



Political Science

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

POL486H1S-2205HS: POSTCOLONIAL DEBATES in IR Winter 2023

Time: Mondays, 12-2pm EST (Starts at 12:10pm)

Delivery: In person | **Course Location:** SS2114

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Office: SS3112

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30-3:30pm EST or by appointment (virtual or in person)

Online Platforms: Quercus

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OVERVIEW

This course examines the foundations and evolution of postcolonial International Relations (IR), to situate its legacies, changes, and continuities. What is postcolonial IR, and what does it mean for the discipline of IR? Why/how has postcolonial IR emerged and evolved? Long held at the margins of the discipline of IR, it is now seeing renewed interest, particularly given its analytical value for examining issues of *race and racism in IR*. We cover key themes in postcolonial IR such as *otherness, difference, representation, knowledge/power*. We also examine what it means to undertake *decolonial and anticolonial knowledge production* in IR. The course is analytically divided in two connected parts. The first part teases out core theoretical tenets of postcolonial IR. The second part covers how postcolonial IR can be empirically deployed. These two components will always be intertwined in our discussions. For example, throughout the course, we examine the empirical relevance of applying postcolonial lenses to key issues in IR, such as north-south cooperation, global environmental politics, foreign policy, global capitalism, war.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course seeks to create a space through which students will be able to:

- (1) Understand complex conceptualizations of postcolonialism, its foundations and evolution, and its relevance to IR theory.
- (2) Identify and discuss core issues, actors, structures, and theoretical debates on the dynamics between postcolonialism and IR theory.
- (3) Apply postcolonial lenses to empirical issues in International Relations.
- (4) Develop critical analytical skills that can inform their reading, their writing, their classroom discussions, and their work beyond the classroom.

COURSE MATERIAL & READINGS

The required reading material include academic and non-academic articles, books, chapters from books, as well as (occasionally) some video and audio material. Links will be provided wherever relevant.

- All articles and books in this syllabus are available through your UofT library account.
- All other non-academic material will be accessible online, and links will be provided.
- You can access all readings directly on your own, though direct links will also be available via the Quercus reading list.

EXPECTATIONS

This course will be delivered *weekly* in a *seminar* format. Students are expected to:

- Read (and watch/listen as relevant) all course material prior to seminars, to better comprehend the material discussions, as well as to better prepare for discussions and assignments.
- Attend and participate in all weekly seminars, be actively engaged, and be informed by the course material in their classroom discussions and assignments.
- Complete all assignments by the set deadlines.

EQUITY, HUMAN RIGHTS & DIVERSITY

- “The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of *mutual respect* where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another’s differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.”
- Please don’t hesitate to come to me for concerns or questions regarding these matters. Feel free to contact the University’s dedicated team on related issues. For e.g. the Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office at antiracism@utoronto.ca; the Sexual and Gender Diversity Office at sgdo@utoronto.ca.

COMMUNICATION

- Kindly use the subject line “**POL486-2205**” in all email correspondence.
- Please be **courteous** in your email communication.
- Only use **your @mail.utoronto.ca** address in communication with me about this course, to avoid your message being directed in the spam folder.
- I am happy to answer questions via email during the course. Before emailing me, please make sure to follow these steps:
 - Carefully check your **syllabus** for an answer to your question.
 - If the answer is not in your syllabus, please check **Quercus**, as we will aim to address all common/repeated questions on that platform.
 - If none of the above holds the answer, feel free to contact me.
 - If a live conversation will be more efficient to address your question, I will recommend a meeting during office hours or during an appointed timeslot.
- I will do my best to respond to your emails in a timely manner. Please allow between 48h to 72h of response time, excluding weekends and holidays.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

All written assignments are to be submitted electronically via Quercus.

- **Participation** (15%)
 - Ongoing
- **Seminar Lead** (25%)
 - Ongoing
- **Book Review** (25%)
 - Due Monday **Feb 27**

**** *MARCH 19, 2023 – Last day to withdraw from the course* ****

- **Research Paper** (35%)
 - Due Friday **April 14**

DETAILS OF EVALUATION

Since this course involves 4th year undergraduate students as well as graduate students, there may sometimes be different grading standards/requirements for each level (see details below).

