

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

HISTORY 180

COURSE OVERVIEW

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the causes, courses, and consequences of British imperialism between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries (from the loss of the American colonies to the period of decolonization). We will study the justifications, motivations and methods of imperial rule as Britain colonized territories in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. We will also investigate how colonial interactions shaped both the British Empire and domestic British society. Crucial to our project is to understand how integral the imperial project was to shaping the British domestic politics, economy, culture, and society. In order for us to delve deeply into significant themes, I have organized the course in two parts. The first section offers an overview of British and imperial history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This will allow us to devote during the rest of the semester special attention to the formation of national and imperial identities, relationships between colonizer and the colonized, the role of gender within the imperial experience, anticolonial resistance and postcolonial identities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is meant to serve a variety of goals. First, it is meant to acquaint you with the basic narrative of British imperialism. To achieve this initial goal, we will survey the history of Britain and the formation and dissolution of its empire in the first third of the semester. This approach will enable us to explore specific historical themes in more depth. The second goal will be to acquaint you with different historical approaches. To study the history of the British Empire is to move beyond a history of acquisition and requires us to consider imperialism in terms of the hows and whys (i.e., why was it pursued, how was it justified and maintained, why did it end) and in terms of relationships (such as the relationship between technology and imperialism, colonizer and colonized, or race and empire). A third and significant goal of this course is to help train you as critical readers, thinkers, and writers. The various assignments for class are intended to provide opportunities for you to develop a critical understanding of the history of British imperialism and to present your arguments in clear persuasive essays and presentations.

COURSE READINGS:

Our readings will include current historical scholarship as well as a host of primary sources including government documents, novels, memoirs, and films. P.J. Marshall's book will serve as our main textbook while Jane Samson's book will serve as our document reader. These texts will also be on regular reserve in the library as will additional required readings (mostly scholarly articles). Please bring these readings to class on the assigned days.

P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) (ISBN: 0521002540)
Jane Samson, ed., *The British Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2001) (ISBN: 0-19-289293-2)
Olaudah Equiano, ed. Allison, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Bedford Books, 1995) (ISBN: 0-312-11127-4)
Daniel Headrick, *Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism* (Oxford University Press, 1981) (ISBN: 0195028325)
Rudyard Kipling, *Man who would be King* (Dover, 1994) (ISBN: 0-486-28051-9)
Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women* (Duke University Press, 1996). (ISBN: 0822317621)
Rabindranath Tagore, ed. by Anita Desai, *The Home and the World* (Penguin, 1985) (ISBN: 0140181873)
Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (Seal Press, 1988) (ISBN: 1580050638)

EVALUATION:

COMPONENTS OF GRADE:

**ESSAYS ON CLASS READINGS:
MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAM
RESEARCH PAPER
QUIZZES AND SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:
DISCUSSIONS**

Essays:

There are two scheduled essays that all students are required to complete. Each of the essays this semester will enable us to explore a particular historical theme in greater depth. These essays are argumentative and require you to make claims based upon analysis of historical evidence. The readings that we discuss in class form the basis for these assignments. Your preparedness for class and your participation in discussion will serve you well as you set out to write your essay. During the course, we will also discuss essay-writing strategies and highlight components to good essay writing.

Exams:

There will be two exams for this course: a first exam (20%) on October 2 and a final exam (20%) on December 16.

In both of the exams you will receive study guides that will provide lists of possible questions and topics. Components of exam may include (but are not limited to) identifications, short essays, long essays, and map questions. For the essays, I will give you broadly based, analytical questions on large and important topics that we will have covered on a number of occasions whether in lecture or in discussions and presentations. Your answers should reflect your appreciation for the complexity of the question and should be built upon strong historical method. A good answer will synthesize information from the textbook, the lectures, and most importantly from your other readings. You must back up your assertions with primary evidence and concrete examples, and you must avoid sweeping information contrary to your thesis under the carpet. We will talk more specifically about the exams as each nears.

