

NON-WESTERN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
POLSCI 4KB3
Winter 2023

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Course Description

This seminar challenges the assumptions found in the 'canonical' readings of IR Theory. It draws on a plethora of Non-Western thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Al-Afghani, Gandhi, Soekarno, Kwame Nkrumah, and Edward Said, among others. The course thus introduces students to several important political figures and concepts/issues from the non-Western world. It seeks to foster a sustained engagement with non-Western political views, voices and perspectives. It also aims to engage questions, such as: what would a non-Western IR theory look like? Or, to put it differently, what would a genuinely international theory look like, one that included a diversity of voices, histories, and worldviews? The course thus intends to offer an alternative framework for thinking about international politics that is more accurately 'international.'

Course Objectives

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

- Think critically about the main assumptions of the IR discipline
- Interrogate the Eurocentrism of the field
- Understand the centrality of race, gender and class to past and contemporary processes in world politics
- Think outside the Western-centric boundaries of the discipline

Best Practices for Email Communication

Please note that emails will only be answered on weekdays during business hours. Please also keep in mind that emails sent within 24 hours of an assignment deadline may not be answered in time.

Required Materials and Texts

- All required materials will be posted on A2L.
- Textbook:

Randolph Persaud and Alina Sajed (eds), [*Race, Gender, and Culture in International Relations. Postcolonial Perspectives*](#), Routledge, 2018 (**e-book; available via McMaster Library website**). In the syllabus, it appears as Persaud & Sajed.

Class Format

Weekly seminar.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Participation [40%]

2. Group video project [20%] – due **March 1, 2023**
3. Take-home Exam [40%] – due **TBA**

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation Total (40%)

Normally, the discussion of readings will be divided into two or three parts each week.

Allocation of the participation grade:

- a) Leading discussions 10%

(For some more thoughts on leading discussions, see Appendix B below)

Note that all the below components should be focused on understanding the readings well, and not on criticizing them. Criticism should only follow in class when we have a good understanding of what the author is arguing.

The leader of the discussion should use this principle in calling upon class members to speak:

General Note: given the relatively large size of the seminar and the short times available for discussing a reading, facilitators should ensure that every member of class wishing to make a statement is heard before a member who has already made a statement on the given topic is asked to speak again. Use this rule in each of the discussions of concepts, main argument, other questions, and strengths and weaknesses of the reading.

The leader of the discussion should begin with the following questions:

1. *These are the several key concepts and terms that I noticed in the reading such as . . . Are any of these unclear to any of you? Are there any other key concepts that you noted that need to be clarified? (If one or more are unclear) Can anyone help us clarify the meaning of <problematic concept(s)>.*

Advice: try to keep this part of the seminar to about 10 minutes. Use your discretion here. If a concept or term brought up is interesting but not central to the reading, then suggest that we come back to it if we have time. If a concept is integral to the argument (see below), you can reserve its discussion for when we get to the next step.

2. *Would any member of the class like to give us their statement on what the main argument of the author is? Would anyone like to add something to what <the first person> has said? Do you agree or disagree that we have captured the key aspects of the argument?*

Advice: Try to avoid starting off with your own statement of the argument. See if you can draw it out from members of the class first. You can add some of your own understanding as the argument proceeds. As you see the discussion being finished or beginning to get into key issues arising from the argument, move to the third step.

3. I would like now to identify some of the key issues that arise out of the reading and that we might discuss. One of these might be... Are there any others that we might take up?

Advice: Your goal here is to get as many key issues discussed as is possible. Try to draw in members of the class who have not had a chance to speak. The aim here is to improve understanding of the reading, not to criticize it. If members move to critique, stop them and say we will do that soon. Keep an eye on your watch or the clock. You want to reserve time for a critical discussion of the reading.

4. With our understanding of the argument and the various issues related to the argument, we can now spend a few minutes to reflect critically on the reading. Are there any points that are particularly problematic in your understanding? Are there any points that are particularly useful or persuasive?

Advice: It is important here to ensure that members of the seminar get a chance to comment on both the weaknesses and the strengths of the given reading. Don't just concentrate on the weaknesses.

- b) Participation in seminar discussions 20%

(For some information on the difference between evaluating participation and evaluating knowledge and understanding, see Appendix A below).