Participation: 15%

Active and sustained engagement with the readings is central to your learning in the course. Since this is a seminar, students are expected to complete the required readings (and videos/audios if indicated) prior to each seminar, ready to engage in discussions during class.

Keeping some possible active reading prompts in mind can help facilitate your contributions. For example:

- What is the common issue/thread raised in the readings? Think of the main issue(s), argument(s), and/or key concept(s).
- What is a piece of information, an issue, challenge, etc. that intrigued or surprised or confused you in your readings?
- Think of relevant examples of your own (from history, or current affairs, or everyday life, or personal experience), that relate to the core issue(s) at stake across the readings.
- Think of an open-ended discussion question for the class.

Seminar Lead: 25%

This course is designed to be a space of active learning. One way to foster active learning in this course is having students lead a seminar session as a small group assignment:

- Students will **lead 1h** (out of 2) of weekly seminars, **from week 3 to week 11**. As the instructor, I will take over facilitation again in the second hour of the seminar.
- This is a **group assignment**. Students will be in **groups of 2 or 3** (based on class size).
- Seminar leads are expected to read the week's material, and to engage the class into discussions, including facilitating the class's understanding of key concepts.
- The following will contribute to effectively leading a seminar, and are key to the assessment:

- Thorough engagement with all assigned material for that week.
- Active learning strategies used to engage the whole class. Keep in mind different learning styles/levels, etc.
- Innovativeness of strategies. Feel free to use online platforms prior and during the seminar (e.g. Quercus discussion boards, breakout groups, games, etc.) **Be creative!**
- Each group leading a 1h seminar session will receive the same grade.

Book Review: 25%

You will write a book review, which will be a critical analysis of one of these two books:

- **Getachew, Adom. 2019. *Worldmaking after Empire*. Princeton University Press.**
- **Vitalis, Robert. 2016. *White World Order, Black Power Politics*. Cornell University Press.**
 - 5-6 pages (all levels)
 - No additional bibliography required, though feel free to cite any relevant references as needed in your analysis.
 - The following are guiding questions that can help you frame your analysis. This list is of course not exhaustive.
 - What is the central message of this book (thesis/core arguments)?
 - What key theme, concept, or theory from the course can best help you evaluate the key arguments from the book? How does this book speak to other relevant issues/debates covered in the course?
 - What is the most important argument/finding that you learned from this book (i.e., something that you did not previously know from your IR training), which has significantly reshaped your understanding of IR?
 - What do you agree and/or disagree with from the core message? Be sure to provide an analysis rather than an opinion, by backing up your position (e.g., theoretically and/or empirically).
 - Can you identify any gaps in the arguments presented in the book?
 - Can you identify alternative narratives/accounts to the core arguments presented in the book? Explain why/how these alternative narratives are important to consider.
 - What are some key implications of this book for mainstream IR? For postcolonial IR?

Final research paper: 35%

- The research paper is designed to allow students to choose a topic of their choice, based on their interest in a specific theme/concept/issue from the course material.
- You can be inspired by issues tackled in the readings, in class discussions, or be informed by outside sources/events that speak to the themes covered in the course.
- Research papers should include: a guiding research question; a theoretical framework, a core argument (thesis); an outline; developed arguments (supported by empirical illustrations) and a bibliography.
- Identifying a compelling research question is often the hardest part. You are expected to write a research paper that will answer a research question you have identified.
- As this is a research paper, you should show **research beyond the course material**,

though of course you can still use course material as relevant. The stronger your research of relevant literature will be, the more informed your analysis will be, and the stronger your paper will be.

- Required Length (excluding bibliography)
 - Undergraduate: 10-12 pages
 - Graduate: 12-15 pages
 - Page format guidelines below

STYLE GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

The following applies to the submission of all written assignments in this course:

- *Font & Size*: Times New Roman; 12 pt.
- *Space & Margins*: Double-space; 2.54 cm / 1-inch margins on each side.
- *Page numbers*: Beginning on the first page of the paper (not the title page).
- *Structure*: Always have an introduction, a body and a conclusion.
- *Citation style*: Please use in-text citations (of your choice) and remain consistent. Footnotes should be used for clarifications beyond the main text.
- *Bibliography*: Always include one.

LATE PENALTY

To maintain fairness to all students, late papers will be deducted at **5% per day (24h) late**. Where needed, accommodation requests will be reviewed in accordance with university policies. Further details are provided below to explain the university's accessibility accommodations.

