

European Imperialism

History 400
Sarah Curtis

Fall 2012
TTh 11:00-12:15

Course objectives:

From the discovery of the New World in 1492 until at least 1945, European nations sought to expand outside of the continent of Europe spreading their culture and enriching themselves, usually to the detriment of indigenous peoples. This course examines the encounters between Europeans and non-Europeans throughout the world and over time refracted through lenses of race, class, and gender. Rather than provide a complete history of every region of the world where Europeans dominated, it examines instead the motivations and rationale for European expansion, the interaction between Europeans and non-Europeans, resistance to European rule, and the impact of European domination. We will end the course by examining how European colonies became independent and the lingering impact of imperialism on contemporary Europe.

Student learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- engage the discourse on the origins of modern imperialism.
- discuss imperialism as a constituent element of European societies, cultural constructs, politics, and economics from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries.
- understand the roles of the “metropole” (center) and “periphery” in jointly constructing the operations of the colonial state.
- demonstrate various models for the functioning of colonial states.
- investigate the respective roles of colonizers and colonized peoples in the functioning and undermining of the colonial system.
- define and discuss various approaches to and understandings of modern imperialism.

Reading:

The following books are available for purchase at the bookstore:

Bartolomé de las Casas, *An Account, Much Abbreviated, of the Destruction of the Indies* (Hackett)

Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (Anchor)

Trevor Getz and Liz Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men* (Oxford UP)

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (Mariner)

If you buy your books outside of the bookstore, please get the same editions.

Electronic reserves and websites:

Many of the readings are available on electronic reserves at the library. They can be accessed via the internet on campus or at home via iLearn (ilearn.sfsu.edu). These readings are indicated on the schedule with the abbreviation iLearn. Some readings are directly accessible on the web, in which case the URL is given in the syllabus. There are also links on my web page.

Course requirements:

Discussion of assigned reading will generally take place on Thursdays. Exceptions to this schedule will be announced in class. Regular attendance and participation are important to success in this class.

There will be two exams (midterm and final), a research paper based on a travel narrative (with two parts, a preliminary bibliography/summary and the paper itself), and an online project on post-colonial Europe. Due dates are indicated on the schedule. Details on the research paper and online project are at the end of the syllabus. Details on the exams will be given in class.

Graduate students taking the course for upper-division credit will have one additional assignment, a book review of a monograph in European imperial history. Graduate students enrolled concurrently in History 799 (1 unit) will complete a 15-20 pp. historiographical essay in addition to the assignments on this syllabus. Both assignments are due November 27.

Grading:

Grades will be calculated as follows: midterm 25%, final 25%, travel narrative bibliography/summary 5%, travel narrative paper 20%, online project 15%, participation 10%. (Graduate students: midterm 20%, final 20%, travel narrative bibliography/summary 5%, travel narrative paper 20%, online project 15%, book review 20%.) Students who wish to take the course CR/NC can change their grading status via "My SFSU" before October 23.

Assignments due on Tuesday and turned in on Thursday will be penalized one half grade (e.g. A to A-), due Thursday and turned in on Tuesday two-half grades (e.g. A to B+), and assignments turned in one week late one full grade (e.g. A to B). **Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted.**

If you are unable to complete the course requirements by the end of semester, it is your responsibility to withdraw from the course. I will issue no instructor-initiated withdrawals or incompletes. Student-initiated incompletes are reserved for serious medical reasons (with documentation) or other natural disasters within the last three weeks of the semester. The last day to drop a course without a "W" is September 10; the last day with a "W" (except in extreme circumstances) is November 26.

Disability Statement Policy:

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu).

Office hours and contact information:

Tues 9:30-10:30 and Thurs 12:30-1:30, and by appointment
office location: Science 267 phone: (415) 338-2250
e-mail: scurtis@sfsu.edu website: <http://bss.sfsu.edu/scurtis>

Schedule:

Week 1: August 28-30

Introduction

Reading:

De las Casas, introduction

Week 2: September 4-6

Setting the Pattern: Conquest and Settlement

Reading:

De las Casas, pp. 1-88, 103-05

Week 3: September 11-13

New World Empires

Reading:

Jesuit Relations, selected documents (iLearn)

De las Casas, pp. 89-102

“Code Noir,” (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/335/>)

Week 4: September 18-20

Slavery and Atlantic Empires

Reading:

Colley, introduction, chaps. 1-3

Week 5: September 25-27

Global Connections

Reading:

Colley, chaps. 4-6, conclusion

Week 6: October 2-4

Slavery Challenged

Reading:

“The First Days of the Slave Insurrection” in *Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection* (iLearn)

Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, selected documents (iLearn)

Preliminary bibliography/summary for research paper due Tuesday

Week 7: October 9-11

Tuesday: Possible guest lecture: Raymond Jonas, The Battle of Adwa

Thursday: MIDTERM

Week 8: October 16-18

Between Empires

Reading:

Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, chaps. 1-6

Week 9: October 23-25

The Scramble for Africa

Reading:

Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (selections) (iLearn)

Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, chaps. 7-11

Week 10: October 30-November 1

Mission to Civilize

Thursday: Guest speaker: Trevor Getz, Dept. of History, SFSU

Reading:

