General Information

Course
Title: Understanding Power and Empowerment in International Development
Code: INTD 397
Term: Fall
Year: 2019
Class Times: Fridays 8h30 to 11h30
Location: Wilson 105
Number of credits: 3

Instructor
Name: Kattie Lussier
Office: Room 240 Peterson Hall, 3460 McTavish street
Email: kattie.lussier@mcgill.ca
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 14h00 to 16h00
Appointments needed for meetings outside of office hours

Teaching assistant
Name: TBA
Email: TBA
Office hours: TBA

Course overview
Synopsis: The word ‘power’ has many meanings, and these vary depending on the settings and the concerns being discussed (Lukes, 2005). While this will be explored further in class, a simple working definition of power is the ability of people to achieve the change they want. This course is therefore about change and how it happens. In international development discourse, the word ‘power’ is often replaced by more neutral terms such as ‘consultation’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘inclusivity’ in order to mask the unpleasant fact that power is rarely distributed fairly and that power dynamics are inextricably linked to poverty (Chambers, 2012). It is important to understand power better, because it helps to bridge the gap
between the way people perceive the change they want in theory, and how they make it happen in practice (Hunjan and Pettit, 2011).

‘Empowerment’ is one of development’s most popular buzzwords and has long been associated with social change. Nowadays, the term has become rather elastic (Cornwall, 2016). Once used for social activism, it is now part of the day to day vocabulary of a range of actors from grassroots movements to international organizations. This course will unpack what it really means, how it is practiced and measured, and its implications for the study and practice of international development.

The concepts discussed in this course are equally relevant to all forms of marginalization amongst which poverty status, gender, religion, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, caste and social class, disabilities and cognitive differences, literacy and level of instruction, etc. That said, empowerment has been studied in more depth by gender scholars and even after years of efforts, women empowerment remains a key challenge in several countries and therefore a key development priority. For these reasons, some of the readings will discuss women’s empowerment more specifically, but the discussions in class will address a wider range of exclusion.

Similarly, while most of the discussions in the course will focus on aid-receiving countries, powerlessness is far from being a developing country’s problem. Power dynamics are therefore as important in the Canadian context as they are in the rest of the world. Consequently, the course will occasionally draw on domestic and North-American examples as well.

Course’s Contribution

This course does not require any prerequisite and its content is relevant to all development students. However, it will be particularly helpful for students keen to engage in advocacy or eager to reduce social exclusion. Students with an interest in gender issues will particularly benefit from the cases and articles presented.

Instructional methods

The instructor will use a variety of teaching methods including lectures, plenary sessions, case studies and small group activities. An active pedagogy will be used in class, which means that students will be required to engage in their learning by discussing with their colleagues and taking part in individual and group activities.

The material used during the course will be uploaded to myCourses weekly. Other important information and material will also be shared through myCourses. Students should therefore consult it regularly. Polling@McGill will be used for formative purposes only. Students are encouraged to download the application (see https://mcgill.ca/polling/ for further information) but the answers they will provide through the app will not be part of the evaluation.

Students are expected to do their readings before each class and, from times to times, will be requested to watch short videos online before class. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in the lectures by sharing their ideas and experiences, discussing the course material and asking questions.
Learning

Aim
This course aims to develop a better understanding of what power and empowerment means in a development context and the way power dynamics can be transformed to influence processes of change.

Objectives
At the end of the course, students are expected to be able to
- discuss the meaning of power and empowerment in an international development context;
- explain how power dynamics are shaped;
- discuss what causes exclusion and powerlessness;
- identify empowerment strategies adapted to different situations;

Competencies
- Conduct simple power analysis
- Analyze a case to identify ways to influence power dynamics
- Use simple strategies to influence mindsets

Soft skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Empathy
- Analytical skills

Evaluation

Means of evaluation and ponderation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Ponderation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Information on exams

The mid-term exam will assess the first three objectives. It will comprise essay-type questions and students will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts discussed in class as well as the relations between the different themes presented during the course. It will take place in class on October 18th.

The final exam will assess the three competencies. Students will be presented a case study and asked to analyze the power dynamics, discuss how the power dynamics can be influenced, identify empowerment strategies and present how they would deal with mindsets in such situation. The final exam will take place between Dec. 5th and Dec. 20th. The exact date and location of the exam will be communicated nearer the time.

