possible, the students' proposed plan should draw either upon resources available to students here or some of the skills and capabilities that they hope to gain in their majors. If the course is

major specific, they should consider how someone with the interests and skills of their discipline can serve his or her community.

## II. OTHER RESOURCES

Below are a variety of web sites and articles that supplement *Outcasts United*.

Websites	
<i>Outcasts United</i> official site	<a href="http://outcastsunited.com/">http://outcastsunited.com/</a>
The Fugees Family	<a href="http://www.fugeesfamily.org/">http://www.fugeesfamily.org/</a>
Newspaper & Magazine Articles	
-St. John, "Refugees Find Hostility and Hope on Soccer Field," <i>New York Times</i> 21. Jan., 2007 (original article)	<a href="http://www.fugeesfamily.org/documents/Fugees_Family_nytimes.pdf">http://www.fugeesfamily.org/documents/Fugees_Family_nytimes.pdf</a> or <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/21/us/21fugees.html?_r=1&amp;scp=1&amp;sq=fugees%20clarkston%20ga&amp;st=cse">http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/21/us/21fugees.html?_r=1&amp;scp=1&amp;sq=fugees%20clarkston%20ga&amp;st=cse</a>
Audio & other multimedia	
- NPR's <i>Morning Edition</i> Interview with Warren St. John	<a href="http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103516824">http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=103516824</a>
- Lohr, Kathy, "Refugees Find Hope, Film Deal on Soccer Field." <i>All Things Considered</i> . NPR. 9 March, 2007. <i>*includes print story, interactive "Meet the Fugees" map.</i>	<a href="http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7761970">http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7761970</a>
-St. John, "Hostility and Hope on the Soccer Field" <i>* audio and photogallery, includes voices of St. John, Luma Mufleh, &amp; Beatrice Ziaty</i>	<a href="http://www.nytimes.com/packages/khtml/2007/01/20/us/20070121_FUGEES_FEATURE.html">http://www.nytimes.com/packages/khtml/2007/01/20/us/20070121_FUGEES_FEATURE.html</a>