BACKING UP YOUR WORK

- Please backup draft/rough copies and final copies of all your assignments (in electronic drives and/or in external drives, as well as hard copies if possible) before submitting them for evaluation.
- You are ultimately responsible for maintaining multiple copies of your work, as extensions are not provided on the grounds of not being able to retrieve existing work.
- All copies of essays/assignments should be kept by students until the marked essays/assignments have been returned to them and the grades are posted on ACORN.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined [in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources.

Plagiarism Detection: “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, as a student, you object to using a plagiarism detection tool, see the course instructor for alternative arrangements for submission of your written assignments. These arrangements will include some or all of the following: submission of drafts, rough work and notes; submission of hard copies of sources along with call numbers and web site addresses of sources cited in the paper; a personal meeting with the instructor.

ACCESSIBILITY

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services Office (at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or 416-978-8060) as soon as possible.

Accessibility Services staff is available to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations.

NOTICE OF COLLECTION

The University of Toronto respects your privacy. The information on medical certificates is collected pursuant to section 2 (14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971. It is collected for the purpose of administering accommodations for academic purposes based on medical grounds. The department will maintain a record of all medical certificates received. At all times it will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If you have questions, please refer to www.utoronto.ca/privacy or contact the University’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office at 416-946-5835. Address: Room 201, McMurrich Bldg., 12 Queen’s Park Crescent, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A1.

GRADING SCHEME

UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

Refined Letter Grade Scale	Grade Point Value	Numerical Scale of Marks
A+	4.0	90 – 100%
A	4.0	85 – 89%
A-	3.7	80 – 84%
B+	3.3	77 – 79%
B	3.0	73 – 76%
B-	2.7	70 – 72%
C+	2.3	67 – 69%
C	2.0	63 – 66%
C-	1.7	60 – 62%
D+	1.3	57 – 59%
D	1.0	53 – 56%
D-	0.7	50 – 52%
F*	0.0	0 – 49%

*F = Fail

GRADUATE LEVEL

Truncated Refined Letter Grade Scale	Numerical Scale of Marks
A+	90-100%
A	85-89%
A-	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
FZ**	0-69%

**FZ = Fail

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Writing centres: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>
- Health & Wellness: <http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/>
- Positive space (LGBTQ+ resources): <http://positivespace.utoronto.ca>
- Religious accommodations: <http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation>

CLASSROOM HOUSEKEEPING

- We will meet weekly, in person for this seminar.
- Class starts 10 minutes after the hour.
- There will be a 10mns health break half-way through the class.
- Please let me know your preferred names if they do not match the official records. Please also feel free to convey your preferred pronouns in class as well, especially at the beginning of this course.
- This in-person seminar should not be recorded on any device by individual students.

GENERAL CONTENT & COPYRIGHT

Please be advised that the intellectual property rights in the material referred to on this syllabus [and posted on Quercus] may belong to the course instructor or other persons. You are not authorized to reproduce or distribute such material, in any form or medium, without the prior consent of the intellectual property owner. Violation of intellectual property rights may be a violation of the law and University of Toronto policies and may entail significant repercussions for the person found to have engaged in such act. If you have any questions regarding your right to use the material in a manner other than as set forth in the syllabus, please speak to your instructor.

COURSE CALENDAR

Please note that the overall syllabus (particularly the assigned readings) is **subject to amendment**, in which case students will receive prior notice on Quercus.

PART I: Foundations & Evolution of Postcolonialism in IR theory

Week 1: January 9 Course Introduction & Overview

- Introductions & overview of the syllabus, assignments, and overall expectations

Week 2: January 16 Why Postcolonialism: Empire, Representation, Knowledge/Power

- *Readings*
 - Spivak, G. C. (1988). 'Can the subaltern speak?' In Nelson, C., & Grossberg, L. (Eds.). (1988). *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. pp.271-313. University of Illinois Press.
 - Hall, S. (1996). When was 'the post-colonial'? Thinking at the limit. In I. Chambers & L. Curti, *The postcolonial question: common skies, divided horizons* (pp. 242-260). London: Routledge.
 - Said, E. W., Bayoumi, M., & Rubin, A. (2000). 'Orientalism'. *The Edward Said reader*. (pp.49-84). Vintage Books.
 - Mbembé, A. (2006). What is postcolonial thinking: An interview with Achille Mbembé. *Esprit*, December (12), 117-133.

