

GSFS 404: Politics of Identity

Instructor: Eric Wilkinson
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Class Timing: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 13:05 - 14:25
Location: EDUC 433

Course Description:

In the late twentieth-century a range of political struggles centred on different categories of identity gained prominence. Termed “identity politics,” this included the political mobilization of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, regional, and religious minorities, Indigenous peoples, the LGBTQ+ community, and other identity-based groups. This course examines the normative significance of personal and collective identities, as well as how various identity-based communities have mobilized politically. The course is divided into three parts. In the first, we will look at the ethical foundations of identity politics, including critiques from feminist, egalitarian, anti-capitalist, and Indigenous perspectives. Second, we will examine the intersection of several identarian projects and feminism, like Québec Nationalism, Indigenous nationalisms, racism, queer politics, trans activism, and multiculturalism. The final section will look at ongoing debates over the future of identity politics and its potential.

Assessment & Grading:

<i>Assignment:</i>	<i>Due Date:</i>	<i>Weight:</i>	<i>Description:</i>
Participation	Ongoing	10%	Attendance and participation are necessary.
Midterm Paper	October 18 th	25%	A five-page argumentative essay.
Presentation	Sign-Up Sheet	20%	A 20-minute group presentation in class.
Paper Proposal	November 22 nd	10%	A one-page proposal outlining the final paper.
Final Essay	December 8 th	35%	A ten-page argumentative essay.

Communication Policy: Before emailing, please consult the syllabus for an answer to your query. Also consider raising your questions during class, as other students might have the same questions. When emailing, use your McGill email address, and allow at least 48 hours to receive a response.

Late Policy & Extensions: The penalty for late assignment submission is five percent (5%) a day. Extensions will be assessed individually and granted mainly for medical reasons or bereavement.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students should understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences.

Student Rights & Language Policy: In accordance with McGill University’s *Charter of Students’ Rights*, students have the right to submit in either French or English any work that is to be graded.

Course Schedule
September 8th, 2022 – December 1st, 2022

Date:	Lecture Topic:	Required Readings:	Supplemental Readings:
September 8 th	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Readings
September 13 th	What Is Identity Politics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Identity Politics” (James Tully) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Politics of Identity” (Kwame Anthony Appiah)
September 15 th	Societal Hierarchies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Racial Contract</i> (Charles Mills) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Sexual Contract</i> (Carole Pateman)
September 20 th	Recognition & Subjectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Politics of Recognition</i> (Charles Taylor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Retrieving Experience: Subjectivity and Recognition in Feminist Politics</i> (Sonia Kruks)
September 22 nd	Contexts of Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Multicultural Citizenship</i> (Will Kymlicka) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Disgraceful” (Rinaldo Walcott)
September 27 th	Oppression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Five Faces of Oppression” (Iris Marion Young) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analyzing Oppression</i> (Ann E. Cudd)
September 29 th	Identity & Redistribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rethinking Recognition” (Nancy Fraser) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Identity Politics and the Left” (Eric Hobsbawm)
October 4 th	Indigenous Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Red Skins, White Masks</i> (Glen Coulthard) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This Is Not a Peace Pipe</i> (Dale Turner)
October 6 th	Essentializing Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Against Recognition</i> (Lois McNay) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rethinking Culture” (Alan Patten)
October 11 th	Reading Break – No Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Readings
October 13 th	Reading Break – No Class		
October 18 th	Indigenous Nationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Native Feminism vs. Native Nationalism” (Michael Behiels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peace, Power, and Righteousness</i> (Taiaiake Alfred)
October 20 th	Indigenous Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beyond Blood, Chapter 2</i> (Pam Palmater) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beyond Blood, Chapter 1</i> (Pam Palmater)
October 25 th	Québec Nationalism & Feminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Nationalism and Feminism in Québec” (Diane Lamoureux) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Yvettes as the Expression of a Federalist Feminism in Quebec” (Stephanie Godin)
October 27 th	Québec Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Nationalism, Secularism, and Ethno-Cultural Diversity in Quebec” (Daniel Béland, et al.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Quebec Sovereignty and the Challenge of Linguistic and Ethnocultural Minorities” (Daniel Salée)
November 1 st	Racism & Feminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Canadian Feminism and Women of Color” (Vijay Agnew) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ain’t I a Woman?</i> (bell hooks)
November 3 rd	Women & Multiculturalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” (Susan Okin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Accounts of Racialized Gendering” (Rita Dhamoon)

November 8 th	Queer Identity Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Homonationalism at the Border and in the Streets” (K. Trevenen & A. Degagne) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Nationalism and Social Movement Politics” (Miriam Smith)
November 10 th	Trans Issues & Feminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Philosophical Problems” (Aleardo Zanghellini) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Transexual Women and Feminist Thought” (Raewyn Connell)
November 15 th	Feminist Identity Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Global Feminism and Transformative Identity Politics” (Allison Weir) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Take Back the Fight</i> (Nora Loreto)
November 17 th	Intersectionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mapping the Margins</i> (Kimberlé Crenshaw) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Intersectionality</i> (Anna Carastathis)
November 22 nd	Coalition Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Identity Politics, Political Identities” (Martha Ackelsberg) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On the Way to Decolonization in a Settler Colony” (Kristie Dotson)
November 24 th	Multicultural Nationhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Majoritarian Interculturalism & Multicultural Nationhood” (Tariq Modood) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Possibility of Multicultural Nationhood” (Eric Wilkinson)
November 29 th	Wither Identity Politics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In Defence of Identity Politics” (Suzanna Walters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Against Identity Politics” (Francis Fukuyama)
December 1 st	After Identity Politics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Identity Politics and the Need for a ‘Tomorrow’” (G. Bhabra & V. Margree) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Feminism and Post-Identity Politics” (Lois McNay)

Course Readings: All course readings are available for viewing and download on MyCourses.

Extra Materials: On MyCourses, in the folder containing readings for certain days of class, there is also a sub-folder containing extra course materials. These include additional readings, podcasts, and videos that are not required to complete, but offer a deeper understanding of the topics covered. These materials should be especially useful to those who will be presenting on the associated day.

Office Hours: The instructor’s office hours are held on Tuesday at 14:30 at IGSF in Room 302.

Content Warning: The content of this course includes readings and lectures that discuss gendered violence, racial discrimination, colonialism and other subjects that might be disturbing to students. These difficult topics are central to the questions investigated in this course, but nevertheless please remain aware, and contact the instructor if any personal concerns arise in relation to this material.

Special Accommodations: Please have OSD inform the instructor immediately if you require any special accommodations for the course, and remain informed of OSD accommodation regulations.