Research Paper:

You will write one 15 page research paper, relating to a topic relevant to the course. I will hand out an informal, but not exhaustive, list of topics relevant to British imperialism. The research paper will enable you to explore a particular historical theme in greater depth. Like the shorter essays, the research paper is argumentative in nature and requires you to make claims based upon analysis of historical evidence from primary sources and interpretation of historiographical arguments in secondary sources. There will be a number of deadlines during the semester for you to hand in a project, proposal, a bibliography and outline, and a draft of your project before submitting your final project. As the semester progresses, we will talk about strategies for constructing reading lists and searching for materials and will take a tour of the library resources. We will also discuss how to approach structuring your argument and writing the assignment.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES:

Office Hours: I encourage you to stop by my office and introduce yourself to me in the next few weeks as well as to stop by throughout the course of the semester. I have a number of office hours every week and would look forward to meeting any student who needs review or clarification about lectures, readings, and assignments.

Discussions and Participation: While I expect that lecture days will be a mix of lecturing and discussion, I have reserved most 3rd classes of each week as student discussion of key texts. Read the assignments and come to class on time with the text and be prepared to participate actively in class. I consider these classes as crucial to understanding the historical contexts of the texts and to finding connections between these texts and the larger themes of our course. Since text analysis is an important component of this class, you are expected to bring the texts -- whether books or documents -- to class on the assigned days. The Blackboard discussion board will also give us the chance to continue in-class discussions online as well as to ask questions about any aspect of the course. Additional student postings on our Blackboard site after a class discussion will be considered as part of the discussion grade.

Academic Integrity and Course Conduct: The strength of this course will depend upon our relationships with each other. The classroom environment (whether in lectures, discussions, or on Blackboard) should encourage participation and discussion. Although we won't always agree with each other's opinions, I expect that all of us will treat each other with respect. To foster that community of learning, I would ask that you arrive on time, turn your cell phones off and try to avoid classroom disruptions that detract from the intellectual task at hand. In addition, the intellectual foundation upon which this course rests is Academic Integrity. All work that you turn in for this course (whether for correspondence, essay, exam or quizzes) must be your own. For information on Holy Cross's policy on academic integrity, please see page 13 of the Holy Cross Catalog and the History Department's own guidelines to avoid plagiarism: <http://www.holycross.edu/departments/history/website/plagiarism.htm>. Any form of plagiarism (intentional and unintentional), cheating, or presenting someone else's work as one's own will be treated as a serious academic transgression, with a penalty ranging from receiving a 0 on an assignment to expulsion from the college. In addition, I will include a citation of this act of academic dishonesty with your university file. Before we set down to write the first assignment, we will review the ethics and responsibilities of research.

Late Papers: All students are expected to turn in their assignments by the beginning of the class period on the dates scheduled. Penalties will apply for all papers received after the assigned time.

Retaining Coursework and Copies of Assignments: All students are required to hold onto all graded assignments (exams and papers) until the final grade is announced. In addition, students are expected to retain a xerox copy of their papers until their graded papers have been returned.

Attendance and punctuality: The quality of any class depends on your investment in it and repeated absences will impede your individual progress in this course. Attendance and punctuality will be expected for lectures and discussions throughout the course. Although missing a class will not adversely affect your grade, repeated absences will not only hamper your understanding of the material but will also automatically lower your participation grade and your overall class grade. For example, any student missing three discussions will fail her/his discussion/participation grade.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1:

UNIT ONE: An Overview

Introductions

Reframing British History or British Imperialism in Historical Context

Read: Marshall, Introduction (7-14)

Shula Marks, "History, the Nation, and Empire: Sniping from the Periphery" *HWJ* 29 (1990)

David Cannadine, "British History: Past, Present, and Future?" *Past and Present* 117 (1987)

Week 2:

Early Empire to the Eighteenth Century

Read: Marshall, Ch. 1 (pp. 16-24)

Samson, Ch. 1 (pp. 8-10) and Sources-- #3, #4, #25, #26, #27

Samson, Ch. 2 (pp. 81-82) and Sources-- #32, #38, #39, #40, #41, and #42

Imperial Expansion to the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Read: Marshall, Ch.2 "An Expanding Empire" (1783-1870) (pp. 24-46)

