

**History 257-01**  
**Empires**  
**Professor Weisensel**  
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**Old Main 307**  
**Office Hours: MWF 2:30-4:00, and by appointment**  
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### **Course Description and Objectives**

This course intends to introduce students to the controversies that have arisen in the study of modern European empires. To cover our subject the course begins with the era of the European Renaissance (ca. 1400-1600) and ends with the current post-colonial era of independent states. The subjects we will discuss lie at the heart of today's world politics, and they are filled with emotion and anger. We will try to approach them as scholars (i.e., without a priori prejudices). We will strive to come to some tentative conclusions about the strengths and weak points of the Third World's critique of the West, and of the West's self defense.

### **Course Activities and Evaluation**

Each class session we will consider the reading indicated for that day (the readings must be read for discussion on the day indicated in the syllabus). Other days we will hear and discuss oral reports and participate in debates. I will introduce the main historical subdivisions of the course but we will spend most of our time discussing the readings and critiquing their ideas. Class activities will be diverse.

Students will be evaluated according to the following system:

1. Two argumentative essays (4-5 pp. each), to be rewritten and resubmitted by the end of the course- 30%
2. Research paper (10-12 pp., due May 6th)- 35%
3. Three quizzes - 15%
4. Quality and frequency of class participation- 20%

The most important part of your grade will be the essays and research paper. The quizzes are intended to reward students for understanding and interrelating the readings. Your grades on these quizzes will depend on your ability to recognize the place of the readings within the issues of the course, and your ability to recognize their shortcomings and contributions to the ongoing flow of scholarly study.

I will pass out the topic or problem of each of the two argumentative essays. The deadline dates are indicated in the syllabus. By Feb. 23rd I will ask you to turn in a one-paragraph statement of the issue or problem on which you would like to write your research paper. By that time you individually and I will have had time to discuss what you are interested in doing. In contrast to the shorter 4-5 pp. essays this one will require footnotes and a formal bibliography. Late papers are strongly discouraged. Barring special circumstances (e.g., illness) they will be accepted but will be downgraded one

level for every day, or portion of a day, they are late. Plagiarism means stealing someone else's ideas, research or work without crediting them for it. With honest footnoting one avoids problems in that direction.

In the two argumentative essays and the research paper I think it is important to understand what I am looking for so that you know how to approach these assignments.

I will look for the following key features in your essays:

1. The introductory paragraph. This will be where you will explain the problem and where you will tell your readers what you are going to argue. This is the most important part of the essay and it cannot just float aimlessly.

2. A thoroughly developed argument. Here in the middle part of your essay you will thoroughly make your argument. Each paragraph will make a separate point. Each paragraph will serve the argument of the essay; a paragraph will not be a dumping ground for "interesting stuff" which you don't know how to use elsewhere. Evidence from readings, lectures and discussion sessions will be utilized to back up your points. Here also, you shouldn't overlook anything important from the class materials that can help you. Needless to say, you will have to read everything assigned for the essay by the time you write the essay. Footnotes are not necessary! If, however, you want to quote an author word-for-word, then cite the source of the quotation in parentheses (...) in the text immediately after the quote.

3. A conclusion. Here you may want to summarize your argument. However, the most important element of the conclusion will be your explanation of the significance of your findings. For example, how should your findings guide our thinking in the future? Or, What do your findings tell us about potentially fruitful lines of inquiry in the future (what should researchers do next)? etc.

In the past the following problems have frequently appeared in students' essays:

a. Essay lacks a clear point/goal/argument. The essay just "talks about" a subject rather than presents an argument about it.

b. Essay fails to use the material at hand, especially ideas that could really help you, suggesting that you didn't understand a book or article, or worse that you didn't read it.

c. Essay is not written clearly for an audience of readers. Writers sometimes overlook the fact that writing means writing for others to read and understand. If a writer's syntax, or choice of terms, or organization is so idiosyncratic that only the writer understands what's going on, the purpose of writing in the first place is lost. The reader is like a blind man walking in a lightless tunnel unless you "take his hand" by being clear and organized.

d. Presenting an essay that has not been proofread, leaving it full of misspellings and sloppy and unintelligible syntax.

e. Essay lacks a conclusion, or has conclusion that does nothing more than summarize the argument.

