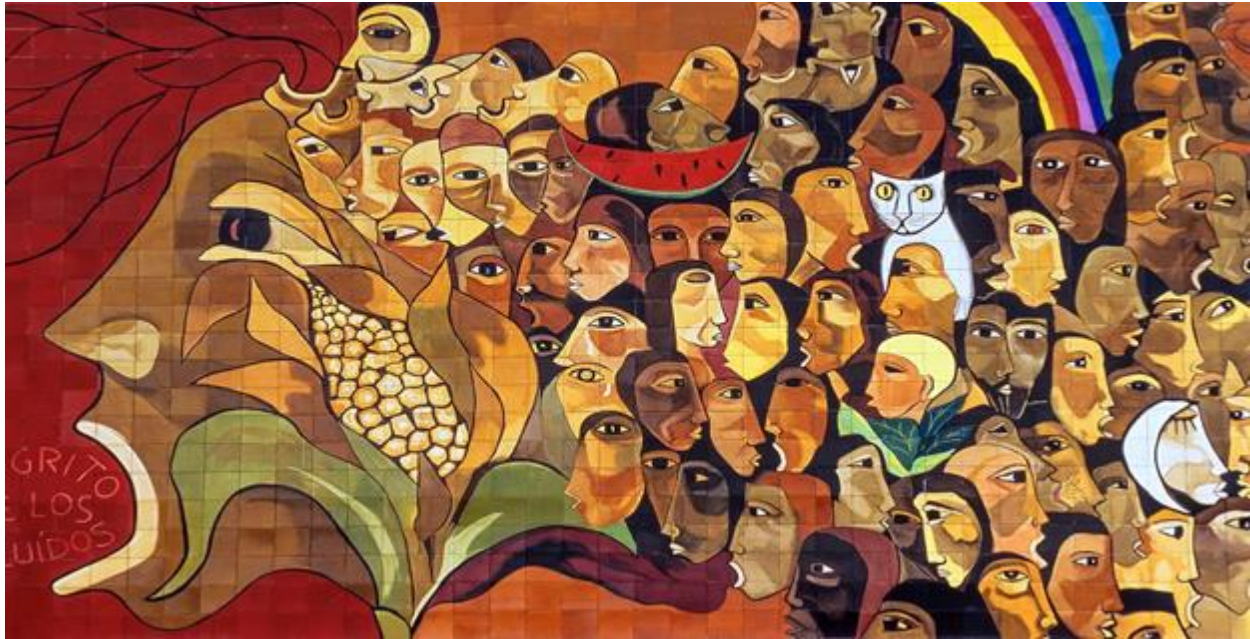


POL377H1 S Violence, Development, and Difference

University of Toronto
Political Science
Summer 2021

Mon. and Wed, 4-6pm EST
Office hours: Mon. and Wed. 3-4 pm,
Wed. 6-7pm EST or by appointment



“The Cry of the Excluded” by Oswaldo Guayasamín

Instructor: Prof. María J. Méndez, 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 Western 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.

Expectations

It's an emergency!

This class is not “normal,” it is an emergency remote class being taught in a public health, economic, and political crisis. I am approaching this class with this fully in mind and I am not going to pretend that things are normal or good or easy to ignore or even bearable. Please do not hesitate or feel shame if you need to ask me for extra help or an extension. **We're all in this together** and I will do my best to make sure this is an enjoyable and enlightening course given shared and personal constraints.

Synchronous sessions

For synchronous sessions, students will be divided into two groups to allow for a more intimate and engaged discussion. From July 12 onwards, each group will join one synchronous session on Zoom per week. However, note that we will convene as a big group on August 4th and August 16th.

Group 1: Mondays 4-6pm EST

Group 2: Wednesdays 4-6pm EST

Grading and due dates

- Attendance and participation: 10%
- Discussion posts and responses: 20% *weekly recurrent (weeks 2-6) by 11:59pm EST, day before session*
- Discussion board moderation: 10% *once (weeks 2-6, check course schedule for dates)*
- Critical-creative assignment: 10% *July 19 by 11:59pm EST*
- First take-home assignment: 25% *July 28 by 11:59pm EST*
- Final take-home assignment: 25% *August 16 by 11:59pm EST*

Assessment

Where needed, rubrics, prompts, and further details will be provided at least one week in advance. Note that you are required to earn a passing grade in all assignments to pass the course.

Attendance & Participation: 10%

Attendance will be kept every class. You are allowed one unexcused absence. In addition to attending each synchronous session and arriving on time, 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.

Discussion forum 4 (weekly engagements) x 5: 20%

We will have a discussion forum on Padlet (a digital tool that allows you to collaborate online by posting in many formats) where you will actively participate every week during weeks 2-6. This board will be a space for you to engage with questions posed by peer facilitators, comment on your peers' responses, reflect on course materials (through unanswered questions, criticisms, connections to your life experiences, or creative extensions of the readings and films). You may do so through written posts, video, or audio messages. This board is also an opportunity for you to share references that resonate with the readings/films. The references, which you can embed as an internet link or image, can take any form: a meme, a song, a poem, a movie, an art piece, a game, a TV series, a podcast, a news article, a book, a photograph, and so on. If you add a reference, make sure you expand on how and why you make this connection to the course materials. You are required to contribute at least one post (200-300 words or 2-3 minutes audio or video clip) no later than 11:59pm EST the night before your assigned synchronous session. The word and time limit does not apply to subsequent posts.

