

**CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN GLOBAL POLITICS:  
POLITICS OF POLITICAL SUBJECTHOOD**  
Fall 2019

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**Class:** Mondays, 8:30-11:20  
**Room:** KTH B101

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## **Course Description**

This course considers what and whom may be counted as meaningful agents from a range of conceptual positions in International Relations. Moving beyond the field's traditional focus on and enduring privileging of the state, political subjecthood is explored with reference to Indigenous peoples, social movements, children, and others. The aim of the course is to reveal something of what is missed in approaches to International Relations with narrowly construed notions of the political subject and how this affects our understanding even of traditional disciplinary areas of inquiry such as diplomacy and war.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should:

- Have a deeper understanding of how political subjects are produced and what is at stake in conferring or withholding subjecthood of actors in global politics.
- Recognize and evaluate key concepts from contemporary social theory and how they both play a part in and help us to make sense of international relations.
- Have built on and refined research and writing skills through argumentative essays.
- Have developed skills in leading and participating in group discussions.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- All required readings are available online via e-Journals from the Library website.

## **Class Format**

The course will operate on a weekly seminar format based on regular and consistent participation by all students.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Seminar Participation – 25%
2. In-class Presentation – 10%, date to be assigned
3. Think Piece – 25%, due in class September 30, 2019
4. Essay – 40%, due in class November 25, 2019

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Seminar Participation (25%)**

Students will be graded on their participation in class discussions. Attending class having read and thought about the assigned readings for the week will be essential to effective participation. Questions can also be a stimulus to discussion and will be counted as participation.

### **In-class Presentation (10%), date to be assigned**

Students will each give a short presentation (12-15 minutes in length) during the term. Each presentation will cover one reading assigned for the week in which it is given. Presentations should (very) briefly outline the main thrust or argument of the reading, but the main focus should be on the student's assessments of them. Students should end their presentations by proposing 2 or 3 questions or points for class discussion.

### **Think Piece (25%), due in class September 30, 2019**

Students will write a short essay of approximately 1000 words arising from the material covered in readings for the week of September 23<sup>rd</sup>. This assignment is to be a 'think piece' in which students will make the case for a particular understanding of security over others suggested by the readings and in class discussion. Please note that papers must be submitted in hard copy and cannot be accepted electronically or by fax.

### **Essay (40%), due in class November 25, 2019**

Students will prepare an analytic essay of 10-12 pages length. Topics will deal with issues raised in the course and will be developed by students in consultation with the instructor.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (September 9)**

#### **Introduction to the Course**

Readings: None

### **Week 2 (September 16)**

#### **International Relations: The State of the Field**

Readings:

- Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy* 110 (Spring 1998).
- Steve Smith, "Singing our World into Existence: International Relations Theory and September 11," *International Studies Quarterly* 48: 3 (September 2004).
- Ashley, Richard K. and R.B.J. Walker, "Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 34:3 (September 1990).

### **Week 3 (September 23)**

#### **The Subject of Security**

Readings:

- Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 35:2 (June 1991).
- Edward Kolodziej, "Renaissance in Security Studies? Caveat Lector!" *International Studies Quarterly* 36:4 (December 1992).
- Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12:4 (1987).
- Jeff Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean? From Concept to Thick Signifier," *European Journal of International Relations* 4:2 (1998).

### **Week 4 (September 30)**

#### **Securitizations and Silences**

Readings:

- Jutta Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," *European Journal of International Relations* 2:3 (1996).
- Thierry Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," *European Journal of International Relations* 11:2 (2005).
- Lene Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School," *Millennium* 29:2 (2000).
- Michael C. Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 47:4 (2003).

Note: Think Piece due in class.

### **Week 5 (October 7)**

#### **Security and the Biosphere**

Readings:

- Daniel Deudney, "The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security," *Millennium* 19:3 (1990).
- Simon Dalby, "Security, Modernity, Ecology: The Dilemmas of Post-Cold War Security Discourse," *Alternatives* 17:1 (1992).

- Marc Levy, "Is the Environment a National Security Issue?" *International Security* 20:2 (1995).
- Nicole Detraz, "Environmental Security and Gender: Necessary Shifts in an Evolving Debate," *Security Studies* 18:2 (2009).

