

McGill University  
Fall 2024

# POLI 423

## POLITICS OF ETHNO-NATIONALISM

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**Grader:** Brian Isaac  
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**Class meets:** Tue, Thu 4:05 PM to 5:25 PM  
**Class location:** MAASS 217

**Office hours:** Fri 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM  
**Location:** LEA 521

**MyCourses page:**  
<https://mycourses2.mcgill.ca/d2l/home/724584>

### Course Description and Objectives

The course aims to explain the impact of ethnic nationalism on contemporary politics. It offers a comparative perspective that brings together empirical evidence from a wide variety of regions. After a brief introduction to the main concepts and theories of nationalism studies, it focuses on the interaction between the state, ethnicity, and identity formation, notably including “race” and its role in colonialism and imperialism. It then examines the influence of ethnicity in contentious politics, as it moves from negative attitudes to violent episodes such as riots and war. Next, the course positions ethnicity within the context of party politics and political behaviour. It highlights potential ways of accommodating ethnic diversity through institutional means. It concludes by exploring ethnicity intersectionally, centering the relationship between gender and nationalism.

#### Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will:

- Be able to apply the theoretical apparatus of comparative political science to examine ethnic nationalism in different contexts such as Southern Africa, Northern Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Caribbean, North America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia.
- Be familiar with the main debates about ethnic nationalism, especially as they relate to contemporary contentious politics.
- Learn to synthesise findings from scholarship in different methodological traditions such as comparative historical analysis and political behaviour.
- Know how to write a research proposal for a grant and practise doing it.

**Prerequisites:** Any 300-level course in comparative political science or international relations.

**Credits:** 3

## Course Materials and Communication

**Readings:** This course uses a combination of journal articles and book chapters. All readings are available as PDF files via MyCourses or via McGill Library.

**Slides:** Lectures will be accompanied by PowerPoint presentations. The slides will be made available to students via MyCourses.

**Communication:** I can be reached via email and during office hours. We can also arrange a zoom meeting within the office hours, but you need to notify me in advance. If you have a lengthy question or a question that implies a long answer, please ask during my office hours instead of emailing.

## Assessment

**Online Midterm Exam (30%):** Answer one out of three questions based on readings and lectures from Week 1 to Week 6. The answer is an analytical essay of about 750 words. The questions ask you to argue for or against a position in a scholarly debate, first giving an overview of factors and then focusing in detail on two factors. This open-book online midterm lasts 80 minutes. Essays with higher grades would have accurate term use, accurate use of literature, have strong supporting evidence, high quality of analysis, would answer the question, and be clear in terms of structure and style.

**Research Proposal (20%):** Write a two-page single-spaced research project proposal for an imaginary 100-page dissertation on a topic dealing with ethnic nationalism. This task simulates the research proposal part of applying for an FRQSC grant. It includes elements such as research problem and context, contribution to literature, methodology, and time frame. It is assessed based on the originality of the project, the clarity and coherence of the research problem, the relevance of methodology, and the feasibility of the project.

**Online Final Exam (40%):** The final exam follows a similar format to the midterm but has two sets of three questions. Pick one question out of each of the two sets. Write analytical essays of about 750 words, each worth 50% of final grade. Essay 1 covers any topic from the course. Essay 2 covers topics from Week 8 to Week 13. This open-book online exam lasts 3 hours.

**Participation (10%):** Participate in group discussions. There will be group discussions in the last 20 to 30 minutes of every class, based on answering two or three questions that are less formal than the questions on the exams. Each group of 4 to 6 people briefly writes down their answers but should primarily focus on oral discussion. I will be moving from one group to another and listening to your discussions. The questions are announced in the beginning of each class so you can keep them in mind as you follow the lecture.

