

INTD 358
Ethnographic Approaches to Development
Winter 2023

Indigenous Land Statement

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

Instructor: Daniel Ruiz-Serna

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Office hours: Monday 10-11am. 3610 McTavish Street, room 16-4

Instructor email policy: For general queries about the course, please contact the TA, Emma Myhre; where necessary, she will forward them on to me. Please review this course syllabus carefully before contacting Emma or me regarding administrative questions. For more involved queries and advising, including help on a paper, further discussion of readings and lectures, and so on, you should come and see me during office hours. I will not do advising on email. You should also be aware that I am not on email at all times. I will respond to any email as quickly as I can, but it may take 24-48 hours (especially over weekends). Do not expect a response to last minute emails before assignments are due.

TA: Emma Aurora Myhre

Email: emma.myhre@mail.mcgill.ca

Office hours: TBA

Class time: Monday and Wednesday 8:35 am -9:55 am

Location: STBIO S3/3

Course Description

Development entails a set of social processes that are, most of times, intercultural, transnational and multiscalar, involving different actors, logics and life-worlds. Development, in other words, raises core anthropological questions about human similarity and difference. Focusing on different ethnographic examples, in this course we will study some well-grounded critiques regarding development (is it a hidden colonial ideology? A narrative reproducing culturally biased notions of progress, national economic growth, social uplift or even environmental stewardship?) and how its discourses and practices are at the heart of contentious political projects bound up with notions of identity, bodies, and place. We will pay particular attention to the ways development agendas are demanded, resisted, and reworked, as well as how they interact with particular cultural notions of nature and rights. The course will focus, among other topics, on colonial ideology and its legacies; the emergence of social movements contesting the role of the state as an engine of growth; extractivism and its promise of repairing social inequality; dispossession; and rights of nature. At the end of the course, students will realize how ethnographic approaches might help us destabilize notions of personhood, wellness, place, rights, and justice.

Course Objectives

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to (1) gain a critical understanding of development as an interrelated process across cultural, economic, political, social, spatial and ethical dimensions; (2) develop familiarity with how race, identity, place, gender, and cosmology interrelate with processes of development; (3) expand their understanding of key concepts and debates in the anthropological study of development; and (4) improve their skills in critically assessing scholarly publications, and in presenting their ideas in oral and written forms.

Course Materials: All course materials are accessible through the MyCourses website. Please read all assigned material prior to class.

Instructional methods: In-person lectures, class discussion, audiovisual materials, student group presentations, and guided reading and independent research. In addition, there will be four guest lectures and three of them will be held on Zoom. These sessions will be recorded and posted online after the lecture. These lectures will typically be 40-45 minutes, followed by a Q & A session.

Evaluation: The final grade for this course will be based on the following components:

Assessment Component	Percentage	Due
Personal Statement	5%	January 11
Internet Meme	10%	April 12
Group Presentations	20%	March 29 to April 5
Four Response Posts	20%	Two before reading week + Two after reading week
Midterm	20%	February 22
Final Paper	25%	April 19

Personal Statement (5%)

To help me get to know you, I ask that you write 1 page (about 500 words) about yourself, telling me where you're from, what you're majoring in, why you're taking this class, and some interests or hobbies that you have outside of school. More importantly, I'd like to know about any experience or significant event in which you had difficulties showing or teaching something that you otherwise took for granted. Any type of experience may be discussed, from a weird encounter during a trip to a professional misunderstanding. Tell me why what happened mattered to you. **Please notice that you must turn in a handwritten, hard copy of this assignment on January 11, 2023** (before class). Please write legibly.

Internet Meme (10%)

An internet meme is a photo with captioned text that contains meaningful and often funny information. A meme exemplifies what a shared sphere of cultural knowledge is, communicating complex ideas or feelings with just a short phrase and a concrete image. For this assignment your goal is to create a meme that encapsulates some of the original content of the course, fostering some kind of awareness about the conceptual, methodological or ethical issues discussed in class. Although you can choose both the image and the text, the meme as a whole has to say something meaningful about the course and one of the ideas you learned during this term.

Four Response Posts (20%)

These are brief exercises in analytical thought and are meant to help you organize your thinking and clarify the key issues you want to discuss each week. You must write four different posts throughout the term. Two should be completed before week 7 and two after. Each will contribute 5% of your final grade. Starting on January 16, you have the opportunity of posting your “critical reaction” in response to the assigned readings for the week. Please submit by Sunday, 6:00 pm, an approximately 250-350 word post. Anything submitted after this time will not count towards this assignment.

Your reaction should demonstrate your own original thoughts about the texts and should go beyond summarizing the material. You may choose to analyze the arguments of each assigned text or to offer synthesizing critical reflections on questions raised across the texts. In addition, your reaction could also focus on a critique, challenge, connection, concern, application or any other original idea about the texts. Unlike other academic writing, when quoting an assigned reading in your post, you just need to indicate the following: author’s last name + date, page number(s) (e.g., Williams 1991, 45-47).

