

INTD398AB: TOPICS IN CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT

WINTER 2026

GENDERED VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:35 AM-3:55 PM, BURN 1B39

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Office Hours: Thursdays 5:30PM-6:30PM by appointment.

NOTE: For the latest updates and announcements regarding office hours, please check the pinned post on myCourses >> INTD398 Announcement Board.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the intersections of conflict, development, and gendered violence, exploring how war, political violence, and structural inequalities disproportionately affect women, children, and marginalized groups. Drawing on case studies from global conflicts—including the Balkans, Rwanda, and the Yazidi genocide—as well as settler colonial contexts in Canada, the course investigates sexual and gendered violence as both a tool and consequence of conflict. Students engage critically with empirical research, legal frameworks, and legal and policy responses, analyzing the limits of humanitarian interventions, international law, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The course emphasizes survivor perspectives, decolonial and feminist critiques, and the social and political dimensions of violence, justice, and reconciliation.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze how gendered violence functions as a structural feature of armed conflict and as a tool of political, military, and social control.
2. Critically evaluate legal, policy, and post-conflict responses to sexual and gendered violence, including international tribunals, restorative justice, and gendered policy interventions.
3. Apply theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence to understand the social, political, and cultural dimensions of conflict-related gendered violence across diverse contexts.

4. Assess survivor experiences and agency, challenging assumptions of passivity, homogeneity, and victimhood, and integrating intersectional and decolonial perspectives into analysis.

II. REQUIRED MATERIAL

a. Readings

All of the required texts are available and/or will be posted on *myCourses*.

b. Lectures

In this course, the term *lecture* refers to the full content delivered during class time, including verbal explanations, examples, discussions, and contextual analysis provided by the instructor. Lecture content is **not limited to what appears on the slides**. Slides are intended solely as a guide to help students follow the lecture and structure their notes; they do not capture the full scope or depth of material covered in class. Students are therefore expected to attend lectures and take their own notes, as assessments may draw on material discussed in class that does not appear explicitly on the slides.

Please note that lectures in this course will not be recorded.

III. COURSE ASSESSMENT

The final grade in this course will be based on the following parts:

Assessment Components	Percentage
5 out of 6 Quizzes; duration & deadlines are outlined in the table below.	2%*5= 10%
Participation in Discussion Sessions, throughout the semester	1*10= 10%
48-hour Take-home Midterm Exam, from Feb 10 at 5:00 PM to Feb 12 at 5:00 PM	20%
Group Project, consisting of two parts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Group Essay, due on March 19 at 5:00 PM (15%), and b. Group Presentation based on the essay (Weeks 11 to 13), (10%) 	25%
In-person Closed-book Final Exam, scheduled by McGill University.	35%

1. Quizzes, 10% (2%*5)

To support your learning and assess your understanding of course material, six quizzes will be administered periodically throughout the semester. These quizzes are lecture-based and are designed to evaluate your breadth of knowledge regarding the key themes, concepts, and case studies discussed in class.

- **Number and Requirement:** There will be a total of six quizzes, but students are required to complete only five. This provides one free pass. If a student completes all six quizzes, their top five scores will be counted toward their final grade. No other accommodations or make-up quizzes will be granted.
- **Format and Access:** Each quiz will consist of multiple-choice and/or true/false questions and will be administered through *myCourses* under the “Quiz” tab. Quizzes are designed to assess understanding of the lecture material covered in the same week in which the quiz takes place. For example, Quiz 1 will assess content from the Week 3 lectures only.
- **Timing and Duration:** Once a quiz is released, students will have 24 hours to complete and submit it. **Once started, the quiz must be finished within 30 minutes.** It is students’ responsibility to ensure a stable internet connection and to allocate uninterrupted time to complete the quiz.
- **Coverage:** Quizzes are intended to test comprehension of lecture content, key concepts, and overarching themes rather than rote memorization. Students are encouraged to review lecture materials and readings to prepare.
- **LockDown Browser Requirement:** This course requires the use of LockDown Browser for the online quizzes. Watch [this video](#) to get a basic understanding of LockDown Browser:

Download Instructions

- Select the quiz in the course.
- Under Quiz Requirements you will see “To take this quiz you must use the Respondus LockDown Browser.”
- Below this will appear: “You can use the button below if you have not already downloaded LockDown Browser”. Click the button to go to the download page and then follow the instructions.
- Use the link to download Respondus LockDown Browser to your computer; follow the installation instructions.
- Return to the Quiz page on *myCourses* (it may still be open in another tab) and select the quiz.
- Select “Launch LockDown Browser.”
- The quiz will now start.

