Transitional Justice 9501B
Foundations in Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Winter term 2021
Time: Tuesdays 4:30 to 7:30 pm (London/Ontario time)
Instructor: Dr. Samar El-Masri
On-line Office Hours: By appointment (through zoom on OWL)
  Please only use your western account.
Email: selmasr2@uwo.ca

I-Course Description
The course will provide students with inter-disciplinary instruction in Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. Students will explore aspects of societal and state transition relating to development, democracy, the environment, the economy, identity, human rights, politics, peace agreements and justice before, at the time of, and post-transition. The course will familiarize students with the foundations of emerging debates surrounding transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction, and to allow for real-world application of theoretical constructs and explanations.

II-How to think about this course
This course may be a valuable addition to your academic year for three reasons: First, it reinforces your knowledge of the field of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction, by discussing the major issues, debates, themes and approaches in the literature. Second, it gives you a great opportunity to develop your critical thinking skills and delve deeper into areas or issues that you are passionate about in the context of transitional justice. Third, it provides a great venue to listen to other students who may come from various disciplines with a different perspective on issues that you might not be aware of. And finally—although this is more applicable to the PhD students in the class—it prepares you for your comprehensive exams as a considerable number of the readings are also required for your Comps.

III-Objectives
This course is designed to achieve several objectives:
  1) Depth and Breadth of Knowledge: Students will become familiar with the “canon” of literature in the growing field of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction through an advanced core course, in which they will be guided by expert faculty members who are actively researching and publishing in the field. The core course will serve to build a community of scholars, facilitating frequent interaction with faculty, and the interchange of ideas with and interaction among peers. Intended learning outcome: Students will engage in critical thinking and writing about the core questions that underlie scholarship in
the field of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction through the preparation of essays and presentations. These papers and presentations will develop the student’s analytic and interpretive skills.

2) **Research and Scholarship:** Students will carry out their own independent research projects through the requirements of the program, in the form of essay assignments and dissertations. These assignments will require the critical analysis of current knowledge and the creation of new knowledge, and advanced students’ work will be presented at conferences and symposia held through the Centre for Transitional Justice, as well as national and international conferences. Some students will also be selected as research assistants to assist in the development and conduct of research projects carried out by faculty members affiliated with the Centre. Intended learning outcome: Students will receive mentorship and training in research methods.

3) **Level of Application of Knowledge:** Some students may be selected as teaching assistants for the undergraduate courses to be taught as components of the Minor in Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. This will be determined by allocations made within the student’s home department or faculty. Other students will have opportunities to convey their specialized knowledge through presentations to, for example, the TJ Club, and in the research colloquium—all on a voluntary basis. Intended learning outcome: Students will have the opportunity for knowledge mobilization through presentations.

4) **Professional Capacity / Autonomy:** Students will work toward their own research goals to develop their own ideas, and to present those ideas in the form of conference papers and presentations. Intended learning outcome: Students will be trained as highly-qualified personnel, able to translate their scholarship in both the classroom and the academic forum.

5) **Level of Communication Skills:** Students will complete a series of assignments that provide critical analyses of current knowledge and the creation of new knowledge. They will also participate in colloquia, seminars and conferences to orient them toward academic communication at professional events. Intended learning outcome: Students will develop rigorous writing and research skills to assist them in developing and disseminating their own ideas.

6) **Awareness of Limits of Knowledge:** Students will undertake a program of advanced study and research in the field of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction. Intended learning outcome: Students will be exposed to the breadth and expanse of interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction.

7) **By the end of the course students should be able to:**
   a) Discuss different approaches to transitional justice.
   b) Describe the key events, changes over time and the current state of transitional justice.
   c) Think critically and write about an issue in transitional justice.
   d) Evaluate the effectiveness of a policy or inter-state issue in transitional justice.
   e) Participate in a presentation about a particular theoretical perspective through a case study of transitional justice.
   f) Analyze current policy and political issues in transitional justice.
   g) Discuss a current transitional justice issue in historical context.
IV-Required Texts

Because the field of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction is new, and because it involves different areas and disciplines, there will be no one textbook that is required for this course. Instead, the reading list will involve academic articles, book chapters, and technical reports, that you will find in the “Course Readings” on this course OWL’s page. You are responsible for accessing them yourself.

V-Grade Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>60% (Due April 6 @ 4:30pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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VI-Explaining the Components of the Course:

1-Seminar Participation (see the rubric below):
This is a synchronous course, where participation is of the essence. My aim is to move the face-to-face vibrant learning experience online. So, every Tuesday at 4:30 pm you are expected to join our zoom meeting. Certain rules apply:

- **Your cameras should always be ON.** If you have any problem with the camera, or if you have any legitimate reason for not sharing your picture you must let me know ASAP to sort this out.

