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Critical Interventions:
Humanitarian Action in the 21st Century: Dilemmas, Challenges and Innovation
INTD 497
Tentative course Syllabus Fall 2020
(Please check MyCourses for the official syllabus.)

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Course Instructor: Rachel Kiddell-Monroe
Class time: Fridays, 10-11.30am (live Zoom session)

Two ways to contact me during term:
Office hours: Fridays, 11.30am – 1pm on Zoom
Email: Rachel.Kiddell-Monroe@mcgill.ca

Recognition:
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.

1. Course Overview

The course will introduce students to some of the key issues facing humanitarian action today. Through practical case studies and theory, students will identify, analyze and reflect on cross cutting dilemmas and challenges facing practitioners and policy makers alike.

Using case studies, lectures and the instructor's first-hand experiences from 25 years of humanitarian work, these seminars will encourage students to engage with the issues from both a theoretical and a practical perspective. We will look at key ethical dilemmas and challenges, such as when to intervene, how to intervene, with who and with what, and at what cost, in contexts ranging from Rwanda to Yemen, from Syria to Central African Republic. We will look at some of the key challenges to the humanitarian "system" and based on these experiences, discuss the future of humanitarian action in the 21st century.

Unique to this course will be the translation of theory to action. As well as producing a final academic paper on a humanitarian topic related to the course, students will learn how to develop policy briefs and how to translate the learning from the course into meaningful humanitarian impact. A running theme of the seminar series will be the group project developed by students bringing the principles of humanitarian action into contexts being faced by societies today.

By the end of this course students should be able to:
- Appreciate the convergences and divergences between theory and practice in humanitarian action

- Develop and present persuasive oral and written arguments related to humanitarian theory and practice
- Critically engage interdisciplinary, scholarly and practical debates about humanitarian intervention
- Conduct independent research and writing that explores the themes of the course further
- Develop an awareness about global humanitarian needs and the links to their local community.

The teaching methods include:
- Brief lectures to introduce key terms and theoretical debates
- Class discussions
- Guest lectures and panels
- Guided reading and independent research
- Online interactions with the humanitarian community in Montreal **or** option for students to prepare a group humanitarian project proposal

Course requirements
Method of evaluation: Your course grade will be assessed as follows:

Course Assignments	Course grade percentage
Seminar participation and alternative report on Zoom seminar	10%
Weekly journal entries	15%
OpEd	20%

Policy Brief
  -   Outline
  -   Full
	10%
	20%

Collaborative Humanitarian Project OR Group Humanitarian Project Proposal*	25%

 *breakdown of this grade available under other assignments

Readings
Required readings are identified below under each seminar. They are available as e-books through the McGill library and on the internet. As necessary, articles will be available via MyCourses. There is no course reader for this class. Since many of the issues we will discuss are current, I will post articles and video links relevant for the courses in MyCourses throughout the seminar series. Students are also encouraged to share articles they come across relevant to what we are discussing in class.

2. Description of Course Assignments

2.1   What you will be doing every week

- **Seminar participation and recordings**

While the mandated time of the class is from 8.35 am to 11.25 am, due to remote learning protocols, McGill asks us to limit the length of online Zoom sessions. Therefore, I will be lecturing and hosting Zoom class discussions online from 10am to 11.30am each Friday. Exceptionally I may request the class to extend by half an hour to accommodate content and guest speakers, but we'll agree this together in advance.

This is a seminar course, so there will be as little lecturing as possible. It is up to students to advance the discussion. Your seminar participation grade will be an average of your grades from your *best ten seminars*. Every time we meet, I will assign a letter grade for oral participation. If your participation is excellent (you show a command of the assigned readings, some originality and/or intellectual curiosity in the discussion, and your arguments are pertinent, clear and solid) you will receive an A-range grade; if it is good to very good (your remarks are competent, interesting, and well-articulated, even though you may not have fully digested the material) you will receive a B-range grade.

Alternative to seminar participation or make-up assignments for seminar participation:
If a student is unable to attend and participate in the Zoom session for any given week, or if a student attends the Zoom session but does not participate orally in the class discussion, the alternative/make-up assignment is to watch the 1.5 hour recorded Zoom session for the week, and write a 500-word report addressing specific points or questions raised in the discussion about the week's readings. Each report should be submitted via MyCourses on the Wednesday after each Friday's Zoom class.

If a student misses or does not participate in the Zoom session, and does not submit a report on time, they will receive a 0 for that week's seminar participation grade.

● **Journaling**
This is a reading intensive course that is conducted as a seminar not lectures. The weekly journaling entails deliberate, careful preparation, focused attention and is measured in quality not quantity. Active participation of all students is essential to a successful seminar.

Over the course of the semester students are required to write short journal entries (maximum 1 page, single-spaced) each week on the assigned readings. These journal entries should be your reflections on the assigned readings/audiovisual. There is no right or wrong, but your reflections need to be thoughtful and well set out. Each journal entry should include one key question raised by the week's readings.

These journal entries should be uploaded on MyCourses **at Thursday midday** before each Zoom seminar. If you miss the deadline, then you will receive a 0 for that week.

Discussion notes that are substantive and show solid engagement with the readings will receive a + (positive sign). Discussion notes that are filled with lengthy quotations from the readings, or only describe the reading content but do not engage critically with it, will receive a – (negative sign). You need to receive at least 8 + evaluations to receive an A-range grade, and 7+ evaluations to receive a B-range grade.

2.2 Other assignments

- **Op-ed**

An essential tool of the policy maker. We will study some different Op-eds and learn how to write them. The Op-ed should be submitted via MyCourses on **9 October 2020.** It must have a clear thesis, identify key terms and focus on a particular humanitarian ethical dilemma, challenge, debate, or intervention. There are no references in an Op-ed: it is intended to be your opinion on a current issue.

- **Policy brief**

A key skill in humanitarian work is being able to develop a policy paper which draws out a key argument and supports it with persuasive and well-supported arguments. Students will be asked to produce one policy paper directly on an issue covered during the course. Students will be guided to many different policy papers which can be used as models.

The policy brief exercise is in two parts:
- *Outline*

Students must submit a 2 or 3 page proposal due at 10am on **23 October 2020.** The outline should include a thesis statement, a skeleton structure for the introduction, main argument and conclusion plus an annotated bibliography of texts being used.
- *Full Policy Brief*

It should be between 3 and 5 pages submitted via MyCourses by 10am on **13 November 2020.**

- **Online Collaborative Humanitarian Project (CHP) OR, if applicable, the online Group Humanitarian Project Proposal (GHPP) (25%)**

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in the online CHP. Given the remote learning situation, students outside Montreal time zone may request an exception from the instructor and instead do the online GHPP.

- The online Collaborative Humanitarian Project

Drawing on the learning throughout the course, students may carry out an online Collective Humanitarian Project over the course of the semester which aims to demonstrate how global issues are translated at a local level. There are two components to the CHP:
1. Online volunteering with a local organization in Montreal. The theme and organizations are selected by the Instructor (minimum 10 hours over the period of the course outside class)
2. Develop and implement a simple online humanitarian activity with the people you interacted with in the volunteering. The thematic focus will be collectively developed over the course of the semester and will draw on the readings and class discussion.

The organization will be selected by the students by **2 October 2020.** The volunteering and the online humanitarian activity should be completed by **27 November 2020.** On this date, each group will present a short video (5-7 mins) of their volunteering and activity to present in class.

Grading: engagement and participation in the project and the video (12.5%) and confirmation of completion of 10 hours volunteering signed virtually by the organization (12.5%).

The activity/action needs to be
- be simple and actionable in a short time frame;
- directly linked to the teachings of the course, and be in support of or be supported by the organizations that students interacted with; and
- adhere to principles of volunteerism, collaboration and community involvement.
- Group Humanitarian Project Proposal

This is only available to students on permission from the instructor based on being outside of the Montreal EST zone or other exceptional reason. Through group work, the student will develop a project proposal for a humanitarian project of the group's choice linked to the course, together with a budget.

The choice of theme is due on **2 October 2020**, the outline GHPP is due on **23 October 2020** and the final proposal is due by **27 November 2020** (15%) with a 5-7 minute presentation of the project proposal to the class.

Grading: outline (5%), final proposal (10%) and class presentation (10%)

Recap of important dates

4 September	Course begins
2 October	Choice of Collaborative Humanitarian Project or, **if applicable,** the theme for the Group Humanitarian Project Proposal
9 October	Op-ed due
23 October	Outline policy brief and, **if applicable,** outline of Group Humanitarian Project Proposal
6 November	Online group work
13 November	Policy brief due
27 November	Final class and Collaborative Humanitarian Project Report or, **if applicable**, the Group Humanitarian Project Proposal

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3. Course policies on remote format

Students must read carefully McGill's Guidelines for Instructors and Students on Remote Teaching and Learning, especially the section for Students.

Lecture/Conference/Seminar Recording Statement

By enrolling in a remote course, you accept that fixed (synchronous) sessions will be recorded. You must consent to being recorded if you are attending a lecture or participating in a component

of a course that is being recorded. You will be notified through a "pop-up" box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. If you are not comfortable being in a class that is recorded, you may decide to not take part by logging off Zoom. Students who log off will be able to later watch the video recording in MyCourses.

For pedagogical reasons and for the enrichment of the experience of all students, attendance may be monitored and/or active participation may be expected or required during fixed (synchronous) class time. As such, you may be asked to turn on your camera and audio. If you do not have the necessary resources (e.g., adequate Internet bandwidth or equipment) to do so, inform your instructor *at the beginning of term* so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

In addition to the recording of your image and voice, your name (or preferred name) may be displayed on screen, and your instructor may call your name during the session. As such, this personal information will be disclosed to classmates, whether during the lecture or in viewing the recording. By remaining in classes that are being recorded, you accept that personal information of this kind may be disclosed to others, whether during the lecture or in viewing the recording.

Netiquette Statement
The University recognizes the importance of maintaining teaching spaces that are respectful and inclusive for all involved. To this end, offensive, violent, or harmful language arising in contexts such as the following may be cause for disciplinary action:
1. Username (use only your legal or preferred name)
2. Visual backgrounds
3. "Chat" boxes

To maintain a clear and uninterrupted learning space for all, you should keep your microphone muted throughout your class, unless invited by the instructor to speak. You should follow instructors' directions about the use of the "chat" function on remote learning platforms.

4. Description of Course Assignments

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. 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).

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 www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

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 under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the _Office for Students with Disabilities_, _514-398-6009,_ (http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/) to receive further information and assistance. However, _please remember that the OSD has no authority_ to approve changes to course assignment due dates, to devise alternative assignments, or to waive course requirements.

Late policy
Written work is due at the start of class on the specified due dates. Late papers will be subject to a 5% penalty _per day, starting with the due date_, except in exceptional cases, with the instructor's prior agreement. Extensions will not be granted on the day an assignment is due, except in case of medical or family emergency, accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Format and style
Students are required to type their text in 12-point Times New Roman font with standard one inch margins. Please double space the text. Use single spacing for block quotations, footnotes, appendices and bibliographies. References and citations must follow a standard academic format. In-text citations are preferred. Include your name, date and title on the first page of your paper, and number and staple your pages. **_Proofread your drafts carefully before turning them in._**

Sensitive content Statement:
Content warning: Please be aware that some of the course content may be disturbing for some students. It has been included in the course because it directly relates to the learning outcomes. Please contact the instructor if you have specific concerns about this.

5. **Weekly Course Schedule**

September 4: Teaching and learning in the time of COVID-19
  ● Who are we?
  ● Meet your teacher
  ● Principles and goals of the seminar series
  ● Adapting to remote learning and teaching: principles to guide us and communication
  ● Outline and methodology, assignments and expectations
  ● The Collaborative Humanitarian Project
  ● Writing tips for Op-eds and policy papers

Part 1   **Humanitarianism: Past, present and future**

September 11: Humanitarianism: where are we going? COVID-19 as the ultimate disrupter

Readings:
- David Rieff. 2002. *A bed for the night: Humanitarianism in crisis.* Simon and Schuster. pp. 31-56.
- UK Consortium of NGOs. 2013. *Missed Opportunities: The Case for Strengthening National and Local Partnership-Based Humanitarian Responses*
- Rachel Kiddell-Monroe (2020) COVID-19 underscores need for community-led approaches to health
- ICRC (2020) The world tomorrow: COVID-19 and the new humanitarian

Policy briefs/commentary/audio-visual:
- Rachel Kiddell-Monroe (2018) The Power of Choice... Choosing Humanity and Solidarity

OpEd writing:
- https://www.theopedproject.org/oped-basics
- HOW TO WRITE AN OP-ED OR COLUMN

September 18: Humanitarian principles: What are they good for?
Readings:
- Kate Mackintosh. 2000. The Principles of Humanitarian Action in International Humanitarian Law - HPG Reports 5 - Research reports and studies
- Alastair Ager and Joey Ager. 2011. Pages 456–472, Faith and the Discourse of Secular Humanitarianism | Journal of Refugee Studies | Oxford Academic Volume 24, Issue 3, 1 September 2011

September 25: Humanitarian ethics: from principles to practice
Readings:
- Antonio Donini & Carolina Abu-Sada. 2012. *Humanitarianism, Perceptions and Power* In the Eyes of Others: How people in crisis perceive humanitarian aid. MSF.   pp183-192
- Lisa Schwartz, Christina Sinding, Matthew Hunt, et al. (2010, August 27). *Ethics in Humanitarian Aid Work: Learning from the Narratives of Humanitarian Health Workers.* AJOB Primary Research, 1(3): 45-54.

Policy briefs/commentary/audio-visual:
- TEDxRC2 - Fiona Terry - The Paradox of Humanitarian Aid

Part 2   Humanitarian contexts: reflecting on common dilemmas and challenges

October 2: Climate Crisis and Humanitarian Action

<u>Readings</u>:

- UNHCR. July 2020. <u>When Rain Turns to Dust</u>: Chapter 2 - Facing conflict and a changing climate, from the Central African Republic to Iraq and Mali. pp. 22-37

<u>Policy briefs/commentary/audio-visual</u>:

- <u>5 transformational policies for a prosperous and sustainable world</u>
- <u>Lake Chad Environmental Degradation</u>

October 9: Innovating in a time of climate crisis

<u>Readings</u>:

- Lancet Countdown. MSF. 2018. <u>Climate Change and Health: an urgent new frontier for humanitarianism</u>. pp. 1-18
- UNHCR. 2020. <u>When Rain Turns to Dust (UNHCR)</u>: Chapter 3 - Adapting our response to ensure a more sustainable humanitarian impact. p.38 - 47.

<u>Policy brief writing</u>:

- <u>A Student's Guide to Writing a Global Health Policy Brief</u>

October 16: Refusing refuge: A Global Crisis of reception

<u>Readings</u>:

- Gibney M. 2006. *<u>A thousand little Guantanamos: Western States measures to prevent the arrival of refugees</u>*. In Tunstall, Kate E. 2006. *Displacement, Asylum, Migration: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 2004.* Oxford University Press. 11 December 2017.

