McGill University Department of Political Science

POLI 435  Identity and Inequality

Winter 2019 Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:05 PM-5:25 PM
Classroom: ENGMC 11

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Baert
Office: Ferrier room 426 Office Hours: TBA
Ph: 514-398-4800 (leave message)
Email: michelle.baert@mcgill.ca
Teaching Assistant: Aidan Gilchrist-Blackwood

Course Description:

Discussions of inequality can be difficult, particularly when they are connected to matters of identity. The course will consider different kinds of equality as well as questions of recognition and redistribution, tolerance, and negotiation of difference.

The course will examine the classic forms of identity eg: class, race, gender, and ethnicity but also less familiar ones such as disability, intergenerational issues, legal standing (corporations as 'people' and ecosystems as having ‘identity’) and geographic identity (climate change risk).

Prerequisites: 300 level course in comparative politics or related social science course.

Required Texts: There is no text to buy for this course.

Weekly readings, podcasts, and videos will be available on the myCourses course page as pdfs and links. These are central to the course and will be referred to in discussions, lectures, assignments, and tests. Most of the podcasts and videos have transcripts, but not all of them.

Grade Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test/Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term test (in class)</td>
<td>Thurs 7 Feb</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long essay (3000-3500 words words)</td>
<td>due Thurs 14 Mar</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Take-home Exam</td>
<td>due Thurs 18 April</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference participation</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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Specific instructions about these tests and assignments will be provided as the course proceeds.

Conferences:

This course is comprised of two lecture hours a week with the instructor, and one hour a week conferences in which students are assigned to small groupings led by teaching assistants (TAs) to discuss contemporary issues in a seminar format. This will give people a smaller setting where they can debate issues, explore concepts, and of course, get to know their
fellow students. If a student has to miss several lectures for reasons of illness or other types of emergency, the instructor or the teaching assistant (TA) should be notified. Conferences are scheduled to start during the 4th week of the term, and will be held at various times to accommodate different student schedules.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please turn off your phone. If you have a legitimate reason for using your cell phone or for coming/leaving early (i.e. a family emergency) please inform me and sit near the door.

**Additional Notes:** 1) Extra credit assignments, re-submissions, or make-up work is not permitted in this course. 2) The professor will not read rough drafts of papers prior to submission, but will discuss any problems you are having with your paper or with the course readings during office hours or by appointment. 3) Lateness penalties are available for those who have difficulties completing work on time without them; this will be negotiated with the instructor as needed.

**Policy Statements on Academic Integrity and Language**
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 for more information).

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.

**Disability Statement**
McGill University provides accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (514-398-6009) and the professor in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.
Class Schedule and Readings: Readings etc are subject to change. Please consult the myCourses course page regularly.

Week 1   Introduction

Thinking about equality; egalitarian theory

readings:
• "Democracy and the Rights Revolution" from The Rights Revolution - Michael Ignatieff

Week 2   Class

Marxism, class consciousness, redistribution

readings:
• "Recognition and distribution" and "Responses to class I: egalitarianism, respect(ability), class pride and moral boundary drawing" from The Moral Significance of Class Andrew Sayer
  Transcript here: http://billmoyers.com/api/ajax/?template=ajax-transcript&post=71448
• "Piketty’s 'Capital,' in a Lot Less than 696 Pages" by Justin Fox in Harvard Business Review

Week 3   Inequality of Belonging: Nationalism

Nationalism, populism

readings:
• "Globalization, Belonging, and the State" - Sheila Croucher
• "Populism and Nationalism" - Benjamin de Cleen

Week 4   Acceptance or Toleration: The Question of Religious Minorities

Relation between equality, toleration, and difference

readings:
• "The range of toleration: From toleration as recognition back to disrespectful tolerance" - Anna Elisabetta Galeotti
• "Toleration in the 21st Century: A Revised Liberal Defense" - Christian Fernández
Week 5    Review and Mid-term Test
Tues      Review
Thurs     Mid-Term Test

Week 6    'Identity Politics'
Historical influences, social movements, shared meaning, diversity in groups
readings:
  • video - TVO *The Agenda* "Liberalism Beyond Identity" (2017) (28min) - Mark Lilla
  • podcast: CBC *Sunday Edition* interviews philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (30min)
  • "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" - Jonathan Dean

Week 7    Equality and Difference: Race
Racial injustice, identity and marginalization.
Indigenous people, The Indian Act; Brown vs Board of Education (US)
readings:
  • video: TVO *The Agenda*: "The Indian Act Explained" (25min)
  • A short print version too: https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/21-things-you-may-not-have-known-about-the-indian-act-
  • video: TVO *The Agenda* - On the Afrocentric school debate in Toronto: Interview with renowned American educator and activist Dr. Howard Fuller during:
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJgEyfpdDHM

Week 8    Equality and Difference: Gender
Issues of identity: are identities socially constructed or essential?
Recognition vs redistribution; inclusion and state legitimacy
Readings:
  • "Towards Global Justice: An Interview with Nancy Fraser" by Marek Hrubec
  • "Gender parity and state legitimacy: From public office to corporate boards" by Julie Suk
  • "Introduction: The Diversity of Feminist Thinking" by Rosemarie Tong

Week 9    Disability and Access
Physical disabilities, learning disabilities
readings:
• "Disability Studies and the Future of Identity Politics" from Identity Politics Reconsidered - Mohanty, Moya et al
• CBC podcast "Literacy: The Medium and the Message" esp Part 1

<<< READING BREAK >>>

Week 10  Negotiating Difference: Identity, Equality, and Democratic Life

Polarization, political communication, public conversation projects

readings:
• Excerpts from: Essential Partners - Bold Explorations in Community
  https://ep.todcreative.com
• "Understanding Trump" - George Lakoff
  https://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/excerpt/2016/lakoff_trump.html
• "The Role of National Identity in Conflict Resolution: Experiences from Israeli-Palestinian Problem-Solving Workshops" from Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction - Richard D. Ashmore, Lee Jussim, and David Wilder

Week 11  Climate Justice: Geography, Wealth, and Inequality of Risk

Climate change justice, reparations

readings:
• Video from the BBC: "Should the Rich World Pay for Climate Change?" - renowned liberal philosopher Michael Sandel tackles the big question (40 min)
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0424yc4
• related article: http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-36900260

Week 12  Systems and Identity

A) Corporations as 'People'

readings:
• "Company Men:The 200-year legal struggle that led to Citizens United and gave corporations the rights of people" - Kim Phillips-Fein

B) Ecosystems as Rights-bearers?

Expanding the notion of 'personhood' to include elements of nature

readings:
• "Three rivers are now legally people – but that’s just the start of looking after them" - O'Donnell & Talbot-Jones  https://theconversation.com/three-rivers-are-now-legally-people-but-thats-just-the-start-of-looking-after-them-74983
• "Creating legal rights for rivers: lessons from Australia, New Zealand, and India" - O'Donnell & Talbot-Jones
Excerpts from: *Should Trees Have Standing? Law, Morality, and the Environment* - Christopher D. Stone

**Week 13  Review and Wrap-up**

**SYLLABUS ADDENDUM: STUDENT RESOURCES**

**Equity Advisors in the Department of Political Science**

In the context of ongoing efforts to promote strong and sustainable departmental responses to the issues of harassment and sexual misconduct, the Department of Political Science has appointed two professors to the position of equity advisor. The aim of this position is to work in cooperation with the chair and other members of the department to promote strengthened norms and practices in the department regarding preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct.

The equity advisors are available, individually or in tandem, to meet with colleagues and students to discuss questions relating to harassment, sexual misconduct, and related equity concerns, and will refer students and colleagues to the relevant specialized services and offices at McGill. They will promote awareness and application of policies and guidelines related to these issues in the department, including the *Department of Political Science Guidelines on Relationships between Instructors and Students*. The role will evolve according to Departmental needs.

Our current equity officers are Professor Kelly Gordon (kelly.gordon2@mcgill.ca) and Professor Hudson Meadwell (hudson.meadwell@mcgill.ca). Please feel free to reach out to either Professor Gordon or Professor Meadwell with any concerns in relation to this issue.

**Political Science Students’ Association (PSSA)**

The PSSA represents the students enrolled in major, minor, honours, and joint-honours undergraduate degrees in the department of political science at McGill University. They advocate for students’ needs and concerns with the aim of helping to promote students’ experience and overall wellbeing. The team offers many involvement opportunities, coordinates academic and social events and services, provides advising and student support, and enhances the relationship between students, staff, and administration as student liaisons.

Office: Leacock 420
Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/McGill.PSSA/ Website: https://www.mcgillpssa.ca
Liaison Librarian for Political Science
Need help doing research for a paper? Our very own library liaison, Sandy Hervieux, is dedicated to helping you find the sources you need as well as providing you access to software and resources to help organize and simplify the process.
sandy.hervieux@mcgill.ca
514-398-1087
McLennan Library Building

Additional Support: AUS Essay Centre

Further Student Support Resources
Student Services
Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)
Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students’ Society (SACOMSS) Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support, and Education (OSVRSE) Peer Support Centre
SSMU Walksafe / Drivesafe
McGill Students’ Nightline

On-Campus Resources / Off-Campus Resources
- emotional support and psychological services
- medical services
- safety and security services (shelters)