

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS POSTCOLONIAL RELATIONS

Tuesdays, 11:35-14:25, LEA517 | Office hours: Tuesdays, 3-4pm in LEA324C

### 1 Course description

Modern imperialism and ensuing decolonization have had particularly deep and long-lasting effects on international relations. This seminar interrogates the manifold legacies of these experiences on both former metropolises and post-colonies. Without a doubt, the key building blocks of global governance today, from security interventions to international law through development, would not look the way they do but for colonial encounters and postcolonial dynamics. This empirical starting point obviously calls for a critical take on International Relations (IR) scholarship, which is slowly reckoning with it. A variety of theoretical and methodological approaches will be surveyed to this purpose, with a particular emphasis on global historical sociology and, to some extent, postcolonial theory. The seminar intends to grapple with key analytical challenges in accounting for postcolonial legacies, such as writing colonial histories, grasping global circulations, and making sense of subterranean transformations in sovereignty. Overall, by the end of the term students will develop a lucid understanding of the current international system as deeply and centrally shaped by colonial and postcolonial relations.

### 2 Format

The class meets once a week for three hours. Each class consists of a short introductory presentation by the instructor followed with interactive debates and group discussions. This seminar is articulated around students' questions, concerns and arguments. In order to fully benefit from these discussions, students should not only complete all the readings but also reflect on them prior to the course.

### 3 Materials

Ten mandatory books are available at the bookstore; the remainder of the readings (articles and book chapters) are to be downloaded on an individual basis through the library system. Supplementary references, such as background readings or works that almost made the course list, are available upon request.

### 4 Requirements

1. Participation (20 percent): students are expected to take an active part in discussions and debates, as well as to show a high level of preparedness (i.e., talking points). The participation grade also includes weekly discussion memos, which are short reactions

(max. one page) to a particularly significant/interesting/problematic sentence taken from the readings. Discussion memos must be posted online (mycourses) at least 24 hours prior to the course (i.e., Monday at noon).

2. Critical essays (2 X 20 percent): 1,500-words critical reviews of any given book (or set of readings) during the term. Essays have two parts: a brief summary of the key arguments (500 words) and an original critique assessing the reading's contribution to understanding global relations as (post)colonial relations. The critique should be internal (i.e., criticize the reading for what it is trying to do, not for what it could have done) and it may rely on other sources. As students will be invited to refer to their essay during class conversations, it must be submitted at the beginning of the seminar. In order to balance coursework, all students must submit their first essay by Oct. 24th, 2023.
3. Take-home exam (40 percent): based on a choice of two questions, students will be prompted to synthesize their learning experience and connect it with their own research interests. Students are expected to take an analytical stance in scholarly debates and relate the different readings with one another. Exact submission date will be announced early into the term. Note that the late penalty does not apply to the take-home: failure to submit on time will result in a zero grade.

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.

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

## **5. Communications**

Office hours are held weekly on Tuesdays, 3-4pm in the instructor's office (Leacock 324C). In case of scheduling conflict, it is also possible to set an appointment by email. Email inquiries will normally be answered within two business days. Questions of general interest should be raised in class only. Extensive advice or feedback should be sought in person.

## **6. Late penalties, extensions and special needs**

Given the time-sensitive nature of the course requirements, there is no late penalty for any of them: failure to submit by set deadlines will result in a zero-grade. Students are responsible for keeping safe copies of their work throughout the term.

Under exceptional circumstances and in line with McGill rules, extensions may be granted by the instructor. Be prepared to provide mandatory documentation and make sure to make contact *prior* to deadlines in order to find an arrangement.

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/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more

information). A number of tools, including public search engines, may be used to detect plagiarism. In addition, students are not permitted to hand in the same assignment in two or more courses.

Students with learning disabilities should advise the instructor as soon as possible. They should also contact the Office for Students with Disabilities ([www.mcgill.ca/osd](http://www.mcgill.ca/osd)). Arrangements can be made to accommodate special needs such as religion, chronic illness or social discomfort.

Students facing personal issues are invited to seek help with McGill's Counselling Service ([www.mcgill.ca/counselling](http://www.mcgill.ca/counselling)). Please note that in order to avoid penalties, it is imperative to inform the instructor of any possible delays as soon as possible. Additional policies governing academic issues affecting students can be found in the Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities, Charter of Students' Rights ([www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/greenbookenglish.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/greenbookenglish.pdf)).

## 7. Schedule and readings

Date	Readings
05.09	<p><b>1 Introduction: IR theory and (post)colonial encounters</b></p> <p>Sankaran Krishna (2001), "Race, Amnesia, and the Education of International Relations," <i>Alternatives</i> 26(4): 401-424</p> <p>Meera Sabaratnam (2020), "Is IR Theory White? Racialised Subject-Positioning in Three Canonical Texts," <i>Millennium</i> 49(1): 3-31</p> <p>Jordan branch (2010), "'Colonial Reflection' and Territoriality: The Peripheral Origins of Sovereign Statehood," <i>European Journal of International Relations</i> 18(2): 277-297</p> <p>Jason C. Sharman and Ayse Zarakol (2023), "Global Slavery in the Making of States and International Orders," <i>American Political Science Review</i> (first view)</p>
12.09	<p><b>2 Appraising (post)colonial legacies: concepts and methods</b></p> <p>Julian Go and George Lawson (2017), "Introduction: For a Global Historical Sociology," in Julian Go and George Lawson, eds., <i>Global Historical Sociology</i>, 1-34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Pinar Bilgin (2016), « 'Contrapuntal Reading' as a Method, an Ethos, and a Metaphor for Global IR," <i>International Studies Review</i> 18: 134-146</p> <p>Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper (2010), "Imperial Trajectories," in <i>Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference</i>, 1-22. Princeton: Princeton University Press</p> <p>Michael Doyle (1986), "I. Imperialism and Empire," in <i>Empires</i>, 19-50. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.</p>
19.09	<p><b>3 The politics of writing (colonial) history</b></p> <p>Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), <i>Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History</i>. Boston: Beacon Press</p> <p>Daniel Immerwar (2019), <i>How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States</i>. New York: Picador [read introduction and conclusion only]</p>

26.09	<p><b>4 Tensions in the making of the liberal international order</b></p> <p>Edward Keene (2002), <i>Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press</p>
03.10	<p><b>5 Origins of global governance</b></p> <p>Mark Mazower (2009), <i>No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press</p>
17.10	<p><b>6 Decolonization and self-determination</b></p> <p>Adom Getachew (2019), <i>Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press</p>
24.10	<p><b>7 International law</b></p> <p>Antony Anghie (2005), <i>Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press</p>
31.10	<p><b>8 War and security</b></p> <p>Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey (1999), "The Imperial Peace: Democracy, Force and Globalization," <i>European Journal of International Relations</i> 5(4): 403-434</p> <p>Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey (2006), "The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies," <i>Review of International Studies</i> 32: 329-352</p> <p>Tarak Barkawi (2016), "Decolonising War," <i>European Journal of Int'l Security</i> 1(2): 199-214</p> <p>Tarak Barkawi (2015), "Diplomacy, War and World Politics," in Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B. Neumann, eds., <i>Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press</p>
07.11	<p><b>9 Intervention and state-building</b></p> <p>Lou Pingeot (2024), <i>Police Peacekeeping: The UN, Haiti, and the Production of Global Social Order</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press [PDF to be provided on mycourses]</p>
14.11	<p><b>10 Development and aid</b></p> <p>Tania Murray Li (2007), <i>The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics</i>. Duke University Press</p>
21.11	<p><b>11 Race in colonial encounters</b></p> <p>Roxanne Lynn Doty (1996), <i>Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations</i>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press</p>
28.11	<p><b>12 Global circulations</b></p> <p>Alexander D. Barder (2015), <i>Empire Within: International Hierarchy and Its Imperial Laboratories of Governance</i>. London: Routledge</p>
05.12	<p><b>13 Global indigenous politics</b></p> <p>Sheryl Lightfoot (2016), <i>Global Indigenous Politics: A Subtle Revolution</i>. New York: Routledge</p>