

## **MIGRATION, BORDERS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

INTD 497(002)

Fall 2023 McGill University

**Class Schedule:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:35pm-3:55pm

**Location:** ENGTR 1100 (LM Trottier Building, 3630 University St.)

**Instructor:** Blair Peruniak, Dr. Email: [blair.peruniak@mcgill.ca](mailto:blair.peruniak@mcgill.ca)

**Office/Hours:** TBA McTavish 3610/TBA

**Teaching Assistant:** Ronaldo Lobo ([ronaldo.lobogonzalez@mcgill.ca](mailto:ronaldo.lobogonzalez@mcgill.ca))

**TA Office/Hours:** Rm# 16-4, McTavish 3610/Mondays, 10am-11am

### **Course description**

This course examines the human rights implications of migration and border practices set amidst increasingly contentious territorial politics, complex population movements, and record-shattering climate events. Students will be introduced to empirical, conceptual, and moral issues of contemporary transnational migration and border control in consideration of how human rights concerns are related to regional and global migration governance strategies. Selected case studies and current events will be used to illustrate a wide range of human rights concerns that emerge from attempts to harmonize territorial control with universal human rights aspirations in the face of ongoing and future migration patterns and pressures. Throughout the course, students will have the opportunity to analyse and discuss issues ranging from biometric border technologies and human smuggling to forced immobility and sanctuary cities in a global context. Students will also have the opportunity to develop original strategies in addressing human rights problems through independent and guided research.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The general goal of the course is to stimulate critical thinking about the dynamic relationship between migration, borders, and human rights which have major implications for political and development policies in the remainder of Twenty-First Century and beyond. At the end of this course students should be able to:

- understand the role of border regimes and their justifications in shaping international human rights standards and related legal frameworks of global migration governance.
- compare and contrast modes of border control and their respective implications for the human rights of migrants through persuasive written and oral arguments.
- apply critical skills, knowledge, and insights during in-class activities and original research projects to address specific human rights problems in the context of borders and migration.

## Teaching Methods

- Lectures
- Theoretical and applied readings
- Audio-visual materials
- Student-led discussions
- Independent and collaborative research

## Required Readings

All required readings will be available on myCourses.

## Important Dates

Aug 30	Introduction	See myCourses for instructions
Sep 13	Discussion Seminar #1	Report due Sept 18, before class
Sept 27	Discussion Seminar #2	Report due Oct 02, before class
Oct 20	Research Proposals Due, 5PM	
Oct 25	Discussion Seminar #3	Report due Oct 30, before class
Oct 30	Midterm Posted, 5PM	
Nov 06	Mid Term Due	
Dec 04	No Lecture, Research Papers Due, 5PM	

## Assignments

**NB.:** All Assignments are to be submitted on myCourses.

A.	Student Seminars	30%
B.	Research Proposal	10%
C.	Mid-term (take home)	20%
D.	Research Paper	40%

## Instructions and Grading Criteria

### A. Discussion Seminars /30%

Certain classes will be devoted to seminar discussions during which students will critically discuss required readings and exchange ideas based on a series of prompts related to course themes. Group discussions and seminar exercises will form the basis of 3 corresponding written reports, each worth 10%, compiled by pre-assigned groups. Groups will be assigned in Week 3. Attendance during scheduled seminar discussions is mandatory and attendance will be taken.

Seminar Reports: For each report, ONE member of the group will be chosen to upload maximum 3 pages to myCourses in Assignments under the corresponding ‘Seminar’ week. (\*Please include all names of group members who are present for the discussion). Seminar reports are ideally written in formal paragraph form (i.e., minimal point form notes) detailing the content of your group discussion (i.e., the key points, insights, arguments/disagreements and/or alternative

perspectives whether in opposition with the author(s), your peers or, indeed, your instructor. Seminar reports should also demonstrate critical engagement with the readings and/or questions/concepts/legal problems that your group tried to answer/grapple whether during the discussion or upon reflection. You may not be able to include everything from your conversation so be selective and aim for depth rather than breadth.

**Due Dates:** Seminar reports must be submitted to myCourses by the start of class on the following Monday (see above under Important Dates).

Grading Criteria:

10 Points per seminar report:

- Clear and concise references to required readings which informed/motivated your group discussion.
- Quality of discussion and understanding of readings including through criticisms, objections, or concerns raised by the group.
- Depth of critical engagement with readings and one another's ideas/arguments (i.e., avoid mere 'lists' of the range of ideas discussed)
- Quality of writing and general insightfulness

**B. Research Proposal /10%**

A short proposal (**500 words +/- 10%, excluding bibliography**) for a suitable final research project based on the criteria as set out in the Final Research paper assignment (see assignment 'D' below). Your bibliography should identify a minimum of 3 relevant, peer-review sources. Media sources may be referenced but will not count towards your peer-review source count.

Grading Criteria:

5 Points      Effective communication

- Concise communication of a clear and suitably focused human rights issue/problem identifying a specific migrant group/individual.
- Clarification on whether your paper will focus on an historical, current, or future/anticipated human rights issue.
- Grammar/spelling/bibliography/page numbers/etc.