Note: LockDown Browser only needs to be installed once on a computer or device. After installation, it will launch automatically whenever a quiz requires it. Students are responsible for ensuring that LockDown Browser is properly installed and functioning before beginning the quizzes.

Quiz	Open	Close	Coverage	Duration
Quiz 1	Jan 22, 5:00 PM	Jan 23, 5:00 PM	Week 3 Lectures	30 minutes
Quiz 2	Jan 29, 5:00 PM	Jan 30, 5:00 PM	Week 4 Lectures	30 minutes
Quiz 3	Feb 5, 5:00 PM	Feb 6, 5:00 PM	Week 5 Lectures	30 minutes
Quiz 4	Feb 19, 5:00 PM	Feb 20, 5:00 PM	Week 7 Lectures	30 minutes
Quiz 5	Feb 26, 5:00 PM	Feb 27, 5:00 PM	Week 8 Lectures	30 minutes
Quiz 6	Mar 12, 5:00 PM	Marc 13, 5:00 PM	Week 9 Lectures	30 minutes

2. Participation in Discussion Sessions, 10% (1%*10)

Students are expected to participate in 10 Discussion Sessions throughout the semester. The Discussion Sessions are designed to deepen students' understanding of lecture material, facilitate critical discussion, and provide opportunities for active engagement with the course material. These sessions take place during regular class time, throughout the semester, and in the same location as the main lecture. For the Discussion Session schedule, please consult the detailed course outline below. No registration is required for these sessions as they take place during class time.

Expectations for Participation:

- Students are expected to arrive on time and to have completed the required readings/documentaries and reviewed the relevant course material in advance.
- Active engagement is required. This includes, but is not limited to, asking questions, contributing to discussions, and participating in group activities.
- Students will be assessed based on both the frequency and quality of their participation, including contributions to both class-wide and small-group discussions.

Discussion Sessions provide an important opportunity to engage more deeply with course material, clarify key concepts, and practice applying analytical frameworks introduced in lecture. Consistent and meaningful participation is a core component of the course and contributes significantly to the overall grade.

3. Take-home Midterm Exam (20%):

There will be one take-home midterm exam for this course. The exam will be available on *myCourses* under the “Assignments” tab **as of February 10 at 5:00 PM** and must be submitted via *myCourses* **by February 12 at 5:00 PM PROMPTLY**. Students will therefore have 48 hours to complete and submit the exam. Late submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances, and email submissions are not permitted; no extensions will be granted. The exam response must not exceed three double-spaced pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 2.5 cm margins on all sides). Any essay that exceeds the page limit will be truncated.

The midterm will be in essay format and will focus on material covered from the beginning of the course up to, and including, Week 6. It is designed to assess students’ ability to:

- Analyze the gendered dimensions of armed conflict, including the use of sexual violence as a strategy, weapon, and tool of genocide.
- Examine case studies (Balkans, Rwanda, Yazidi women under ISIS) to understand differential impacts on women, children, and marginalized groups.
- Critically evaluate post-conflict responses and international legal frameworks addressing sexual and gendered violence, including their limitations.
- Apply key concepts, theories, and empirical evidence to construct clear, evidence-based arguments about gender, power, and violence in conflict.

Further instructions, prompts, and grading criteria will be posted on *myCourses* closer to the exam date.

Make-up Exam Policy:

A make-up exam will only be permitted for reasons recognized by McGill as excusable, and approval is at the sole discretion of the instructor. The format, timing, and submission method for any make-up exam may differ from the main exam (e.g., it could take the form of an oral examination or a presentation).

