

Department of Anthropology and The Institute for Globalization and the Human
Condition

Global Futures: Politics and Care (786)

Professor Petra Rethmann

Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Petra Rethmann

Email: rethman@mcmaster.ca

Seminar: synchronous; discussion-based

Time: Tuesdays, 14:30 – 17:20

Room: Zoom and Avenue

Office Hours: Please email rethman@mcmaster.ca to request a meeting

Land Acknowledgement

While meeting for this course, we recognize and acknowledge our presence on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” Wampum agreement. This acknowledgement marks a commitment to honor treaties and work toward decolonization and establishment of just relations.

Course Description

This course seeks to address and open up the question of “the future” through the twinned lenses of **politics and care**. Last year’s course started from the hypothesis that many of us today experience the present as extremely cynical and politically unpromising and closed, and that – thus – it would behoove us to examine conceptual, ethical, and affective openings to the problem of political possibility. This year’s course will maintain this emphasis, but also train its attention on notions of politics and care. As we move through the class, we will read a number of **philosophical, critical, and ethnographic texts** that will be set in juxtaposition to each other. Overall, this course is based on a commitment to tracing out political possibilities – possible futures, and not just limitations.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Articulate theoretical and conceptual perspectives on issues of politics and care
- Have a conceptual and an empirical understanding of significant political and cultural challenges related to questions of politics and care
- Be able to understand how political and ethnographic analysts look at politics and care
- Enter with confidence debates related to the future of our planet and care

Required Materials and Texts

There are no required textbooks for this class. All required readings are listed below. Most are accessible through the library catalogue; simply search for the journal, year, and name of the author. Those that are not accessible through the library catalogue will be posted on Avenue to Learn or distributed via email.

The books, including ethnographies, we will read in this course are:

Fisher, Mark

2009 *Capitalist Realism. Is There No Alternative?* Winchester: Zero Books.

Myers, Ella. 2013. *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Stevenson, Lisa. 2014. *Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Varma, Saiba. 2020. *The Occupied Clinic: Militarism and Care in Kashmir*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Course Format

The course will consist of synchronous presentations and discussions. We will use Zoom to run weekly 90 – 120 minute-long seminars. The third hour I will be available for individual consultation

Course Evaluation

Responses to Assigned Readings (24 %, each worth 3%)

There will be 8 (Sept. 14, 21, 28; Oct 19, 26; Nov. 2, 9, 23) response papers you will have to submit for this class, with each response paper worth 3 %. Each class has a set of assigned readings. After each class, I will send you three questions that directly related to the assigned readings, and your responses should address these three questions. Response papers should be single-spaced and NOT longer than 2 pages. They are **due on Sunday nights 7:00 pm**.

The goal of the response papers is for you to consider the readings in more detail, provide you with a chance to identify key concepts and themes, to share impressions, and to identify key questions or concerns arising from the texts for the class's consideration.

Seminar Participation (21 %), ongoing

The participation grade covers Class participants are responsible for having read the material and coming to class ready to contribute to the discussion.

Readings Quiz, (15%), due November 2

The readings quiz will consist of 3 questions, each worth 5%. It will be based on the readings from September 15 – October 20. Each answer should not exceed 1.5 pages, single-spaced. Please submit your answers on Avenue to Learn. Each answer should not exceed 1.5 pages, single-spaced. Please submit your answers on Avenue to Learn. I will post the quiz on Avenue to Learn on **October 20**, and you can submit your exam before November 2.

Take-Home Research Exam, (40 %), due December 10.

The take-home research exam will consist of four questions, each worth 10%. It will be based on the readings we have done in class; that is, the readings listed under the rubric “required”). It will be cumulative in the sense that it will cover the readings from September 15 – November 24. Each answer should not exceed 2 pages, single-spaced. Please submit your answers on Avenue to Learn. I will post the take-home research exam

on Avenue to Learn on **November 23**, and you can submit your exam before December 10.

Please remember to keep copies of all your work in case anything goes astray.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: SEPTEMBER 7

Introduction to the Course

No readings

Suggested Readings

Appadurai, Arjun

2002 Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon Politics. *Public Culture* 14: 21 – 47.

2006 The Right to Research. *Globalisation, Societies, and Education* 4 (2): 167 – 177.

2007a Hope and Democracy. *Public Culture* 19 (1): 29 – 34.

2007b The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition. In *Cultural Politics in a Global Age: Uncertainty, Solidarity, and Innovation*. Edited by David Held and Henrietta L. Moore. Oxford: Oneworld Publications. Pp. 29 – 35. Available, <https://mapn-ulm.ac.id/wp-content/uploads>

2017 Democracy Fatigue. In *The Great Transgression*. Edited by Heinrich Geiselberger. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 1 – 12.

