McMaster University
Department of Political Science

POLSCI 771
Advanced Concepts in International Relations Theory
Course Outline, Winter 2018, Term 2

Class: Wednesdays, 11:30AM – 2:20PM
Instructor: Marshall Beier
Classroom: KTH 709
Office: KTH – 508, Ext. 23888
Office Hours: Mondays, 12:30-2:20PM
Email: mbeier@mcmaster.ca

Introduction:

Taking the International Relations canon as read, this course will delve into emergent trends and debates in and of relevance to International Relations theory. A range of new theoretical interventions will be examined in depth, as will questions of epistemology, methodology, ethics, representation, disciplinarity, and more. Novel subject matters and approaches such as those associated with a nascent literature on childhood will also be considered. A strong working knowledge of the main issues, debates, and theoretical traditions of IR is assumed. Though not exhaustive, the current IR comprehensive exam reading lists (available from the Political Science main office) give some indication of the sort of prior grounding that is assumed.

Evaluation:

Seminar participation: 25% of final grade.

Students will be graded on their participation in class discussions. Consistent participation informed by each week’s assigned readings is expected. Beginning on week 2, one or two students per week will give short presentations (10-15 minutes in length) at the start of class. Presentations should offer students’ critical assessments of the week’s readings, highlighting common themes and making connections where appropriate. It is assumed that all students will come to class having read and thought about the assigned readings, so presentations should not simply summarize them. Each presentation should end by suggesting three or four questions with the aim of stimulating class discussion. (NB: presenters need only address the assigned readings for the week – recommended readings are intended to give additional background and elaboration of topics necessary for the longer paper due on March 21st).

Short paper: 30% of final grade. Due 2 weeks after chosen topic is covered in class.

Students will prepare a short paper of 8-10 pages in length. Topics will deal with issues raised in the assigned readings from a week selected by the student and will be developed individually by students in consultation with the instructor. This paper should deal with a topic from weeks 2 through 5 (i.e., up to and including the week of February 7th). Please
note that papers must be submitted in hard copy and cannot be accepted electronically or by fax.

Longer paper: 45% of final grade. Due March 21st

Students will prepare an analytic essay of approximately 15 pages in length. Topics will deal with issues raised in the assigned and recommended readings of the course and will be developed individually by students in consultation with the instructor. Please note that papers must be submitted in hard copy and cannot be accepted electronically or by fax.

Late Papers

Late papers will be accepted, but will be subject to a late penalty of one grade point per day. In the interest of fairness to all students, there will be no exceptions to this. Extensions will be granted in cases of serious documented problems such as illness. It is recommended that students budget extra time to accommodate unforeseen minor difficulties such as computer or printer failure.

Academic Dishonesty

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.

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.

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, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

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 other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

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 Statement

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.

**Accommodations for 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. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

**Jan. 10:**  **Introduction to the Course**

**Assigned Readings:**
- None

**Jan. 17:**  **Telling Stories: Another Look at IR’s Account of Itself**

**Assigned Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**

**Jan. 24:**  **Disciplinary Practice and Disciplined Knowledge**

**Assigned Readings:**
Recommended Readings:


Jan. 31: **Ethics, Poststructuralism, IR**

Assigned Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Feb. 7: **A Methodological Turn in IR? Ethnographic Research and Writing**

Assigned Readings:


Recommended Readings: 

Feb. 14: **Postcolonialism**

Assigned Readings:

Recommended Readings:
• Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair, eds., *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations: Reading Race, Gender and Class* (London: Routledge, 2002), passim.

Feb. 21: **no class** / Mid-Term Recess

Feb. 28: **Indigeneity and IR**

Assigned Readings:

**Recommended Readings**


• Allaine Cerwonka, *Native to the Nation: Disciplining Landscapes and Bodies in Australia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).


**Mar. 7: Pop Culture**

**Assigned Readings:**


• Nick Robinson, “Videogames, Persuasion and the War on Terror: Escaping or Embedding the Military-Entertainment Complex?” *Political Studies* 60:3 (2012).


**Recommended Readings:**


**Mar. 14:** **no class**

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Mar. 21: **Simulating Security and Selves in Crisis and War**

**Assigned Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**

Mar. 28: **Childhood**

**Assigned Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**
Apr. 4: **Resilience**

**Assigned Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**