4. Group Essay (25%)

Students are required to write a group essay in groups of 3 or 4 students, due on **March 19 at 5:00 PM**. Group essay topics will be determined and posted closer to the due date. Individual submissions will not be accepted; failure to participate in a group essay will result in a zero for this portion of the course evaluation.

a. Purpose:

This assignment is designed to give students the opportunity to conduct in-depth, collaborative research on a selected topic related to conflict, development, and gendered violence. Groups will:

- Identify and frame a key issue or problem within the course theme.
- Critically evaluate existing approaches, interventions, or policies addressing the problem.
- Propose evidence-based recommendations or solutions.

Through this process, students will develop critical analytical skills, research proficiency, and the ability to construct well-supported arguments, while also learning to collaborate effectively in a team setting.

b. Group Formation:

Students must form groups of 3 or 4 and register them by **February 14 at 5:00 PM**. A registration link will be provided on the announcement board. Students who do not sign up by this deadline will be randomly assigned to a group.

c. Essay Requirements:

Length: Maximum 7 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 2.5 cm margins on all sides. Essays exceeding the page limit will be truncated.

Submission: One submission per group must be made via *myCourses* >> *INTD398* >> *Group Essay* by **March 19 at 5:00 PM PROMPTLY**. Submissions via email will not be accepted.

d. Assessment:

Each group's quality of the essay will be evaluated, including, but not limited to, clarity, coherence, depth of analysis, use of evidence, and proper referencing.

Individual contributions to group work will also be assessed. Groups must submit a group work report form with the essay, detailing:

- Division of labor and who completed each section
- Internal deadlines and adherence
- Attendance and active participation at meetings
- Timely submission of work within the group

e. Grading:

All group members will typically receive the same grade. However, the instructor reserves the right to assign an individual grade if it becomes clear that a student did not contribute equally to the group effort.

Further instructions and grading criteria will be posted on *myCourses*.

Note: Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade per day late as of then (for example: A → A-). Essays submitted more than 72 hours past the deadline will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.

Extension policy: Students will not be granted an extension unless they have a legitimate reason recognized by McGill as excusable. Extensions will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor.

5. Group Presentation (10%)

As part of the Group Project, each group will deliver an in-class presentation based on their group essay. Presentations will take place **during regular class time in Weeks 11 to 13**.

Each group will have approximately **15 minutes** to present their work, followed by a period of class discussion and Q&A. Presentations should clearly communicate the group's topic, key arguments, and main findings, and should situate the issue within the broader course themes of conflict, development, and gendered violence.

The presentation component is intended to develop students' skills in oral communication, synthesis, and critical engagement. Students are expected to actively participate as audience members by listening attentively and contributing thoughtfully to discussion and Q&A. Further details regarding presentation order, evaluation criteria, and expectations will be provided on *myCourses* closer to the presentation dates.

6. In-person Final Exam (35%):

The final exam is cumulative, closed-book, will be in essay format, and will be held in person during the exam period. This examination will cover the material studied from the beginning to the end of the course. It is designed to evaluate your ability to critically engage with the major concepts, theories, and case studies discussed throughout the term. The exam will provide you with the opportunity to synthesize readings and lectures, develop well-structured arguments, and demonstrate depth of understanding in written form.

Information on the final exam schedule will be posted on the McGill Examinations website.

According to Senate regulations, instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final exams. Please consult the Calendar, section 4.7.2.1, General University Information and Regulations at www.mcgill.ca.

Note: No supplemental examination or extra-credit assignments will be offered in this course.

Extension policy: Extensions requested for all in person or timed online final assessments must be done through Deferred Exams, which is managed by Service Point.

Note: For a consolidated overview of all important dates and deadlines, please refer to the summary table provided in the Appendix at the end of this syllabus.

IV. SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please ask the Student Accessibility Office to notify me immediately if you require any kind of special accommodations for this course. If you are registered with the Student Accessibility Office and/or have a chronic condition that requires time-based or other accommodations, please ensure that the necessary documentation is sent to me at the beginning of the semester.

If I do not receive communication from the Student Accessibility Office regarding accommodations at least five working days prior to an assessment, I cannot guarantee that accommodations can be provided in time.

You are welcome to schedule an office hours appointment if you would like to discuss any necessary accommodations.

V. LECTURE ETIQUETTE:

To ensure a productive and respectful learning environment for all students, please observe the following guidelines during lectures:

1. Attendance and Punctuality:

- Attend lectures on time.
- If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to catch up on the content and any announcements made.