- **Attendance is crucial:** In a seminar, it is especially important for students to attend class. Failure to attend class will have a detrimental effect on a student’s participation grade, for example, since students cannot participate if they are not present in class. Absence also affects a student’s understanding of the material, which affects the student’s performance on essays and other assignments.

- **Course Content Note:** Because the field of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction deals with disturbing events like war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, some students may find specific material emotionally challenging. In that case, I would be happy to discuss any concerns students may have before the subject comes up during our meeting. If students ever feel the need to step out of the zoom discussion as a result, they may do so without academic penalty. But they will be responsible for any missed material.

- If students ever wish to discuss their personal reactions to course material with the class or with me (individually afterwards), I welcome these discussions as an appropriate part of our scholarly work.

- If you are shy or feel that you did not have the chance to participate in the discussion the way you wanted to, or you wish you made a different point in class, you can send me one/two double spaced page paper about that, which will then be corrected and counted towards your participation mark.
• **Etiquette is key**: Our interactions must be guided by an ethic of respect. Uncivil, disrespectful, abusive, or other inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.

2-Seminar Presentation
Each week, during our zoom meeting, one or two students will do a presentation for us highlighting the main points and arguments of the readings assigned for that week, also drawing on themes covered earlier in the term, to the class. Some of the important things you need to know about this course component are these:

- Each presentation should be approximately 20 minutes in length.
- Student presenters are expected to refer to material BEYOND that assigned to the class.
- The student is expected to prepare few questions to discuss with classmates after the presentation is over.
- The presenter(s) is expected to send me the PowerPoint slideshow.
- Since we need to share with the other students the main points of the presentation, the student will be given two options: The first option is to send me a summary of the presentation to post it under Weekly Content. The second option is giving me the permission to post the entire PowerPoint slideshow on OWL (under weekly content) for other students to access.
- It is helpful to include at the beginning of the PowerPoint a sort of a “road map” of your presentation, highlighting all the major issues that you will be talking about.
- If the presentation is a joint project between the students involved, all students in the group will be graded together.

3-Essay *(Due April 6 at 4:30 pm)*
You will be required to write one essay of 25-30 typed, double-spaced pages, or between 6250-7500 words. Students are encouraged to speak with the instructor about their proposed topic. The completed paper must be submitted through the assignment tab on OWL.

a-Evaluating the essay: Although I will be evaluating your essay as a whole, your mark will depend on various factors including:

- The argument itself, the quality of the evidence you presented, your creativity and your ability to effectively use quotations and footnotes,
- Your organization
- Your adherence to the instructions I mentioned including formatting, referencing style…

b-Late Penalty: The completed paper must be submitted on April 6, 2021 at 4:30 pm(London Ontario time). A late penalty of 10% per day will be applied to papers submitted at any point after that date.

c-Turnitin: Essays must be submitted to Turnitin.com, using the link on OWL. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (*http://www.turnitin.com* ).

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d- **Citation Style:** Citations must be formatted using *Chicago-style footnotes, not in-text citations.* Students are advised to consult a writer’s handbook when composing their essays in order to see how to format things like bibliography and footnotes. One excellent handbook is *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian. A useful link may be found at the following url:  [http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicago.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicago.html)

e- **Spelling and Grammatical Errors:** Grammatical, spelling and other errors are not acceptable. You are responsible for your own work, and, as such, you must be careful to proofread your work before turning it in.

f- **Bibliography:** You must attach a Bibliography to your essay. Your bibliography must include a minimum of four academic sources (consult a librarian for clarification on what counts as an academic source (e.g. newspapers, magazines, and encyclopedias do not count). Failure to include at least four academic sources will result in a grade of “F”. The highest grades in this course typically go to students that consult a large number of high-quality source materials. Consulting more than six sources is highly recommended.

g- **Academic Dishonesty:** Many different types of actions may be considered academically dishonest. These might include, although not exhaustively, the following: cheating, submission of work not authored by you, double submission, fabrication, plagiarism. Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf). You are advised to familiarize yourself with the guidelines set out in the Academic Handbook, Rights and Responsibilities, Scholastic Discipline - Undergrad.