PLEASE NOTE THAT ATTENDANCE TO THE SEMINAR IS COMPULSORY, NOT OPTIONAL. IF A STUDENT ACCUMULATES MORE THAN 3 ABSENCES, THEY WILL FORFEIT 50% OF THE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION GRADE.

- c) Handing in of summary statements 10%. These will be prepared for each of the substantive discussions of the readings, **starting with week 2 (January 16)**, hence 10 weekly submissions in total. To receive credit, these summaries must be submitted electronically prior to the class (***by midnight before class***). Members of the class are permitted one 'heavy burden' week without losing points here. In taking a "heavy burden" week, students are not expected to hand in summaries. They should try, however, as best as possible, to do the readings and participate in the discussions. Students taking a 'heavy burden' week must inform me ***by the Friday*** preceding the class when they are taking the option.

Each statement will have the following components:

1. List of key concepts and terms
2. Summary statement (four sentences maximum) of the author's main argument. This statement should be written in your own words as far as possible. It should not be borrowed directly from the text of the reading.
3. 1 or 2 issues or questions in the reading that are important and merit some discussion and that you would like to be addressed by class time permitting. Formulate these in the form of a question.

Video Group Project (20%) – DUE March 1, 2023

You will be working in a group of 2-3 people to produce a 10-minute video feature, on **one** of the following topics (of your choice):

- ❖ What role does race play in international politics?
- ❖ Is liberalism an intrinsically racist ideology?
- ❖ What are the linkages between slavery/slave-trade and global political economy?
- ❖ Select, introduce, and present an anticolonial struggle.
- ❖ Are women's rights and voices relevant to anticolonial struggles?

The purpose of the 10 min. video will be to introduce the specific topic of choice to your class colleagues. You can use any visual/audio materials relevant to the topic, such as archival footage, photos, video clips, music, poetry and narrative. When you put together the video, bear in mind the following questions: how is this topic relevant to understanding significant political processes in the non-Western world or from non-Western perspectives? Is the topic connected to larger global/regional processes? How?

The video must be your own creation, i.e. you cannot simply take a video from YouTube and claim it to be your own (that would constitute academic dishonesty). Every group will have to also submit a one-page executive summary of their creative process: list and describe the types of materials you used (i.e. a bibliography of the project), why you chose to focus on these specific materials, and what is the main message you want your viewers to remember/take away.

Videos will be submitted by midnight of March 1, 2023 on A2L.

Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of 3 points out of a grade of 100 for every day they are late. Also, late assignments do not receive comments.

Take-home Exam (40%)

At the last class, a take-home examination composed of 7 questions will be handed out. Students will be asked to answer three of these seven questions. Each answer will be limited to 1500 words.

Late submission of the exam will be subject to a penalty of 3 points out of a grade of 100 for every four hours it is late (to a maximum of 15 points).

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (January 9)

Introduction – no readings required.

Week 2 (January 16)

What should a *non-Western* IR look like? Theoretical assumptions and challenges

- ❖ Sankaran Krishna, “Postcolonialism and its relevance for International Relations in a globalized world” (ch. 2), in Persaud & Sajed. (**e-book**)
- ❖ Robert Vitalis, ‘Birth of a Discipline’ in D. Long and Brian C. Schmidt (eds), *Imperialism and Internationalism in the Discipline of International Relations*, SUNY Press, 2005.
- ❖ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “An Unthinkable History. The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event” in *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History*, Beacon Press, 1995, pp. 70-107.

Notes: Summary statements submission begins.

Week 3 (January 23)

The racial constitution of IR

- ❖ S. Vucetic & R. Persaud, “Race in International Relations” (ch. 3), in Persaud & Sajed. (**e-book**)
- ❖ W.E.B. Du Bois, [“The African Roots of War”](#)(**e-link**)
- ❖ Ta-Nehisi Coates, [“The Case for Reparations”](#), *The Atlantic*, May 21, 2014 (**e-resource**)

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 4 (January 30)

Liberal theory and the constitution of contemporary world order

- ❖ Woodrow Wilson, [“The Fourteen Points”](#)
- ❖ John Hobson, “Racist and Eurocentric Imperialism: racist-realism, racist-liberalism, and ‘progressive’ Eurocentric liberalism/Fabianism, 1919-1945” in *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory 1760-2010*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- ❖ Domenico Losurdo, “Liberalism and Racial Slavery: A Unique Twin Birth”, in *Liberalism: A Counter-history*, Verso, 2011, 35-65.