### **Week 6 (October 14)**

No class – Reading Week

### **Week 7 (October 21)**

#### **Moral Entrepreneurs?**

Readings:

- Wapner, Paul. "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics," *World Politics* 47:3 (April 1995).
- Anna Holzscheiter, "Discourse as Capability: Non-State Actors' Capital in Global Governance," *Millennium* 33:3 (2005).
- Asteris Huliaras and Nikolaos Tzifakis, "Celebrity Activism in International Relations: In Search of a Framework for Analysis," *Global Society* 24:2 (2010).
- Nukhet Ahu Sandal, "Religious Actors as Epistemic Communities in Conflict Transformation: The Cases of South Africa and Northern Ireland," *Review of International Studies* 37:3 (2011).

### **Week 8 (October 28)**

#### **Human Security**

Readings:

- Lloyd Axworthy, "Human Security and Global Governance: Putting People First," *Global Governance* 7:1 (2001).
- Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" *International Security* 26:2 (2001).
- David Chandler, "Human Security: The Dog That Didn't Bark," *Security Dialogue* 39:4 (2008).
- Kyle Grayson, "Human Security as Power-Knowledge: The Biopolitics of a Definitional Debate," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21:3 (2008).

## **Week 9 (November 4)**

### **Banning Landmines**

Readings:

- Frank Faulkner, "Anti-Personnel Landmines: A Necessary Evil?" *International Relations* 13:4 (April 1997).
- Richard Price, "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines," *International Organization* 52:3 (Summer 1998).
- Jozef Goldblat, "Anti-Personnel Mines: From Mere Restrictions to a Total Ban," *Security Dialogue* 30:1 (March 1999).
- J. Marshall Beier, "Siting Indiscriminacy: India and the Global Movement to Ban Landmines," *Global Governance* 8:3 (2002).

## **Week 10 (November 11)**

### **Vanishing Subjects**

Readings:

- J. Marshall Beier, "Discriminating Tastes: 'Smart' Bombs, Non-Combatants, and Notions of Legitimacy in Warfare," *Security Dialogue* 34:4 (2003).
- Hugo Slim, "Why Protect Civilians? Innocence, Immunity and Enmity in War," *International Affairs* 79 (2003).
- Derek Gregory, "The Death of the Civilian?" *Environment & Planning D: Society and Space* 24 (2006).
- J. Marshall Beier, "Dangerous Terrain: Re-Reading the Landmines Ban through the Social Worlds of the RMA," *Contemporary Security Policy* 32:1 (2011).

## **Week 11 (November 18)**

### **Rise of the Robots?**

Readings:

- Ronald C. Arkin, "The Case for Ethical Autonomy in Unmanned Systems," *Journal of Military Ethics* 9:4 (2010).
- Heather M. Roff, "The Strategic Robot Problem: Lethal Autonomous Weapons in War," *Journal of Military Ethics* 13:3 (2014).
- Gregory P. Noone and Diana C. Noone, "The Debate Over Autonomous Weapons Systems." *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 47:1 (2015).

- Duncan Purves, Ryan Jenkins, and Bradley J. Strawser, "Autonomous Machines, Moral Judgment, and Acting for the Right Reasons," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 18:4 (2015).

## **Week 12 (November 25)**

### **Indigenous Peoples**

Readings:

- Neta C. Crawford, "A Security Regime Among Democracies: Cooperation Among Iroquois Nations," *International Organization* 48:3 (Summer 1994).
- David Bedford and Thom Workman, "The Great Law of Peace: Alternative Inter-Nation(al) Practices and the Iroquoian Confederacy," *Alternatives* 22:1 (Jan.-Mar. 1997).
- Karena Shaw, "Indigeneity and the International," *Millennium* 31:1 (May 2002).
- Laura Parisi and Jeff Corntassel, "In Pursuit of Self-Determination: Indigenous Women's Challenges to Traditional Diplomatic Spaces," *Canadian Foreign Policy* 13:3 (2007).