5 Points      Analysis and Research

- A brief outline/summary of the proposed strategy or approach addressing the human rights issue including the central goal and timeline.
- Identification of ONE main (non-monetary) obstacle/limitation of your approach.
- Quality/relevance of preliminary sources.

**Due** Oct 20, by 5PM, via myCourses.

### C. Mid Term (take home) /20%

An argumentative essay (**1000 words +/- 10%, excluding bibliography**) in response to ONE essay question/topic. Three Essay options will be offered based on the required readings and lectures inclusive of Week 9. Question options will be posted on myCourses on Oct 30 at 5PM. Details on how to structure the mid-term essay will be formally outlined in class.

**Due** November 06, by 5PM, via myCourses.

#### Grading Criteria:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 10 points | Effective communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear and logical organization of ideas (structure of paper, explicitly indicated in a concise introduction)</li><li>• Pertinent examples/clear citation and referencing</li><li>• Style, grammar and spelling</li></ul>   |
| 10 points | Analysis and argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding and application of relevant concepts, theories and literature</li><li>• Clear articulation of student's own argument/position</li><li>• Effective support/evidence provided for the student's argument</li><li>• Quality and convincingness of argumentation</li></ul> |

### D. Research Paper /40%

A research paper (4000 words +/- 10%, excluding footnotes and bibliography) that identifies/explains the following:

- i) *a specific human rights issue* related to the themes of migration and/or borders focusing either on an historical, current, or future/anticipated human rights issue.
- ii) *a specific group of migrants (or migrant individual)* related to the issue you identify whose human rights are either threatened, are currently being violated, or have previously been violated.
- iii) *an original policy, strategy, or approach* that you would implement as a means of either preventing, resolving, or otherwise addressing the human rights issue you identify (i.e., one that has a specific and practical goal achievable within a clearly stated time-line). Your strategy may focus on a specific area of policy, law, civic action, or other development proposal including re-drawing an existing border.
- iv) *a discussion of ONE main obstacle/limitation of your original strategy.* \*For the purposes of this paper please do not discuss monetary or funding challenges. Assume you have the money.

Research Sources: Your paper should engage a minimum of 10 relevant, peer-review sources. Media sources may be referenced but will not count towards your minimum/maximum peer-review source count.

**Due:** December 04, by 5PM, via myCourses.

**\*NB:** Students must receive a passing grade on the research paper in order to pass the course. It is *essential* to understand and adhere to McGill's policies on academic integrity (see below).

Grading Criteria:

15 Points: Structure, Clarity, and Style

- Concise introduction that briefly and immediately summarizes the overall project followed by a clear procedural statement outlining the paper's structure.
- Structure outlined in the procedural statement is the structure actually followed in the paper.
- Development and communication of a clear and suitably focused human rights issue/problem identifying a specific migrant group/individual.
- Grammar/spelling/references/bibliography/page numbers/etc.

15 Points: Analysis and Research

- Incorporation of feedback on your proposal
- Understanding, application, and critical analysis of relevant empirical or social science literature on your human rights/migration topic
- Rationale for your approach supported by evidence and logical argumentation
- Quality, depth, and integration of sources/research.

10 Points: Significance of Approach

- Details regarding the main elements of the strategy or approach including the goal and timeline.
- Quality of policy/recommendations and insightfulness
- Assessment of ONE main (non-monetary) obstacle/limitation of your approach.

## COURSE READING SCHEDULE

*\*\*Course materials and scheduling are subject to change\*\**

### **Week 1 – August 30 – Introduction**

- Read our class syllabus and email your instructor with any questions or concerns.
- There will be an introductory exercise in lieu of class. Please see myCourses for instructions.

### **Week 2 – September 06**

- Mainwaring. 2019. “Constructing Crises to Manage,” *At Europe’s Edge: Migration and Crisis in the Mediterranean*, 24–49.
- Babar. 2020. “Human Mobility in the Middle East,” *Mobility and Forced Displacement in the Middle East*, 1–17.

### **Week 3 – September 11/13**

- Luke Glanville. 2020. “Hypocritical Inhospitability: The Global Refugee Crisis in the Light of History,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 34(1): 3–12.
- Ignatieff. 2017. “The Refugee as Invasive Other,” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 84(1): 223–231.

### **Week 4 – September 18/20**

- Mann. 2021. “Border Crimes as Crimes against Humanity,” In: *The Oxford Handbook of International Refugee Law*, 1174–1190. Cathryn Costello, Michelle Foster, and Jane McAdam (eds). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller. 2013. “Border Regimes and Human Rights,” *The Law and Ethics of Human Rights* 7(1): 1–23.

### **Week 5 – September 25/27**

- Basheska & Kochenov. 2015. “EuroMed, Migration and Frenemy-ship,” In: *Migration in the Mediterranean: Mechanisms of International Cooperation*, 43–67.
- Squire. 2020. “Sea-Watch: Dignity in Danger and a Politics of Witness,” In: *Europe’s Migration Crisis: Border Deaths and Human Dignity*, 134–162.
- Patanè, et al. 2020. “Asylum-Seekers Prosecuted for Human Smuggling: A Case Study of Scafisti in Italy,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 39: 123–152.

### **Week 6 – October 02/04**

- Pirjola. 2008. “Shadows in Paradise: Exploring Non-Refoulement as an Open Concept,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 19(4): 639–660.
- Trevino-Rangel. 2017. “Magical Legalism: Human Rights Practitioners and Undocumented Migrants in Mexico,” *The International Journal of Human Rights* 23(5): 843–861.

**Week 7 – October 09/11 Reading Break, No Classes**

### **Week 8 – October 16/18**

- Bigo. 2022. “The Digitalisation of Border Controls and their Corporate Actors,” In: *Privatising Border Control: Law at the Limits of the Sovereign State*, 229–247.
- Popescu. 2022. “Hiding in Plain Sight: The Power of Biometric Border Technologies,” *Invisible Borders in a Bordered World: Power, Mobility, and Belonging*, 253–264.

### **Week 9 – October 23/25**

- Ochoa Espejo. 2020. “What is Wrong with Border Walls?” In: *On Borders: Territories, Legitimacy, and the Rights of Place*, 273–293.
- Thorburn. 2022. “Roles and Offices at the Border: Is Privatising Border Control Intrinsically Illegitimate?” In: *Privatising Border Control: Law at the Limits of the Sovereign State*, 77–93.

### **Week 10 – October 30/November 01**

- McLeman. 2019. “International Migration and Climate Adaptation in an Era of Hardening Borders,” *Nature Climate Change* (9): 911–918.
- Zickgraf. 2018. “Climate Change and Migration Crisis in Africa,” *The Oxford Handbook of Migration Crises*, 347–364.

### **Week 11 – November 06/08**

- Gebresenbet. 2022. “Hopelessness and Future-Making through Irregular Migration in Tigray, Ethiopia,” In: *Youth on the Move: Views from Below on Ethiopian International Migration*, 79–96.
- Human Rights Watch. 2023. “‘They Fired on Us Like Rain’: Saudi Arabian Mass Killings of Ethiopian Migrants at the Yemen-Saudi Border,” 9–44.

### **Week 12 – November 13/15**

- Stock. 2019. “Arriving in Morocco: Becoming Trapped in a Context of Uncertainty,” In: *Time, Migration and Forced Immobility*, 65–82.
- Hacking. 2010. “Pathological Withdrawal of Refugee Children Seeking Asylum in Sweden,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 41(4): 309–17.

### **Week 13 – November 20/22**

- Martin. 2017. “International Labor Migration,” *Merchants of Labour*, 15–41.
- Mantouvalou. 2023. “Migrant Workers,” *Structural injustice and Workers’ Rights*, 29–48.

### **Week 14 – November 27/29 – Research Workshops**

### **Week 15 – December 04 – No Lecture, Research Papers Due by 5PM.**

## **GENERAL POLICIES**

**Formatting:** All assignments/papers should be submitted to myCourses in word doc. format, 12-point font, double-spaced text with standard margins. All papers should include the student's name and bibliography. Title pages are optional. Please use single spacing for block quotations, footnotes, and bibliographies. References and citations must follow a standard academic format. Students should use in-text citations and include specific page numbers when referencing claims or quoting from academic sources – for example, (Jones 2005: 135). For more details, see the instructions for specific assignments above.

**Late Penalties:** Written work is due at the times indicated in the instructions for specific assignments above. Late papers will be subject to a 5% penalty per day, starting with the due date/time (except in special cases, with the instructor's prior agreement).

\*Please note that I reserve the right to modify aspects of the course timeline or readings if necessary.

### **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). Note that to support academic integrity, your assignments may be submitted to text-matching or other appropriate software (e.g., formula-, equation-, and graph-matching).

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy:**

The use of generative AI tools and apps, including ChatGPT or any other AI writing and coding assistants, is prohibited in all course assignments unless otherwise stated by the course instructor. This policy is meant to support the instructor's pedagogical goals, to promote your intellectual self-development, and to help you achieve course learning objectives, including in collaborative endeavors.

### **Contesting Grades:**

Your TA is not authorized to alter grades once they have been assigned which can only be modified, where appropriate, at the discretion of the instructor. To contest a grade, you must first send a written email notice to your TA clearly explaining your concerns and why you believe you were graded unfairly. Your TA may then respond or ask to meet with you after reviewing your work in light of your concerns in order to offer additional comments/further explanation. If you are still unsatisfied, your TA will forward your complaint to your instructor who will review the work and assign a final grade. This may result in an equivalent, lower or higher grade. All contestations should be submitted no later than 1 week after receiving your grade.

### **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 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).

**Extraordinary Circumstances Statement:**

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

**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.

**Assessment Policy Statement:**

The [University Student Assessment Policy](#) exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations

**Inclusive learning Environment:**

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.

**Mental Health:**

All health and wellness services at McGill University have been integrated into our new Student Wellness Hub. Please visit the [Virtual Hub](#) for all health and wellness information, at <https://mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>.