Group Presentations (20%)

Students will develop a collective research project that explores some aspect of development work (broadly conceived) using some of the qualitative and ethnographic approaches addressed in class. This assignment requires you to work collaboratively in teams of five. These groups will be assigned on Monday, February 20. During the final two weeks of the semester students will present their research projects to the class. Presentations should incorporate different kinds of audiovisual materials and will be followed by a Q & A. Detailed instructions for this assignment will be posted in due time.

Midterm (20%)

To be held in class on February 22. This midterm exam will be comprised of multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions.

Final Paper (25%)

You are required to write a short independent research paper in which you explore an issue raised in the course but extends analysis beyond the syllabus. Although you can choose the topic, it should be a real-world place or problem. Your paper must draw from at least two course readings and three additional independently sourced peer-reviewed texts. Students are advised to consult with the TA and course instructor about their proposed topic. Additional instructions will be given in due time. This assignment is due on April 19.

Late submission: All assignments will be docked 5% for every twenty-hours they are late. Accommodations are possible (see below) but they must be requested in-advance.

Grading guideline: Students who fulfill the course requirements and do good work will receive a B, those who fulfill the requirements and do excellent work will receive an A, and those who fall short in any aspect of the course will receive lower grades.

Course Outline: Please notice that the content and evaluation of this course is subject to change in the case of unforeseeable events

Jan 4	Introduction		
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Jan 9	Aims and scope of anthropological research	- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. "Method and Scope of Anthropological Fieldwork." In <i>Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader</i> , eds. Antonius Robben and Jeffrey Sluka, pp. 46-57. - Boas, Franz. 1932. "The Aims of Anthropological Research" In <i>Science</i> . New Series, Vol. 76, No. 1983 (Dec. 30, 1932), pp. 605-613	
Jan 11	Fieldwork and Positionality	- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1986. "Guest and Daughter." Chap 1 from <i>Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in Bedouin Society</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press.	In Class: Personal statement is due
Jan 16	Culture and Development	Radcliffe, Sarah A., and Nina Laurie. 2006. "Culture and development: Taking culture seriously in development for Andean indigenous people." <i>Environment and Planning D: Society and Space</i> 24 (2): 231-248.	
Jan 18	Paying attention to Infrastructures	- Appadurai, Arjun. 1984. "Wells in Western India. Irrigation and Cooperation in an Agricultural Society." <i>Expedition</i> 26 (3): 3-14 - Gupta Akhil. 2018. "The future in ruins: Thoughts on the temporality of infrastructure." Chap 2 from <i>The Promise of Infrastructure</i> , edited by Nikhil Anand, Akhil Gupta, and Hannah Appel. Durham and London: Duke University Press.	Guest Speaker Vineet Rathee
Jan 23	The Development Encounter I	Ferguson, Jim. 1997. "Anthropology and It's Evil Twin: "Development" in the Constitution of a Discipline." In <i>International Development and the Social Sciences</i> , eds. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, pp. 150 -175.	
Jan 25	The Development Encounter II	Escobar, Arturo. 1991. "Anthropology and the Development Encounter: The Making and Marketing of Development Anthropology." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 18 (4): 658-682.	
Jan 30	Indigenous Perspectives on Development I	Feit, Harvey. 1995. "Hunting and the quest for power: The James Bay Cree and Whitemen in the 20 th Century". In <i>Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience</i> , eds. R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson, pp 115-145. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart	
Feb 1	Prior consultation	Aylwin, José and Policzer, Pablo. 2020. No going back: The impact of ILO Convention 169 on Latin America in comparative perspective. <i>The School of Public Policy SPP Research Paper</i> 13 (8): 1-30	In Class: <i>When Two Worlds Collide</i>. Dir. Mathew Orzel and Heidi Brandenburg. 2016.
Feb 6	Kinship	TBA	
Feb 8	Amazonian Extractivism	Kopenawa, David. 2013. <i>The Falling Sky</i> . Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press. Selection.	Guest Speaker Dr. Camilo Gomez

