

INTD 350

CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT



Instructor

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Class Times

Wednesdays and Fridays 10:05am-11:25am

Location

ARTS 150

Teaching Assistant

Jasmine Ali

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***The content and evaluation of this course is subject to change in the case of unforeseeable events.**

Communication

These are the three ways to communicate with the course instructor.

1. Office hours (in-person) Tuesdays 1:30-3:00pm

Office hours are offered to clarify your substantive questions about the course materials and assignments.

2. Email

Please note that email messages should be kept concise. If you would like to discuss substantive questions, you are highly encouraged to speak to the instructor during office hours.

3. After the lectures (in-person)

Course description:

This course aims to apply a critical and interdisciplinary lens to the study of culture and development. Development policymakers and agencies have long assumed that successful development interventions are direct results of positive economic behavior, while perceiving culture as an inappropriate variable. In the past three decades, development agencies and practitioners have shifted to view culture as an influential determinant for achieving positive development outcomes.

Such celebration of culture in development unfortunately overlooks the intricate linkage between culture and power. This linkage is especially evident in colonialism because it deployed culture as a technology of power for normalizing domination, dispossession, and inequality. We will thus investigate culture as contested sites of asymmetrical power relations, boundary-making, exclusion, violence, precarity chains, and resistance.

The course is divided into two sections. In the first part of the course (Weeks 2-7), we will examine the overarching analytical question of “power and boundary-making” in development. Topics include cultural determinism, the construction of identity, indigeneity, environmental sustainability, colonialism and biopower, and gender and labor discipline.

In the second part of the course (Weeks 8-13), we will delve into diverse sites of power, violence, and precarity chains in development. Topics include the commodification of care labor, international law and biases, legal violence, immigration detention, social violence, labor migration, spatial justice for urban poor, new city projects, and undocumented asylum-seekers. Through the readings, we will explore multiple forms of violence that normalize power and violence in the contemporary landscapes of international development.

By the end of the course, students should be familiar with the key analytical concepts, theoretical approaches, and debates that are integral to the critical analysis of culture and power in development.

Required course materials

All the required readings are available via MyCourses.

MyCourses will be used for:

- Readings
- Logistical information
- Discussion forum
- Assignment submissions
- Class announcements

1.Lecture arrangements

The lectures will be delivered in person, except some of the guest lectures that will be delivered remotely. Please note that we will integrate various in-class activities and small

group discussions to encourage students' proactive learning during the lectures. Students are expected to be ready to discuss the weekly readings.

Health protocol: While students are not required to wear masks in the classroom, please comply with McGill's health regulations on campus. For McGill's updated health guidelines, please visit: <https://www.mcgill.ca/return-to-campus/>

2. Quizzes (5%) *eight required

Students will be given twelve (12) weekly quizzes during the semester. Quizzes are always related to the overarching questions of the weekly topics. We will begin this exercise in Week 2 Cultural Determinism (September 9). The main goal of this exercise is to encourage students to proactively engage with the lectures. There will be no strict rubrics for this exercise. However, your answer must reflect the central points of the given lecture. To maximize points, students are required to participate in **eight (8) quizzes** out of twelve (12). Your answers should be submitted via MyCourses [Assignments – Quizzes].

Due date: The Tuesday (11:59pm) following the week of the quiz. For example, if you are going to participate in the quiz based on the lecture on Friday, September 16, please submit your answer by Tuesday, September 20 (11:59pm) via MyCourses.

3. Conferences

3-a. Logistics

The course will offer five (5) in-person conferences (small-group discussion sessions) during the semester. The primary goal of conferences is to facilitate an engaged and thoughtful discussion of development issues based on the lectures and weekly readings. The first conferences begin in the week of September 19.

Conference registration: Students are required to sign up for one of the conference groups on Minerva and attend it throughout the term. The online conference registration will be available via Minerva from Tuesday, September 13.

Format: Each conference meeting will be held for 50 minutes. Your teaching assistant will take attendance for every conference meeting. Please note that a conference is designed to be a **student-driven discussion session**. Your teaching assistant will provide guiding questions and in-class activities to stimulate the conference discussions. Participating students should not be passive observants during the meeting. You are expected to be **an active and committed contributor** to the class discussions. For your successful participation, you are highly encouraged to prepare one or two questions on the discussion topics (lectures/readings) prior to the meeting.

Themes: Please note that the discussion for the conference will always be based on the topic of the previous week.

Number	Topic	Schedule
Conference registration begins on Tuesday, September 13 (via Minerva)		
Conference #1	Construction of Identity	In the week of September 19
Conference #2	Colonialism and Biopower	In the week of September 26
Conference #3	Politics of Indigeneity	In the week of October 3
Conference #4	Commodification of Care Labor	In the week of October 31

Conference #5	International Law and Biases	In the week of November 7
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After the meeting: After participating in the conference meeting, students are required to submit a discussion reflection (see the following section #3-b. "Discussion Reflections"). If you are going to miss a conference meeting, you can *alternatively submit a précis* (see the section #3-c. "Alternative Assignments").