Bloch, Ernst

1988 *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*. Translated by Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Castiglia, Christopher

2017 *The Practices of Hope: Literary Criticism in Disenchanted Times*. New York: New York University Press.

Haran, Joan

2010 Redefining Hope as Praxis. *Journal for Cultural Research* 14 (3): 393 – 408.

Mouffe, Chantal and Ernesto Laclau, in conversation with Mary Zournazi

2002 Hope, Passion, Politics. In *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*. Edited by Mary Zournazi. New York: Routledge. Pp. 122 – 148.

Solnit, Rebecca

2016 *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Tsiolkas, Christos, in conversation with Mary Zournazi

2002 On Believing. In *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*. Edited by Mary Zournazi. New York: Routledge. Pp. 98 – 121.

Week 2: SEPTEMBER 14

Crafting a (Democratic) Subject?

Required Readings

Myers, Ella

- 2013 Crafting a Democratic Subject? The Foucauldian Ethics of Self-Care. In *Worldly Ethics*. Pp. 21-39.
- Appadurai, Arjun
 2017 Democracy Fatigue. In *The Great Transgression*. Edited by Heinrich Geiselberger. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 1 – 12.
- Fisher, Mark
 2009 It's Easier to Imagine the End of the World than the End of Capitalism. In *Capitalist Realism*.

Suggested Readings

- Brown, Wendy
 2017 *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution.
- 2006 American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-Democratization. *Political Theory* 34 (6): 690 – 714.
- 1995 Wounded Attachments. In *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 52 – 76.
- Cramer, Katherine J.
 2016 *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mishra, Pankaj
 2017 Politics in the Age of Resentment: The Dark Legacy of the Enlightenment. In *The Great Transgression*. Edited by Heinrich Geiselberger. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 104 – 116.
- Misik, Robert
 2017 The Courage to be Audacious. In *The Great Transgression*. Edited by Heinrich Geiselberger. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 117 - 129.
- Müller, Jan-Werner
 2016 *What is Populism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Rendueles, César
 2017 From Global Regression to Post-capitalist Counter-movements. In *The Great Transgression*. Edited by Heinrich Geiselberger. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 143 - 156.
- Soper, Kate
 2020 *Post-Growth Living: For an Alternative Hedonism*. London: Verso.

Week 3: SEPTEMBER 21

Climate Change, Politics, Care

Required Readings

- Myers, Ella
 2013 Crafting a Democratic Subject? The Foucauldian Ethics of Self-Care. In *Worldly Ethics*. Pp. 39-52.
- Fisher, Mark
 2009 What if You held a Protest and Everyone Came?; Capitalism and the Real. In *Capitalist Realism*.

Gosh, Amitav

2016 *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Excerpts.

Suggested Readings

Brown, Kate

2019 Learning to Read the Great Chernobyl Acceleration. *Current Anthropology* 60 (20): 198 – 208.

Klein, Naomi

2014 *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*. New York: Knopf.

Latour, Bruno

2018 *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

2017 *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

McDermott, Hughes

2017 *Energy Without Conscience: Oil, Climate Change, and Complicity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Nixon, Rob

2011 *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Week 4: SEPTEMBER 28

Militarism and Care I

Required Readings

Myers, Ella

2013 Levinasian Ethics, Charity, and Democracy. In *Worldly Ethics*. Pp. 53-83.

Varma, Saiba

2020 Introduction, Chapter 1, 2, and Interlude. In *The Occupied Clinic: Militarism and Care in Kashmir*.

Suggested Readings

Malkki, Liisa H.

2015 *The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ticktin, Miriam

2011 *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 5: OCTOBER 5

Militarism and Care II

Required Readings

Fisher, Mark

2009 Reflexive Impotence, Immobilization, and Liberal Communism; October 6, 1979: “Don’t Let Yourself Get Attached to Anything,” In *Capitalist Realism*.

Varma, Saiba

2020 Chapter 3, 4, 5, and Epilogue. In *The Occupied Clinic: Militarism and Care in Kashmir*.

Week 6: OCTOBER 12

Mid-term Recess; No Class

Week 7 : OCTOBER 19

What Alternative?

Required Readings

Fisher, Mark

2009 All that is Solid Melts into PR: Market Stalinism and Bureaucratic Anti-Production;” ...If you Can Watch the Overlap of One Reality with Another:” Capitalist Realism as Dreamwork and Memory Disorder; “There’s not Central Exchange,” Marxist Supernanny. In *Capitalist Realism*.

