LIBERALISM AND IMPERIALISM
POLSCI 715 / GLOBALST 716
Term 2, Winter 2021

Instructor: Inder S. Marwah
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Lecture: Wednesday, 8:30-11:20
Classroom: online

Office Hours: By appointment

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Last updated 08DEC2020
Course Description
As a political philosophy, liberalism is animated by basic commitments to moral universalism, political equality and the preservation of individual rights and freedoms. Yet the modern era during which it developed was also a time of unprecedented colonial and imperial expansion, from Europe to the rest of the world. What is the relationship between Western, liberal political thought and the project of imperialism? How were theories grounding universal human rights and political egalitarianism made compatible with, and even used to justify, imperial and colonial domination? How should we – contemporary liberals and non-liberals alike – think about traditions of political thought mired in historical injustice and exclusion?

This course will examine the complex and often contradictory relationship, both historical and conceptual, between liberal political theory and imperialism. We will read canonical thinkers in the history of modern political thought in order to examine not only how they defended or criticized imperialism, but also, how they perceived the non-European world. In so doing, we will pay particular attention their conceptualizations of history, human development, diversity/difference, progress, and civilization.

We will proceed (roughly) chronologically, moving from the early modern era in which liberalism’s foundations were laid, to the Enlightenment, to the 19th century’s high period of liberal imperialism, to a range of 20th century responses and reflections on the legacy and ongoing impacts of empire and domination in liberal political thought. While our focus is squarely on liberalism, we will not be restricted to it. We will examine the roots of liberalism, treating the conceptual moorings preceding any recognizably liberal doctrine (but that have been retrospectively incorporated into the “tradition”); we will engage its critics and interlocutors, past and present; and we will occasionally delve into neighbouring ideologies and political philosophies (Marxism in particular) when it helps shed light on our concerns.

This course is a research seminar. As a seminar, it will require significant student participation; regular attendance, careful preparation and active involvement will be essential. As a research course, students will be expected to read extensive primary and secondary texts, particularly in preparing the final paper.

Course Objectives
Students will develop

- their comprehension of liberalism and imperialism’s historical and conceptual relationship
- advanced critical thinking, presentation, and research skills
Required Materials and Texts


- Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014)


- Online Course Pack (OCP; will be posted on Avenue); Online Resources (OL)

Class Format
The course will meet for a three-hour seminar weekly over Zoom. Each session will involve some (very light) lecturing, group discussions and student presentations.

Course Evaluation – Overview
1. Attendance & participation (20%)

2. Student presentations/seminar moderation (20%)

3. Paper presentation (10%)

4. Research paper (50%), due Mar. 24, 2021

Course Evaluation – Details
This year’s seminar will be online and synchronous. I have made a few adjustments to the course accordingly, and remain entirely open to suggestion if you’d like us to consider other changes in approach/format.

Your attendance and participation (20%) grade will be gauged by consistent attendance, and by active and informed participation. You will be expected to have completed the readings and be ready to discuss them. As a graduate seminar, the course will revolve around our discussion of the salient issues, rather than lectures; the expectation will be that you’ve read and understood the materials, and that you’ve thought about what we should discuss from them.

Each student will be responsible for two presentations/seminar moderations (20%).
The first will be an **individual presentation/seminar moderation**, for which you will sign up on the first day of the course. As presenter/leader, you should aim to do several things.

- First, your presentation should *briefly* introduce the central themes and ideas in the week’s readings. This should *not* be the focus of your presentation, but should rather just take a minute or two to situate the central ideas in question.
- Secondly, and more importantly, the presentation should raise what you think are the most interesting, controversial, and/or perplexing ideas, themes or conundrums stemming from the week’s readings. You are more than welcome (but not obligated) to go beyond the readings themselves; you should feel free to introduce any additional ideas, examples or materials (from the recommended readings or from outside of them) that you think will help us to sort through what’s most interesting about the week’s theme. In short, the presentation should raise the ideas or arguments that you think we need to discuss as a class, and should include a few questions to that end. Overall, then, it aims to have you critically evaluate what’s most important for us to think about and to initiate our discussions on the subject, to which I will add my own questions and comments.
- Third, you will serve as the seminar’s moderator for the session: while I will of course help steer things to some degree, the idea is to have you largely guide the discussion.

The second presentation will follow the **same format, only with one of your peers.** This will require you to meet with your presentation partner ahead of time to plan your presentation and leadership of the seminar.

The **research paper (50%)** will be 6000-8000 words, and will be on a topic of your own choosing. It can be based on the themes/ideas/readings from the course, or on a different subject altogether (within the constraints of the course’s subject, broadly speaking, and subject to my approval). You are required to discuss your paper topic with me ahead of time to have it approved. The paper will be due, by email, on Mar. 24, 2021.

