

ENVIRONMENTAL DISPLACEMENT & STRATEGIC MIGRATION

INTD 497 – Winter 2024

McGill University

Class Schedule: Wednesdays & Fridays, 10:05AM-11:25AM

Location: Macdonald Engineering (ENGMD) 280, 815 Sherbrooke St. West

Professor: Blair Peruniak, Dr.

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Office/Hours: Room #15-3, 3610 McTavish / Wednesdays & Fridays 1-3PM, or by appointment.

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TA Office/Hours: Room #15-3, 3610 McTavish / Thursdays 11:30-12:30, or by appointment

Course Description: This course examines environmentally induced displacement as a special category of migration in the Twenty-first Century. We will grapple with a wide range of urgent issues—conceptual and applied—from international debates on the legal status of ‘climate refugees’ to the politics of community relocation in the face of immanent ecological collapse. We will also consider migration as a strategic response to the extraordinary environmental and political challenges that are anticipated in the years ahead. A premise of this course is that competing value assumptions, controversial empirical analyses, and political motivations play crucial, but often underacknowledged, roles in our understanding of how environmental factors constrain or enable human mobility and mass migration. In some cases, migration is viewed as a tragic involuntary response to environmental harms or losses. In other cases, migration is heralded as a proactive form of environmental adaptation that ensures security, builds resilience, or preserves a valued way of life. In order to consider the tensions and complexities of migration in response to environmental change we will cover a global spectrum of case studies in both national and international contexts of displacement driven by slow and sudden-onset events. Lecture periods, especially those devoted to group discussion, will offer students frequent opportunities to exchange ideas and solve problems together based on core themes. Students will also develop original strategies and sustainable development policies to address ongoing or future environmental displacements through independent and guided research projects.

Learning Outcomes

The general goal of the course is to stimulate critical thinking about the dynamic and controversial relationship between environmental conditions and human displacement which has far-reaching implications for political and development policies in the remainder of Twenty-First Century. At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Understand how environmental transformations (including, but not limited to, climate change, war, and urban conflict) interact in complex ways with socio-economic systems, political institutions, and legal norms to influence human migration both within and across borders;
- Critically analyze the role of political ideology and the media in shaping our understanding of the causes and consequences of environmentally induced migration and the future of global migration governance;

- Develop persuasive oral and written arguments about, inter alia, the conditions under which migration can and ought to function as a strategic response to environmental displacement in a wide range of contexts from internal displacement, to community relocations, to war;
- Design and defend original plans and policies in response to environmentally induced displacements and related development needs based on interdisciplinary research and methods.

Teaching Methods

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

Required Readings

All required readings and supplementary material will be available on myCourses.

Assignments

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

- All Discussion Seminars are to be held during regularly scheduled classes.
- All assignments will be formally outlined in class with detailed instructions and guidance.
- All assignments are to be submitted on myCourses by 11:59PM on the dates indicated below.
- Please consult the formatting requirements in this document before submitting your work.

Important Dates

Jan 05	Online, read syllabus	See myCourses
Jan 19	Discussion Seminar #1	<i>Report Due 23 Jan 11:59PM</i>
Feb 06	Research Proposals Due	11:59PM
Feb 09	Discussion Seminar #2	<i>Report Due 13 Feb 11:59PM</i>
Feb 23	Discussion Seminar #3	<i>Report Due 27 Feb 11:59PM</i>
Mar 6&8	Winter Reading Break, No Classes	
Mar 13	Midterm (take home) <i>begins</i>	Midterm Due 19 Mar 11:59PM
Mar 29	Good Friday, No Class	
Apr 11	Make-up Class	
Apr 12	Research Papers Due	11:59PM

A. Discussion Seminars /30%**Due:** See 'Important Dates' above

Certain classes will be devoted to small group-based 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 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.

Grading Criteria:

10 Points/per seminar report:

- Level of group engagement with the discussion prompt/questions demonstrated by evidence of collaborative exchanges, problem-solving dynamics, diversity of viewpoints, and attempts to resolve issues or achieve shared goals.
- *Critical* engagement with readings and one another's ideas/arguments demonstrated through constructive criticism/disagreements, objections, or concerns raised by the group (i.e., avoid mere 'lists' of the range of ideas discussed)
- Clear and concise references to required readings which informed/motivated your group discussion.
- Quality of writing and general insightfulness

B. Research Proposal /10%**Due:** Feb 06, by 11:59PM, via myCourses

A short proposal (500-800 words min/max, excluding bibliography) for a suitably focused 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 3-5 relevant, scholarly (peer-reviewed) 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 environmental displacement issue/problem identifying a specific migrant group/individual.