Week 8: OCTOBER 26

Care and Life I

Required Readings

Myers, Ella

2013 The Democratic Ethics of Care for Worldly Things. In *Worldly Ethics*. Pp. 85-98.

Stevenson, Lisa

2013 Introduction, Chapter 1, 2, 3. In *Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic*.

Week 9: NOVEMBER 2

Care and Life II

Myers, Ella

2013 The Democratic Ethics of Care for Worldly Things. In *Worldly Ethics*. Pp. 98-110.

Stevenson, Lisa

2013 Chapter 4, 5, 6, and Epilogue. In *Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic*.

Required Readings

Myers, Ella

2013 The Democratic Ethics of Care for Worldly Things. In *Worldly Ethics*. Pp. 111-126.

Week 10: NOVEMBER 9

Decolonization, Politics, Care

Required Readings

Myers, Ella

2013 The Democratic Ethics of Care for Worldly Things. In *Worldly Ethics*. Pp. 126-151.

De la Cadena, Marisol

2010 Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond “Politics.” *Cultural Anthropology* 25 (2): 334 – 370.

Suggested Readings

Haraway, Donna J.

2016 *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Kohn, Eduardo

2013 *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kohn, Eduardo

2007 How Dogs Dream: Amazonian Natures and the Politics of Transspecies Engagement. *American Ethnologist* 34 (1): 3 – 24.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A.

1995 Do Rocks Listen?: The Cultural Politics of Apprehending Australian Aboriginal Labor. *American Anthropologist* 97 (3): 505 – 518.

Week 11: NOVEMBER 16

Self-Directed Work

Week 12: NOVEMBER 23

Modalities of Research

Required Readings

Biehl, João, and Peter Locke

2010 Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming. *Current Anthropology* 51 (3): 317-51.

Hage, Ghassan

2009 Hating Israel in the Field: On Ethnography and Political Emotions. *Anthropological Theory* 9 (1): 59-79.

2016 Why I have voted in support of BDS: Ghassan Hage.

<https://savageminds.org/2016/042/20/why-i-have-voted-in-support-of-bds-ghassan-hage>

Suggested Readings

Appadurai, Arjun

2000 Grassroots, Globalization, and the Research Imagination. *Public Culture* 12 (1): 1 – 19.

Enslin, Elizabeth

1994 Beyond Writing: Feminist Practice and the Limitations of Ethnography. *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (4): 537 – 568.

Simpson, Audra

2014 *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 13: November 30

IT'S UP TO YOU!

COURSE POLICIES

Submission of Assignments

Unless otherwise noted below, all assignments will be submitted through folders that will be available on the Avenue to Learn site for this course.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale as illustrated below.

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Grade</u>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

For the research proposal and research paper all students have the option of an extension of up to one week of the deadline specified in the course outline above. All requests for deadline extensions longer than one week must be made in advance of the assignment's original deadline, and must be accompanied by a documented justification for why a deadline extension of longer than a week is needed. Challenges such as assignments or final presentations in other courses that were announced earlier in the term should be anticipated and planned for. It is your responsibility to make contingency plans for unforeseen problems such as computer failures. Assignments that are completed after the extended deadline, if accepted, will be penalized by one grade point per day including Saturday and Sunday (a grade point is the interval between A+ and A, A and A-, etc.).

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Please inform me of any absences or problems with the course,

Courses with an On-Line Element

This course will be using online technologies, including Avenue to Learn, e-mail, and Zoom. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster email accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required before the text/exam begins.

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.html

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- a) Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained. (Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide).
- b) Improper collaboration in group work.
- c) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning, and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Students Rights & Responsibilities (the “Code”; <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities>). All students share responsibilities of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of the McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning rooms. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviors that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue2Learn, WebEx, or Zoom for delivery) will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restrictions or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Faculty of Social Sciences Email Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Etiquette

In this course we value integrity, inclusiveness, and teamwork. As all of us make the transition to on-line course delivery and teaching, I would like for us all to emphasize the values of mutual respect, dignity, and responsibility. Sometimes issues, glitches in electronic systems, and other concerns can feel overwhelming. Please be kind to each other, and patient. I am always happy to assist you in, and to make this the experience as I can.

Course Communication

If you wish to communicate with me, please try to be as clear and concise as possible. If you are unsure about your message, read it out aloud. I do this often before I send a message, since it helps me to better understand how the message might "land" on the other end. And/or review your written message. Not only will this let you review your questions, concerns, and/or ideas, but also make sure that the tone is appropriate. I will answer e-mails on weekdays between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm. Given the volume of messages I receive, you may have to wait up to 48 hrs for a reply.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the students to check her or his McMaster e-mail and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labor disruptions, etc.). Changes will be

communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L, and/or McMaster email.