1- Course Description

A little over ten years ago, the International Studies Association created a new section called International Political Sociology (IPS) and launched a scientific journal under the same name shortly thereafter. These institutional developments attest that IPS has become a vibrant approach in the study of world politics. Taking stock of this exciting new research program, this course starts from the premise that, even though context matters greatly (in the sense that politics is by nature historically and culturally contingent), there is nothing about global relations that sets them entirely apart from other social dynamics. The main analytical focus will be on the political constitution of social artifacts such as institutions, practices, identities, norms, fields and organizations, which are pervasive across human configurations, global or otherwise.

This year, the course will deal with a subfield of IPS, Global Historical Sociology (GHS), which sits at the confluence of global history and political sociology. Still a relatively recent development in IR, GHS is confronting some of the most vexing issues faced by the discipline, including race, inequality, colonialism, non-Western worlds, capitalism, religion, gender, technology, and many others. GHS also helps understand why history is “the mother of all social sciences,” and a necessary endeavor for any serious student of world politics. We will discuss a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches to global history that use the political sociology lens, broadly construed.

The course pursues three main objectives. First, it seeks to critically assess the merits and limits of approaching international politics from a political-sociological perspective. In particular, the class intends to equip graduate students with the proper tools to make sense of the theoretical pluralism that characterizes IPS. Second and related, the course moves from theory to practice in exploring the various ways in which IPS frameworks and conceptual tools can be put to work in the actual study of world politics. Third, the class aims to train students in efficient reading of theoretically complex materials. More specifically, students are expected to be able to identify, in a systematic and rigorous way, the main arguments of a text, as well as to develop an original and internal critique that builds on competing IR theories and approaches.

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 discussions involving students. Please note that this research seminar is articulated around students’ questions, concerns and discussions. In order to fully benefit from discussions, it is crucial not only to complete all the readings, but also to reflect about them prior to the course. The reading load is heavy and requires sustained work.
3- Materials

There is a total of 22 books assigned for this class. These were pre-ordered from the bookstore, although most of the books are also available in e-format (some restrictions may apply). Articles and chapters are to be downloaded through the McGill library system on an individual basis.

4- Course Requirements

There are three requirements for this class:

1) Participation (20%): students are expected to take an active part in discussions and debates, as well as to show a high level of preparedness, which involves not only reading the materials but also reflecting about them ahead of class. Starting on the second week, the participation grade also includes weekly discussion memos, which consist of short (1-page max., ideally shorter) explorations of an aspect of the readings that the student found intriguing or problematic. Discussion memos must be circulated electronically to the group (including the instructor) by Monday at noon, except when a critical essay is to be submitted the same week.

2) Critical essays (2 X 20%): critical essays take the form of 2,000-words critical reviews of two pairs of books assigned (see the list below). Essays should contain two main parts: an analytical summary of the key arguments presented in the books (max. 750 words) and an original critique questioning and comparing them. The critique should be internal (it must “ride the bicycle” of the argument, that is, critique it for what it is trying to do) and, where relevant, refer to the IR literatures. As students will be invited to give a short oral presentation based on their essay as a springboard for in-class discussions, they must hand in their essay at the beginning of the class; failure to do so will result in a zero mark. Note that in order to balance coursework the first essay must be submitted by February 18th, 2019.

3) Take-home exam (40%): the take-home exam requires students to wrap up their learning experience by discussing the various materials covered in the course. A choice of two wide-ranging questions will be handed out at the end of the last class; students will then have two days or forty-eight hours to prepare an answer and submit it to the instructor. Students should not only develop an original argument (i.e., take an analytical stance) but also show breadth and depth of knowledge of the IR theoretical landscape, starting with GHS. Connections across authors and frameworks, as well as references to key debates in GHS and IR more largely, are particularly encouraged. Note that the late penalty does not apply for 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 Policy

Office hours are held weekly on Tuesdays, 10-11am. Priority will be given to students who come in person to the instructor’s office (Leacock 324C) on a first come, first serve basis. It is also possible to set an appointment via email.
Legitimate email inquiries will normally be answered within two business days. If you do not receive a reply within this period, please resubmit your question(s). Questions of general interest will be answered in class only. Extensive advice or feedback on students’ works should be sought in person during weekly office hours or by appointment.

6- Late penalties and extensions

Late penalty on the virtual proposal amounts to 2 percent of the final course grade per day, including weekends and holidays. Due to the fact that critical essays are discussed during the same class as they are submitted, late submissions will not be accepted and result in a zero grade. Essays will not be accepted via email and must be handed in in the classroom itself. Students are responsible for keeping safe both a paper and an electronic copy of any submitted papers, and to retain marked assignments until the end of the term.

Extensions are not granted except in cases consistent with the Faculty of Arts’ guidelines. Be prepared to provide all the relevant documentation (medical notes with clear date indications, etc.). Students should advise the instructor about extensions prior to deadline if possible and at most one week later.

7- Plagiarism

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). 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.

8- Disabilities and other special needs

Students with learning disabilities should advise the instructor as soon as possible. They should also contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (398-6009, www.mcgill.ca/osd). Arrangements can also be made to accommodate special needs such as religion, chronic illness, social discomfort or else.

Students facing personal issues are invited to seek help with McGill’s Counselling Service (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).
## 9- Course Schedule

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<th>Readings</th>
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| 07.01.20   | **What is GHS and where does it come from?**  
| 14.01.20   | **GHS as research program**  
| 21.01.20   | **Social configurations and relational structures**  
| 28.01.20   | **Emergence of sovereignty**  
| 04.02.20   | **Changing international orders**  
| 11.02.20   | **The rise of the West**  
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<th>Authors and Titles</th>
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