

The Institute for Globalization and the Human Condition
Global Actors Beyond the State: Methods and Cases (718)
Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Petra Rethmann

Email: rethman@mcmaster.ca

Seminar: synchronous; discussion-based

Time: Mondays, 9:30 – 12:20

Room: Zoom and Avenue

Office Hours: Please email rethman@mcmaster.ca to request a meeting

Land Acknowledgement

While meeting for this course, we recognize and acknowledge our presence on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” Wampum agreement. This acknowledgement gives rise to a commitment to honour treaties and work toward decolonization and establishment of just relationships.

Course Description

This course seeks to address the question of how individuals and a number of non-state actors respond to, resist, engage, or challenge the state. Interdisciplinary in method, thought, and design, it draws on political science, activist, and ethnographic work to consider the ways in which various constituencies grapple with issues of governance, governmentality, agency, resilience, and resistance.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Articulate theoretical and conceptual perspectives on the state
- Have an empirical understanding of some particularly significant political and cultural challenges related to addressing and/or challenging the state
- Engage with confidence in a number of theoretical and political discussions
- Produce a final research paper that evinces an element of originality in its theorization, empirical content, or analytical finesse.

Required Materials and Texts

There are no required textbooks for this class. All required readings are listed below. Most are accessible through the library catalogue; simply search for the journal, year, and name of the author. Those that are not accessible through the library catalogue will be posted on Avenue to Learn or distributed via email.

Course Format

The course will consist of a mix of synchronous presentations, and discussions. We will use Zoom to run weekly two hour seminars. The third hour I will be available for individual consultation.

Course Evaluation

Presentation (15 %)

Classes will be structured as discussions based on assigned readings. In the beginning of the course, students will be assigned to lead the discussion for particular weeks. The goal is not so much to present your response to the class as to use it as a framework for discussion, allowing for the following: for each text, presenters will summarize their sense of the text's general meaning/ significance, identify and define key concepts (including difficult or troubling parts of the text), and then invite others to respond. Once most members of the class have had a chance to identify other themes or concepts and share impressions, presenters will identify one or two key questions or problems arising from the text for the class's consideration, and then monitor discussion.

Seminar Participation (30%), ongoing

The participation grade covers Class participants are responsible for having read the material and coming to class ready to contribute to the discussion.

Prior to each seminar students will post on Avenue a one page summary document on the texts they have read. This document will contain:

Research Proposal, (15%), due November 2

The purpose of the research proposal is to develop a plan for your final research paper. It aims to make sure that you have a research plan that is a good one. It can be up to 3 single-spaced pages with regular margins and a 12-point font, not including the bibliography.

Research paper, (40 %), should not 4000 words. Due December 14.

Your research paper should build on your proposal. In grading the paper, the following criteria will be used: (a) is there a thesis or an argument clearly stated at the beginning of the paper, and is the paper organized around that? (b) Does your paper address course themes? (c) Are the knowledge gaps or counter-arguments that your paper addresses identified and articulated at some point in your paper? (e) have you brought your research up to date? (f) Is your writing clear, engaging, and adequately proofread? You do not need to include all the sources you cited in your proposal, but you should be sure to use those that are most relevant.

Please remember to keep copies of all your work in case anything goes astray.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: SEPTEMBER 14

Introduction to the Course

No readings

Suggested Readings

Mitchell, Timothy

1991 The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics. *The American Political Science Review* 85 (1): 77 – 96.

Peck, Jamie, and Nikolas Theodore
2015 *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft and the Thresholds of Neoliberalism*. Minneapolis.
University of Minnesota Press.

Rose, Nikolas, Pat O' Malley, and Mariana Valverde
2006 Governmentality. *Annual Review of Law and Social Sciences* 2: 83 – 104.

Week 2: SEPTEMBER 21

How to think about the State I

Required Readings

Gupta, Akhil

1995 Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the
Imagined State. *American Ethnologist* 22 (2): 375 – 402.

Ferguson, James, and Akhil Gupta

2002 Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality. *American
Ethnologist* 29 (4): 981 – 1002.

Suggestions for Further Readings

Aretxaga, Begona

2003 Maddening States. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32 (1): 393 – 410.

Mbembe, Achille

2001 *On the Postcoloniality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph

2001 The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization: Close Encounters of the
Deceptive Kind. *Current Anthropology* 42 (1): 125 – 138.

Week 3: SEPTEMBER 28

How to think about the State II

Required Readings

Brown, Wendy

1995 Finding the Man in the State. In *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*.
Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 166 – 196.

Cooper, Davina

2017 Prefiguring the State. *Antipode* 49 (2): 335 – 356.

Suggestions for Further Readings

David Graeber. 2009. *Direct Action: An Ethnography*. Oakland: AK Press.

_____. 2007. *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire*. Oakland, CA.:
AK Press.

James C. Scott. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: an Anarchist History of Upland
Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Week 4: OCTOBER 5

Self-Directed Work

Week 5: OCTOBER 12

Mid-term Recess; no class

Week 6: OCTOBER 19

Agents and Cases I: Feminist and Queer Spaces

Required Readings

Cooper, Davina

2015 Bringing the State Up Conceptually: Forging a Body Politics through Anti-Gay Christian Refusal. *Feminist Theory* 16 (1): 87 – 107.