Week 3: January 23 Evolution of Postcolonial IR

- *Readings*
 - Krishna, S. (1993). The importance of being ironic: A postcolonial view on critical international relations theory. *Alternatives*, 18(3), 385-417.
 - Darby, P., & Paolini, A. J. (1994). Bridging international relations and postcolonialism. *Alternatives*, 19 (3), 371-397.
 - Obendorf, S. (2015). Dangerous Relations? Lessons from the Interface of Postcolonialism and International Relations. In A. Bernard, Z. Elmarsafy, S. Murray, *What Postcolonial Theory Doesn't Say*, 30-48. London: Routledge.
 - Adem, S. (2011). Ali A. Mazrui, postcolonialism and the study of international relations. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 14(4), 506-535.

Week 4: January 30 Race and International Relations

- *Readings*
 - Persaud, R. B., & Sajed, A. (2018). Introduction: race, gender, and culture in international relations. In *Race, gender, and culture in international relations* (pp. 1-18). Routledge.
 - Georgis, M., & Lugosi, N. V. (2014). (Re) inserting race and indigeneity in international relations theory: a post-colonial approach. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 26(1), 71-83.
 - Shilliam, R. (2020). Race and racism in international relations: Retrieving a scholarly inheritance. *International Politics Reviews*, 8(2), 152-195.

Week 5: February 6 Postcolonial Feminism in IR

- *Readings*
 - Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist review*, 30(1), 61-88.
 - Oyewumi, Oyeronke. (1997). *The Invention Of Women: Making An African Sense Of Western Gender Discourses*. University of Minnesota Press. *Chapter 4: P.121-156*.
 - Parashar, S. (2016). Feminism and Postcolonialism: The Twain Shall Meet, *Postcolonial Studies*, 19:4, 463-477.
 - Chowdhry, G., & Ling, L.M.H. (2018). Race(Ing) International Relations: A Critical Overview of Postcolonial Feminism in International Relations. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*.

Week 6: February 13 Decolonizing IR

- *Readings*
 - Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2013). Why decoloniality in the 21st century. *The thinker*, 48(10), 10-15.
 - Sajed, A. (2013). Fanon, Camus and the global colour line: colonial difference and the rise of decolonial horizons. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 26(1), 5-26.
 - Blaney, D. L., & Tickner, A. B. (2017). Worlding, ontological politics and the possibility of a decolonial IR. *Millennium*, 45(3), 293-311.
 - Capan, Z. G. (2017). Decolonising international relations?. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(1), 1-15.

**** FEB 20-24, 2023: Reading Week, No Classes (Feb 20 is Family Day) ****

PART II: Postcolonial IR in Practice

Week 7: February 27 Untold Stories of the World Wars

- *Readings*
 - Koller, C. (2008). The recruitment of colonial troops in Africa and Asia and their deployment in Europe during the First World War. *Immigrants & Minorities*, 26(1-2), 111-133.
 - Echenberg, M. (1985). 'Morts Pour La France'; The African Soldier in France during the Second World War. *The Journal of African History*, 26(4), 363-380.
- *Video*
 - ***Camp de Thiaroye***. By Sembène, Ousmane, 1923-2007.; Sow, Thierno Faty.; Bakaba, Sidiki, 1949-; Camara, Mohamed.; Cisse, Ismaila.; Films Domirev (Firm); SNCP (Firm); ENAPROC (Firm); S.A.T.P.E.C. (Firm); New Yorker Video (Firm). New York : Distributed by New Yorker Video. 2008 [Initial Release 1988]
 - **The library has a DVD copy of the film, with English subtitles.** The library will provide a digital link to this.
 - **The film is also available on YouTube, without English subtitles.** If you are fluent in French, you can access the full film [there](#).

