



GLOBAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

2020/2021

Department of Global Studies

LAURIER

Inspiring Lives.



A Note from the Chair



“*The pandemic forced us to transform the way we learn, teach, research, socialize, mobilize, care and persevere.*”

It's spring 2021 and we are ending a most unusual and demanding academic year. The pandemic forced us to transform the way we learn, teach, research, socialize, mobilize, care and persevere. The distancing has had profound impacts on all of us, yet we rose to the challenge and are now at the end of another academic term. So, kudos to everyone reading this!

This is the first-ever Global Studies Newsletter! I wanted to create something that anchors and celebrates the department's life. The Newsletter provides a space to honour the important work of colleagues and share students' perspectives. I hope it can contribute to a sense of community, both within and beyond Global Studies.

At a time when post-secondary education, especially in the Humanities and Social Sciences, is feeling the squeeze of financial cuts, I believe it is important to show what we do and why it matters. The Newsletter is a small gesture in this direction!

Have a great summer, everyone!

Alicia Sliwinski

Pedagogy for a Pandemic

Dr. Joanne Benham-Rennick,
Undergraduate Advisor and
Associate Professor

One of my biggest concerns with remote course delivery is ensuring students can easily access course material as needed. Global Studies students are diverse: they live in different parts of the world, come from various socio-economic circumstances, and have unique personal situations. Some of these challenges can be mitigated by offering courses asynchronously.

Some of you are studying from different time zones. If I do a real-time lecture at 1:00pm EST, a student working in Korea must be online at 3:00am. I know from my own experiences working overseas how frustrating it can be to schedule calls and video meetings at a time that is reasonable for everyone.

Course materials that are less dependent on good connectivity and technology can make life easier too. Technological problems are frustrating: images freeze, sentences are dropped (or stretched!), and quality can be abysmal. Some students depend on businesses that provide free WiFi and have been working outside from their cars during the lockdown. In rural areas connections are often slower and have limited bandwidth that makes streaming video impossible and downloading it very slow. In regions where the power and WiFi are unreliable your connection may be repeatedly disrupted.



Students caring for small children, seniors or family members with special needs, have a lot of extra work now that pandemic restrictions have severely curtailed outside supports. Some of you are sharing a kitchen table (or floor) with two or three others. It's not quiet, it's not comfortable, it's not easy to focus, and motivation is going out the window. Even in the best circumstances, trying to carve out space and time to concentrate in the midst of distractions and interruptions can be a huge challenge; having course materials available at a time that works for you can help.

I opted to convert my teaching materials to PDFs available for download when learners' time and circumstances allow. This approach is not ideal for every student, nor will it be the preferred approach of every professor, but it allows maximum flexibility to engage with the course when it works best for each individual's circumstances.

We're all learning to negotiate life during a pandemic with flexibility, patience and perseverance – skills that will serve across our lifetime. If you'd like to comment on this article or offer feedback about your learning experience under pandemic constraints, please email me at jbenhamrennick@wlu.ca.

Canadian Gold Mining and Alleged Tax Fraud in Tanzania

Dr. Paula Butler, Course Instructor,
Department of Global Studies



In Tanzania, a Canadian company, Barrick Gold Inc., owns and operates three of the country's six largest gold mines. In March 2016, Acacia Mining (a subsidiary of Barrick at the time) was accused of tax evasion and ordered to pay \$41.25 million. Acacia appealed. In March 2017, under suspicion that gold values had been mis-reported, port authorities seized 277 containers of gold-bearing mineral sands from Barrick/Acacia mines awaiting export. Following further investigation, the Government of Tanzania presented Acacia with a bill for over two decades of unpaid taxes plus a fine totaling US\$190 billion. Additionally, the Tanzanian government passed three laws that tightened government control of mining and rolled back aspects of the liberalization of mining that had occurred since the mid-1990s. These actions were pejoratively called "resource nationalism" by the Canadian stakeholders.

This was the "opening act" in a drama that carried on for more than 2 years. Had a majority-owned Canadian company engaged in sustained tax evasion in a low-income developing country? How were the behind-the-scenes negotiations conducted? I had analytical and interpretive questions as well. Under what conditions is "resource nationalism" a good development strategy for Global South governments such as Tanzania?

