METHODOLOGIES IN CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
POLSCI 778
Winter 2022, Term 2

Instructor: Peter Nyers
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Lecture: Tuesdays 11:30am-2:20pm
Room: KTH 709

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-11am, or by appointment

Contents

Course Description

This course introduces graduate students to methodological debates found in critical approaches to International Relations. Students will be introduced to debates in a variety of methodological approaches, including discourse analysis, bodies and emotions, decolonial and indigenous approaches, ethnography and narrative approaches, visual and popular culture issues, among others. The course will also train students in research design and various strategies and techniques for conducting critical research on global issues. Students will benefit from practical examples of research as presented by guest speakers.

As members of the McMaster community, we are grateful to work, learn, and study on lands that are the traditional territory shared between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishinabe Nations, acknowledged in the Dish with One Spoon Wampum belt.

Course Objectives

The aims of the course are:

1. To read and come to understand a variety of scholarly writings on methods in critical international relations.

2. To develop a specific appreciation of the methodological challenges facing researchers in the field of security studies, especially with regards to state secrecy.

3. To understand a range of methodological strategies and techniques for conducting research on global issues.

4. To improve and refine research and writing skills through short and long essays.

5. To develop skills in group leadership, discussion, and class presentation.

Required Materials and Texts

- Marieke De Goede, Esmé Bosma, Polly Pallister-Wilkins, eds., *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research: A Guide to Qualitative Fieldwork* (Routledge 2020).

The textbook is available from the Campus Store as well as the usual online book retailers. All other readings are available as PDFs on the Avenue to Learn page for this course.

Class Format

This is an advanced graduate seminar that will involve a high level of student participation and leadership.

Course Evaluation – Overview

Participation	Every class	Active in class discussion.	25%
	Mondays 1pm	Keywords, Key Passage, Questions	
Class Leadership	Twice per term	Presentation on readings; leading class discussion	20%
Review Essay	March 1	1,500 word paper	15%
Final Project & Presentation	April 5	4,000 word research paper	40%

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation (25%), weekly

This is an advanced seminar and so you are expected to attend all class sessions and participate in the discussions. You are expected to complete the required readings, think carefully about them before coming to class, and take an active part in the seminar. The quality of your questions and comments will be valued more than the quantity. Listening and engaging with your fellow students' ideas will also be valued.

The agenda of each class session will be student driven. For weeks 2-6 and 8-11 you will be responsible for submitting a one page document consisting of: 1) a list of key concepts and terms from the readings; 2) a key line or passage from one of the readings; 3) three or four discussion questions based on the readings. The document is to be uploaded to the A2L course page ("Communication"→"Discussions") by 1pm on Monday. You are encouraged to bring up your own or others' keywords, passages, and questions in the seminar.

Class Leadership (20%), twice per term

Students will take two turns at serving as class leader this semester. The class leader will make a short presentation of the readings for that week. Students should avoid providing an author-by-author summary and concentrate instead on connections, contrasts and themes in the readings. Presentations on the readings should be no longer than 15 minutes long.

In addition to presenting on the readings, the class leader will lead the seminar discussion. They will create two-page 'agenda' based on the key terms, passages, and

questions provided by their classmates, and provide copies to the class. Class leaders are encouraged to use visual material and bring examples, illustrations and cases into their presentations. Class leaders must also organize at least one group activity for the seminar session. For additional ideas on how to organize the class discussion, see the "Tips for Class Leadership" document that is posted to the Avenue to Learn site.

Review Essay (15%), due March 1, 2022

Each student is required to write a 1,500 word review of a book on the topic of methods in critical international relations. The review should consist of three parts: a summary that identifies key concepts and the main arguments; an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the book; an assessment of the book's contribution to developing innovative methods for critical research on global politics. A list of potential books for review are below. It is fine if a student wishes to review a different book; however, permission from Prof. Nyers is required first.

- Absolon, Kathleen (2011) *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* (Fernwood).
- Ackerly, Brooke, Maria Stern, Jacqui True, eds. (2006) *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- Aradau, Claudia, Jef Huysmans, Andrew Neal, and Nadine Voelkner (2014), *Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis* (New York: Routledge).
- Bejarano, Carolina Alonso, Lucia López Juárez, Mirian A. Mijangos García, Daniel M. Goldstein (2019) *Decolonizing Ethnography: Undocumented Immigrants and New Directions in Social Science* (Durham: Duke University Press).
- Chilisa, Bagele (2011) *Indigenous Research Methodologies* (London: Sage).
- Choi, Shine, Anna Selmeczi, Erzsébet Strausz, eds. (2019) *Critical Methods for the Study of World Politics: Creativity and Transformation* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
- Dauphinee, Elizabeth (2013) *The Politics of Exile* (London: Routledge).
- Hansen, Lene (2006) *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge).
- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus (2016) *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Routledge).
- Klotz, Audi and Cecelia Lynch (2007) *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations* (New York: M.E. Sharpe).
- Law, John (2004) *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. (Abingdon: Oxford University Press).
- Montgomerie, Johnna (2017) *Critical Methods in Political and Cultural Economy* (New York: Routledge).
- "Quo vadis IR: Method, Methodology and Innovation" (2015) Special Issue of *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43:3.
- Salter, Mark B. and Can E. Mutlu, eds. (2013) *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies*, Second Ed. (New York: Routledge).