Week 8: March 6 Global Capitalism

• *Readings*

- Dirlik, A. (1994). The postcolonial aura: Third World criticism in the age of global capitalism. *Critical inquiry*, 20(2), 328-356.
- Lazarus, N. (2011). What postcolonial theory doesn't say. *Race & Class*, 53(1), 3-27.
- Gruffyd-Jones, B. (2013). Slavery, Finance and International Political Economy: Postcolonial Reflections. In S. Seth, *Postcolonial theory and international relations: A critical introduction*, (pp.49-69). London: Routledge.
- Bhabra, G. K., & Holmwood, J. (2018). Colonialism, postcolonialism and the liberal welfare state. *New Political Economy*, 23(5), 574-587.

Week 9: March 13 Global Environmentalism & Postcolonialism

• *Readings*

- Nixon, R. (2005). Environmentalism and postcolonialism. In *Postcolonial Studies and beyond* (pp. 233-251). Duke University Press.
- Paperson, L. (2014). A ghetto land pedagogy: An antidote for settler environmentalism. *Environmental Education Research*, 20(1), 115-130.
- Erickson, B. (2020). Anthropocene futures: Linking colonialism and environmentalism in an age of crisis. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 38(1), 111-128.

**** *MARCH 19, 2023 – Last day to withdraw from the course* ****

Week 10: March 20 Postcolonial North-South Relations

• *Readings*

- Doty, R. L. 1996. *Imperial encounters: the politics of representation in North-South relations* (Vol. 5). U of Minnesota Press, pp.145-162.
- Singh, J. P. 2017. *Sweet Talk: Paternalism and Collective Action in North-South Trade Relations*. Stanford University Press. [Chapters 1 & 2: pp.1-54].

Week 11: March 27 Borders, Mobility, Migration

• *Readings*

- Persaud, R. B. 2013. "Situating race in international relations: the dialectics of civilizational security in American immigration." In *Power, postcolonialism and international relations* (pp. 56-81). Routledge.
- Achiume, E. Tendayi. 2019. "Migration as decolonization." *Stan. L. Rev.* 71: 1509-1574.
 - Achiume, E. Tendayi. 2019. "The Postcolonial Case for Rethinking Borders." *Dissent* 66.3: 27-32. [[A brief summary of the above lengthier article](#)]

Week 12: April 3 At the margins of IR: What *counts* as IR theory?

• *Readings*

- Henderson, E. A. (2017). The revolution will not be theorised: Du Bois, Locke, and the Howard School's challenge to white supremacist IR theory. *Millennium*, 45(3), 492-510.
- Sjoberg, L. (2017). Undisciplined IR: Thinking without a Net. In S. L. Dyvik, J. Selby & R. Wilkinson, *What's the Point of International Relations?* (pp.159-169). London: Routledge.

A WARNING ABOUT PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an academic offence with a severe penalty.

It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. In essence, it is the theft of the thoughts or words of others, without giving proper credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s). You must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words. Plagiarism is unacceptable in a university. What the university calls "plagiarism", non-university institutions might call "fraud".

The University of Toronto provides a process that faculty members must initiate when they suspect a case of plagiarism. In the Department of Political Science, suspected evidence of plagiarism must be reported to the Chair; in most cases, the Chair passes the case on to the Dean.

A faculty member may not mark an assignment or assess a penalty if he or she finds evidence of plagiarism – the matter must be reported. Penalties are assigned by the Chair, by the Dean or by the University of Toronto Tribunal.

The following are some examples of plagiarism:

1. Submitting as your own an assignment written by someone else.
2. Quoting an author without indicating the source of the words.
3. Using words, sentences, or paragraphs written by someone else and failing to place quotation marks around the material and reference the source and author. **Using either quotation marks or reference alone is not sufficient. Both must be used!**
4. Adapting an author's ideas or theme and using it as your own without referencing the original source.
5. Seeking assistance from a friend or family member in respect to work you claim as your own.

Ignorance of the rules against plagiarism is not a defense; students are presumed to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Students are especially reminded that material taken from the web **must** be quoted and cited in the same manner as if it came from a book or printed article.

If you are not sure whether you have committed plagiarism, it is better to ask a faculty member or teaching assistant than risk discovery and be forced to accept an academic penalty.

Plagiarism is **cheating**. It is considered a **serious offence** against intellectual honesty and intellectual property. Penalties can be **severe**, ranging from a mark of "0" for the assignment or test in question, **up to and including expulsion from the university**.

Some websites on avoiding plagiarism:

'How to Use Sources and Avoid Plagiarism' - available at:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Other Advisory Material available at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>