Samson, Ch. 2 (pp. 93-94) and Sources-- #50, #51, #52

Samson, Ch. 3 (pp. 105-106, 162-163) and Sources-- #82, #83, and #84

Imperialism of Free Trade

Read: Samson, Sources-- Ch. 2: #23 and #29; Ch. 3: #53, #54, and #59

Reserve: John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 6:1 (1953)

Oliver MacDonagh, "The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade" *Economic History Review* 14:3:.. (1962), pp. 489-501

D.C.M. Platt, *Economic History Review* 21:2 (1968), 296-306, and "Further Objections" in *Economic History Review* 26:1 (1973) 77-91

Week 3:

The End of Informal Empire

Read: Marshall, Ch. 2 "An Expanding Empire" (1783-1870) (pp. 46-51)

Samson, Sources-- Ch. 3: #65, 69, #85, #86, #87, and #88

Short Essay Due

New Imperialism

Read: Marshall, Ch. 3 "1870-1918: The Empire under Threat" (pp. 52-79)

Samson, Ch. 3 (pp. 177-178) and Sources--#81, #93, #94, #95, #96, #98, and #100

New Imperialism cont'd

Read: Samson, Sources—Ch. 3: #97, #99, #102

BB: Karl Pearson, "National Life"

Week 4:

Empire and the First World War

Read: Marshall, Ch. 12 "Imperial Britain" (pp.318-337)

Samson, Ch. 4 (pp. 225-226) and Sources-- #103, #104, #113, #114, #115, #116, & #117

Towards Independence and Decolonization

Read: Marshall, Ch. 4 "1918 to the 1960s: Keeping Afloat" (pp.80-105) and end of Ch. 6

"Power, Authority and Freedom" (pp.174-184)

Samson, Sources-- Ch. 4: #109, #118, #119, #120, and #121
Reserve: George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging"

Resistance Movements, Decolonization, and Assessments of Empire

Read: Marshall, Ch. 5 "For Richer or Poorer" by David Fieldhouse (pp. 108-146); Ch. 15 "British Rule in India: An Assessment" by Tapan Raychaudhuri (pp.357-369) and Conclusion (pp. 370-381)
Samson, Ch. 4 (pp. 241-242) and Sources-- #107, #105, #122, #123, #124, #125, #126, #127

Week 5:

Review

MIDTERM EXAM

Week 6:

UNIT TWO: Slavery And Its Imperial Legacy

Slavery

Read: Olaudah Equiano, ed. Allison, *The Interesting Narrative* (pp. 1-100)
Marshall, Ch. 10 (280-283)
Samson, Ch. 1 (pp.27-28) and Sources-- #11, #12, #14, and #15

Slavery and Abolition

Read: Olaudah Equiano, ed. Allison, *The Interesting Narrative* (pp. 100-196)
Samson, Ch. 3 (pp.121-122) and Sources-- #60, #61, #62, and #63

Slavery, Indentured Labor, and Imperial Populations

Read: Marshall, Ch. 10 "The Diaspora of the Africans and the Asians"(pp. 280-295)
Samson, Sources-- Ch. 3: #55, #56

Week 7:

UNIT THREE: Knowledge, Identity And Empire

Inventing East and West:

Read: Marshall, Ch. 7, "Empires in the Mind" by Andrew Porter (pp. 185-223) and skim Ch. 11, "Art and the Empire" by John M. MacKenzie (296-315)
Samson, Sources— Ch. 3: #24, #25, #27

Reserve: Edward Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered" in Francis Barker, et al. (eds), *Literature, Politics and Theory* (Methuen, 1986)
T.N. Mukherji, "Observations on the Indian and Colonial Exhibition," (1889) (pp.245-249)