<u>Policy briefs/commentary/audio-visual</u>:

- Charles Heller and Lorenzo Pezzani. 2017. *<u>Blaming the Rescuers: Criminalising solidarity, reinforcing deterrence</u>*.
- Oscar Martinez (2017) *<u>Escaping death asylum seekers surge in Mexico</u>*. Univision Noticias & Elfaro.
- Nina Lakhani. <u>Reporting on people on the move in Mexico and Central America</u>. The Guardian.
- Alexander Betts. <u>Our refugee system is failing, here is how we can fix it.</u> TED.com
- MSF. 2017. *<u>Interview with MSF Canada explaining why the migration flow from Central America through Mexico is a hidden humanitarian crisis.</u>* YouTube.ca.

October 23: What's in a name? Refugees, migrants and the challenges to international refugee and human rights law

<u>Reading</u>:

- Zetter R.. 2007. *More labels, fewer refugees: Remaking the refugee label in an era of globalization.* Journal of Refugee Studies 20(2).
- [Latin America and the Caribbean rapid gender analysis for COVID-19](#)

Policy briefs/commentary/audio-visual:
- Sir Michael Aaronson. October 9, 2017. *[Refugees, migrants, IDPs: Protecting people on the move—without distinction](#)*.

Reference texts:
- [1951, Convention Relating the status of refugees](#)
- [1961, Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness](#)
- [1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees](#)

October 30: Genocide, Conflict and Compromise
Readings:
- James Orbinski. 2008 *An imperfect offering: humanitarian action in the 21st century.* Doubleday Canada. pp 163 - 200.

Policy briefs/commentary/audio-visual:
- Amnesty International. 7 April 2014. *[The World still failing to act despite Rwanda genocide shame](#)*.
- Amnesty International. 2017. *[Myanmar: "My world is finished." Rohingya target in crimes against humanity in Myanmar.](#)*

Reference text:
- [Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide](#)

November 6: Group Work to prepare Collaborative Humanitarian Project and, if applicable, Group Humanitarian Project Proposal

November 13: Access to medicines, a global challenge
Readings:
- Ellen 't Hoen, Jonathan Berger, Alexandra Calmy and Suerie Moon. 2011. *[Driving a decade of change: HIV/AIDS, patents and access to medicines for all.](#)* Journal of the International AIDS Society2011**14**:15
- Chokshi DA. 2006. *Improving access to medicines in poor countries: The role of universities.* PLoS Med 3(6): e136. DOI: [10.1371/journal.pmed.0030136](#)

Policy papers/commentary/audiovisual:
- Toreele, Els (2020) [Collective intelligence will deliver the best Covid-19 vaccine - STAT](#)
- Suerie Moon. 2017. *Powerful Ideas for Global Access to Medicines.* N Engl J Med 2017; 376:505-507

- Priti Krishtel Why are Drugs Prices so High? Outdated US patent system

November 20: Unpacking racism and neo-colonialism in Humanitarian action

"If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time. But if you have come here because your liberation is bound upon with mine, then let us work together" Lilla Watson. Activist.

Reading:
- Bob Pease. 2010. Undoing Privilege: Unearned Advantage in a Divided World, Zed Books. ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=579120. pp3-17; 39-61; 169-187.

Policy papers/commentary/audiovisual:
- https://blogs.msf.org/bloggers/charity-arunn/its-not-okay-so-lets-plant-tree
- Stephanie Nixon. 1 December 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1561&v=APdNxzsqnz4.
- Malaka Gharib (November 26, 2017) Volunteering Abroad? Read This Before You Post That Selfie. A Social Media Guide To Taking Ethical Selfies In Low-Income Countries : Goats and Soda
- Desmond Jumban (July 2020) How (not) to write about global health

November 27: INTD 497 In Practice

Presentations of the online Collaborative Humanitarian Project or, **if applicable**, the Group Humanitarian Project Proposal.

Reflections from former students (panel discussion).