How is it that "resource nationalism" becomes a racially-coded slur wielded by Western diplomats and corporate leaders to identify their own practices, by contrast, as liberal and reasonable? Does Canada always ultimately manage conflicts of interest between its own companies and the sustainable development goals of Global South states in favour of Canadian companies? If this is just another performance of an old story about power asymmetries in North-South competition for valuable resources, what is unique or noteworthy about how this competition takes place and is represented in the 21st century?

To answer such questions, I started with an ATIP (Access to Information and Privacy) request directed at Global Affairs Canada, to obtain records of government involvement in this case. Obtaining these files required filing an official complaint to the federal Information Commissioner when GAC refused to comply. Eventually I received 600 pages of heavily redacted communications on this matter. Nevertheless, I was able to identify and create files on 30 different themes, and begin to develop a number of interpretive stories. My hope to travel to Tanzania to meet with civil society organizations working on mining policy and taxation issues – in order to test and deepen insights – was interrupted by the pandemic, and writing projects were interrupted by teaching responsibilities! I hope to resume work on this project in the near future!

Reflections from First-Year Global Studies Students

“My most memorable part of first year has been being able to connect with my professors and speak with other like-minded individuals. It's not often that you get to meet so many different people who have very similar views of the world as you and I really appreciate these connections I've formed with all the wonderful humans I have spoken with.”

- Mikaela Romero-Atyeo, first-year Global Studies student



“I chose Global Studies at Laurier because I have always had the desire to learn different cultures and languages from all over the world. I was also looking for a program where I could connect with my classmates through and get to know my professors on a personal level. Laurier has indeed met my expectations because as a Global Studies Student, you are surrounded by like-minded individuals who are always eager to provide support in any way possible.”

- Lina Glory Diigula, first-year Global Studies student

Introducing Our New Colleague in Social Entrepreneurship

Dr. Ehaab Abdou, Assistant Professor, Social Entrepreneurship Option; Global Studies Department.



It is a real pleasure to be joining Laurier's GS Department. I look forward to getting to know and work with my colleagues at the department, the Faculty of Arts, and beyond.

My research interests lie at the intersection of how education – both K-12 as well as higher education – shapes students' understanding of their roles as citizens and how that manifests in their civic engagement and social entrepreneurship. I am also interested in how curricular designs and pedagogical approaches could help students not only develop the needed skills, but also develop the abilities to appreciate various perspectives and epistemologies, as well as critical approaches to historical and structural roots of societal challenges. Further, I am interested in exploring how pedagogical approaches can meaningfully draw on students' experiences and cultural knowledges, including their spiritual traditions to promote learning and contemplative self-reflective practices.

I would like to take this opportunity to also congratulate our students on the inspiring work they have been doing in the various Social Entrepreneurship (SE) courses this year! Students of SE300 course last semester showed amazing creativity and professionalism in their work as could be attested to by their final reports and the comments from our wonderful panel of external jurists who attended their final presentations.

Congratulations as well to our SE400 students who successfully completed the yearlong capstone seminar. Our 'friendly dragon's den' members were all clearly impressed and inspired by the progress the SE400 students made on their social enterprises and all the hard work and determination they showed! Congratulations as well to some of the SE400 social enterprises successfully mobilizing additional funding and technical support from external partners, such as the RBC Venture Accelerator Program.

The GS/SE364 CityStudio students have also been working closely with our City of Waterloo partners developing social innovations and policy recommendations on the important and timely topic of student university housing.

Despite the challenging restrictions the pandemic has imposed, everyone still manifested great responsibility, drive, passion, dedication, and resilience and came up with some excellent social enterprises and innovations. I very much look forward to continuing to see how some of these social enterprises and innovations continue to grow and make a positive impact on our community and society at large!

Reflections from (and What's Next for) Graduating Global Studies Students

"I believe Global Studies has prepared me for life after graduation through the skills and knowledge that I have acquired over the years. I see a huge change between the beginning of my Global Studies journey and now in terms of how much I've managed to learn and I feel really inspired and confident with the next steps towards my career. I'm also grateful for the amazing professors in the program that have been supportive and have worked hard to help me learn more about important topics."

Meron Solomon will be returning to Laurier in the fall for an MA in Religion, Culture, and Global Justice.

