

POL377H1 F

## Violence, Development, and Difference

University of Toronto  
Political Science  
Fall 2022

Wed 6-8pm EST, SS 1070  
Office hours: Wed 8-9pm SS 1070, Tue. 4:30-5:30pm SS 3052  
or by appointment



“The Cry of the Excluded” by Oswaldo Guayasamin

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. María J. Méndez, [maria.mendez@utoronto.ca](mailto:maria.mendez@utoronto.ca)

### Course Overview

International organizations such as the World Bank view violence as “development in reverse,” that is, as one of the most serious obstacles to development due to its negative effects on human welfare and economic growth. However, there are many more ways in which violence and development intertwine. Historically, one can note a mutually reinforcing relation between colonial violence and capitalist development. More recently, international development projects (such as the construction of dams for “clean energy”) have had deadly consequences for subaltern peoples and their different cultural, political, and economic ways of being in the world. This course explores the contentious links between violence and development by focusing attention on the problem of difference, that is, the diverse visions of social life held by those inhabiting the margins of the Global South.

Guided by authors that center the colonial encounter and its legacies, this course will challenge you to make sense of the relationship between violence and development on your own terms. Rather than accumulating information on a conceptual object named violence or development, the focus of our course will be on gaining a critical perspective from which to understand the pressing political issues of the global present—including the exorbitant levels of violence affecting certain parts of the world—and how colonial pasts and presents intersect with these realities.

## Grading and due dates

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- Attendance and participation: 10%
- Learning paragraphs: 30% *weekly recurrent (weeks 2-12) by 11:59pm EST, day before session*
- Critical-creative assignment: 10% *October 12 by 11:59pm EST*
- First take-home assignment: 25% *November 2 by 11:59pm EST*
- Final take-home assignment: 25% *December 7 by 11:59pm EST*

## Assessment

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*Where needed, rubrics, prompts, and further details will be provided at least one week in advance.*

### **Attendance & Participation: 10%**

While I will occasionally lecture, this is a discussion-based class. As such, your participation is essential for the success of the course. You are expected to arrive on time and stay until the end of the session. In addition to attending each session, you should come prepared with thoughtful questions and comments about the assigned materials. Participation will not be evaluated based on how much you speak but on the quality of the insights you share and your fruitful engagement with the views of others. Active participation in class also means being a good listener and contributing to in-class group activities. Writing exercises, where you will demonstrate close engagement with the assigned materials, will be an important component of these activities. These writings will not be graded individually but they will count toward your participation grade.

### **Learning paragraphs (weekly engagements) 3% x 10: 30%**

Every Tuesday before class by 11:59pm, from week 2 to 12 (except reading week 9), you will submit a learning paragraph (200-300 words) about the week's assigned materials that references at least one reading. A learning paragraph is a brief writing exercise that gives you the opportunity to reflect on course materials through unanswered questions, criticisms, connections to your life experiences (and popular art forms you are familiar with such as memes, songs, movies, games, etc.) or creative extensions of the readings and films. Here are some open-ended questions that you can respond to in this paragraph: What are the key ideas in the reading and how do they relate to what I already know? How do the materials connect to each other or to other readings/films I have explored in class? How do the readings connect to my everyday life? What remains unclear in the readings and why? What is lacking in the author's analysis? Given the brevity of these paragraphs, do not quote author's exact words in the text but express key ideas in your own words. I will not provide individual comments on weekly paragraphs. Rather, I will give collective feedback during class. Your lowest grade will be dropped.

### **Critical-creative assignment: 10%**

I will hand out a prompt to which you will respond using any creative medium. This is a chance for you to be experimental and express your understanding in formats that you might not typically employ.

### **First take-home assignment\*: 25%**

You will write a 2-3 single-spaced paper where I will ask you to engage closely with the arguments made by a specific author.

### **Final take-home assignment\*: 25%**

Drawing on your notes, learning paragraphs, and close engagement with course materials, you will write an analytical essay (2-3 page single-spaced) that grapples with a question or prompt I will provide in advance.

*\*Paper format:* 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins.

## **Course policies**

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### **Personal Accessibility Needs**

All students are welcome in the course and should provide reasonable prior notice to facilitate any needed disability accommodation. To arrange accommodations contact the Accessibility Services staff: Phone: 416-978-8060; E-mail: [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca).

### **Assignments**

*Submission:* Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must be submitted on Quercus and sent to my email by 11:59 pm on their due date.

*Late penalty:* Assignments will receive a late penalty of 5%/day, including weekends, and will only be accepted within 7 days of when they were due. Moreover, feedback on late assignments is not guaranteed.

*Extensions, make-ups, and incompletes:* These will not be granted unless you meet one of the University's identified exceptions (official documentation is required). If you are absent for legitimate reasons, such as illness or injury, report your absence through the online absence declaration form available on ACORN and contact me to arrange an accommodation. You must submit appropriate documentation within a week of your missed assignment.