- Clarification on which specific environmental factors are significant to your chosen topic and whether your paper will focus on a current/ongoing or future/anticipated displacement/migration issue.
- Grammar/spelling/bibliography/page numbers/word count/etc.

5 Points Analysis and Preliminary Research

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

C. Midterm (take home) /20%

Due: March 19, by 11:59PM, via myCourses

An argumentative essay (**1000 words** +/- 10%, **excluding bibliography**) in response to ONE essay prompt. Three Essay options will be offered based on the required readings and lectures inclusive of Week 9. Details on how to structure the midterm will be formally outlined in class. Question options will be posted on March 13 during class. Attendance on this day is mandatory and will be taken.

Grading Criteria:

10 points Effective communication

- Clear and logical organization of ideas conforming to the procedural statement
- Pertinent examples/clear citation and referencing
- Style, grammar and spelling
- Formatting (spacing/citations/bibliography/page numbers/word count/etc.)

10 points Analysis and Argument

- Understanding and application of relevant concepts, theories and literature
- Clear articulation of student's own argument/position, counter argument, and defense
- Effective support/evidence for the student's argument, counter argument, and defense
- Quality and convincingness of argumentation

D. Final Research Paper /40%

Due: April 12, by 11:59PM, via myCourses

A research paper (4000 words +/- 10%, excluding footnotes and bibliography) relevant to the course themes of environmental displacement and strategic migration that identifies/explains the following:

- i) An issue/problem related to the themes of the course focusing either on an ongoing/current or future/anticipated migration or displacement scenario.
- ii) A specific displaced group, migrant sub-population or migrant individual impacted by the issue you identify and serving as the focus of your strategy or approach.
- iii) An original policy, strategy, or approach that you would implement as a means of either preventing, resolving, or otherwise addressing the displacement issue/problem you identify (i.e., one that has a key priority/goal achievable within a clearly stated timeline). To help define your key priority you may refer to 'sample actions' within the Kaldor Centre Principles on Climate Mobility, the Geneva or

Kampala Conventions, Refugee & Internal Displacement Law, or any another relevant area of policy, law, human rights, civic action, or sustainable development.

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.

Research Sources: Your paper should engage a minimum of 12-15 relevant, peer-review sources. Media sources may be referenced but will not count towards your minimum peer-review source count.

[NB. Students must receive a passing grade on the research paper in order to pass the course. It is *strongly recommended* that you discuss your chosen topic and the scope of your paper with your instructor/TA well before you submit the final paper.

Grading Criteria:

10 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.
- Description of ongoing or future migration scenario supported by evidence.
- Development and communication of a clear and suitably focused issue/problem.
- Grammar/spelling/page numbers/word count/etc.

15 Points: Details and Rationale

- Detailed elements of the main strategy, approach, or actions addressing your key priority including the timeline.
- Rationale for your approach supported by evidence and logical argumentation.
- Assessment of ONE main (non-monetary) obstacle/limitation of your approach based on your research.
- Quality of policy/recommendations, originality and insightfulness

15 Points: Analysis and Research

- Quality and integration of sources/research (including source count/relevance)
- Understanding, application, and critical analysis of relevant empirical or social science literature.
- Citation practices, judicious use of quotes, and bibliography.

[NB. When grading, incorporation of feedback from your proposal (where relevant) will be considered for all grading sub-categories above.

COURSE REQUIRED READING SCHEDULE

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

Week 1, January 05: Introduction

- Read our class syllabus and email Blair with any questions or concerns.
- There will also be an online exercise in lieu of a lecture. Please see myCourses.

Week 2, January 10/12: The Environment–Displacement Nexus: From Morality to Methods

- Jamie Draper. 2023. “The Moral Challenge of Climate Displacement” In: *Climate Displacement*, 1–18. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jessica Miller & Anvy Vu. 2021. “Emerging Research Methods in Environmental Displacement and Forced Migration Research,” *Geography Compass* 15(4): 1–16.