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 5 (February 6)

On colonial violence: outside and within

- ❖ Randolph B. Persaud, “Security Studies, Postcolonialism and the Third World” (ch.9), in Persaud & Sajed. (**e-book**)
- ❖ Raoul Peck, [*I Am Not Your Negro*](#) (**film/documentary, 1h 33 minutes**).

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 6 (February 13)

Anti-colonialism/anti-imperialism in IR

- ❖ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, pp. 29-78, Monthly Review Press, 2001.
- ❖ Edward Said, ‘Introduction’ and ‘Knowing the Oriental’ in *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, 1979, 1-73.

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 7 (February 20)

READING WEEK

Week 8 (February 27)

Revolution and Political Violence

- ❖ Frantz Fanon, “On Violence” in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, 2004.
- ❖ Mahatma Gandhi, “Non-Violence” and “National Independence is Not Enough” in L. Fischer (ed.) *The Essential Gandhi*, Vintage Books, 2002.
- ❖ Sankaran Krishna, “A Postcolonial Racial/Spatial Order: Gandhi, Ambedkar and the Construction of the International” in A. Anievas, N. Manchanda and R. Shilliam (eds) *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line*, Routledge, 2014.

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 9 (March 6)

Nationalism and state-building

- ❖ Soekarno, *Nationalism, Islam and Marxism*, pp. 35-62, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1970.
- ❖ Reem Abou-El-Fadl, ‘Introduction,’ *Foreign Policy as Nation Making. Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 10 (March 13)

NO CLASS – INSTRUCTOR ATTENDING CONFERENCE.

Week 11 (March 20)

Poverty/Inequality in IR

- ❖ Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney, “Race and Global Inequality” (ch. 7), in Persaud & Sajed. (**e-book**)

- ❖ Shahd Hammouri, '[Revisiting Allende's 1972 Speech at the United Nations General Assembly: Histories Repeated with a Twist.](#)' *Third World Approaches to International Law Review*, June 2, 2020.
- ❖ Thomas Sankara, 'Imperialism is the Arsonist of our Forests and Savannas' and 'A United Front Against the Debt' in *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987*, Pathfinder, 2017, pp. 254-260 and 373-381.

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 12 (March 27)

Feminism and the condition of women

- ❖ Aytak Akbari-Dibavar, "Race, Gender, and International Relations" (ch. 4), in Persaud & Sajed (**e-book**).
- ❖ [Revolutionary Hope: Conversation between James Baldwin and Audre Lorde](#), *Essence Magazine*, 1984.
- ❖ Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, '[The Post-Revolutionary Women's Uprising of March 1979: An Interview with Nasser Mohajer and Mahnaz Matin.](#)' *Iran Wire*, June 11, 2013.

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 13 (April 3)

Indigenous Perspectives

- ❖ Hayden King, "Discourses of conquest and resistance. International Relations and Anishinaabe diplomacy" (ch. 8), in Persaud & Sajed (**e-book**).
- ❖ Nick Estes, "Prologue: Prophets" and "Internationalism" (ch. 6), in *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance*, Verso, 2019.

Notes: Summary statements submission.

Week 14 (April 10)

Course wrap-up. Final exam questions and review.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Critical response papers should be handed in during class. Take-home exams should be emailed to the instructor prior to the deadline.

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 assignments will be subject to a penalty of 3 points out of a grade of 100 for every day they are late. Late assignments (included excused ones) will not receive comments.

Late submission of the take-home exam will be subject to a penalty of 3 points out of a grade of 100 for every four hours it is late (to a maximum of 15 points).

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”.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

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.

