

POL377H1 F

## Violence, Development, and Difference

University of Toronto  
Political Science  
Fall 2024

Mon 1-3pm EST  
Office hours: Mon 3-4pm SS 3052  
or by appointment



“The Cry of the Excluded” by Oswaldo Guayasamín

INSTRUCTOR: Professor María 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.

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### Grading and due dates

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- Learning paragraphs: 20% *weekly recurrent (weeks 2-13) by 11:59pm EST, day before session*
- Critical-creative assignment: 10% *October 11 by 11:59pm EST*
- First take-home assignment: 35% *November 8 by 11:59pm EST*
- Final take-home assignment: 35% *December 2 by 11:59pm EST*

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### Assessment

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

#### **Learning paragraphs (weekly engagements): 20%**

Every Sunday before class by 11:59pm, from week 2 to 12 (except week 6 and week 8), you will submit a learning paragraph (200-250 words) about the week's assigned materials that centers on one powerful quote from the readings. These reflections will help you prepare for our class discussion and assignments.

#### **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\*: 35%**

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\*: 35%**

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.*

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### 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).

#### **Communication policy**

Official communication for this course will take place through Quercus. Please note that emails will not receive replies. Given the high volume of daily messages, we encourage you to ask questions during class or seek clarification before or after our classroom sessions for a faster reply. Regularly check Quercus for important course updates.

For course-related inquiries, follow these steps:

- First, check the syllabus or Quercus for answers, as many assignment details are outlined under specific instructions.
- Second, contact your course buddy (we will set up a buddy system so you can contact each other about coursework!)
- Thirds, message Prof. Méndez via Quercus (skip step 4 if the question pertains to the lecture)

Messages received within 24 hours of an assignment deadline may not be answered in time. Questions that are answered in the course syllabus or on Quercus and queries about missed class content will not receive responses.

When messaging about the course, include the course number and a brief description of your query in the subject line. We aim to respond within 4 business days, Monday-Friday (8:00 am-5:00 pm). Plan accordingly for urgent matters and maintain professional communication, using appropriate salutations. In general, address individuals with the title "Professor" followed by their last name. You can address me as Professor Méndez. My pronouns are she/her/hers

## **Assignments**

*Submission:* All assignments must be submitted on Quercus unless stated otherwise. It is your responsibility to keep a backup hard copy in case of loss. Students must ensure that their assignments are correctly uploaded. Assignments not appearing or unable to be opened will receive a grade of zero.

*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.

*Grade appeals:* If you believe that the TA has given you an unfair grade, you may email the TA who graded the assignment and request a re-evaluation. Students must 1) submit the original work and attach 2) a written explanation identifying in detail why they believe there is a substantive error in grading (no more than 300 words). Grading appeals must be submitted after 48 hours and within 72 hours of receiving the graded assignment (It is your responsibility to regularly check Quercus to find out when your grade has been posted). If the student is not satisfied with this re-evaluation, the student may then appeal to the course instructor (i.e., me) by submitting (1) the written reasons as to why they believe the work was unfairly/incorrectly marked, and (2) communications from the original marker as to why no change in mark was made. This must be done within 48 hours of receiving the TA's re-evaluation. Please note that a re-evaluation doesn't guarantee a change in your grade; it can result in the same or lower grade. Continuing with the remark or the appeal means

the student accepts this condition. Appeals that do not follow the procedure outlined above will not be considered.

*Final grades:* Final grades for the course are considered final and will not be subject to negotiation or alteration after they have been submitted. Please refrain from contacting the instructor to request additional points or grade adjustments. The grading process is conducted thoroughly and fairly, adhering to the criteria outlined in the course syllabus.

### **Missed Academic Obligations**

*Extensions, make-ups, and incompletes:* These will not be granted unless you meet one of the University's identified exceptions. If you are absent for legitimate reasons report your absence through the online absence declaration form available on ACORN and contact your instructor to arrange an accommodation. In your message, please include the reason for your request and a proposal for a new deadline. Extensions requests made 48 hours prior to the deadline will be granted automatically. Any other requests will be considered at the instructor's discretion.

Legitimate reasons for temporary absences include illness, injury, and other unplanned circumstances beyond a student's control (such as court subpoena, funeral, car accident). Reasons such as holidays, pre-purchased plane tickets, family plans, lack of test/assignment preparation, conflicting deadlines, late course registration, technology failure, and traffic- or weather-related incidents are not considered to be beyond a student's control. Please note that accommodations due to late registration into the course will not be approved.

*Absence due to illness:* If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, the instructor will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

### **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.

### **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 your instructor no later than September 16, 2024.

*Use of generative AI:* The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, is prohibited and will be considered a form of cheating. Representing as one's own an idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated may be considered an academic offense in this course.

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## **Course support**

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://onereach.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/>

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## **Course schedule**

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

## Week 2

**September 16**—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 23** — 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

**September 30** — Colonial violence II

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

## Week 5

**October 7** — Imperial terror and the Cold War (Film screening and Q and A with Dr. Cuéllar Cuéllar)

Mark Danner, “El Mozote”  
Jean Franco, *Cruel Modernity*, Introduction

\*\*\*Critical-creative assignment (10%) due October 11\*\*\*

## Week 6

**October 14** — Thanksgiving holiday. No class.

## Week 7

### October 21 — Race and capitalist development

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Chapter 4

Film: Ryan Coogler, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, <https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/audiocine/play/6c46a9b4b0230805?referrer=marc>

## Week 8

### October 28 — Reading week. No class.

## Week 9

### November 4 — Gender and capitalist development

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

\*\*\*First take-home assignment (35%) due November 8\*\*\*

## Week 10

### November 11 — Colonial and imperial traces

Ann Stoler, *Imperial debris*, Introduction

Additional reading TBD

## Week 11

### November 18 — Development and the erasure of difference

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"

## Week 12

### November 25 — The violence of development I

Arundhati Roy, "The greater common good"

Anna Tsing, "Prosperity"

Film: James Cameron, *Avatar The Way of Water*

<https://media3-criterionpic-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/display/006?T=F1813022>

### Week 13

#### **December 2nd — The violence of development II**

Memoir of the Rio Negro Massacres

Robert Nixon, "Unimagined communities"

Film: Defensora.

*\*\*\*Final take-home assignment (35%) due December 2\*\*\**