## Readings

(Books are available for purchase at the Macalester Bookstore, Lambert Building).

Robert Marks, The Origins of the Modern World (Rowman and Littlefield paperback);  
R. Lim and David K. Smith, eds., The West in the Wider World. Vol. 2. From Early

Modern Europe to the Present (Bedford-St. Martin's paperback);

Flaubert, Flaubert in Egypt (Penguin paperback);

(Recommended Only!): Wesseling, European Colonial Empires (Pearson-Longman paperback, if you'd like a textbook).

Selected chapters and articles from other books and journals. They will be available for downloading and printing on the Moodle site for this course.

### **Week 1. Jan. 24-28. Theoretical Debate. Said vs. Lewis.**

Jan. 24. Introduction.

Jan. 26. Edward Said, "Introduction" to Orientalism (1978)(Moodle).

Jan. 28. Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism," in Islam and the West (1993) (Moodle); "Monty Python's Life of Brian" (film)

### **Week 2. Jan. 31-Feb. 4. Theory (continued). Phase I: Expansion, 1400-1773. Does Europe Have a Special Character?**

Jan. 31. Landes, Wealth and Poverty of Nations, Chs. 1-2 (Moodle);

Feb. 2. Marks, Origins of the Modern World, Chs. 1-2.

Feb. 4. Lim and Smith, eds., The West in the Wider World, documents from Ch. 1 ("Two Worlds Collide").

Were the Europeans Racists? Africans in European Art in the Renaissance.

### **Week 3. Feb. 7-11. Contraction, 1776-1824. Does Europe Have a Special Character?**

Feb. 7. Lim and Smith, eds., The West in the Wider World, documents from Ch. 2 (Challenges to Christendom in Reformation Europe); Vandervort, Wars of Imperial Conquest (Moodle);

Feb. 9. Vandervort, Wars of Imperial Conquest (Moodle);

Feb. 11. First 15-minute quiz. Vandervort, Wars of Imperial Conquest (Moodle).

**Week 4. Feb. 14-18. Contraction, 1776-1824 (continued). The European Enlightenment and Empire.**

Feb. 14. Film: "Sara Baartman, the Hotentot Venus."  
Essay #1 (4-5 pp.) due in class.

Feb. 16. The European Enlightenment: Question of the Origins of European Racial Prejudice. De Waal Malefijt, "The Proper Study of Mankind is Man," in De Waal Malefijt, Images of Man, Ch. 5 (Moodle).

Feb. 18. The Enlightenment and Its Implications. Discussion of: Lim and Smith, eds., The West in the Wider World, documents from Ch. 5 (Rethinking the World: The Enlightenment).

**Week 5. Feb. 21-25. Racism and the European Enlightenment (continued).**

Feb. 21. The Enlightenment and Its Implications (continued). Discussion of: George Stocking, "French Anthropology in 1800," in Stocking, Race, Culture and Evolution. Essays in the History of Anthropology, Ch. 2.

**Phase III. Expansion, 1824-1912. Industrial Revolution and the New Colonial Age.**

Feb. 23. Vandervort, Wars of Imperial Conquest, Ch. TBA (Moodle).

Feb. 25. Marks, Origins of the Modern World, Ch. 4.

**Week 6. Feb. 28-Mar. 4. Industrial Revolution and the New Colonial Age (continued).**

The European Industrial Revolution and Rationalism: Was it a "Slam-Dunk" at Home?

Feb. 28. Lim and Smith, eds., The West in the Wider World, Ch. 8 (The Great Transformation).

**A. Running the Empires. Collaborators and Policemen.**

Mar. 2. Crowder, "The White Chiefs of Tropical Africa," in Gann and Dugan, eds., Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960 (1970) (Moodle).