Discussion forum moderation: 10%

There will be two separate discussion forums on Padlet. 4-5 students will sign up to moderate a discussion forum for their assigned group one week during the term. Moderating will involve: 1) collaborating with each other to offer a brief set of provocations about all the week's material (in the form of questions, critiques, short videos, images, news links, etc., or a combination of these) by Thursday at 11:59pm EST for Group 1 and Saturday by 11:59pm EST for Group 2 (except for week 2, when the moderation is pushed by one day and except for week 5 when both teams will post initial provocations in their respective Padlets by July 31st at 11:59pm EST). During the week you moderate, you should monitor the discussion by offering at least six (6) comments on your peers' responses and posts, suggesting connections between posts, etc. In other words, you are expected to be more active in the discussion board on the week you moderate it.

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, discussions posts, 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

Netiquette

- This is a discussion-based class so please keep your video on (videos can be turned off if you are experiencing bandwidth issues, have a temporary interruption, need a quick eye/stretch/bathroom break, or have made other arrangements with the instructor).
- Make sure that your Zoom name reflects your preferred name and pronouns.
- Keep yourself muted unless speaking and be aware of your actions on camera (remember that we can all see you!)
- Please use the chat function to discuss amongst yourselves or ask questions (Be respectful of other participants and keep your comments and questions constructive and coherent; avoid using all caps and acronyms; and proofread your writing). We will use the hand raising feature for the discussion section.
- Remote learning means that our living spaces are our learning spaces and pets, family members, and roommates may sometimes intrude on class. It's ok, do your best, and please introduce us to any pets that make an appearance!
- Technology issues will happen. Please be patient with me and your classmates.
- Above all, be kind and respectful!

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.

Assignments and Due Dates

Recognizing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic due dates will not be strictly enforced. **Non-final assignments will be accepted for a grade until August 11. However, I will only guarantee feedback on assignments submitted within 24 hours of the due date.** Please communicate early and often if you're facing issues completing assignments—I am an educator not a disciplinarian, we're all doing our best, and the more you communicate the more I can help. Course incompletes and final paper extensions will be granted in accordance with university policy.

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 24 hours and within 48 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 or grade that is specific to you.

Email Policy

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 24 hours Monday-Friday. Please plan accordingly for urgent queries.

Recording Policy

Except for accessibility accommodations, all audio/visual recording of discussion sessions is expressly prohibited. Any violations of this policy will result in automatic failure of the class and referral to the college disciplinary process.

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. Please note that this schedule is subject to modification.

Week I

July 5— Introduction: What is this course about? — No reading

July 7—The violent conflict-development nexus (according to international development institutions)

IDRB/World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*, Part I (49-93).
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4389>

Michael Watts, “Economies of Violence: Reflections on the World Development Report 2011.”

Week II

Group 1: Moderating team posts by July 9, 11:59pm ET, and others by July 11, 11:59pm ET

Group 2: Moderating team posts by July 11, 11:59pm ET, and others by July 13, 11:59pm ET

July 12 and 14 — Colonial violence

Andrea Smith, “Sexual Violence as a Tool of Genocide”

Frantz Fanon, “On violence”

Film: Sanjay Kak, *Red Ant Dream*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMje28Fg0vk>

Week III

Group 1: Moderating team posts by July 15, 11:59pm ET, and others by July 18, 11:59pm ET

Group 2: Moderating team posts by July 17, 11:59pm ET, and others by July 20, 11:59pm ET

July 19 and 21— Colonialism and capitalist development

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

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

Critical-creative assignment (10%) due July 19

Week IV

Group 1: Moderating team posts by July 22, 11:59pm ET, and others by July 25, 11:59pm ET

Group 2: Moderating team posts by July 24, 11:59pm ET, and others by July 27, 11:59pm ET

July 26 and 28— Development and the erasure of difference

Arturo Escobar, Introduction, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*

Gustavo Esteva and Arturo Escobar, “Post-Development @ 25: on ‘being stuck’ and moving forward, sideways, backward and otherwise”

Vandana Shiva, “Monocultures of the mind”

Film: Abderrahmane Sissako, *Bamako*,

<https://play.library.utoronto.ca/play/ac72f68a87b9fad9f0a5c3c67bf8f957>

First take-home assignment (25%) due July 28

Week V

Groups 1 and 2: Moderators for both groups post in their respective board by July 31, 11:59pm ET; and others post by August 3, 11:59pm ET

August 4— The violence of development I (synchronous session for Groups 1 and 2)

Andrea Smith, “Rape of the land”

María J. Méndez, “The River Told Me: Rethinking Intersectionality from the World of Berta Cáceres”

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

Week VI

Group 1: Moderating team posts by August 5, 11:59pm ET, and others by August 8, 11:59pm ET

Group 2: Moderating team posts by August 8, 11:59pm ET, and others by August 11, 11:59pm ET

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August 9 and 12— The violence of development II

Arundhati Roy, “The greater common good”

Robert Nixon, “Unimagined Communities: Megadams, Monumental Modernity, and Developmental Refugees”

Film: James Cameron, *Avatar*,

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

Week VII

No discussion posts

August 16— Materials TBD. Final assignment due (25%). This will be a synchronous session for Groups 1 and 2.