3-b. Conference Reflections (10%) *five required

Students are required to submit a total of **five** discussion reflections based on their conference participation. Each reflection should be written **in at least 250 words**. Your reflection should include: (1) the main points/ideas that you learned from the conference discussion as well as (2) further thoughts on the discussion topic(s). The main goal of this exercise is to encourage students' serious engagement with the discussion topics and the course materials. Please note that you are not allowed to submit a conference discussion reflection without participating in a conference. The assessment of your conference grade is based on: (1) your proactive/committed contribution to the conference discussion and (2) the quality of the conference discussion reflection.

Due date: The Tuesday (11:59pm) following the week of the conference meeting. For example, if you are going to participate in the first conference meeting in the week of September 19, please submit your answer by 11:59pm (EST) on Tuesday, September 27.

3-c. Alternative Assignments - précis

If you are going to miss a conference meeting, you can alternatively write a *précis*. *One précis is equivalent to one conference discussion reflection*. Students are allowed to submit five *précis* without attending any conference meetings. A *précis* is a reading analysis written **in at least 400 words** discussing one of the assigned weekly readings. In your *précis*, discuss (1) the key arguments of the article and (2) your critical thoughts on the reading. Your *précis* must follow

the same weekly themes as the conference meetings. The submission date is the same as the discussion reflection (the following Tuesday).

Conferences	
Required number of conferences	Five
Online conference registration opens	Tuesday, September 13
First conference meetings	In the week of September 19
Method of evaluation	(1) Actual participation in a conference meeting + (2) a conference reflection (250 words)
An alternative assignment – for those who miss a conference meeting	Précis (400 words) - one précis for one conference reflection
Submission due for the conference reflection/précis	The following Tuesday

4.Short Analytical Essay (35%)

Students must write a short essay that engages with the question of “power and boundary-making”, which is the overarching theme of the first section of the semester. The analysis should be written in a minimum of 1,600 words and a maximum of 1,800 words excluding footnotes and the bibliography. The detailed instructions will be provided on Friday, October 7 (10:05am-11:25am).

Due date - Monday October 24 (11:59pm) via MyCourses. The document format should be a PDF file.

5. McDonald-Currie Lecture (Tuesday, October 25)

The Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID) annual McDonald-Currie Lecture will take place in-person this Fall. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, October 25. Further details will be confirmed shortly and announced in class. Students will receive 10 points, that will count toward their conference grade, for attending the lecture and providing a 1-paragraph reflection. Attendance for the full lecture is necessary to receive the extra credit. Please note that the participation grade is never to exceed the percentage established for the course.

6. Précis on “Legal Violence and Precarity Chains” (5%)

Students must write two précis related to any assigned readings between Week 10 and Week 13. A précis is a reading analysis written **in at least 500 words** discussing one of the assigned weekly readings. In your précis, you should discuss: (1) the key arguments of the article and (2) your critical thoughts on the reading.

Due date: Monday, December 5 (11:59pm) via MyCourses. The document format should be a PDF file.

7. Final Research Essay (45%)

Students must write a final research essay discussing a specific question that engages with power, exclusion, and violence. The paper should be written **in a minimum of 2,200 words and a maximum of 2,500 words** excluding the bibliography. The detailed instructions and the review session will be provided on Friday, November 25.

Due date: Friday, December 16 (11:59pm) via MyCourses. The document format should be a PDF file.

Grade distribution:

Assignments	Requirements	Due	Percentage
Quizzes	Eight (8) required (See section #2)	The following Tuesday	5%
Conference Reflections/précis	Five (5) required (See section #3)	The following Tuesday	10%
Short Analytical Essay	See section #4	Monday, October 24	35%
Two Précis on “Legal Violence and Precarity Chains”	See Section #6	Monday, December 5	5%
Final Research Essay	See section #7	Friday, December 16	45%

Plagiarism:

“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](#).” (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (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](#). » (Énoncé

approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#).)

Copyright of lectures:

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.