Further instructions about the exams and the proposal will be available on MyCourses. These include items such as informal rubrics for the exam and the proposal, sample questions, suggestions on writing essays, late submission penalties, and other aspects. Late submissions are subject to gradual point reduction. Group discussions imply your physical attendance, so non-

attendance means non-participation for that class. Per McGill's policy, missing over 40% of classes will result in failing the entire course because the usefulness of discussions for the whole class depends on the students being present to participate in them. Students have the option to switch the weight for the midterm and the research proposal before they learn their midterm grade. This is done via MyCourses.

**Notable deadlines and exams:**

Oct 10 – Online midterm exam.

Oct 17 – Deadline for the option to switch weight for midterm and proposal.

Nov 11 – Deadline to pick the topic for research proposal.

Nov 24 – Deadline to submit research proposal.

After Dec 5 – Online final exam.

## Course and University Policies

**Language of Submission:** Conformément à [la Charte des droits de l'étudiant](#) de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté, sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue. (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 21 janvier 2009).

In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Students' Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009).

**Academic Integrity:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#) (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

**Special Needs:** As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.

**Extraordinary Circumstances:** In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of McGill University, assessment tasks in a course are subject to change, provided students are sent adequate and timely communications regarding the change.

**Course Evaluations:** End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

**Copyright of Lectures:** All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning ends. ***You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials;*** doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.

**Generative AI:** You may use generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) for learning and practicing the concepts in this course, but these tools ***may NOT*** be used for completing assignments in this course.

# Schedule of Lectures and Readings

\*\*\* Note: readings may be subject to minor change \*\*\*

## Week 1. Aug 29 – Introduction

Browse through the files on MyCourses and get a sense of the reading list.

Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed). Verso, pp. 1-7.

## Week 2. Sep 3, Sep 5 – Theories and Typologies of Nationalism

Özkırımlı, U. (2010) *Theories of nationalism: A critical introduction* (2nd ed). Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 9-46, 169-198.

Simonsen, K. B. and Bonikowski, B. (2020) 'Is civic nationalism necessarily inclusive? Conceptions of nationhood and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe', *European Journal of Political Research*, 59(1), pp. 114–136.

## Week 3. Sep 10, Sep 12 – Ethnicity and Ethnic Nationalism: an Overview

Varshney, A. (2007) 'Ethnicity and ethnic conflict', in Boix, C. and Stokes, S. C. (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics*. Oxford University Press, pp. 274-294.

Varshney, A. (2003) 'Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality', *Perspectives on Politics*, 1(1), pp. 85–99.

Smith, A. D. (2018) 'The ethnic sources of nationalism', in Brown, M. E. (ed.) *Ethnic conflict and international security*. Princeton University Press, pp. 27-41.

Kaufman, S. J. (2001) *Modern hatreds: The symbolic politics of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press, pp. 15-49.

## Week 4. Sep 17, Sep 19 – The State, Classification, and Linked Fate

Nobles, M. (2000) *Shades of citizenship: Race and the census in modern politics*. Stanford University Press, pp. 1-84.

Roth, W. D. (2016) 'The multiple dimensions of race', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(8), pp. 1310–1338.

Gay, C., Hochschild, J. and White, A. (2016) 'Americans' belief in linked fate: Does the measure capture the concept?', *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 1(1), pp. 117–144.

## Week 5. Sep 24, Sep 26 – Race-Making and Colonialism

Marx, A. W. (1997) *Making race and nation: A comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-10, 81-119, 191-216.

Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed). Verso, pp. 141-159.

**Week 6. Oct 1, Oct 3 – Empire and Separatism**

Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed). Verso, pp. 83-113.

Hale, H. E. (2008) *The foundations of ethnic politics: Separatism of states and nations in Eurasia and the world*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 57–90.

Ponarin, E. and Komin, M. (2018) 'Imperial and ethnic nationalism: A dilemma of the Russian elite', in Kolstø, P. and Blakkisrud, H. (eds.) *Russia before and after Crimea: Nationalism and identity 2010-17*. Edinburgh University Press, pp. 50-65.

**Week 7. Oct 8 – Mid-Course Revision**

No new readings, hence the heavier load in Week 6. Lecture will review the material so far.