2. Focus and Technology Use:

- Laptops may be used only for taking notes.
- Cell phone use is not permitted during class. If a student is observed using a phone, they may be asked to leave the classroom.

3. Respectful Behaviour:

- Remain quiet and attentive while the lecture is in progress.
- Engage respectfully with the instructor and fellow students. Avoid side conversations, interruptions, or disruptive behaviour.

4. Participation:

- Questions and discussion are welcome, but please wait your turn and ensure that your contributions are relevant to the topic.

Adhering to these guidelines helps create an environment conducive to learning and ensures that all students can fully benefit from the course.

VI. MAKE-UP POLICY:

Students cannot write a make-up exam unless they have a legitimate reason recognized by McGill as excusable. Permission to write the make-up exam will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. The make-up exam may take on different formats (including an oral examination or presentation) and may therefore differ from the main exam. The time and location of the make-up exam will be determined at the discretion of the instructor.

VII. RE-GRADING POLICY:

Students wishing to request a re-grade must first meet with their teaching assistant to receive additional feedback on their submission. If they remain unsatisfied, they may submit a written

request, not exceeding one double-spaced page (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 2.54 cm margins on all sides), within seven working days of the return of the exam or assignment. This document must clearly explain the specific reasons why a higher grade is warranted. Requests based on effort, study time, or expectations of performance will not be considered.

Please note that upon re-grading, the instructor reserves the right to maintain, lower, or (if justified) raise the original grade. Because all second readings are conducted with heightened scrutiny, students should expect that the grade is more likely to remain the same or decrease than to increase.

VIII. COMMUNICATION:

1. Office Hours:

I will hold several office hours throughout the term to address students' questions and concerns. Please schedule an appointment to meet with me during these times, either individually or in groups.

Office hours are an opportunity to engage with course topics in greater depth, clarify concepts, and discuss ideas. Please note that I will not repeat lectures or instructions given in class, so it is important that you attend lectures, review course materials, and come prepared with specific questions or discussion points.

2. Email Policy:

Please note that all content-related questions must be addressed during my office hours and not via email. I am unable to respond to content-related inquiries through email, particularly those that require detailed explanations. As such, email communication should be reserved strictly for administrative matters.

Please allow at least 2 working days for a response before following up. During busier periods, it may take longer to receive a reply. I am offline every week starting Friday at 4:00 PM (EST) through the weekend.

It is entirely students' responsibility to stay up to date with all instructions, announcements, and course content provided in class. Students should not wait until the last minute to seek clarification, as inquiries submitted at the last minute cannot be guaranteed to be seen or answered in time.

IX. LANGUAGE POLICY

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

X. SPECIAL NOTES:

Extraordinary Circumstances

Extraordinary Circumstances: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of McGill University, the content and/or assessment tasks in this course are subject to change, provided students are sent adequate and timely communications regarding the change.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see [McGill’s guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

Copyright

All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor’s intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation) ends. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor’s intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

Any sharing and discussion of exams in this course is in violation of the law and applicable University policies, and may be subject to penalties.

Generative AI

Students may not copy or paraphrase from any generative artificial intelligence applications, including ChatGPT and other AI writing, to write their assignments. The reason for this is that using such tools conflict with the pedagogical purpose of the essay, which is for students to read and synthesize existing research and to form their own argument based on this analysis. There are also many other risks with using such tools, including, but not limited to, the following: inventing sources that do not exist, presenting incorrect or biased information, and drawing on copyrighted work. In short, in addition to the problems of academic honesty surrounding AI, using these tools risks producing a lower quality essay.

XI. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (Jan 6 & 8) Introduction: Conflict, Gender, and the Politics of Violence

Key points

- Gendered violence as a structural feature of armed conflict
- Sexual violence as strategy, weapon, and consequence of war
- Women and children as disproportionately affected, but not homogenous
- Limits of humanitarian and legal “solutions”

Brief description

This week introduces the course’s central premise: that armed conflict is deeply gendered in its causes, practices, and consequences. Drawing on empirical and conceptual work on rape and sexual violence in war, students examine how women’s bodies become sites of political struggle and military strategy. The readings situate gendered violence within broader security challenges and highlight how conflict amplifies pre-existing inequalities rather than creating them anew.