Emigration across the Empire

Read: Marshall, Ch. 9, "Br. Emigration and New Identities" by Martin and Kline (pp. 254-279)
Samson, Ch. 3 (pp. 139-140) and Sources-- #70, #71, #73, #74, #77
Reserve: Antoinette Burton, "Indian Travellers in Victorian Britain" (pp.157-165)

Week 8:

UNIT Four: Technology And Empire

Technology and Empire

Read: Headrick, *Tools of Empire*: Intro. & Part One "Tools of Penetration" (pp. 3-79)

Violence and Conquest

Read: Headrick, Part Two, "Guns and Conquest," (pp. 83-126)
Samson, Sources-- #80, #95 and #96
Kipling, "The Man Who Would Be King," (pp. 41-70)

Week 8 (cont'd):

Communication and the Maintenance of Empire

Read: Headrick, Part Four "The Communications Revolution" (pp. 129-210)
Samson, Sources-- #57 and #58

Week 9:

UNIT FIVE: Justifying Empire As Civilization

Humanitarianism and Imperial Missions

Read: Samson, Ch. 3 (pp.121-122) and Sources-- #60, #64, #65, #66, #68, and #79
Reserve: A.N. Porter, "'Cultural Imperialism' and Protestant Missionary Enterprise" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 25 (1997)

Imperial Landscapes

Read: Marshall, Ch. 8 "Imperial Towns and Cities" by Thomas Metcalf (pp. 224-253)
Reserve: Antoinette Burton, "The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and 'The Indian Woman,' 1865-1915," from *Western Women and Imperialism* (pp. 137-158)

Cleanliness and Civilization

Read: Anne McClintock, "Advertising the Empire" from *Imperial Leather* (149-157)
Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy men, Lux Women* (pp. 1-90)

Week 10:

UNIT SIX: Maintaining Empire At Home And Abroad

Power, Authority and Freedom

Read: Marshall, Ch. 6, "Power Authority and Freedom" by A.J. Stockwell (pp.147-174)
Samson, Source-- #101

Rethinking Empire

Read on Catherine Hall "An Imperial Man in Australasia and the West Indies" (pp.100-110)
Reserve: Catherine Hall, Economy of Intellectual Prestige: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre," *Cultural Critique* 12 (1989): 167-196.

UNIT SEVEN: Gender, Race And Empire

Childhood and Empire

Read: Kipling, "Wee Willie Winkie" in *Man Who Would Be King* (pp. 71-79)
Reserve: Dennis Judd, Ch. 16, "Scouting for Boys" in *Empire*(1997)
A. Watt Smyth, from *Physical Deterioration* (1906) (pp. 306-310)

Week 11:

Domesticity and Empire

Read on Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Home-Made Hegemony: Modernity, Domesticity, and Colonialism in South Africa," in *African Encounters with Domesticity*, ed. Karen Tranberg Hansen.
Flora Annie Steel, selections from *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook*

Marriage, Sex and Empire

Read: Kipling, "Without Benefit of Clergy" in *Man Who Would Be King* (pp. 81-100)
Reserve: T. Sarkar, "The Hindu Wife and the Hindu nation: domesticity and nationalism in nineteenth century Bengal" *Studies in History*, 8:2 (1992) (pp. 213-235)

Gendering the Nation

Read: Tagore, *The Home and the World*

Week 12:

Research and Writing Consultations

Week 13:

UNIT EIGHT: Colonial Legacies And Postcolonial Identities

Consuming Identities

Read: Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy men, Lux Women* (pp. 91-216)
Samson, Source-- #106

Week 14:

Identity Formation in the Postcolonial World

Read: Ngugi We Thiong'o, Introduction and Chapter 1 "The Language of African Literature" from *Decolonizing the Mind* (London, 1981), (pp. 1-33)

Conflicting Identities

Read: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (1-102)
Marshall, Ch. 14, "Africa" by Toyin Falola (pp. 347-356)
Samson, Ch. 4 (pp. 256-257) and Sources-- #134, #139, #140, #141, #142, and #143

Discussion of *Nervous Conditions* continues (102-204)

Week 15:

Review

Study Period Begins

Final Exam