

**CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN GLOBAL POLITICS
POLITICS OF POLITICAL SUBJECTHOOD
POLSCI 4GG3
Autumn 2021**

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Class: Mondays, 11:30-2:20
Room: Virtual Classroom

Office: KTH-508; no in-person meetings
Office Hours: By appointment, via
Zoom

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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. In light of ongoing COVID-19 mitigation measures, seminars will be held using Zoom. All students will receive a weekly Zoom invitation via email from the instructor. Please follow the link in the weekly invitation at the start of each week's class.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Seminar Participation – 25%
2. In-class Presentation – 10%, date to be assigned
3. Think Piece – 25%, due October 4, 2021
4. Essay – 40%, due November 22, 2021

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 October 4, 2021

Students will write a short essay of approximately 1000 words arising from the material covered in readings for the week of September 27th. 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. Papers are to be submitted directly to the instructor at mbeier@mcmaster.ca in Word or PDF format by 11:59 pm on the due date; students will receive an email from the instructor within 24 hours confirming receipt of their paper.

Essay (40%), due November 22, 2021

Students will prepare an analytic essay of 10-12 pages length. Drawing from assigned readings, topics will make connections between issues raised in the course and will be developed by students in consultation with the instructor. Papers are to be submitted directly to the instructor at mbeier@mcmaster.ca in Word or PDF format by 11:59 pm on the due date; students will receive an email from the instructor within 24 hours confirming receipt of their paper.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (September 13) Introduction

Readings: None

Week 2 (September 20) IR: The Field of the State?

Readings:

- Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy* 110 (1998).

- Steve Smith, "Singing our World into Existence: International Relations Theory and September 11," *International Studies Quarterly* 48:3 (2004).
- Kelebogile Zvobgo and Meredith Loken. 2020. "Why Race Matters in International Relations." *Foreign Policy* (19 June).
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/19/why-race-matters-international-relations-ir/>

Week 3 (September 27) The Subject of Security

Readings:

- Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 35:2 (1991).
- Edward Kolodziej, "Renaissance in Security Studies? Caveat Lector!" *International Studies Quarterly* 36:4 (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 (October 4) Securitizations and Silences

Readings:

- 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).
- Sabine Hirschauer, "For Real People in Real Places: The Copenhagen School and the Other "Little Security Nothings," *European Security* 28:4 (2019).

Note: Think Piece due.

Week 5 (October 11) Mid-term recess, NO CLASS

No class – Reading Week

Week 6 (October 18) Security and 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).
- Nicole Detraz, “Environmental Security and Gender: Necessary Shifts in an Evolving Debate,” *Security Studies* 18:2 (2009).
- Wilfrid Grievies, “Naturally Insecure: Critical Environmental Security and Critical Security Studies in Canada,” *Critical Studies on Security* 2:1 (2014).

Week 7 (October 25) Moral Entrepreneurs?

Readings:

- Wapner, Paul. “Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics,” *World Politics* 47:3 (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 (November 1) 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 8) Banning Landmines

Readings:

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

Week 10 (November 15) 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 22) 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).

Note: Essay due.

Week 12 (November 29) Indigenous Peoples

Readings:

- Neta C. Crawford, "A Security Regime Among Democracies: Cooperation Among Iroquois Nations," *International Organization* 48:3 (1994).
- David Bedford and Thom Workman, "The Great Law of Peace: Alternative Inter-Nation(al) Practices and the Iroquoian Confederacy," *Alternatives* 22:1 (1997).
- Laura Parisi and Jeff Corntassel, "In Pursuit of Self-Determination: Indigenous Women's Challenges to Traditional Diplomatic Spaces," *Canadian Foreign Policy* 13:3 (2007).
- Justin de Leon, "Lakota Experiences of (In)security: Cosmology and Ontological Security," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 22:1 (2020).

Week 13 (December 6) 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 directly to the instructor at mbeier@mcmaster.ca in either Word or PDF format, no later than 11:59 pm (Eastern) on the date it is due.

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](#) 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:

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

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

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

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.

Courses With An On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). 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 e-mail 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 to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

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 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 behaviour 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 behaviour 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 types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- 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 Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all 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 environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

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.

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, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.