Readings

- Wachala, K. (2012). The tools to combat the war on women's bodies: Rape and sexual violence against women in armed conflict. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 16(3), 533-553.
- Danjibo, N., & Akinkuotu, A. (2019). Rape as a weapon of war against women and girls. *Gender and behaviour*, 17(2), 13161-13173.
- Alabi, O. J. (2024). The impact of armed conflicts on women and children in Nigeria. In *Understanding contemporary security challenges in Nigeria* (pp. 245-275). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- **Watch:** *Weapon of War: Confessions of rape in Congo* ([link](#))

Week 2 (Jan 13 & 15) Ethno-Nationalism, War, and Sexual Violence: The Balkans

Key points

- Ethno-nationalism and gendered violence
- Sexual violence as a tool of ethnic cleansing
- Post-conflict justice, reparations, and recognition
- Long-term social and political consequences of wartime sexual violence

Brief description

Focusing on the wars in the former Yugoslavia, this week examines how ethno-nationalist projects relied on gendered and sexual violence to redraw political and social boundaries. Students analyze how violence against women was both a military tactic and a symbolic attack on community identity. The discussion extends into the post-conflict period, exploring the uneven pursuit of reparations and the challenges survivors face in seeking justice and recognition.

Readings

- Korac, M. (1998). Ethnic-nationalism, wars and the patterns of social, political and sexual violence against women: The case of post-Yugoslav countries. *Identities Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 5(2), 153-181.
- Djurić-Kuzmanović, T., Drezgić, R., & Žarkov, D. (2012). Gendered war, gendered peace: Violent conflicts in the Balkans and their consequences. In *Gendered Peace* (pp. 265-292). Routledge.
- Freizer, S. (2016). Reparations after conflict related sexual violence: The long road in the Western Balkans. *Security and Human Rights*, 27(1-2), 14-27.
- **Watch:** *Weapon of war: Sexual violence against men* ([link](#))

January 15: Discussion Session #1

Week 3 (Jan 20 & 22) Genocide and Gender: Rwanda

Key points

- Gendered dimensions of genocide
- Sexual violence as integral to genocidal campaigns
- Post-genocide gender norm transformation
- Restorative justice and the limits of reconciliation

Brief description

This week explores the Rwandan genocide through a gendered lens, emphasizing how sexual violence functioned as a central component of genocidal intent rather than as a by-product of war. Students consider how genocide reshaped gender roles in its aftermath and assess efforts to address harm through restorative justice mechanisms, particularly for girls. The accompanying documentary reinforces the lived realities behind legal and political narratives.

Readings

- Jones, A. (2002). Gender and genocide in Rwanda. *Journal of genocide research*, 4(1), 65-94.

- Brown, S. E. (2016). Reshaping gender norms in post-genocide Rwanda. *Genocide Studies International*, 10(2), 230-250.
- Feliciati, C. C. (2006). Restorative justice for the girl child in post-conflict Rwanda. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 7(4), 14-35.
- **Watch:** *The Rwandan Genocide: Women's Stories of Survival in Rwanda* ([link](#))

Assessment:

- Quiz #1 must be completed on *myCourses* within 30 minutes during the window from 5:00 PM on January 22 to 5:00 PM on January 23.

Week 4 (Jan 27 & 29) Genocide, Enslavement, and Survival: Yazidi Women under ISIS

Key points

- Sexual slavery and genocide
- Gendered governance under extremist rule
- Women's agency, survival, and resistance
- Silence as strategy rather than absence

Brief description

This week examines the genocide of the Yazidis by ISIS, centering sexual violence, enslavement, and forced conversion as core tools of domination. Moving beyond portrayals of passive victimhood, students engage with scholarship that foregrounds Yazidi women's strategies of survival, silence, and resistance. The readings challenge simplified narratives of agency and complicate assumptions about choice and coercion in extreme contexts.

Readings

- Kaya, Z. (2019). Iraq's Yazidis and ISIS: the causes and consequences of sexual violence in conflict.
- Di Paolo, C. (2025). The Complex Role of Women in ISIS and the Yazidi Genocide. *Liberated Arts: a journal for undergraduate research*, 12.
- Sarac, B. N. (2024). Silence as agency: Yazidi women's security strategies during ISIS rule. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 7(1), 102-117.