- Shephard, Laura (2012) *Critical Approaches to Security: An Introduction to Theories and Methods* (New York: Routledge).
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (2006) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books).
- Stump, Jacob L. and Priya Dixit (2013) *Critical Terrorism Studies: An Introduction to Research Methods* (New York: Routledge).

Final Project & Presentation (40%), due April 5, 2022

Students will choose between two options for their final projects: (a) write a literature review as their final paper, or (b) design a full syllabus/course outline. When choosing between these options, students should reflect on what would be most useful for their own development as a scholar, researcher, and teacher.

> 1. Literature Review. For this option, students should write a review of a literature of your choice, but related to themes of the course. The literature review should be useful to your developing scholarly trajectory. For example, the literature may be relevant to your MRP or dissertation; it may be central to your upcoming comprehensive exam; it may involve familiarizing yourself with a literature for a future course you might teach; etc. You can use some of the course readings as a starting point; however, priority should be placed on mastering a literature that will be useful for your own purposes. The literature review should be around 12-14 pages in length (3000-3500 words) and you should engage with approximately 10-15 articles or book chapters.

> 2. Design a course outline. For this option, student will design a full syllabus on a topic of their choice for an upper-level undergraduate audience. The syllabus will include a course title, course description, statement of objectives, description of class assignments, weekly topics with assignment readings, and 3-4 discussion questions for each week. In addition to the syllabus, students must also submit a rationale paper of about 1,000 words that pedagogical justifications for the course design, readings, and assignments.

Finally, students will make a 15 minute presentation of the key findings of their research project and then field questions from their classmates. A PowerPoint presentation must accompany the presentation.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (January 11): Introduction
Readings:

No readings.

Week 2 (January 18): Debating: Critical Methods in IR
Readings:

- Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, 'Broadening the Agenda of Security studies: Politics and Methods', *Mershon International Studies Review* 40 (1996), pp. 229-254.
- J. Ann Tickner, 'What is your research program? Feminist answers to International Relations Methodological Questions', *International Studies Quarterly* 49 (2005), pp. 1-21.
- Mark B. Salter and Can E. Mutlu, 'Methods in Critical Security Studies', in Alexandra Gheciu and William C. Wohlforth, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of International Security*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 1-14.
- Esmé Bosma, Marieke de Goede and Polly Pallister-Wilkins, 'Introduction: navigating secrecy in security research', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 1-27.

Week 3 (January 25): Accessing: Secrets, Site Visits, FOI
Readings:

- Oliver Belcher and Lauren Martin, 'The problem of access: site visits, selective disclosure, and freedom of information in qualitative security research', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 33-47.
- William Walters and Alex Luscombe, 'Postsecrecy and place: secrecy research amidst the ruins of an atomic weapons research facility', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 63-78.
- Alexandra Schwell, 'Navigating Difficult Terrain', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 80-96.
- Fairlie Chappuis and Jana Krause, 'Research Dilemmas in Dangerous Places', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 112-125.

Week 4 (February 1): Immersing: Ethnography and Autoethnography
Readings:

- Jennifer Hyndman, 'The field as here and now, not there and then', *Geographical Review* 91 (2001): 262–72.

- Hugh Gusterson, 'Ethnographic research', in A. Klotz and D. Prakash, eds., *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 91–113.
- Heather L. Johnson, 'Ethnographic translations: bringing together multi-sited studies', *Critical Studies on Security* 2:3 (2014): 362-365.
- Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker, 'Autoethnographic international relations: Exploring the self as a source of knowledge'. *Review of International Studies* 36:3 (2010): 779–798.

Week 5 (February 8): Risking: Difficult and Dangerous Research Sites
Readings:

- J. Christopher Kovats-Bernat, 'Negotiating dangerous fields: Strategies for fieldwork amid violence and terror', *American Anthropologist* 104:1 (2002): 208-222.
- Jonathan Luke Austin, 'Accessing Lifeworlds: Getting people to say the unsayable', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 97-111.
- Sarah Parkinson, 'Humanitarian crisis research as intervention', *Middle East Report* 290 (2019): 29–37.
- Pauline Maillet, Alison Mountz, and Keegan Williams, 'Researching migration and enforcement in obscured places: Practical, ethical and methodological challenges to fieldwork', *Social & Cultural Geography* 18:7 (2017): 927–50.