Policy statement: Language of submission

"In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Student Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French 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." (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

« 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. » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 21 janvier 2009)

Course Evaluations:

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Theme
Week 1: Introduction	
August 31	Introduction
September 2	Why does the Study of Culture and Development Matter?
PART I. POWER AND BOUNDARY-MAKING	
Week 2: Cultural Determinism	
September 7	Cultural Determinism and Its Discontents
September 9	The Rhetoric of Asian Values
Week 3: Construction of Identity	
September 14 (Wednesday)	Colonialism: Construction of Identity
September 16 (Friday)	Fictions of Ethnicity
Week 4: Colonialism and Biopower	
September 21 (Wednesday)	Colonialism and Biopower #1: Reproductive Control
September 23 (Friday)	Colonialism and Biopower #2: Welfare Colonialism
Week 5: Politics of Indigeneity	
September 28 (Wednesday)	Politics of Indigeneity
September 30 (Friday)	Indigenization of Environmental Sustainability: Local Communities' Conservation Initiatives in Namibia

Week 6. Indigenous Rights Advocacy	
October 5 (Wednesday)	Indigenous Rights Advocacy at the United Nations Guest Speaker: Kenneth Deer, Secretary of the Mohawk Nation at Kahnawà:ke
October 7 (Friday)	Review Session
Week 7: Modernization, Gender, and Labor Discipline	
October 19 (Wednesday)	Early Modernization and Female Labor Discipline
October 21 (Friday)	Contested Women's Labor Mobility and Moral Crisis
PART II. POWER, VIOLENCE, AND PRECARIETY CHAINS	
Week 8: Commodification of Care Labor	
October 26 (Wednesday)	Commodification of Gendered Care Labor
October 28 (Friday)	Commercial Surrogacy
Week 9: International Law and Biases	
November 2 (Wednesday)	Exclusion of Sexual Violence in International Tribunals
November 4 (Friday)	Immigration Detention Guest Speaker: Jenny Jeanes, Detention Program Coordinator, Action Réfugiés Montréal
Week 10: Legal Violence	
November 9 (Wednesday)	Legal Violence

November 11 (Friday)	Exclusion of Cultural Genocide in International Human Rights Law
Week 11 Precarity Chains	
November 16 (Wednesday)	Precarity Chains #1: Social Violence
November 18 (Friday)	Precarity Chains #2: Spatial Justice for Urban Poor
Week 12: New Cities in the Gulf	
November 23 (Wednesday)	New Cities in the Gulf - Planning for National Survival and Post-oil Futures in Kuwait Guest Speaker: Jasmine Ali, Department of Geography, McGill University
November 25 (Friday)	Review Session
Week 13: Conclusion	
November 30 (Wednesday)	Legal Violence against Children? Undocumented Refugee Children in Japan *Film Screening ("Tokyo Kurds" by Fumiari Hyuga)
December 2 (Friday)	Conclusion

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 Introduction

August 31 – Introduction

We will have an overview of the course, including the overarching learning goals, course schedule, conferences, and course requirements.

September 2 – Why does the Study of Culture and Development Matter?

We will introduce our key objectives of the course, especially the significance of the study of culture in development. The lecture will delve into a distinct perspective of culture, especially the sites of power, violence, precarity chains, and resistance. We will include in-class activities to introduce each other.

*No readings for the first week

PART I. POWER AND BOUNDARY-MAKING

Week 2 Cultural Determinism

September 7 – Cultural Determinism and Its Discontents

Readings:

Harrison, Lawrence. 2000. "Culture Matters." *The National Interest* 60 (Summer): 55-65.

Sen, Amartya. 2004. "How Does Culture Matter?" in *Culture and Public Action* (edited by Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton). Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.37-58.

September 9 – The Rhetoric of Asian Values

Readings:

Sen, Amartya. 1997. "Human Rights and Asian Values," *The New Republic* 217 (2-3): 1-9.

Thompson, Mark. 2001. "Whatever Happened to 'Asian Values'?" *Journal of Democracy* 12(4): 154-165.

Week 3 Construction of Identity

September 14 – Colonialism: Construction of Identity

Readings:

Chatterjee, Partha. 1989. "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonized Women: The Contest in India." *American Ethnologist* 16(14): 622-633.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. "Indirect Rule, Civil Society, and Ethnicity: The African Dilemma." *Social Justice* 23(1/2): 145-150.

September 16 – Fictions of Ethnicity

Readings:

Jefremovas, Villas. 1997. "Contested Identities: Power and the Fictions of Ethnicity, Ethnography, and History in Rwanda." *Anthropologica* 39(1/2): 91-104.

Week 4 Colonialism and Biopower

September 21 – Colonialism and Biopower #1 : Reproductive Control

Readings:

Thomas, Lynn. 2003. *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.1-20.

Bourbonnais, Nicole. 2016. *Birth Control in the Decolonizing Caribbean: Reproductive Politics and Practice on Four Islands, 1930-1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-29.

September 23 – Colonialism and Biopower #2: Welfare Colonialism

Readings:

Stevenson, Lisa. 2012. "The Psychic Life of Biopolitics: Survival, Cooperation, and the Inuit Community." *American Ethnologist* 39(3): 592-613.