2009 Caring for Sex and the Power of Attentive Action: Governance, Drama, and Conflict in Building a Queer Feminist Bathhouse. *Signs* 35 (1): 105 – 130.

Suggestions for Further Readings

Cooper, Davina

2014 *Everyday Utopias: The Conceptual Life of Promising Spaces*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hartman, Saidiya

2019 *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Week 7 : OCTOBER 26

Agents and Cases II: Decoloniality and Indigenous Recognition

Required Readings

Coulthard, Glen Sean

2014 *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Excerpts.

Niheu, Kalamaoka'aina

2019 Indigenous Resistance in an Era of Climate Change Crisis. *Radical History Review* 133: 117 – 129.

Teaiwa, Katerina

2020 On Decoloniality: a View from Oceania. *Postcolonial Studies*. Published online May 18, 2020. Pp. 1 – 3.

Suggestions for Further Readings

Simpson, Audra

2014 *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 8: OCTOBER 29

Agents and Cases III: Environmentalism and Climate Change

Required Readings

Gosh, Amitav

2016 The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Excerpts.

Klein, Naomi

2014 *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*. New York: Knopf. Excerpts.

Suggested Readings

Latour, Bruno

2018 *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

2017 *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

McDermott, Hughes

2017 *Energy Without Conscience: Oil, Climate Change, and Complicity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Nixon, Rob

2011 *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Muecke, Stephen

2016 An Ecology of Institutions: Recomposing the Humanities. *New Literary History* 47 (2-3): 231 – 248.

Week 9: NOVEMBER 2

Agents and Cases IV: Heritage and Non-Governmental Organizations

Required Readings

De Cesari, Chiara

2020 Heritage Beyond the Nation State? Non-governmental Organizations, Changing Cultural Policies, and the Discourse of Heritage as Development. *Current Anthropology* 61 (1): 30 – 57.

Roy, Ananya

2009 Civic Governmentality: The Politics of Inclusion in Beirut and Mumbai. *Antipode* 41 (1): 159 – 179.

Week 10: NOVEMBER 9

Academic and Political Practices of Thinking Beyond the State I: Activism and Engagement

Required Readings

Kirsch, Stuart

2018 *Engaged Anthropology: Politics Beyond the Text*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Excerpts.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy

1995 The Primacy of the Ethical: Proposition for a Militant Anthropology. *Current Anthropology* 36 (3): 409 – 420.

Suggested Readings

Lassiter, Luke Eric

2005 Collaborative Ethnography and Public Anthropology. *Current Anthropology* 46 (1): 83 – 106.

Week 11: NOVEMBER 16

Self-Directed Work

Week 12: NOVEMBER 30

Academic and Political Practices of Thinking Beyond the State I: How we Write if we Write

Required Readings

Brown, Kate

2015 “Being There,” and “Returning Home to Rustalgia.” In *Dispatches from Dystopia: Histories of Places Not Yet Forgotten*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 1 – 18, and 134 – 150.

Suggested Readings

Latour, Bruno

2004 Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern. *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2): 225 – 48.

Week 13: DECEMBER 7

IT'S UP TO YOU!

COURSE POLICIES

Submission of Assignments

Unless otherwise noted below, all assignments will be submitted through folders that will be available on the Avenue to Learn site for this course.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale as illustrated below.

Mark	Grade
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

For the research proposal and research paper all students have the option of an extension of up to one week of the deadline specified in the course outline above. All requests for deadline extensions longer than one week must be made in advance of the assignment's original deadline, and must be accompanied by a documented justification for why a deadline extension of longer than a week is needed. Challenges such assignments or final presentations in other courses that were announced earlier in the term should be anticipated and planned for. It is your responsibility to make contingency plans for unforeseen problems such as computer failures. Assignments that are completed after the extended deadline, if accepted, will be penalized by one grade point per day including Saturday and Sunday (a grade point is the interval between A+ and A, A and A-, etc.).

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Please inform me of any absences or problems with the course,

Courses with an On-Line Element

This course will be using online technologies, including Avenue to Learn, e-mail, and Zoom. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster email accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required before the text/exam begins.

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.html

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained. (Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide).
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning, and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Students Rights & Responsibilities (the

“Code”; <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities>). All students share responsibilities of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of the McMaster community members,

whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning rooms. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviors that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue2Learn, WebEx, or Zoom for delivery) will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restrictions or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Faculty of Social Sciences Email Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Etiquette

In this course we value integrity, inclusiveness, and teamwork. As all of us make the transition to on-line course delivery and teaching, we will emphasize the values of mutual respect, dignity, and responsibility. Please be kind to each other, and patient. I am always happy to assist you in, and to make this the experience as I can.

Course Communication

If you wish to communicate with me, please try to be as clear and concise as possible. If you are unsure about your message, read it out aloud. I do this often before I send a message, since it helps me to better understand how the message might "land" on the other end. And/or review your written message. Not only will this let you review your questions, concerns, and/or ideas, but also make sure that the tone is appropriate. I will answer e-mails on weekdays between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm. Given the volume of messages I receive, you may have to wait up to 48 hrs for a reply.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the students to check her or his McMaster e-mail and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labor disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L, and/or McMaster email.