

## **LAWS 7714 Refugee Law: Assignment Two**

### **Essay: Critical reflections around refugee artifacts**

#### **Summary of the Assessment Task:**

The second (progressive) assessment item, weighted at 25% of the overall mark, uses particular objects ('refugee artifacts') including personal letters held in the Fryer Library at UQ ('Burnside Collection') social media, cartoons, films and books) as sources of inspiration for a reflective written piece of work (2000 words).

The written work should relate to and critically engage with key themes from the course content; specifically, access to asylum, and immigration detention and offshore processing of refugees on Nauru and Manus Island. Topics actively considered in seminars four, five and six of the course.

#### **Aims and Objectives**

This progressive assessment item is about critical reflection with the help of artifacts, and tests your knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the 'lived experiences' of asylum seekers subject to immigration controls and how this relates to questions of States' compliance with international refugee law and human rights law. This assessment correlates to **learning objectives** two, three and four detailed in the Aims and Objectives (at 2.2) in the **Course Profile**.

The socio-legal context for this assessment was provided and supported, first, by our study of primary legal sources (e.g. case law) and secondary sources (notably, academic journal articles and book chapters) and related study tasks set for seminars four and five (detention/offshore processing).

Additionally, the context for this assessment is our study of relevant artifacts - testimonial material - studied in seminar six ('offshore processing and refugees' narratives') in the Fryer library, with the senior librarian Kerri Klumpp in conjunction with Professor Gillian Whitlock.

#### **Reflective Essay and Reflective Thinking: Report – Relate – Reason**

In seminar six you were invited to select a letter from the Fryer Library (Burnside Collection) and at least one other more recent refugee artifact (book, newspaper article, *The Messenger* podcast, 'Mr Eaten Fish' cartoons or documentary/film, for instance) to study, in order to prompt thinking about how refugees' narratives enable you to gain knowledge and comprehension of peoples' experiences of offshore detention/processing on Nauru and/or Manus Island.

You were also encouraged to think about how this testimonial material correlates to your awareness of the human impacts of offshore processing. And how this material connects with and informs your evaluation of human rights law violations occasioned by the laws, policies and practices that sustain and regulate offshore processing – human rights violations that have been identified in the ‘grey literature’ (e.g. UN and UNHCR human rights monitoring reports on offshore processing) and assorted academic journal articles and book chapters critiquing offshore processing.

For this assessment you are required to choose a refugee artifact as the source of inspiration and motivation to write a short reflective essay that engages with both the artifact and elements or themes from the course content (seminars four, five and six, most relevantly).

The task encourages you to reflect on our own learning experience by identifying and explaining the connections you can make between the artifact and the legal issues and concepts (human rights) particularly relevant to refugee protection seekers. In short, this assignment is asking you to recount how the academic literature (seminars four and five) and chosen artifact (seminar six) **relate and to reflect** on and offer **reasons** about how your study of these materials has given you personally a more developed understanding of refugees’ experiences.

### **What is required? The plan and structure of your essay**

**Report:** First, in the introduction, be clear about conveying which refugee artifact you have chosen to inspire your writing, summarise essentially what the artifact conveys to you, and then explain why you have chosen to write about that *particular* artifact.

**Relate:** In the body of your essay explore and explain the connections between your chosen artifact and your socio-legal knowledge and understanding of offshore processing/detention: this socio-legal perspective should be informed by your reading of prescribed study materials from earlier seminars (4-5) in the course (and other socio-legal sources you deem relevant).

**Reason:** In the concluding part of the essay explain and demonstrate why the artifact is important to enhancing your own knowledge, understanding and critical appreciation of offshore processing/detention and its human impacts and legal consequences. In this part it is very important for you to clearly show (‘reason’) how your learning (knowledge and understanding) of the lived experience of refugees and legal issues has progressed, developed and changed.

[Note that *socio-legal* refers to the study of legal ideas, principles and practices situated in their wider social, political and historical context. We have approached the study of refugee law in a ‘socio-legal’ way by utilising insights drawn from the social sciences; such as, political science and criminology].