***Week 3, January 17/19: Climate Refugees & Environmental Exile**

- Diane Bates. 2022. “Environmental Refugees? Classifying Human Migrations Caused by Environmental Change,” *Population and Environment* 23(5): 465–477.
- Jamie Draper. 2023. “Against a Treaty for Climate Refugees” In: *Climate Displacement*, 19–34. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 4, January 24/26: Migration as Adaptation: Planned Relocations & Strategic Retreats

- Kira Vinke, et al. 2020. “Migration as Adaptation?” *Migration Studies* 8(4): 626–634.
- Jamie Draper. 2023. “Climate Change and Community Relocation” In: *Climate Displacement*, 35–62. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 5, January 31/February 02: Dilemmas of Protection

- Jane McAdam. 2020. “Protecting People Displaced by the Impacts of Climate Change: The UN Human Rights Committee and the Principle of Non-refoulement,” *American Journal of International Law* 114(4): 708–725.
- Mohammad Pizuar Hossain. 2023. “The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Analysing the International Law Implications of its Environmental Impacts on Bangladesh,” *The International Journal of Human Rights* 27(2): 238–257.

***Week 6, February 07/09: The Many Faces of Territorial Sovereignty**

- Jamie Draper. 2023. “Climate Change and Territorial Sovereignty,” In: *Climate Displacement*, 63–85. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Karen Culcasi. 2023. “Refugee Camp Territories,” In: *Displacing Territory: Syrian and Palestinian Refugees in Jordan*, 116–141. University of Chicago Press.

Week 7, February 14/16: Internal Displacement

- Jamie Draper. 2023. “Climate Change and Internal Displacement,” In: *Climate Displacement*, 131–153. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walter Kälin. 2023. “Protection During Displacement: The Law,” In: *Internal Displacement and the Law*, 141–193. Oxford University Press.

***Week 8, February 21/23: Environmental Warfare**

- Gary Machlis & Thor Hanson. 2008. "Warfare Ecology," *BioScience* 58(8): 729–736.
- Anna Feuer. 2022. "Environmental Warfare Tactics in Irregular Conflicts," *Perspectives on Politics* 21(2): 533–549.

Week 9, February 28/March 02: Pathways of Environmental Dispossession (*Choose 2)

- Zachary Levenson. 2022. "Dynamics of Delivery and Dispossession," In: *Delivery as Dispossession: Land Occupation and Eviction in the Post-Apartheid City*, 40–73. Oxford University Press.
- Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh. 2023. "Theoretical Perspectives on Interactions between Indigenous Peoples and Mining," In: *Indigenous Peoples and Mining: A Global Perspective*, 9–21. Oxford University Press.
- Knut Nustad. 2015. "Dukuduku as Dispossessed Land," In *Creating Africas: Struggles Over Nature, Conservation and Land*. Oxford University Press.
- Jérémie Gilbert. 2014. "The Elimination of the Nomads: Colonialism, Extinction, and Persecution," In: *Nomadic Peoples and Human Rights*, 20–56. Routledge.

Winter Reading Break: March 4-8

Week 10, March 13&15: Midterm Week

- March 13 – Take-home Midterm to begin in-class (Attendance is mandatory)
- March 15 – Film Screening - TBA (Attendance is optional)

Week 11, March 20/22: Attachment, Mobility, and Mental Health

- Rachael Woldoff and Robert Litchfield. 2021. "Goodbye to All That: Escape Stories," In: *Digital Nomads: In Search of Meaningful Work in the New Economy*, 12–38. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh & Melina Antoniadis. 2022. "Climate Displacement and the Right to Mental Health," In: *Climate Refugees: Global, Local and Critical Approaches*, 146–180. Cambridge University Press.

Week 12, March 27: The Borders of Legitimacy

- Jamie Draper. 2023. "Climate Change and the Refugee Regime," In: *Climate Displacement*, 106–130. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ross Mittiga. 2022. "Political Legitimacy, Authoritarianism, and Climate Change," *American Political Science Review* 116(3): 998–1011.

Week 13, April 03/05: Futures of Environmental Displacement

- Jamie Draper. 2023. "Fear and the Future of Climate Displacement," In: *Climate Displacement*, 178–189. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Luke Kemp, et al. 2022. "Climate Endgame: Exploring Catastrophic Climate Change Scenarios," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119(34): 1–9.

Week 14, April 10/11/12 – Research Workshops & Guided Writing Sessions

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. My expectation is that students should be able to keep track of the due dates/times for their assignments and be able to manage their time effectively knowing that they may have multiple assignments/tests with overlapping due dates. 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). If you have a special accommodation form it is your responsibility to reach out well ahead of the due dates to arrange for extra time or other accommodation needs.

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.

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.

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.

Copyright:

All slides, lecture notes, instructor-generated content, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning and research. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials. Recording lectures in whole or part is not permitted.

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/>.