**\*\*\* Oct 10 – Mid-term (Online) \*\*\***

**\*\*\* Oct 15, Oct 17 – Fall Reading Break, No Class \*\*\***

**Week 8. Oct 22, Oct 24 – Ethnic Antagonism**

Petersen, R. D. (2002) 'An emotions-based approach to ethnic conflict'. In *Understanding ethnic violence: Fear, hatred, and resentment in twentieth-century Eastern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 17-39.

Horowitz, D. L. (2003) *The deadly ethnic riot*. University of California Press, pp. 151-194.

Kaufman, S. J. (2001) *Modern hatreds: The symbolic politics of ethnic war*. Cornell University Press, pp. 85-129.

**Week 9. Oct 29, Oct 31 – Ethnic Violence**

Horowitz, D. L. (2003) *The deadly ethnic riot*. University of California Press, pp. 124-151.

Hager, A., Krakowski, K. and Schaub, M. (2019) 'Ethnic riots and prosocial behavior: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan', *American Political Science Review*, 113(4), pp. 1029–1044.

Wilkinson, S. (2007) 'A constructivist model of ethnic riots', in Chandra, K. (ed.) *Constructivist theories of ethnic politics*. Oxford University Press, pp. 359-386.

Beissinger, M. R. (2002) 'Violence and tides of nationalism', in *Nationalist mobilization and the collapse of the Soviet state*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 271-319.

**Week 10. Nov 5, Nov 7 – Ethnic Diversity and Anti-Immigration**

Denney, S. and Green, C. (2021) 'Who should be admitted? Conjoint analysis of South Korean attitudes toward immigrants', *Ethnicities*, 21(1), pp. 120–145.

Jardina, A. (2019). The Preservation of Whiteness. In *White Identity Politics* (pp. 155–186). chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schertzer, R. and Woods, E. T. (2022) *The new nationalism in America and beyond: The deep roots of ethnic nationalism in the digital age*. Oxford University Press, pp. 113-147.

**\*\*\* Nov 11 – Deadline to pick the topic of the research proposal \*\*\***

**Week 11. Nov 12, Nov 14 – Ethnicity, Ideology, and Electoral Politics**

Horowitz, D. L. (2008) 'Ethnic parties and party systems', in *Ethnic groups in conflict: With a new preface* (2nd ed., Nachdr.). University of California Press, pp. 291-333.

Frymer, P. (2010) *Uneasy alliances: Race and party competition in America*. Princeton University Press, pp. 3-23, 87-119.

Subramanian, N. (2020) 'From bondage to citizenship: A comparison of African American and Indian lower-caste mobilization in two regions of deep inequality', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 62(4), pp. 770–809.

**Week 12. Nov 19, Nov 21 – Institutional Accommodation of Ethnicity**

Cornell, S. E. (2002) 'Autonomy as a source of conflict: Caucasian conflicts in theoretical perspective', *World Politics*, 54(2), pp. 245–276.

Shachar, A. (2000) 'On citizenship and multicultural vulnerability', *Political Theory*, 28(1), pp. 64-89.

Horowitz, D. L. (2014) 'Ethnic power sharing: Three big problems', *Journal of Democracy*, 25(2), pp. 5-20.

Chandra, K. (2000) 'Elite incorporation in multi-ethnic societies', *Asian Survey*, 40(5), pp. 836-855.

**\*\*\* Nov 25 – Deadline to submit two-page research proposal \*\*\***

**Week 13. Nov 26, Nov 28 – Gender and Intersectionality**

Kandiyoti, D. (1991) 'Identity and its discontents: Women and the nation', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 20(3), pp. 429-443.

Charrad, M. M. (2001) *States and women's rights: The making of postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*. University of California Press, pp. 1-13, 28-50.

Givens, T. E. (2016) 'The radical right gender gap', in *The populist radical right*. Routledge, pp. 308-326.

**Week 14. Dec 3 – Revision**

No new readings. Last lecture offers a revision of material.

**\*\*\* After Dec 5 – Online final exam \*\*\***