Students are also advised to utilize the Library’s tools on plagiarism:  [http://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html](http://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html)

h- **Other Resources:** There are many resources at Western designed to assist you in your learning. You are strongly advised to utilize these services. The Student Development Centre offers many services, including Effective Writing Programs and Learning Skills Services. The Student Development Centre is located in UCC Suite 210; they can be reached by telephone at (519)661-2147, by email at exams@sdc.uwo.ca, or on the web at [http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/). You should also become familiar with the services offered by the University Library System. The D.B. Weldon Library may be contacted by telephone at (519)661-3162 or by email at dbwref@lib.uwo.ca, or on the web at [http://www.lib.uwo.ca/weldon/#](http://www.lib.uwo.ca/weldon/#).

i- **Non-medical and Medical accommodation:** Western University requires documentation from the medical community for students who require academic accommodation due to medical illness—even accommodation for medical illness of work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. Students are required to have their physician or health care provider fill out the Student Medical Certificate. Medical certificates will only be considered for students seriously affected by illness, who cannot reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Medical
certificates may NOT be issued for minor illness like colds, non-acute vomiting or diarrhea, menstrual cramps, insomnia, or for past illnesses.

If the requested accommodation is related to a death in the family, please see your Academic Counsellor directly. If a student misses a midterm or final exam for non-medical reasons, accommodation must be sought and obtained from Academic Counselling, or else the student will receive a grade of zero. **Late essays will be subject to a penalty of 10% per day** unless accommodation is granted by Academic Counselling.

If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office and **NOT** to the instructor. It will be the Dean’s office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

For further information, please see the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness at [https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm](https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm).

**IX-IMPORTANT AND USEFUL INFORMATION:**

1- **Important Notice re: Prerequisites/Antirequisites:** Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. (Office of the Dean, Faculty of Social Science)

2- **Completion of All Requirements:** According to the Dean’s office, Students who fail to complete all evaluation components of the course, without supporting medical documentation or justifiable and documented extenuating circumstances will be disqualified from appealing the course's final grade.

3- **Mental/Emotional Distress:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health at Western [http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**X-COURSE OUTLINE BY TOPIC:**

**January 12 The Importance of Context**
No readings for today’s class.

**January 19 Transitions**

January 26 Addressing Colonial Harms

February 2 International Criminal Justice

February 9 Truth Commissions

**February 16—No classes (Reading Week)**

**February 23 Repair**


**March 2 Gender**


**March 9 Development**

March 16 Roads to Reconciliation


March 23 Identity


March 30 Local and Grassroots Actors

April 6 Looking Forward (Essay due)


### Student Participation

**Participation Grading Guide:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Excellent: leads debate; offers analysis and comments; always has ideas on theme of reading; takes care not to dominate; asks questions</td>
<td>Clearly has done and prepared questions on virtually all readings; intelligently uses this understanding and these questions in discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>Almost always</td>
<td>Very Good: thoughtful comments and questions for the most part; willing, able and frequent contributor</td>
<td>Has done most readings; provides competent analysis of reading when prompted by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>Good: has basic grasp of key concepts and occasional ideas on the main theme of the reading; arguments are sporadic and at times incomplete or poorly supported; unwilling to ask questions</td>
<td>Displays familiarity with most readings, but tends not to analyze them or to relate them to the course material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Somewhat Poor: remarks in class marred by misunderstandings of key concepts; seldom contributes effectively to discussion of the main theme; often digresses in unhelpful ways; sporadic</td>
<td>Actual knowledge of material is outweighed by improvised comments and remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Poor: rarely speaks; parrots text or comments of others</td>
<td>Little or no apparent familiarity with assigned material</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Student Presentation

## Presentation Grading Guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Presentation style</th>
<th>Presentation content</th>
<th>Post-presentation discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Excellent presentation of the material. Always clear. Always engaging the listeners</td>
<td>Excellent: covered and explained all the important points in the readings. Went above and beyond to ensure that the issue is covered from all sides. Used various sources from outside the reading list.</td>
<td>Clearly has done and prepared questions to be discussed in the class. Did an excellent job in leading the discussion and intelligently kept the class engaged and the discussion flowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>Very good and clear presentation</td>
<td>Very Good: covered and explained most of the important points in the readings. Used some outside sources.</td>
<td>Clearly prepared questions to be discussed in class. Showed a very good ability to lead the discussion and was able to keep the discussion flowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>Good presentation that covered the major points in the readings with a decent ability to relay the information to students</td>
<td>Good: has basic grasp of key concepts and ideas of the reading; arguments are sporadic and at times incomplete or poorly supported; did not use outside sources</td>
<td>Provided questions. Basic ability to initiate a discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>Somewhat poor presentation. Some unclear thoughts and confusing explanations.</td>
<td>Somewhat Poor: misunderstood many of the issues in the reading.</td>
<td>Provided poor questions. Unable to lead a discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>Poor presentation, confusing and vague.</td>
<td>flawed understanding of the readings.</td>
<td>Provided no questions. Unwilling or unable to lead a discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>