History 137

EUROPEAN EMPIRES, 1830-1947

Course Description

The dawn of the twenty-first century has brought about a rethinking of the nature, purpose and ultimate meaning of empire and imperialism. In the wake of pressures towards balkanization and the savage civil wars of the 1990s, many people have begun to reassess the merits of large political systems. This course will offer historical background to present-day debates about empire through an overview of the major moments in Europe’s recent experience with overseas expansion. Themes we will cover include: the place of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European empires in the comparative history of empire; imperial annexation and international law; the diplomacy of empire; imperialism and “free trade”; colonial warfare; citizenship and colonialism; paternalism, humanitarianism and “human rights”; colonial cultures; gender, race and class in this history of imperialism; colonial reform and independence movements; decolonization; and the concept of “postcoloniality” in Europe. Alongside lectures on the political, economic, social and cultural history of empire, students will read a variety of historical texts and primary documents, including novels, memoirs, travel accounts, poetry, and political treatises. Several films will also be shown, including: The Battle for Algiers (1966), Black & White in Color (1976), The Great White of Lambaréné (1995), and Rabbit Proof Fence (2002).

Requirements

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
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<td>5-Page Essay [due Feb 28]</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Attendance & Participation
Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed one unexcused absence from lecture, and one from recitation. Please discuss all subsequent absences with me. Frequent absences will result in failure of the class. Participation will count for 25% of your grade. Participation is more than simple attendance. It includes coming to class prepared and engaging actively and knowledgeably in discussion.

Essay
The five-page, double-spaced essay will be on a primary source related to empire. This can be a novel, a memoir, a book of poetry, a travel account, and so forth. It is due on February 28th. A list of possible texts will be posted on blackboard three weeks before the essay due date, on February 7th.
Final Exam
The final exam will be a take-home exam that covers the entire course. Students will be prepared for this exam throughout the course, and particularly during recitation, when we will bring our knowledge to bear upon the key questions in the historiography of Empire. A list of possible exam questions will be handed out on the last day of class. The exam questions will be posted on our blackboard website at 12 noon on Friday, April 29th and will be due at 12 noon on Monday, May 2nd.

Readings

Course texts are available at the Penn Book Center (34th and Samson Streets). A bulkpack of articles and documents will be available at Campus Copy Center at 38th and Walnut. These readings are designated by [bp] in this syllabus. All books will also be on reserve at Rosengarten Reserve in Van Pelt Library.

A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*
Aimé Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*
E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*
Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*
Daniel Headrick, *Tools of Empire*
Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*
Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy*

I. Introduction: What is Empire?

“To sit in darkness here/Hatching vain empires.”
- John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667)

January 10 Course Overview

January 12 Definitions of Empire

Recitation: What is Empire?
Juan Gines de Sepulveda, *Democratus Secundus, or The Just Causes of War Against the Indians* (1550) [handout]
Bartolome de Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians* (1550) [handout]

January 17 Martin Luther King Day *NO CLASS*
January 19  The World in 1830

Recitation: The “Balance Sheet” of Empire: Positive or Negative?
Niall Ferguson, Empire, Introduction & Conclusion
A. Adu Boahen, African Perspectives, ch. 4

II. The “Era of Free Trade”

“To found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers, may at first sight appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers. It is, however, a project altogether unfit for a nation of shopkeepers; but extremely fit for a nation whose government is influenced by shopkeepers.”
- Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations (1776)

January 24  India and “the Company”

January 26  The British Dominions

Recitation: Why expand?
Niall Ferguson, Empire, chs. 1-2
Lenin, Hobson, Schumpeter, Robinson [bp]

January 31  Abolition of the Slave Trade

February 2  The “Era of Free Trade”

Recitation: How did the Industrial Revolution affect Europe’s global identity?
Michael Adas, “Global Hegemony,” Machines as the Measure of Men [bp]
Niall Ferguson, Empire, ch. 3

February 7  France’s Nineteenth Century Empire

February 9  Minor Players: The Netherlands, Spain, Italy (& the USA)

Recitation: How did Europeans justify imperial expansion? Was it legal?
Niall Ferguson, Empires, ch. 4
A. Adu Boahen, African Perspectives, chs. 1-2
Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” (1899) [bp]
James Lorimer, Institutes of the Law of Nations (1883) [bp]
“General Act” of the Berlin Conference [bp]

III. The New Imperialism

“Take up the White Man’s Burden/Send forth the best ye breed”
- Rudyard Kipling (1899)
February 14    Imperial Rivalries I: Egypt

February 16    Germany & The Scramble for Africa

   Recitation: How did technology influence imperial expansion?
   Ferguson, Empire, ch. 5
   Headrick, Tools of Empire, Introduction, Parts I & II (pp. 3-115)

February 21    South Africa & the Boer War

February 23    Imperial Rivalries II: Morocco and the Coming of War

   Recitation: How did Europeans represent colonial rule?
   A. Adu Boahen, African Perspectives, ch. 3
   Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

February 28    From Imperialism to Colonization – Strategies of Rule
   *Essay due in class*

March 2        MOVIE: “Rabbit Proof Fence” (2002) [begin]

   Recitation: What was colonial culture?
   E. M. Forster, Passage to India

   MOVIE: “Rabbit Proof Fence” [end]

*SPECIAL BREAK* (Have Fun!)

March 14       European Responses to Colonialism: Supporters

March 16       Colonialism & Genocide

   Recitation: Colonial atrocities – exceptions or the rule?
   Adam Hochschild, King Leopold’s Ghost, Pt. I

March 21       European Responses to Colonialism: Opponents


   Recitation: What is humanitarianism in a colonial context?
   Adam Hochschild, King Leopold’s Ghost, Pt. II

   MOVIE: “The Great White of Lambaréné” [end]
IV. The End of Empire

“The black man certainly has to pay dear for carrying the white man’s burden”
- George Padmore (1936)

March 28 The Colonies & the Great War

March 30 MOVIE: “Black & White in Color” (1976) [begin]

Recitation: How did World War I change Empire?
Niall Ferguson, Empire, ch. 6
Boahen, African Perspectives, ch. 3

MOVIE: “Black & White in Color” [end]

April 4 Postcolonial Nation? Germany after WWI

April 6 Peace Treaties & the Middle East

Recitation: How did empire-building lead to the emergence of colonial nationalism?
M. Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, TBA

April 11 Colonial Nationalism & Independence Movements

April 13 World War II & Decolonization

Recitation: How did colonization affect Europe?
Aimé Cesaire, Discourse on Colonialism
Hannah Arendt, Imperialism, selections [bp]

April 18 MOVIE: “Battle for Algiers” (1966) [selection]

April 20 Imperial Headaches

Recitation: Is violence endemic to the maintenance of empire?
Arundathi Roy, “The Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” & “Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy” [bp]
Re-read Niall Ferguson’s conclusion to Empire