Assessment:

- Quiz #2 must be completed on *myCourses* within 30 minutes during the window from 5:00 PM on January 29 to 5:00 PM on January 30.

January 29: Discussion Session #2

Week 5 (Feb 3 & 5) International Law and Gendered Violence in Conflict I: Recognition and Prosecution

Key points

- Sexual violence under international humanitarian and human rights law
- The emergence of rape as a prosecutable international crime
- Contributions and limitations of international tribunals
- Gender erasure in legal narratives of war

Brief description

This week introduces international legal frameworks addressing sexual and gendered violence in armed conflict. Students examine how international tribunals have recognized rape and sexual violence as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide, while also interrogating the limitations of legal recognition. The readings critically assess how law both enables accountability and narrows the understanding of harm.

Readings

- Gaggioli, G. (2014). Sexual violence in armed conflicts: A violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 96(894), 503-538.
- Mibenge, Chiseche Salome. 2013. Sex and International Tribunals: The Erasure of Gender from the War Narrative. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Grootveld, C. (2012). The ICTY and Sexual Violence as a Crime Against Humanity. *Unpublished Thesis Tilburg University*.
- Obote-Odora, A. (2005). Rape and sexual violence in international law: ICTR contribution. *New Eng. J. Int'l & Comp. L.*, 12, 135.
- **Watch:** *Sexual Violence and the Triumph of Justice* ([link](#))

Assessment:

- Quiz #3 must be completed on *myCourses* within 30 minutes during the window from 5:00 PM on February 5 to 5:00 PM on February 6.

Week 6 (Feb 10 & 12) Review & Midterm Exam

February 10: Midterm Exam Review

Assessment:

- The Midterm Exam will be available on *myCourses* under the “Assignments” tab as of February 10 at 5:00 PM and must be submitted via *myCourses* by February 12 at 5:00 PM PROMPTLY.

Week 7 (Feb 17 & 19) International Law and Gendered Violence in Conflict II: Critique, Memory, and Exclusion

Key points

- Law as both solution and reduction
- Memory, testimony, and legal storytelling
- Decolonial feminist critiques of international law
- Sexual violence against men and legal invisibility

Brief description

Building on the previous legal week, this session turns to critique. Students examine how international law frames sexual violence as a problem to be solved through prosecution, often sidelining survivors’ lived experiences and political contexts. The readings foreground feminist and decolonial critiques and expand the analysis to include sexual violence against men, challenging gendered assumptions embedded in legal frameworks.

Readings

- Houge, A. B., & Lohne, K. (2017). End impunity! Reducing conflict-related sexual violence to a problem of law. *Law & Society Review*, 51(4), 755-789.
- Campbell, K. (2002). Legal memories: Sexual assault, memory, and international humanitarian law. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(1), 149-178.
- Philipose, E. (2009). Feminism, international law, and the spectacular violence of the ‘other’: Decolonizing the laws of war. In *Theorizing sexual violence* (pp. 190-218). Routledge.
- Lewis, D. A. (2009). Unrecognized victims: Sexual violence against men in conflict settings under international law. *Wis. Int'l LJ*, 27, 1.

Assessment:

- Quiz #4 must be completed on *myCourses* within 30 minutes during the window from 5:00 PM on February 19 to 5:00 PM on February 20.

February 19: Discussion Session #3

Week 8 (Feb 24 & 26) Gender and Post-Conflict Reconciliation**Key points**

- Gendered approaches to post-conflict reconstruction
- Security, participation, and representation
- Survivor identity: victimhood versus survivorship
- Limits of gender policy in post-conflict settings

Brief description

This week explores how gender is addressed—or sidelined—in post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. Students assess whether gender policies meaningfully transform security and social relations or merely symbolically include women. The readings highlight the politics of identity in post-conflict settings and examine how survivors navigate labels imposed by legal and policy frameworks.