Getz, *Abina and the Important Men*, parts I-III

Week 11: November 6-8

The Empire at Home

Thursday: Guest lecture: Volker Langbehn, German Dept., Imperialism and Visual Culture

Reading:

Steel and Gardiner, *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* (selections) (iLearn)

Vu Trong Phung, "The Industry of Marrying Europeans" (selections) (iLearn)

Travel narrative research paper due Thursday

Week 12: November 13-15

Resistance to Colonial Rule

Reading:

Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (chaps. 12-19)

November 20-22

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13: November 27-29

World War and the Beginning of the End

Reading:

Orwell, "Shooting the Elephant" (<http://www.online-literature.com/orwell/887/>)

Tuesday: Graduate student book review or historiographical essay due

Week 14: December 4-6

Decolonization

Reading:

Césaire, "Discourse on Colonialism" (selections) (iLearn)

Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (selections) (iLearn)

Current Events Project due Thursday

Week 15: December 11-13

The Empire Strikes Back

Tuesday: Discussion of Current Events Projects in class

FINAL EXAMINATION Thursday, December 20 (10:45-1:15)

Travel Narrative Research Paper

This paper will utilize a single travel narrative written by a European between the years 1500 and 1914. (Books *originally* published after 1914 are not permitted for this assignment although modern editions of earlier books are fine.) You should not use writers assigned in class as your primary narrative. You may choose a traveler and a destination in a place and time that particularly interests you. Information on finding appropriate narratives will be given in class.

Part I: Preliminary summary/bibliography

due October 2

For this assignment, you should turn in a 1-2 pp. summary and bibliography with the following elements:

- 1) Bibliographic information for travel narrative you have chosen.
- 2) Paragraph answering the following questions:
 - Who wrote the book?
 - When did s/he live? Where? Under what circumstances?
 - Where did s/he go? Under what circumstances?
- 3) List of areas you will need to research in order to better understand the traveler's perspective.
- 4) 5-10 secondary sources listed in standard bibliographic format that will provide the background information listed above. At least five of these sources must be published books or journal articles (accessing them on electronic databases is okay); internet sources should be in addition to these.

Part II: Final paper

due November 8

The final paper will be 7-8 pp. long, double-spaced (with page numbers, please!), 12-point font. Use foot- or endnotes in Chicago or another standard format and include a final bibliography.

The goal of the paper is to use published sources to analyze how the traveler's cultural and personal background shaped his or her perspective when voyaging into unfamiliar territory. In your paper, you may want to consider the following questions:

- When did the traveler live?
- Where did the traveler go? Why?
- What were the circumstances of the traveler's voyage?
- How might these circumstances shape, limit, or bias the traveler's observations?
- What was the background of the traveler (e.g. profession, class, age when book was written, nationality, religion)?
- What kinds of things did the traveler focus on or omit as a result of his or her upbringing or station in life?
- What subjects does the traveler write about? Why does s/he think these are important?
- What subjects does the traveler overlook? What is the significance of these omissions?
- How did the traveler interpret alien practices for readers?
- Is the traveler a reliable observer? Why or why not?
- Are there particular episodes or examples that show the traveler's point of view?
- What is the presumed audience of the travel narrative?

The Empire Strikes Back: Current Events Project due Thursday, December 6

Since the dissolution of the European empires after World War II, many former colonial subjects have migrated to Europe in search of economic, educational, or other opportunities. They have often benefited from favorable immigration policies put into place by European policymakers, yet European populations have often had trouble assimilating individuals whose culture, religion, and expectations may differ from their own.

In this assignment, you are responsible for finding one substantial article (at least 500 words) published by a reputable journalistic source (see below for suggestions) in the last five years discussing a political or cultural issue that has resulted from this influx. On iLearn, you will post a link to the article as well as a short (300-400 words) analysis of the issue. (Technical details to for posting will be distributed later in class.) For this analysis, it might be helpful if you looked at other articles on the same issue, even if you choose only one to link. If so, please include a bibliography at the end of your analysis.

In your analysis, you will want to consider how the current issue results from European imperial domination in the past, why it has caused conflict, and why it has become relevant now.

During the last week of class, students will present their findings informally in small groups and a selection of articles/issues will be incorporated into the final examination.

Possible issues (not an exhaustive list; can be narrowed down by country and immigrant group):

- headscarf/burqa controversy
- rise of far right anti-immigrant political parties
- educational opportunities for second-generation immigrants
- citizenship opportunities for second-generation immigrants
- role of immigrant women in European societies
- building of mosques
- fears of Islam
- multiracial sports (esp. soccer) teams

Possible sources (not an exhaustive list):

BBC News (<http://news.bbc.co.uk>)

NPR (<http://www.npr.org>)

New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com>)

The Guardian (<http://www.guardiannews.com>)

The Times of London (<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/>)

The Wall Street Journal, European Edition (<http://europe.wsj.com/home-page>)

The New Yorker (<http://www.newyorker.com>)

Do not choose an article on Wikipedia.

Please ask me if you are in doubt about the source of your article.