"My most memorable experience has been organizing the #IAMSUDAN campaign to raise awareness in support of the democratic transition in Sudan following the 2019 revolution. I was able to do this with students who share the same passion for advocacy and justice. GS allows us to take what we are passionate about beyond the classroom with full support from students, faculty, and staff."

Suha Osman will be attending Balsillie School of International Affairs to complete a Master of International Public Policy.

"The most memorable part of my Global Studies experience wasn't one singular moment. Rather, it was the ongoing ability I possessed to study the topics that I am truly passionate about. I have had the opportunity to explore many different social issues throughout my degree, and having that freedom has allowed me to expand my academic and practical knowledge. Being a part of an interdisciplinary program like Global Studies has allowed me to cater my degree to my interests and future pursuits."

Alli Cobb will attend Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo for a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies in the fall.

"As a high school student, I felt overwhelmed by the world's problems and wanted to learn what my role was in addressing them, which is why I chose Global Studies. Although GS certainly hasn't provided any easy answers, I now have a language for talking about complex social issues. I have felt so supported by professors and TA's in this process of (un)learning, and will miss the academic community within Global Studies."

Eliza Mills will be attending the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in the fall for their Masters in Education program in Adult Education and Community Development.

Catching Up with Dr. Sara Matthews

Associate Professor, Global Studies |
Coordinator, Anthropology Program |
Graduate Faculty in MA Programs in
Communication Studies / Religion, Culture
and Social Justice



What does it mean to think of drones as culture? The term drone refers to a diverse range of systems—from palm-sized quadrotors to solar-powered aircraft that fly at 70,000 ft. for weeks at a time. But drone systems are not just technologies. They also animate particular ways of knowing and being known. These orientations are evident in everything from the practiced gestures of the workers who produce them to the algorithmic applications that interpret the patterns by which drones see and apprehend. By exploring the vocabularies and social practices associated with drone systems in the Kitchener-Waterloo region of southern Ontario, Dr. Matthews traces how drone cultures express the intimate ties between everyday life and the military-industrial complex. To do this she discusses a recent exhibition that employs social documentary practice as a way of making evident the perceptual regimes that underlie drone vision, itself a form of ethnographic looking.



Dr. Matthews is collaborating with Gohar Ashoughian, University Librarian, on a digital humanities virtual museum project that explores Canadian civil defense during the Cold War. Funded by a SSHRC Partnership Engage Grant, the collaboration is between WLU and the Diefenbunker: Canada's Cold War Museum.

As a faculty associate at the newly named Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada, Dr. Matthews is working with Copp Scholar Keegan Gingrich (History) on a project that explores how the construction and decommissioning of the DEW Line impacted northern communities. They are thinking through the ethics of how non-Indigenous researchers can adopt protocols that respect Indigenous ownership, control, access and possession of research data, including archival materials currently held in government holdings such as the Canadian War Museum.

Along with colleagues at The Centre for Research on Security Practices, Dr. Matthews is a co-applicant on a SSHRC funded knowledge mobilization initiative to develop a podcast on the visualization of security studies research. Three Canadian scholars (Dr. Brett Story, Human Geography, Ryerson; Dr. Nayrouz Abu-Hatoum, Anthropology, Concordia, Dr. Sara Matthews Global Studies, WLU) discuss their aesthetic approach to visualizing security studies through practices of documentary film and photography.

Indigenous Rights and Environmental Stewardship in the Northwest Territories

Dr. Alex Latta, Associate Professor,
Department of Global Studies; Department
of Geography and Environmental Studies



I conduct research in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with a focus on Indigenous rights and environmental stewardship. Instead of describing my current projects (perhaps another time) I'd like to share the journey that brought me to this work.

I was born and raised on the West Coast, in the traditional territory of WSÁNEĆ First Nations. I felt a strong connection with those lands but had few relationships with its original occupants, many of whom lived just kilometres away. In this sense I was a typical member of settler society: aware of our colonial past and uneasy about conditions on “the reserve”, but not really invested in connecting the dots.