Readings

- Kfir, I. (2012). Security, Gender and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Need for a Woman Question When Engaging in Reconstruction. *Tex. J. Women & L.*, 22, 71.
- Svobodová, K. (2019). Impact of gender policy on post-conflict reconstruction and security in Rwanda. *African Security Review*, 28(2), 124-138.
- Šiljak, Z. S. (2020). Victim or survivor? Choosing identity after wartime sexual violence. In *Healing and Peacebuilding After War* (pp. 121-132). Routledge.

Assessment:

- Quiz #5 must be completed on *myCourses* within 30 minutes during the window from 5:00 PM on February 26 to 5:00 PM on February 27.

February 26: Discussion Session #4

Reading Break (March 3 & 5)

NO CLASS!

Week 9 (Mar 10 & 12) Gendered Violence in Settler Colonial Societies

Key points

- Settler colonialism as a structure of violence
- Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls
- Gendered, racialized, and colonial harm
- Human rights frameworks and their limits

Brief description

This week shifts the focus from “elsewhere” to settler colonial contexts, examining gendered violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Students analyze how colonial governance, racism, and state neglect produce ongoing violence that is often misframed as individual or cultural rather than structural. The documentary complements scholarly critiques of inquiry processes and human rights approaches.

Readings

- McGruder, M. (2021). Missing and Murdered. *American Indian Law Review*, 46(1), 115-154.
- Anderson, C. (2017). (Re) Presenting Indigenous women: a critical analysis of two reports on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.
- Pabla, T. (2021). Murdered and missing indigenous women and girls: a discourse analysis of gendered colonial violence in Canada. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 9(2), 13-42.
- Gunn, B. L. (2016). Engaging a human rights-based approach to the murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls inquiry. *Lakehead LJ*, 2, 89.
- **Watch:** *Canada's Missing Women Tragedy* ([link](#))

Assessment:

- Quiz #6 must be completed on *myCourses* within 30 minutes during the window from 5:00 PM on March 12 to 5:00 PM on March 13.

Week 10 (Mar 17 & 19): Q&A and Discussion Sessions

Tuesday Mar 17: Q&A for Group Essay

Thursday (Mar 19): Discussion Session #5

Assessment:

- Group Essays are due on *myCourses* on March 19 at 5:00 PM PROMPTLY. One submission per group.

Week 11 (Mar 24 & 26) Group Presentations & Discussion Sessions

Mar 24: Group Presentations & Discussion Session # 6

Mar 26: Group Presentations & Discussion Session # 7

Week 12 (Mar 31 & Apr 2) Group Presentations & Discussion Sessions

Mar 31: Group Presentations & Discussion Session # 8

Apr 2: Group Presentations & Discussion Session # 9

Week 13 (Apr 7 & 9) Group Presentations, Discussion Session & Final Review

Apr 7: Group Presentations & Discussion Sessions # 10

April 9: Final Exam Review/Q&A

XII. APPENDIX**Summary of Course Assessments and Key Dates**

Assessment Component	Weight	Date / Deadline	Notes
Quizzes (5 of 6)	10% (2% each)		Lecture-based; one free pass; 30 minutes once started.
Quiz 1		Opens Jan 22, 5:00 PM Closes Jan 23, 5:00 PM	Covers Week 3 lectures
Quiz 2		Opens Jan 29, 5:00 PM Closes Jan 30, 5:00 PM	Covers Week 4 lectures
Quiz 3		Opens Feb 5, 5:00 PM Closes Feb 6, 5:00 PM	Covers Week 5 lectures
Quiz 4		Opens Feb 19, 5:00 PM Closes Feb 20, 5:00 PM	Covers Week 7 lectures
Quiz 5		Opens Feb 26, 5:00 PM Closes Feb 27, 5:00 PM	Covers Week 8 lectures
Quiz 6		Opens Mar 12, 5:00 PM Closes Mar 13, 5:00 PM	Covers Week 9 lectures
Discussion Session Participation	10%	Throughout semester	10 sessions required
Take-home Midterm Exam	20%	Opens Feb 10, 5:00 PM Due Feb 12, 5:00 PM	48-hour window; covers weeks 1-6, inclusively.
Group Essay	15%	Mar 19, 5:00 PM	One submission per group
Group Presentation	10%	Weeks 11–13	Based on group essay
Final Exam (in person)	35%	<i>TBA</i> (Exam Period)	Closed-book, cumulative