Week 5 Politics of Indigeneity

September 28 – Politics of Indigeneity

Readings:

Cornthassel, Jeff. 2003. "Who is Indigenous? Peoplehood and Ethnonationalist Approaches to Rearticulating Indigenous Identity." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9(1): 75-100.

Sylvain, Renée. 2005. "Disorderly Development: Globalization and the Idea of 'Culture' in the Kalahari." *American Ethnologist* 32(3): 354-370.

September 30 – Indigenization of Environmental Sustainability: Local Communities' Conservation Initiatives in Namibia

Readings:

Gafner-Rojas, Claudia. 2020. "Indigenous Languages as Contributors to the Preservation of Biodiversity and Their Presence in International Environmental Law." *International Wildlife Law & Policy* 23(1): 44-61.

Week 6 Indigenous Rights Advocacy

October 5 – Indigenous Rights Advocacy at the United Nations

Guest Speaker: Kenneth Deer, Secretary of the Mohawk Nation at Kahnawà:ke

Readings:

Morgan, Rhiannon. 2007. "Political Institutions and Social Movement Dynamics: The Case of the United Nations and the Global Indigenous Movement." *International Political Science Review* 28(3): 373-292.

October 7 – Review Session

Week 7 Modernization, Gender, and Discipline

October 19 – Early Modernization and Female Labor Discipline

Readings:

Faison, Elyssa. 2007. *Managing Women: Disciplining Labor in Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.8-26.

October 21 – Contested Women’s Labor Mobility and Moral Crisis

Readings:

Lynch, Caitrin. 2007. *Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka’s Global Garment Industry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp.1-18.

PART II. POWER, VIOLENCE, AND PRECARIETY CHAINS

Week 8 Commodification of Care Labor

October 26 – Commodification of Gendered Care Labor

Readings:

Silvey, Rachel. 2004. “Transnational Domestication: State Power and Indonesian Migrant Women in Saudi Arabia.” *Political Geography* 23: 245-264.

October 28 – Commercial Surrogacy

Readings:

Pande, Amrita. 2010. “Commercial Surrogacy in India: Manufacturing a Perfect Mother-Worker.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 35(4): 969-992.

Week 9 International Law and Biases

November 2 – Exclusion of Sexual Violence in International Tribunals

Readings:

Henry, Nicola. 2013. "Memory and Injustice: The 'Comfort Women' and the Legacy of the Tokyo Trial." *Asian Studies Review* 37 (3): 362-380.

November 4 – Immigration Detention

Guest Speaker: Jenny Jeanes, Detention Program Coordinator, Action Réfugiés Montréal

Readings:

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International Canada. 2021. *"I Didn't Feel Like a Human in There." Immigration Detention in Canada and Its Impacts on Mental Health.* Human Rights Watch.

Week 10 Legal Violence

November 9 – Legal Violence

Readings:

Menjivar, Cecilia and Leisy Abrego. 2012. "Legal Violence: Immigration Law and the Lives of Central American Immigrants." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(5):1380-1421.

Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. 2006. "The Wilder Shores of Power: Migration, Border Controls and Democracy in Postwar Japan." *Thesis Eleven* 86(1): 6-22.

November 11 – Exclusion of Cultural Genocide in International Human Rights Law

Readings:

Bachman, Jeffrey. 2019. "A Historical Perspective: The Exclusion of Cultural Genocide from the Genocide Convention." In *Cultural Genocide: Law, Politics, and Global Manifestation* (edited by Jeffrey Bachman). London: Routledge, pp. 45-61

Week 11 Precarity Chains

November 16 – Precarity Chains #1 Social Violence

Readings:

Menjívar, Cecilia. 2011. *Enduring Violence: Ladina Women's Lives in Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-26.

Silvey, Rachel and Rhacel Parrenas. 2019. "Precarity Chains: Cycles of Domestic Worker Migration from Southeast Asia to the Middle East." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

Optional:

Green, Linda. 2009. "The Fear of No Future: Guatemalan Migrants, Dispossession and Dislocation." *Anthropologica* 51(2): 327-341.

November 18 – Precarity Chains #2 Spatial Justice for Urban Poor

Readings:

Macapagal, Katrina. 2021. *Slum Imaginaries and Spatial Justice in Philippine Cinema*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp.1-26 (Introduction & Chapter 1)

Week 12 New Cities in the Gulf

November 23 – New Cities in the Gulf - Planning for National Survival and Post-oil Futures in Kuwait

Guest Speaker: Jasmine Ali, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Geography, McGill University

Readings:

TBA

November 25 – Review Session

Week 13 Conclusion

November 30 – Legal Violence against Children? Undocumented Refugee Children in Japan

*Film Screening: *Tokyo Kurds* (2018) by Fumiari Hyuga

Readings:

Mountz, Alice. 2020. *The Death of Asylum*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, pp.1-26.

December 2 – Conclusion