

**THE SECRET OF THE GIFT (4SG3)  
Winter 2021**

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**Lecture:** Friday 2:30 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.  
online virtual (synchronous) classroom

**Office:** CNH 535  
**Office Hours:** Friday. 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.  
online virtual office hour

*We will be using Zoom platform for this course. Lecture seminars and office hour will go through Zoom. Access to recorded lectures will be posted on Avenue To Learn.*

*Due to the delayed start of classes provided by the University, some details and deadlines regarding course content and assessments in the published course outline may be changed. Please check Avenue to Learn for the most up-to-date information for this course. The course outline on Avenue to Learn will supersede previously published outlines until published course outlines are updated.*

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### **Course Description and Objectives**

This course is a story about returns, an attempt to invoke the notion of *The Gift* into history, geography, economy, and culture. We are talking about the passage of time and the apparent passing of the *gift economy* – from the European colonial encounter to the Cold War, and now into the neoliberal *free* market. The stories to follow is about the price countless countries have to pay (and the impossibility to repay) for being included in the global gift economy. In this course we will critically evaluate the price of the gift - what one might call “the neoliberal economy of history” – and how it is ultimately an economics of storytelling by which a peculiar economic is plotted on the linear passing of history expressed with the equation “trade replaces violence.” We will ask: What are the immense violence underneath the gift of development loans, aid grants, military aids, machine guns, rifles, tanks, artillery, helicopters, advisors, counter-insurgency expertise, psychological warfare tactics, even anthropologists? In turn, how do nation-states talk about itself – nonviolently - about the triumph of peaceful trade and reason over barbarism? Indeed how have “late capitalist” economies accumulated a great deficit in its balancing of historical accounts? These are some of the questions we will be attempting to address in this course, however incomplete they might be when there is an immense debt hanging over the *new world*, a violent history replicated but hidden in the cleanliness of the historical present.

### **Course Policy**

All readings must be completed before the week in which the given topic(s) is being discussed. Class attendance and active participation is part of the grade. Students who are absent more than two times will have a point taken off their final grade. Latecomers may, at the discretion of the instructor, incur an official absence. Students must accept the responsibility to respect the ethical standards in meeting their academic assignments and are encouraged to be active co-producers of questions and knowledge. Students will hand in four (4) one-page summaries, a midterm and final essay.

### **Weekly discussions**

Students should be prepared to participate in class discussion every class period. In addition, each student will be responsible for presenting on selected chapters from the assigned ethnography, book chapters, or articles and leading subsequent class discussion during the semester. Presentations must outline the main arguments in the text, provide some supporting examples for these arguments from the text, and evaluate those arguments in terms of supporting or opposed scholarship.

### **Course Evaluation – Overview**

Attendance, participation, discussions	20%
Four (4) x one-page summary	10%
Midterm essay (seven to eight pages long)	30%
Final essay (seven to eight pages long)	40%

**Four one-page summaries, a seven to eight pages long Midterm, and a seven to eight pages long Final essays (and due dates)**

Students are also expected to hand four one-page summary, a mid-term and final essay. The one-page summary is a brief description of an article/chapter. Essay questions for the midterm and final essays (and their respective due dates) will be distributed in advance.

*You may hand in any of your one-page summary anytime during the course of the semester so long as I have all of four of them by the last session of the term (April 9 , 2021). The due dates for your midterm and final essays are on March 5 and April 14, 2021 respectively.*

**Instructor responsibilities**

To present class material in clearly understandable language, to assist students in thinking critically about concepts and ideas, to respect student opinion and value each student's contributions equally, and to give feedback on student progress early and often; to be accessible during office hours, and to grade and return all midterm essays in a timely fashion.

**Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

*All reading materials, including my weekly lecture notes are accessible on Avenue to Learn. On Avenue, go to "Content," then "Reading Materials," and "e-Reserves" for reading materials. On Avenue, go to "Content," then "Lecture Notes" for my weekly lecture notes.*

**Week one** – Jan 15: Introduction to the course

**Week two** – Jan 22:

[Book] Mauss, Marcel. 1990 or 2002 (1950). *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*. New York: W.W. Norton

- Introduction chapter
- Chapter one

**Week three** – Jan 29:

Mauss:

- Chapter two
- Chapter four

**Week four** – Feb 5:

- Weiner, Annette. 1980. Reproduction: A Replacement for Reciprocity. *American Ethnologist* 7(1): 71-85.
- Weiner, Annette. 1985. Inalienable Wealth. *American Ethnologist* 12(2): 210-227.

**Week five** – Feb 12:

- Carrier, James G. 1992. Emerging Alienation in Production: A Maussian History. In *Man* (New Series) 27(3): 539-558.

- Keane, Web. 2001. "Money Is No Object: Materiality, Desire, and Modernity in an Indonesian Society." In *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*. Fred R. Myers, ed. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, pp. 65-90.

**Week six** – Feb 19: Midterm Recess

**Week seven** – Feb 26:

- Haynes, Douglas E. 1987. From Tribute to Philanthropy: The Politics of Gift Giving in a Western Indian City. In *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46 (2): 339-360.
- Laidlaw, James. 2000. A Free Gift Makes No Friends. In *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* 6: 617-634.

**Week eight** – March 5:

- Parry, Jonathan. 1985. *The Gift, The Indian Gift and The "Indian Gift."* *Man* (New Series) 21(3): 453-473.
- Franquesa, Jaume. 2013. On Keeping and Selling: The Political Economy of Heritage Making in Contemporary Spain. *Current Anthropology* 54(3): 346-359/368-369.

- ❖ **MIDTERM ESSAY DUE DATE – (worth 30% of total grade)**  
**Midterm Essays are to be handed in as a Microsoft Word document via email in the following format: your lastname-4SG3-midterm.docx**

**Week nine** – March 12:

- [Book chapter] Bataille, Georges. 1985. "The Notion of Expenditure." In *Visions of Excess. Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 116-129.
- [Book chapter] Bataille, Georges. 1989 (1967). *The Accursed Share*. Volume 1. Robert Hurley, trans. New York: Zone Books (read "Sacrifices and Wars of the Aztecs," pp. 45-61).

**Week ten** – March 19:

- [Book chapter] Stoekl, Allan. 1997. "Bataille, give giving, and the Cold War." In *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*. Edited by Alan Schrift, pg. 245-255. New York: Routledge.
- [Book chapter] Hutnyk, John. 2004. *Bad Marxism: Capitalism and Cultural Studies*. London: Pluto Press. Read Chapter 11: Anthropologists.

**Week eleven** – March 26:

- Taussig, Michael. 1977. The Genesis of Capitalism amongst a South American Peasantry: Devil's Labor and the Baptism of Money. In *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19(2): 130-155.
- Taussig, Michael. 1995. The Sun Gives without Receiving: An Old Story. In *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37(2): 368-398.

**Week twelve** – April 2:

[Book] Klima, Alan. 2002. *The Funeral Casino: Meditation, Massacre, and Exchange with the Dead in Thailand*. Princeton University Press.

- Chapter 2
- Chapter 3

**Week thirteen** – April 9:

Klima

- Chapter 7
- Wrapping up

❖ **Last day to hand in all of your one-page summary**

**Week fourteen** – April 14:

- ❖ **FINAL ESSAY DUE DATE – (worth 40% of total grade)**  
**Final Essays are to be handed in as a Microsoft Word document via email in the following format: your lastname-4SG3-final.docx**

**Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
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

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **Late Assignments**

Late essays will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

Class attendance and active participation is part of the grade. Students who are absent more than two times will have a point taken off their final grade. Latecomers may, at the discretion of the instructor, incur an official absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour 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 behaviour 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 types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Turnitin.com**

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

*Some courses may* use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using

plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Courses with an On-Line Element**

**Some courses may** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). 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 e-mail 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 to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### **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 Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all 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 environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail 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.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

**Requests for Relief for Miss Academic Term Work**

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

**Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

**Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

**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, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

**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 student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

*[latest update December 19, 2020]*