My love for nature propelled my university studies in Geography and Political Science. Those studies made me re-evaluate my romantic assumptions about human-environment relationships, but looking back I'm surprised how little they “unsettled” my understanding of who I was as a non-Indigenous Canadian. When I decided in 2002 to study conflict over a large hydroelectric dam in Chile for my doctoral research, I was confronted with the ongoing colonial dispossession of Indigenous lands. That research changed the way I thought about people and environment, and I came out the other end calling myself a scholar of environmental justice.

My doctoral research and subsequent work made me into a minor “expert” on relationships between the Mapuche People and the Chilean state. But I became uncomfortable about how my academic practice was interwoven with North-South power relations. I also realized that my expertise in Chile was mirrored by my relative ignorance about Indigenous Peoples' struggles in Canada. In 2013 an opportunity arose to explore research about Indigenous rights and water governance in the NWT, so I took it.

I've had a steep learning curve over the past 6-7 years, and not just to address the gaps in my knowledge. The hardest part has been grappling with the implications of being a non-Indigenous researcher from southern Canada—moving my research from Chile to the NWT didn't erase the power relations! At least these power relations are more immediately linked to my everyday political commitments as a Canadian citizen. Moreover, I've committed to doing community-driven research, which has been both challenging and immensely rewarding. After half a lifetime, I'm finally connecting my passion for the environment with the humbling responsibility to join with Indigenous and non-Indigenous others in building decolonial relationships here on Turtle Island.

Community Fridge KW: Building Community through Enhancing Food Security

Dr. Stephen Svenson, Department of
Global Studies



It was May of 2015. After years of struggle things seemed to be turning around. I'd just defended my dissertation and resolved a major personal issue. Unexpectedly, I walked into a spring that had no work. The courses I had relied on had dried up. I applied for Employment Insurance but due to the changes the Harper Government had made to the Act, did not qualify. I experienced deep waves of anxiety and panic as I tried to regain my footing. I survived that summer on the generosity of friends and family, my old work boots, and the food bank. It was a humbling experience and drove home to me that the impacts of precarity can hit anyone.

When former Global Studies student Kamil Ahmed contacted me this past November about helping build a fridge shelter for Community Fridge KW I immediately said yes. I liked the idea of a food service for vulnerable folks that minimized surveillance and stigma, a core value of the community fridge movement. More than that, I enjoy praxis and initiative, where theoretical rubber hits the practical road. Global Studies excel in this regard. Over three Saturdays, student volunteers converged at my place where we built a shelter out of reclaimed pallet wood. Today, under the management of Kamil and others, Community Fridge KW has hundreds of volunteers and community partnerships helping to support people experiencing food insecurity.

Life happens to people, and we need to be there to support them, especially in an increasingly stressed and broken system. Precarity is all around us. The need for a service like Community Fridge KW highlights just how profound this precarity is and why more than ever we need to defend what remains of the systems that the neoliberal order has attempted to break. We need to continue to build systems of mutual aid, not as replacement but as complement. In building these systems together we reclaim our humanity. I am so grateful to be working with former students and now friends as we build community together and reimagine what is possible in these difficult times. More than that, I enjoy praxis and initiative, where theoretical rubber hits the practical road. Global Studies students excel in this regard!

Dr. Stephen Svenson or "Sven" is a precarious academic worker and community organizer in Kitchener-Waterloo, active on issues of climate change, food justice, and Indigenous sovereignty. He teaches courses on tourism, community engagement, sociology of education, sociology of youth, environmental sociology and research methods on the Haldimand Tract at WLU where he is working on the impossible problem of how to decolonize education in an institutional setting. Feel free to reach out to Dr. Svenson at ssvenson@wlu.ca this summer if you are bored.

Reconnecting with GS Alumni

On March 10th, the Global Studies Student Association (GSSA) hosted the Meet Your Future alumni event. Our GS alumni came out to share their stories about where their degree has taken them and inspired and encouraged current GS students. It was great to see our incredible alumni—we can't wait for next year's event!



OPTIONS AND MINORS

There are many ways to enhance your degree through Options and Minors at Laurier. Participate in our Social Entrepreneurship Option or look around and find one you like.



SPECIALIZATION

The Global Studies Research Specialization focuses on engaged learning to improve students' research skills and is intended to prepare students for advanced study and work opportunities.

Have any ideas or suggestions for next year's newsletter? Please don't hesitate to reach out to Dr. Sliwinski at asliwinski@wlu.ca.

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