Mar. 4. TBA

**Week 7. Mar. 7-11. Collaborators and Policemen (continued).**

Mar. 7. Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in Owen and Sutcliffe, eds., Studies in the Theory of Imperialism (Longman, 1972) (Moodle).

## **B. Race and Segregation in Empires.**

Mar. 9. Second 15-minute quiz. Kennedy, "Securing Social Norms," in Kennedy, Islands of White (1987) (Moodle).

Mar. 11. Ballhatchet, "On the Margins of Social Distance," in Ballhatchet, Race, Sex and Class under the Raj (Moodle).

## **Week 8. Mar. 12-20. Spring Break.**

Week 9. Mar. 21-25. Running the Empires (continued).

## **C. Cultural Imperialism. The Theft of Culture.**

Mar. 21. Kwame Appiah, "The Case for Contamination" New York Times (1/1/2009) (Moodle).

## **Phase IV. Unstable Equilibrium, 1914-1939.**

Mar. 23 . Taylor, The Social World of Batavia. European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia (U. of Wisconsin Press, 1983), Chs. 5 and 6 (Moodle).

Mar. 25. Second essay due in class

## **Week 10. Mar. 28-Apr. 1. Unstable Equilibrium, 1914-1939 (continued).**

Mar. 28. Landes, Wealth and Poverty of Nations, Ch. 19 (Moodle);  
Summaries of research paper plans.

Mar. 30. Landes, Wealth and Poverty of Nations, Ch.20 (Moodle);  
Summaries of research paper plans (continued).

## **Economics of Empire, 1914-39:**

Apr. 1. Landes, Wealth and Poverty of Nations, Ch. 24 (Moodle);  
Summaries of research paper plans (continued).

## **Week. 11. Apr. 4-8. Unstable Equilibrium, 1914-39 (continued).**

Apr. 4. Third 15-minute quiz. Pham Cao Duong, Vietnamese Peasants Under French Domination (excerpts) (Moodle).

Apr. 6. Elson, "Peasant Poverty and Prosperity under the Cultivation System," in Booth, O'Malley and Weidemann, eds, Indonesian Economic History in the Dutch Colonial Era (Moodle).

Apr. 8. Introduction to the Culture of Empire.

**Week 12. Apr. 11-15. Culture of Empire. Empire on Film.**

Apr. 11. Review of Said; Read, Cannadine, Ornamentalism, Ch. (Moodle);  
Film: "Sanders of the River" (1935), time TBA.

Apr. 13. Read Cannadine, Ornamentalism, Ch. (Moodle);  
Film "Four Feathers" (1938). Time TBA.

Apr. 15. Read Cannadine, Ornamentalism, Ch. (Moodle);  
Film "Zulu" (1964). Time TBA.

**Week 12. Apr. 18-22. Culture of Empire (continued). Empire in Literature.**

Apr. 18. Flaubert, Flaubert in Egypt, start

Apr. 20. Flaubert, Flaubert in Egypt, finish.

**Powerlessness of the Imperialized? The Subaltern Studies Group and Indian History.**

Apr. 24. Read Arnold, "Touching the Body. Perspectives on the Indian Plague, 1896-1900," in Subaltern Studies, vol. 5 (1987) (Moodle).

**Week 13. Apr. 25-29. Phase V. Colonial Contraction. 1945-1980. Post-Colonial World, How Much has Changed?**

Apr. 25. Read Said, Orientalism, Ch. 3 ("Orientalism Now. The Latest Phase"), 284-328 (Moodle).

Apr. 27. Fieldhouse, "Arrested Development in Anglophone Black Africa?" and Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (excerpts) (Moodle).

Apr. 29. Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld", Atlantic Monthly (March, 1992), and Huntington, Clash of Civilizations (excerpts) (Moodle).

**Week 14. May 2. Post Colonial World. How Much Has Changed?**

May 2. Sum up.

Final versions of research paper are due in my office by 5 p.m. on May 6.