Feb 13	Traditional Ecological Knowledge	- McGregor, D. 2004. "Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Sustainable Development: Towards Coexistence." In <i>In the Way of Development. Indigenous Peoples, Life projects and Globalization</i> . Edited by M. Blaser, H. Feit and G. McRae, 72-91. - Listen to For the Wild Podcast: Robin Wall Kimmerer on Indigenous Knowledge for Earth Healing.	
Feb 15	Ontological Conflicts	- Li, F. 2015. "The Hydrology of a Sacred Mountain." Chap 3 from <i>Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru</i> . Durham: Duke University Press.	
Feb 20	Identity and Participation	- Asher, Kiran. 2009. "The El Dorado of modern times: Economy, ecology, and territory." Chap 2 from <i>Black and Green: Afro-Colombians, Development, and Nature in the Pacific Lowlands</i> . Durham: Duke University Press.	
Feb 22		Midterm	Midterm
		Reading Week	
March 6	In the name of greater goods	Li, Tania Murray. 2007. "Rendering technical?". Chap 4 from <i>The Will to Improve. Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics</i> . Durham: Duke University Press.	
March 8	Conservation and Dispossession	Ojeda, Diana. 2012. "Green pretexts: Ecotourism, neoliberal conservation and land grabbing in Tayrona National Natural Park, Colombia." <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> 39 (2): 357-375.	Guest Speaker Dr. Diana Ojeda
March 13	Cartographies	Chao, Sophie. 2022. "Living Maps". Chap 2 from <i>In the Shadow of the Palms: More-than-Human Becomings in West Papua</i> . Durham: Duke University Press.	
March 15	Beyond Progress	- Cuellar Gempeler, M. 2020. "Amañarse in San Miguel." In <i>A song for staying: Narrative, absence and mourning in rural Boyaca</i> . - Millar, K. 2014. "The precarious present: Wageless labor and disrupted life in Rio di Janeiro, Brazil." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 29 (1):	Guest Speaker: Monica Cuellar Gempeler
March 20	Indigenous Perspectives on Development II	Gonzalez, P. and Macias Vasquez, A. 2015. An Ontological turn in the debate on Buen Vivir-Sumak Kawsay in Ecuador: Ideology, Knowledge, and the Common. <i>Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies</i> 10 (3): 315-334. Hidalgo-Capitan, A. and Cubillo-Guevara, A. 2017. "Deconstruction and Genealogy of Latin American Good Living". In <i>Alternative Pathways to Sustainable Development. Lessons from Latin America</i> . eds by G. Carbonnier, H. Campodonico, and S. Tezanos Vazquez, pp 23-48.	
March 22	Development and More-than-Human Worlds	- Boyd, David. 2017. "A river becomes a legal person" and "Te Urewera: The ecosystem formerly known as a National Park". Chaps 8 and 9 from <i>The Rights of Nature. A Legal Revolution that Could Save the World</i> . Toronto: ECV Press	
March 27	Transitional Justice and Development	- Selim, Yvette and Murithi, Tim. 2011: "Transitional Justice and Development: Partners for sustainable peace in Africa?". <i>Journal of Peacebuilding & Development</i> 6 (2): 58-72	

March 29	Anthropologists in Development Institutions I	Fox, Jonathan. 2003. "Advocacy research and the World Bank: Propositions for discussion." <i>Development in Practice</i> 13 (5): 519-527	In Class: Group Presentations begins
April 3	Anthropologists in Development Institutions II	Mangold, Katharina. 2021. "Struggling to do the right thing: Challenges during international volunteering." <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 33 (8): 1493-1509.	In Class: Group Presentations continues
April 5	Anthropologists in Development Institutions III	Malkki, Liisa. 2015. "Impossible situations. Affective impasses and their afterlives in humanitarian and ethnographic fieldwork." Chap. 2 from <i>The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism</i> . Durham: Duke University Press.	In Class: Group Presentations ends
April 12	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wells, Herbert George. 1904. <i>The Country of the Blind</i>. New York: Dover Publications - Borges, Jorge Luis. 1969. <i>The Ethnographer</i>. - Listen to AnthroPod: Designing Agency with Vijayendra Rao 	In Class: Internet meme is due

McGill policy statements

Language of submission: "In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Students' 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)

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](#)" (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 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](#).)

Charter of Students' Rights: Additional policies governing academic issues that affect students can be found in the [McGill Charter of Students' Rights](#).

Accommodation for special Needs: Requests for academic accommodations for students with disabilities must be made during the first two weeks of the semester, so that arrangements can be made. If you wish to request an accommodation due to a suspected or documented disability, please

inform your instructor and contact McGill Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) as soon as possible at 398-6009. If you anticipate requiring academic accommodations for other reasons — eg. religious obligations, pregnancy or childrearing, or other student activities — please submit your requests during the first two weeks of class.

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Mercury course evaluations: [Mercury 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. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Respect: The University is committed to maintaining teaching and learning spaces that are respectful and inclusive for all. To this end, offensive, violent, or harmful language arising in course contexts may be cause for disciplinary action.

Wellness: Many students may face mental health challenges that can impact not only their academic success but also their ability to thrive in our campus community. Please reach out for support when you need it; [wellness resources](#) are available on campus, off campus, and online.

Workload management skills: If you are feeling overwhelmed by your academic work and/or would like to further develop your time and workload management skills, don't hesitate to seek support from [Student Services](#).