More details on the exams will be provided in class and students will have the chance to practice case studies before the final exam.
### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Topics covered</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>To do</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>Introduction to power and development</td>
<td>Lecture, Discussion</td>
<td>Reading W1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Understanding the various shapes of power</td>
<td>Lecture, Discussion, Small group work</td>
<td>Reading W2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Categories of power, Forms of power, Spaces and faces of power, Realms of power</td>
<td>Lecture, Discussion, Small group work</td>
<td>Reading W3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Unpacking powerlessness</td>
<td>Lecture, Discussion, Small group work</td>
<td>Reading W4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Structure vs agency, Factors of exclusion, Dimensions of powerlessness, Intersectionality, Participation’s barriers &amp; enablers</td>
<td>Lecture, Small group work, Discussion</td>
<td>Reading W5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Power and institutions</td>
<td>Lecture, Group discussion</td>
<td>Prepare for exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Barriers and enablers to participation, Power and the State, Power and social movements</td>
<td>Lecture, Small group discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Analyzing Power</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Why, when and how to analyze, Simple tools of power analysis (Power cube, Venn diagrams, Webs of power)</td>
<td>Lecture, Small group work, Plenary</td>
<td>Reading W6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Power, empowerment and change</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Links between empowerment and change, Approaches to empowerment</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
<td>Reading W7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Economic empowerment</td>
<td>Lecture, Group discussion</td>
<td>Reading W8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Meaning, role and strategies of economic empowerment</td>
<td>Lecture, Group discussion</td>
<td>Reading W9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Empowerment through education and capacity development</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Benefits, limits and strategies, Social and contextual barriers</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Social and political empowerment</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Meaning, role and strategies of social and political empowerment</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Mindsets and empowerment</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Coaching and mentoring, Reframing and Language as change</td>
<td>Lecture, Small group work, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Measuring empowerment</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Approaches and frameworks; Women’s empowerment in agriculture index</td>
<td>Lecture, Small group work, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Synthesis and revision</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Practice case study, Q&amp;A session, Group work</td>
<td>Lecture, Group case study, Q&amp;A session</td>
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**L as C Resources**

**Week 11**

- Mindsets and empowerment
- Coaching and mentoring
- Reframing and Language as change
- Lecture, Small group work, Q&A session

**Week 12**

- Measuring empowerment
- Approaches and frameworks; Women’s empowerment in agriculture index
- Lecture, Small group work, Prepare for exam

**Week 13**

- Synthesis and revision
- Practice case study
- Q&A session, Group work

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Course Materials

All course materials will be available on myCourses or from McGill’s online library. There is no textbook to purchase for this course.

Key References:


(McGill Ebook https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/868082669)


(McGill Ebook https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/957610227)


(Open Access https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781351245623)


(McGill Ebook https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1057018513)

**Other Resources:**

(McGill Ebook https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/55894425)


(McGill Ebook https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/56413674)

(McGill Ebook https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1057018513)

### Useful Websites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powercube</td>
<td><a href="https://www.powercube.net">https://www.powercube.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways of women empowerment</td>
<td><a href="http://archive.ids.ac.uk/pathwaysofempowerment">http://archive.ids.ac.uk/pathwaysofempowerment</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender at work</td>
<td><a href="https://genderatwork.org">https://genderatwork.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge – gender and development research and information service</td>
<td><a href="https://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk">https://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources from Just Associates</td>
<td><a href="https://justassociates.org/en/resources">https://justassociates.org/en/resources</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naila Kabeer’s web page</td>
<td><a href="http://nailakabeer.net">http://nailakabeer.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Data Portal</td>
<td><a href="http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender">http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s empowerment in development lab</td>
<td><a href="https://womensempowerment.lab.mcgill.ca">https://womensempowerment.lab.mcgill.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab</td>
<td><a href="https://www.povertyactionlab.org">https://www.povertyactionlab.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s empowerment in agriculture index</td>
<td><a href="https://www.ifpri.org/project/weai">https://www.ifpri.org/project/weai</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data2x</td>
<td><a href="https://data2x.org">https://data2x.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Change Happens</td>
<td><a href="http://how-change-happens.com/">http://how-change-happens.com/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Weekly Readings

**Reading week 1:**


Also suggested (not mandatory)


**Reading week 2:**


Also suggested (not mandatory)

**Reading week 3:**


Also suggested (not mandatory)

**Reading week 4:**


Case for discussion:

**Reading week 5:**


**Week 6:** Prepare for mid-term
**Reading week 7:**


Also suggested (not mandatory)

**Reading week 8:**


**Reading week 9:**


**Reading week 10:**


Also suggested (not mandatory)
Reading week 11:


Also suggested (not mandatory)


Institutional Policies¹

Academic Integrity / Plagiarism

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” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Note that to support academic integrity, your assignments may be submitted to text-matching or other appropriate software (e.g., formula-, equation-, and graph-matching).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any 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.

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).

¹ The content below comes from McGill’s Course outline guide, 2019
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 on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Note: In order to encourage the timely completion of course evaluations, each student will receive an extra 0.5% if at least 85% of enrolled students complete the on-line course evaluation on time. The extra 0.5% will count toward the participation grade. Please note that the participation grade is never to exceed the percentage established for the course.

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.

If you have a hearing, visual and mobility impairment, please contact me immediately (in advance of any evaluations or other class requirements).

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students’ Rights (see document).

McGill has policies on sustainability, paper use and other initiatives to promote a culture of sustainability at McGill. (See the Office of Sustainability.)

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

L’Université McGill est sur un emplacement qui a longtemps servi de lieu de rencontre et d’échange entre les peuples autochtones, y compris les nations Haudenosaunee et Anishinabeg. Nous reconnaissons et remercions les divers peuples autochtones dont les pas ont marqué ce territoire sur lequel les peuples du monde entier se réunissent maintenant.