Note: Essay due in class

## **Week 13 (December 2)**

### **The Global Child**

Readings:

- J. Marshall Beier, "Children, Childhoods, and Security Studies: An Introduction," *Critical Studies on Security* 3:1 (2015).
- Alison M.S. Watson, "Seen but not Heard: The Role of the Child in International Political Economy," *New Political Economy* 9:1 (March 2004).
- Alison M.S. Watson, "Children and International Relations: A New Site of Knowledge?" *Review of International Studies* 32:2 (2006).
- Jeremy Roche, "Children: Rights, Participation and Citizenship," *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research* 6:4 (1999).

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Written work must be submitted in hard copy in class and cannot be accepted electronically or by fax.



When marking your written work throughout the term, I will consider the following criteria. Please be sure to read them carefully:

**Analytical Content:**

Higher grades will be given to work that demonstrates comprehension of the readings and issues raised in class, and that presents an interpretation and critical analysis of that material. Lower grades will be given to work that simply summarizes or describes the readings and course content. To determine whether you are on the right track, ask yourself, “Am I telling the reader what I think about the concepts and ideas in my paper and why they are important to my argument, or am I simply telling the reader what those concepts are?” The key here is engagement with the literature, as opposed to repetition of the literature.

**Development of an Argument:**

Higher grades will be given to work that has a clearly stated thesis and a set of logically developed and reasonably comprehensive arguments in support of that thesis. Lower grades will be given to work that has no thesis or has a thesis that is not logically developed or supported by the body of the paper. Ask yourself, “Does my paper seek to prove a point?” The key here is to attempt to convince your reader of the soundness of your argument (i.e., that you are ‘right’). Imagine that you are telling someone about your brilliant idea for world peace – have you anticipated and accounted for their questions and counter-arguments in your paper? NOTE: a paper that has a clear thesis is almost unavoidably analytical, while the failure to pay attention to your thesis and arguments will make the ‘analytical content’ requirement difficult to meet.

**Grammar, Spelling, and Style:**

Higher grades will be given to written work that is grammatically correct and is clearly and accurately written, while lower grades will be given to work that is difficult to read or understand due to excessive grammatical and/or spelling errors. Different approaches work for different people, but I would recommend that you try the following every time you have a written assignment: after completing your assignment, put it away for a while (ideally, for a few days); when you pick it up again, read it carefully, slowly, and aloud – when we are familiar with a paper we tend to skim it during proof-reading, thereby missing errors, so make sure you are reading it word for word. Mistakes in grammar may not always look wrong, but they usually sound wrong. If you need some help with writing, you are encouraged to contact the Student Success Centre (<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support/>) for assistance.

**Meeting the Requirements of the Assignment:**

All written work must be submitted on time, must be of the appropriate length, must use the required number and type of resources, and, most importantly, must address the issues or questions posed in the assignment.

### **Mechanics and Aesthetics:**

Higher grades will be given to written work that includes all of the basic requirements of any written assignment. This includes a title page, complete and proper referencing in a major recognized format, and numbered pages. Further, all of the conventions of essay writing should be observed (i.e. double-spacing, use of a standard sized font, uniform one-inch margins, single spacing and indenting of quotes longer than four lines, etc.). Lower grades will be assigned to work that does not include all of these elements, and to work that is sloppy in general. Again, a careful proof-reading will be helpful.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
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**

Late papers will be accepted, but will be subject to a late penalty of 5 per cent per weekday to a maximum of 5 days, after which they will not be accepted and a mark of 0 will be recorded. In the interest of fairness to all students, there will be no exceptions to this unless you have arranged with me in advance for an extension. Papers submitted after deadlines (including excused late papers) will be marked, but comments will not be provided.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

Extensions on assignments can be arranged in the event of illness or similar circumstances. All extensions must be arranged in advance of the day on which a paper is due.

In light of the format of the course and the emphasis on regular and consistent participation in class discussions, attendance is mandatory. Some absences (such as in cases of illness, for example) may be unavoidable. Please contact me in advance (or as soon thereafter as possible) via email if you are going to be absent.

## **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## **University Policies**

### **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.

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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail 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 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 student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.