Appendix A: Evaluation of Participation

Part of the participation grade will come from an evaluation of how much a given class member contributed to the seminar. Remember that evaluation of participation is different from evaluation of knowledge or understanding of a set of given readings. My evaluation of your knowledge and understanding will come from the short paper and the final examination. If you wish to check out how well you are doing in your participation, you might ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I initiate a topic or question?
- Did I provide some information when it was needed?
- Did I give some positive opinions or reactions?
- Did I give some negative opinions or reactions?
- Did I ask for positive or negative opinions or reactions?
- Did I confront someone whom you thought was wrong?
- Did I try to restate what someone else had said to ensure I and others understood?
- Did I ask someone else to restate what he or she had said?
- Did I give examples when they were needed?
- Did I ask others to provide some examples?
- Did I try to synthesize or summarize a part of the discussion?
- Did I ask if someone might synthesize or summarize a part of the discussion?
- Did I sponsor, encourage, help or reward others in the group?
- Did I relieve tension in the group by cracking a joke or calling for a break at an appropriate time?

Appendix B: Leading a discussion

Preparing to lead a discussion, you must be familiar with the assigned material. "Familiar with" is just the right phrase. You need not have mastered the material; after all, a goal of discussion is to move everyone towards mastery, that is, to improve everyone's (even the leader's) understanding.

To prepare for discussion (leadership or participation), first read and study the assignment, underlining the more important or interesting points, and making notes in the margins. Then think about and write down some of the main issues that the author raises and a few questions pertinent to the issues. Then go back over your notes and the text and note the key concepts or terms and then try to put the author's argument into your own words.

Getting Started

Class has started and your name has been drawn from the hat. How do you begin? Simply clear your throat and begin with the questions everyone has been asked to address. Before you know it, the hard part -- getting started -- is done.

One word of caution: Start out on a positive note. Avoid beginning with an apology for being poorly prepared or for finding the reading difficult. Treat the day's topic as having real value. Openers like "I didn't get much out of this" or "I don't agree with anything the author said" will stifle, rather than promote, discussion. Remember that a time for critical evaluation will come at the end, but only after the class has worked on its understanding of the author's arguments. If you treat the readings as worthwhile, your classmates will follow your lead, join you in examining the day's assignment, and thus make your job easier.

Sustaining Discussion

Discussions need some urging to keep them moving. A discussion leader can often keep things moving with only modest prodding, giving the class its head when things are going well. Of course, if you can contribute something useful, do so; but other kinds of comments or actions on your part can sustain the discussion just as well as an injection of insight. Here are some suggestions:

- 1) Get students to talk to each other. Ask for a response to the most recent comments. (Anyone have a response to A's opinion?) Or ask a specific student to respond. (B, do you agree with A?)
- 2) Get students to defend or explain their opinions. (Why do you say that? What's your evidence or reasoning?)
- 3) Encourage an exploration of differing points of view. When you hear conflicting views, point them out and get the holders of those views to discuss their differences. Perhaps ask a third person to sum up the two positions.
- 4) Keep the class on the subject. If you are even halfway familiar with the material, you know when the discussion is no longer connected to it. Just say so. (We've gotten pretty far from the readings; let's get back on the subject.) Or simply consult your list of questions. Any sensible response to one of your questions is bound to be pertinent.
- 5) Try to give as many persons in the class as possible a chance to speak. Keep a list of who wishes to speak. Ensure that all those who have not spoken who are on your list get to speak first before a colleague gets a chance to speak an additional time.
- 6) Point to a particular passage in the text relevant to a comment made by one person, or to a discussion among several. This might be a passage that challenges, or sums up and confirms, the views being expressed.
- 7) Don't fill every silence with your own voice. Any discussion will lapse occasionally. It is not your job as leader to avoid all silence. Some quiet periods are productive. Students who are not so quick to speak will frequently get the chance they need when others are quiet. If the silence gets too heavy, take advantage of the other students' lists of questions. (C, give us one of the questions you brought to class.)

Remember, as discussion leader you do not have to be the brains for the class. You are not expected to know it all; the class is full of students who have read the same assignment that you have read. Your job is to give them a chance to talk about it and

thus give others the benefits of their thinking. If any one student begins to do all the talking, gently correct this problem by bringing other students into the discussion. You are there to steer, to keep the class reasonably near the center of the path, by pulling a rein when needed, by loosening the reins when it keeps to the trail, by reining it in when it threatens to gallop away to greener subjects. If students are talking to each other about the reading material, things are going well; relax, listen, and contribute when you can.