*Grade appeals:* If you believe that I have given you an unfair grade, you may request a re-evaluation of the assignment. Grading appeals must be submitted after 48 hours and within 72 hours of receiving the graded assignment. They should be sent to my email with a cover letter detailing the reasons for the appeal. Please note that a re-evaluation doesn't guarantee a change in your letter grade; it can result in the same or lower grade.

### **Fostering a Positive Learning Environment**

Effective learning can only occur in a positive classroom environment; therefore, we have a shared responsibility in ensuring that everyone in the class feels welcome to contribute. As your course instructor, I am committed to fostering a learning community that recognizes your inherent worth and dignity. This means that I will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or hate speech.

Over the course of this class we will be discussing issues of violence and oftentimes it is easy to forget the real human suffering involved in these events. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to continually recognize that we are talking about things and events that impacted real people and speak about them with due respect. Everyone enters the classroom with their own unique perspective and relationship to historical events. Events that seem historically abstract to you may have involved the family or friends of a classmate. It is critical that we take care to recognize this as we go through class.

## Office Hours

This class will require you to digest and synthesize a large range of materials, therefore I encourage you to attend office hours early and often or contact me to set up an appointment. Here are some reasons why you might attend office hours:

- You need clarification on a concept, aspect of class discussion, or reading.
- You want to discuss course materials or topics further.
- You want to chat about a topic related to course materials.
- You have a question, concern, or comment about the course.
- You need to ask a question about an assignment that is specific to you.

## Communication policy

We will communicate via our University of Toronto e-mails. I will not respond to any messages sent through Quercus. You are expected to check your email on a consistent basis to stay abreast of any important course updates. When emailing me regarding the course please include in the subject line the course number (POL 377) and a short description of your query. I will try to respond to your message within 2 to 3 business days, Monday-Friday (8:00am-5:00pm). Please plan accordingly for urgent queries and conduct all communication (electronic and otherwise) in a professional manner, using adequate salutations.

## Academic integrity

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense punishable by the university. Examples of plagiarism include copying another's work without attribution, falsifying records, cheating on tests, and submitting your own previous work. For advice on how to avoid plagiarism see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>). If you wish to opt out of the university's plagiarism detection tool, email me no later than September 21, 2022.

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## Course support

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If you are struggling in the course in personal or academic ways and/or need special accommodations, here are some helpful resources available to you:

- For mental health: <https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/>
- For writing: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>
- For research: <https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/research-help>
- For religious accommodations: <http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation>
- For other support contact the Registrar's Office: <https://future.utoronto.ca/current-students/registrars/>

## Course schedule

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Readings or films that are not available at the hyperlinks provided below or at the library database (<https://search.library.utoronto.ca/index>) will be made available through Quercus. I recommend engaging with materials in the order in which they are listed. Please note that this schedule is subject to modification.

### Week 1

**September 14**— Introduction: What is this course about? — No reading

### Week 2

**September 21**—The violent conflict-development nexus (according to international development institutions)

IDRB/World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*, Part 1 (49-93).  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4389>  
Michael Watts, “Economies of Violence: Reflections on the World Development Report 2011.”

### Week 3

**September 28** — Colonial violence I

Aimé Césaire, “Discourse on Colonialism”  
Film: Raoul Peck, *Exterminate all the Brutes*, Episodes 1-2  
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/utoronto/video/11265068>

### Week 4

**October 5** — Colonial violence II

Frantz Fanon, “On Violence”  
Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, “#ItEndsHere: Rebelling against colonial gender violence”  
<https://rabble.ca/feminism/itendshere-rebelling-against-colonial-gender-violence/>

### Week 5

**October 12** — Race and capitalist development I

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Chapter 4  
Film: Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther*, <https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/audiocine/play/6c46a9b4b0230805?referrer=marc>

\*\*\*Critical-creative assignment (10%) due October 12\*\*\*

## Week 6

### October 19 — Race and capitalist development II

Karl Marx, "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation"  
Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Chapter 5

## Week 7

### October 26 — Gender and capitalist development III

Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, Introduction and Chapters 4 & 5

## Week 8

### November 2 — Development and the erasure of difference I

Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Introduction  
Gustavo Esteva and Arturo Escobar, "Post-Development @ 25: on 'being stuck' and moving forward, sideways, backward and otherwise"

*\*\*\*First take-home assignment (25%) due November 2\*\*\**

## Week 9

### November 9 — Reading week, no class

## Week 10

### November 16 — The violence of development I (Online zoom session)

Guest lecture by Dr. Túlio Zille. Materials TBD.

*\*\*\*Last day to drop course is November 16\*\*\**

## Week 11

### November 23 — The violence of development II

Arundhati Roy, “The greater common good”

Film: James Cameron, *Avatar*,

<https://media3-criterionpic-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/htbin/wwform/006?T=F030776>

## Week 12

### **November 30 — Decolonial responses**

Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*, Chapters 1 & 5.

Pamela Yates, *500 Years: Life in Resistance*, <https://utoronto.kanopy.com/video/500-years>

## Week 13

### **December 7 — Conclusion: What did we learn? — No reading**

Final assignment due (25%).