Our final class, on Apr. 14, will be dedicated to your **research paper presentations (10%)** – we will run something of a mini-conference on your work. Each student will prepare a 15-minute presentation based on your research paper – its subject, central ideas, and/or research question. The purpose of the presentation is threefold. First, it will provide you with an opportunity to develop presentation skills in a friendly and collegial environment; this aims to prepare you to present papers at professional academic conferences. Second, it will allow us all to learn a bit about what everyone is working on. Third, it will enable both me and other students to ask a few questions and offer some constructive criticisms regarding your paper.
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Jan 13) Introduction

   Topic: Introduction: What is Liberalism?

Reading:

-Duncan Bell, “The Dream Machine: On Liberalism and Empire”. OCP

Recommended:


-Mehta, Liberalism and Empire, Introduction.


Week 2 (Jan 20) Working the Land Right

   Topic: Working the Land Right: Locke and Property in America

Reading:

-John Locke, Two Treatises of Government. If you’ve read Locke’s Treatises way too many times, just read Chapter 5; if it’s been a while (or if you haven’t read it way too many times), read Chapters 1-5. OL

-David Armitage, “John Locke: Theorist of Empire?”, in Sankar Muthu (ed) Empire and Modern Political Thought (Cambridge, 2012), 84-111. OCP


-Onur Ulas Ince, Colonial Capitalism and the Dilemmas of Liberalism, ch. 2. OCP

Recommended:

Week 3 (Jan 27) Philosophical Histories

   Topic: Philosophical Histories: Race, Difference and Distance

   Reading:


   Recommended:


**Week 4 (Feb 3) Tocqueville**

**Topic: Tocqueville: Liberalism, Republicanism and Colonialism in Algeria**

*** PLEASE NOTE: WE CAN REPLACE TOCQUEVILLE WITH EITHER J. S. MILL OR EDMUND BURKE, DEPENDING ON YOUR INTERESTS. IF WE OPT TO DO SO, I WILL PROVIDE A DIFFERENT SET OF READINGS (REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED). WE WILL DECIDE ON THIS IN THE FIRST SEMINAR.***

**Reading:**

- Pitts, Introduction to Tocqueville, *Writings on Empire and Slavery*.


**Recommended:**

- Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, Ch. 6, 7.


**Week 5 (Feb 10) Liberalism, Imperialism and Capitalism**

**Topic: Liberalism, Imperialism and Capitalism**

**Reading:**


- Kevin Anderson, Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity and Non-Western Societies (University of Chicago Press, 2010), 22-55, 196-198, 208-218. OCP

Recommended:


- Terrell Carver, Marx (Polity, 2018).


- Shlomo Avineri (ed) Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization: His Despatches and Other Writings on China, India, Mexico, the Middle East and North Africa (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968).

Week 6 (Feb 17) Mid-term Recess – NO CLASS

Week 7 (Feb 24) Hobson and Lenin

   Topic: Hobson and Lenin on Imperialism

Reading:


**Recommended:**


**Week 8 (Mar 3) Indian Liberalism and its Critics**

**Topic:** Indian Liberalism and its Critics

**Reading:**


**Recommended:**

- Bayly, *Recovering Liberties* (remainder).

- Shruti Kapila (ed) *An Intellectual History for India* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).


**Week 9 (Mar 10) Liberalism, Recognition and Indigeneity in Canada**

**Topic: Liberalism, Recognition and Indigeneity in Canada**

**Reading:**

-Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*.

**Recommended:**


**Week 10 (Mar 17) Anticolonial Nationalism, Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism**

**Topic: Anticolonial Nationalism, Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism**

**Reading:**

-Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*. 
Recommended:


Week 11 (Mar 24) BREAK WEEK – RELAX AND AVOID ZOOM!

Week 12 (Mar 31) The Critique of Neo-Colonialism

   Topic: The Critique of Neo-Colonialism, and a Civic Alternative

Reading:


- Tully, “On Global Citizenship”.

Recommended:


Week 13 (Apr 7) Moving Forward?

Topic: Moving Forward? Liberalism and Progress, Past and Present

Reading:

- Thomas McCarthy, Race, Empire and the Idea of Human Development (Cambridge University Press, 2009), Ch. 5, Conclusion. OCP

- David Scott, “The Traditions of Historical Others”, Symposia on Gender, Race and Philosophy 8 (1) 2012. OCP

Recommended:


- Jürgen Habermas, “Kant’s Idea of Perpetual Peace, with the Benefit of 200 Years’ Hindsight”, in James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (eds), Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitan Ideal (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).


Week 14 (Apr 14) IN-CLASS MINI-CONFERENCE

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments
The paper will be submitted by email on Mar. 24.

Grades
Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

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<th>MARK</th>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-90</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
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Late Assignments
All students will be granted a one-week extension on the final paper, by request. If you opt to use the extension, please let me know by email a minimum of one week prior to the paper’s due date.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness
Beyond the above, extensions for the paper will ONLY be extended to students unable to submit in time due to extraordinary circumstances. This will require official documentation (for example, an official medical certificate) explaining your circumstances.

Courses with an On-Line Element
Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring
Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection
Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.
All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

**Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

**Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

**Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
• plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
• improper collaboration in group work.
• copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Conduct Expectations
As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy
Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification
The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.
**Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.