Course Professor: Catherine Lu
Three ways to contact during the term:
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30-3:00 pm, or by appointment.
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Course description

This graduate seminar in Political Theory examines the concepts of justice and reconciliation in response to social and political injustices in modern international history that have culminated in war, atrocity, and/or oppression. Themes to be discussed include victimhood and the sense of injustice; accountability and punishment; law, politics and morality; compensatory and rectificatory justice; reparation and disgorgement; benefiting from injustice; individual, corporate, and collective responsibility; historic injustice; transitional justice; structural injustice; moral and political responsibility; self-determination; alienation; and reconciliation. The course will focus on the concepts and practices of justice and reconciliation in modern international and transnational relations, focusing on colonialism and settler colonialism.

The specific objectives of the course are (1) to clarify the concepts of justice and reconciliation, (2) to identify, understand and assess different conceptions/forms of each as responses to various contexts of political injustice and harms, (3) to engage in a critical evaluation of existing practices of justice and reconciliation, especially in response to colonial and settler colonial injustice and alienation. The general objectives of the course include developing the ability to evaluate political and philosophical arguments critically, and improving the skills of communicating normative and interpretative arguments in oral discussion and written work.

Required texts

The following books are available for purchase at Paragrampe Bookstore, 2220 McGill College Ave. In addition, some required readings are available through myCourses, other internet sources, and/or the McGill library on-line e-book or journal system. Books are also on course reserve at the McGill library.
Books to purchase:

- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Atlantic, 2008 [1952]).

**Grade distribution**

Your course grade will be assessed as follows:

- Seminar participation 25%
- Two short papers 20%
- Book review 10%
- Research paper proposal 5%
- Research paper 40%

**Assignments**

1. Research paper proposal: *to be submitted any time before or on Monday, November 11*. *(Please note that this deadline is firm for everyone, including TAs)*. The proposal should be 5 pages maximum (single-spaced), and include a clear statement of your thesis question, identification of the relevant literature, main arguments or debates to be examined, and bibliography, which should consist of two or three major works from the syllabus as well as sources from the wider literature.

2. Research paper (maximum 8,000 words or 25 double-spaced pages) on a question related to the course themes and readings. Students should meet with the Course Professor and formulate their own precise essay topics, and essay topics must be approved in advance *(by October 28)*. The final draft of the research paper is due on *Monday, December 9, by 4:00 pm*, in PDF by email and in hard copy in Leacock 414. Papers will lose 1/3 of a letter grade per day late. If students are seriously ill or distracted by a serious emergency, it is their responsibility to inform me before the paper is due so that we can make other arrangements. Those students employed as Teaching Assistants during this term will receive an automatic two-week extension (due date, Monday, December 23).

3. Two short papers (maximum 2 pages, single-spaced) on assigned readings for the week. Assignments for short papers will be determined in the first two weeks of the course. *These papers must be distributed via email to all class participants by 9 pm, the Sunday night before each seminar*. This gives everyone time to read the papers, which will launch the seminar discussions. The short paper should identify a key argument or point of contention among the readings for the week, and provide a critical evaluation of it. The short paper should also end with a few key questions, either generated by the key argument or point of contention identified, or more generally, raised by the week’s readings. Please note that if you miss the 9 pm Sunday deadline, you will have to sign up for another week.
4. Seminar participation: This is a graduate seminar, so there will be as little lecturing as possible. It is up to students to advance the discussion. The seminar participation grade will be an average of your grades from your ten best 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; if it is fair to good (you have not really developed a point of view based on reasoned analysis of the assigned material and/or your comments are inaccurate and inconsistent) you will receive a C-range grade; if it is poor (you have barely grasped the point of the assigned reading) you will get a D; if it’s clear that you have not done the reading at all, you will receive an F; and if you fail to attend, you will earn a 0 for that day.

5. Book review: The book review (of a book based on a list to be provided on MyCourses on September 4) should be between 1000-1200 words, and provide a concise summary of the book’s main arguments and contributions to relevant literatures, as well as critically assess their rigour, coherence, and cogency. The summary should be less than 500 words, so most of the review should be concerned with assessment and outlining avenues of critique. The review should have less than 3 references (other than to the book itself), and contain be no more than one or two direct quotations from the book. The final date of submission of reviews (by email as Word document) is Friday, October 18. These reviews will subsequently be distributed to your classmates, so that you will have a compilation of reviews of recent books.

Policies

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

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 Chartre 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).

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 www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).
L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/.

Course schedule

*Please note that there is a special seminar on Friday, September 27, 2019, 2-5 pm, Arts Building, room 160 (Arts Council Room) of visiting speaker, Colleen Murphy. This event counts as one of 13 sessions for this course.

1. September 9 / Introduction
   Required reading:

2. September 16 / Victimhood and Injustice
   Required reading:

3. September 23 / Punishment and Legal Accountability
   Required reading:
   Recommended reading:
   - Catherine Lu, Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics, Chapter 3.
4. Special Seminar: Friday, September 27 / Transitional Justice  
2-4 pm, Arts 160  
Guest: Colleen Murphy, ‘When does a process of transition justice qualify as just?’  
Required reading:  
- Paper by Murphy to be distributed on September 20.  

5. September 30 / Complicity and Collective Contexts  
Required reading:  
Recommended reading:  

6. October 7 / Rectifying Historic Injustice  
Required reading:  
Recommended reading:  

Monday, October 14 – Thanksgiving – no class

7. October 21 / Benefiting from Injustice  
Required reading:  
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations”  
  https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/  [Internet source]  

Recommended reading:

8. October 28 / The Concept of Structural Injustice

Required reading:

Recommended reading:
• Sally Haslanger, ‘What is a (social) structural explanation?’ *Philosophical Studies* (2015)

9. November 4 / Colonialism as Structural Injustice

Required reading:

Recommended reading:

10. November 11 / Alienation and Racial Oppression

Required reading:
• Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, R. Philcox, trans., (New York: Grove Press, 2008 [1952]), Introduction (pp. xi-xviii), Chapter 1 (pp. 1-23), Chapters 3-5 (pp. 45-119), Chapters 7-8 (pp. 185-206). [Book purchase.]
Recommended reading:


11. November 18 / Recognition and Reconciliation within Settler Colonialism

Required reading:

- *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* [Internet source.]

Recommended reading:

- Truth and Reconciliation commission, *Calls to Action*

12. November 25 / Self-Determination and Self-Realization

Required reading:


13. December 2 / Strategies of Redress: Decolonization and Structural Change

Required reading: