

HIST 5389.01 Great Britain and the British Empire
Credit Hours: 3.0
Spring 2018



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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines British empire-building and colonial rule in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia from the eighteenth century until the 1960s. We will discuss the encounters between the indigenous peoples and the agents of imperial power, the diverse mechanisms of colonial rule, and British conceptualizations of their role as overseas imperialists. We will also probe the ways that the British acquired, organized, and interpreted information about people and places around the globe. How should we properly contextualize the impact and importance of colonial knowledge vis-à-vis other forms of colonial power such as violence and economic exploitation? To what extent did the British have to negotiate their power with local elites? Finally, we will consider the forces that led to the decline of the British empire in the twentieth century.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The goals of this course are:

- To gain knowledge on British empire-building and colonial rule in Africa, the Middle East and Asia from the 1700s to the 1960s;
- To identify and assess the major shifts in the historiography of the British empire;
- To develop stronger critical thinking and analytical skills as historians by engaging a variety of secondary sources;
- To learn to express ideas more clearly and confidently through online discussions and response papers.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This course is divided into eight units. Each unit will feature a short minute videos produced by the instructor that will provide the historical context and raise questions on the assigned reading. These course videos will be posted on Blackboard. Students are required to watch the video before beginning the assigned reading for that unit.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The readings for this course include eight assigned books listed below (some of these books can be checked out from our university library):

David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Nicholas Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

James Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2003).

NOTE: Available as an e-book at our university library

Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Holt, Henry & Company, 2005).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Response Papers (80% of your final grade): Students will choose five of the eight required readings and write a five- to six-page response paper based on the assigned readings for this course. Each response paper should not be limited to the books' content. It should also examine the analytical and methodological techniques employed by the author, the book's contribution to the field, and how it connects to the other readings in the course.

Discussion Forum (20% of your final grade): There will be eight discussion fora on Blackboard in which participation is mandatory. Each student will compose a discussion forum post (ca. 300 words) as well as respond to two blog postings (ca. 150 words). Each discussion forum contains a prompt with questions on the assigned book to help students think about the major themes in the reading and formulate their posts. Students are not required to address all the questions in the prompt. They can select any particular aspect(s) of the readings they wish to discuss. Posts will be graded based upon the quality of the student's engagement with the assigned reading and their understanding of the historical context. ***Students must complete all eight of the discussion fora to pass this course.***

My grading scale is as follows: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69, F = 59 or lower.

SKYPE MEETINGS WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

Students are required to schedule at least two Skype meetings with the instructor during the semester. The first meeting will be scheduled after the student hands in the first response paper. The primary objective of this meeting will be to discuss the student's first response paper and provide any additional assistance. The second mandated meeting will occur during the first week of May to discuss the student's overall performance in the course and answer any questions on the course themes and readings.

Students are also welcome to schedule additional Skype meetings with the instructor whenever they need assistance or if they wish to further engage in a discussion on the course themes and readings.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, plagiarism and cheating, will be subject to disciplinary action. For more information of the university policies, please see: <http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a disability that affects his/her academic functioning should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office located in the Lee Drain Annex (next to Farrington) to apply for accommodations. Their office phone number is 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786. In the event that accommodations are approved by SSD, the student must schedule an appointment with the course instructor to present his/her accommodation form and discuss arrangement for accommodations. ***No accommodation can be made until you register with the SSD.***

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

COURSE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Unit 1: Britain’s interrelationship with its empire (January 18-28)

David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Initial post due by January 25th

Replies to two postings due by January 28th

Response paper due by January 28th

For those who completed their first response paper, please contact the instructor (ericvb@shsu.edu) to schedule a Skype meeting

Unit 2: Colonial Knowledge in India (January 29- February 11)

Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Initial post due by February 8th
Replies to two postings due by February 11th
Response paper due by February 11th

Unit 3: Challenges to East India Company Rule (February 12-February 25)

Nicholas Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Initial post due by February 22nd
Replies to two postings due by February 25th
Response paper due by February 25th

Unit 4: Ideological Foundations of the British Empire in India (February 26-March 11)

Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Initial post due by March 8th
Replies to two postings due by March 11th
Response paper due by March 11th

Unit 5: Britain in Africa during the nineteenth century (March 12-25)

Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Initial post due by March 22nd
Replies to two postings due by March 25th
Response paper due by March 25th

Unit 6: Britain's Colonial Project in China (March 26-April 8)

James Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2003).

Initial post due by April 5th
Replies to two postings due by April 8th
Response paper due by April 8th

Unit 7: Interwar Imperialism in the Middle East (April 9-22)

Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Initial post due by April 19th

Replies to two postings due by April 22nd

Response paper due by April 22nd

Unit 8: Legacies of Empire in Africa (April 23-May 6)

Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Holt, Henry & Company, 2005).

Initial post due by May 3rd

Replies to two postings due by May 6th

Response paper due by May 6th

Skype Meetings with instructor