Week 6 (February 15): Digitizing: Researching (with) Emergent Technologies
Readings:

- Dana Diminescu, "Digital Methods for the Exploration, Analysis, and Mapping of e-Diasporas", *Social Science Information*, 51:4 (2012): 451–458.
- Till Straube, 'The black box and its dis/contents: complications in algorithmic devices research', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 175-192.
- Esmé Bosma, 'Multi-sited ethnography of digital security technologies', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 193-212.
- Sarah M. Hughes and Philip Garnett, 'Researching the emergent technologies of state control the court martial of Chelsea Manning', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 213-228.

Week 7 (Feb 21-27) Mid-term recess, NO CLASS
No class.

Week 8 (March 1): Seeing: Visibility, Invisibility, Popular Culture
   Readings:

- Roland Bleiker, 'Pluralist methods for visual global politics', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43:3 (2015): pp. 872-890.
- Jonna Nyman, '(In)Visible Security Politics: Reflections on photography and everyday security landscapes', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 158-173.
- Nick Robinson, 'Videogames and IR: Playing at Method', *Pop Culture and IR e-IR* (2015), pp. 91-100.
- Lene Hansen, 'Reading comics for the field of International Relations: Theory, method and the Bosnian War', *European Journal of International Relations* 23:3 (2017), pp. 581-608.

   ==Due: Review Essay==

Week 9 (March 8): Feeling: Emotions, Affect, and Embodiment
   Readings:

- Roland Bleiker and Emma Hutchison, 'Methods and Methodologies for the Study of Emotions in World Politics', in Maéva Clément and Eric Sangar, eds., *Researching Emotions in International Relations: Methodological Perspectives on the Emotional Turn* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 325-342.
- Nicola Smith, '(Dis)Embodied Methodology in International Political Economy', in Johnna Montgomerie, ed., *Critical Methods in Political and Cultural Economy* (New York: Routledge 2017), pp. 90-93
- Linda Åhäll, 'Affect as Methodology: Feminism and the Politics of Emotion', *International Political Sociology* 12:1 (2018), pp. 36-52.
- Sarah Marie Wiebe, 'Affective terrain: approaching the field in Aamjiwnaang', in Mark B. Salter and Can E. Mutlu, eds., *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 158-161.

Week 10 (March 15): Decolonizing: Positionality, Race, Indigenizing Research
   Readings:

- Robbie Shilliam, 'Redemptive Political Economy', in Johnna Montgomerie, ed., *Critical Methods in Political and Cultural Economy* (Routledge 2017), pp. 51-57.
- Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2021, pp. 1-37.
- Craig Fortier, 'Unsettling Methodologies/Decolonizing Movements', *Journal of Indigenous Social Development* 6:1 (2017), pp. 20-36.
- Zoe Todd, 'From fish lives to fish law: Learning to see indigenous legal orders in Canada' *Somatosphere* (2016), pp. 1-10.

Week 11 (March 22): Engaging: Collaboration, Solidarity, Politics
Readings:

- Ethel Tungohan, 'Reflections on the use of socially engaged research in the social sciences', *Politics, Groups, and Identities* (2019): pp. 1-9.
- Desirée Poets, 'Failing in the Reflexive and Collaborative Turns: Empire, Colonialism, Gender and the Impossibilities of North-South Collaborations', in Katarina Kušić and Jakub Záhora, eds., *Fieldwork as Failure: Living and Knowing in the Field of International Relations* (Bristol: E-International Relations, 2020), pp. 102-115.
- Erella Grassiani, 'Critical Engagement When Studying Those You Oppose', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 248-260.
- Anthony Amicelle, Marie Badrudin, and Samuel Tanner, 'Research Ethics at Work: Account-abilities in fieldwork on security', *Secrecy and Methods in Security Research*, pp. 274-290.

Week 12 (March 29): ISA Conference
No class.

Week 13 (April 5): Presentation of Student Research
Students will present their research projects to the class.

Week 14 (April 12): Course Wrap-Up
No readings.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments
All written assignments should be handed in as a hard copy in class. Electronic copies of the assignment will only be accepted if prior arrangements have been made with Prof. Nyers.

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

MARK	GRADE
70-72	B-
69-0	F

Late Assignments

Assignments are to be handed in on the due date. Unless a prior arrangement has been made with Professor Nyers, late submissions will be penalized 3% per day. Students are required to keep both paper and electronic copies of all work submitted for evaluation.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Please inform Prof. Nyers if you are ill or will otherwise be missing class.

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".

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.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be

assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

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.

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, 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.