HIS 208 01: TOPICS IN MODERN WORLD HISTORY I:
EUROPEAN EXPANSION AND EMPIRES
MWF: 11-11:50am, MHRA 1215

Professor: Jill Bender
Office: MHRA 2116
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm; and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
In the 1820s, the British Empire encompassed 1/5 of the world’s population. By the
1920s, the British Empire covered more than 14 million square miles of the world’s
surface. And the British Empire is only one example of the world’s empires. European
expansion and imperialism is a reality of our past and has significantly shaped the world
in which we live.

This course provides a historical survey of European expansion and empires from the
early eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. Why did expansion occur? How did
expansion occur? And, what was the impact of this expansion? We will pay particular
attention to the cultural, social, and political ramifications of this imperial expansion.

Learning Objectives:
1. By the completion of the course, students will be able to identify and the give the
   significance of the major events, peoples, and debates in the history of Europe’s
   modern imperial expansion.
2. Students will develop the ability to construct and support an analytical argument
   based on primary historical sources. These skills will be developed both through
   writing assignments and classroom discussions.
3. Students will be introduced to the historical origins of significant debates in
today’s world.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Throughout the semester, we will examine and analyze a variety of historical sources –
from political documents to novels to music to films. The following texts are required
and available for purchase at the university bookstore:

Adam Hochschild, King Leopold’s Ghost
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart

All other reading material is available on the course Blackboard site or will be distributed
in class.

*Please note that there is no central text for this course. The course lectures are designed
to provide the necessary context and background often provided by a traditional textbook.
Should you wish to consult a text in addition to the required readings, however, I have placed *The Earth and It is Peoples* on reserve.

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Participation and Attendance**

To perform well in this course, you must attend all lectures, take notes, and thoroughly engage with the assigned readings. Attendance is mandatory. Weekly reading assignments should be completed in preparation for Friday class meetings, which will largely involve discussion (please note that one discussion will take place on Monday, November 21st). Students must come to classes labeled “Discussion” prepared to participate – in other words, ready to ask questions and discuss the readings.

**In-class Reading Quizzes**

Each course labeled “Discussion” will begin with a short (10 minute) writing assignment or quiz based upon the reading due for that day. These will be graded on a scale of 10. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

**Papers**

Students will be required to write two papers over the course of the semester. The first paper is due October 3rd. The second paper is due November 21st. Paper topics will be provided in advance of both due dates. Papers are due in class. I do not accept emailed copies of papers.

Both papers need to be double-spaced, with 12 point font, and standard margins. Please cite your sources using footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical documentation. Plagiarism is a breach of the university’s academic integrity policy. For more information on this policy, see [http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/](http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/).

*Note on late papers:* The grades of the papers will be reduced by ⅓ of a letter grade for each class-meeting late. Papers will not be accepted after one week and a 0 will be recorded.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on four different aspects of your performance: (1) papers (2) mid-term exam (3) participation, attendance, and in-class quizzes (4) final exam. The final grade will be determined according to the following calculation:

- **Paper #1 15%**
- **Paper #2 25%**
- **Mid-term Exam 15%**
- **Final Exam 25%**
- **Participation, Attendance, and Quizzes 20%**
LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS

WEEK ONE

Aug 22: Introduction
Aug 24: Empire at the close of the 17th Century
Aug 26: The First “Global” War

Reading: No Reading

PART I: THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS

WEEK TWO

Aug 29: Europe’s Swing to the East
Aug 31: The Industrial Revolution
Sept 2: DISCUSSION: India

Reading:
Linda Colley, “Another Passage to India,” Captives, 241-268.

WEEK THREE

Sept 5: No Classes
Sept 7: Science, “Race,” and Empire
Sept 9: DISCUSSION: Eighteenth-century colonial encounters

James Burney, The Maoris, 1772-73,
http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/1777burney-maoris.asp

WEEK FOUR

Sept 12: The French Revolution and its global repercussions
Sept 14: The Haitian Revolution and its global repercussions
Sept 16: DISCUSSION: The Napoleonic Era

PART II: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND NEW IMPERIALISM

WEEK FIVE

Sept 19: Age of Imperial Reform
Sept 21: Indentured Labor in the British Empire
Sept 23: Mid-century conflicts

Reading: *No reading*

WEEK SIX

Sept 26: Mid-century cultural transitions
Sept 28: Britain and the Irish Question
Sept 30: DISCUSSION: *Ireland and the Empire***No Reading Quiz***

Reading:
Christine Kinealy, “At home with the Empire: the example of Ireland,” *At Home with the Empires: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, eds. Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (2006), 77-100.


Documents on 1857 and on the Morant Bay Rebellion


WEEK SEVEN

Oct 3: The modern nation state ***PAPER ONE DUE***
Oct 5: New Imperialism I
Oct 7: DISCUSSION: *New Imperialism*

Reading: *Start King Leopold’s Ghost*
WEEK EIGHT

Oct 10: No Classes
Oct 12: New Imperialism II
Oct 14: DISCUSSION: New Imperialism

Reading: Finish King Leopold’s Ghost

PART III: EMPIRES AND WORLD WARS

WEEK NINE

Oct 17: Empires at home?
Oct 19: The Great War
Oct 21: DISCUSSION: World War I and the imperial perspective

Reading: David Omissi, Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers’ Letters, 1914-1918 (excerpt)

WEEK TEN

Oct 24: New Countries, New Colonies
Oct 26: The rise of Totalitarianism
Oct 28: ***EXAM ***

Reading: No reading

WEEK ELEVEN

Oct 31: The Second World War, part I
Nov 2: The Second World War, part II
Nov 4: DISCUSSION: World War II

Reading: Theodore Abel, “Six Life Histories,” Why Hitler Came to Power (1938)

PART IV: DECOLONIZATION

WEEK TWELVE
Nov 7: Reordering the Post-war World
Nov 9: Decolonization I
Nov 11: DISCUSSION: Decolonization and Violence

**Reading:** Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (excerpt)

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**WEEK THIRTEEN**

Nov 14: Decolonization II
Nov 16: FILM: *Amandla!
Nov 18: FILM: *Amandla!

**Reading:** Begin Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

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**WEEK FOURTEEN**

Nov 21: DISCUSSION: *Amandla!*** No reading quiz, PAPER TWO DUE***
Nov 23: No Classes
Nov 25: No Classes

**Reading:** Continue Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

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**WEEK FIFTEEN**

Nov 28: Legacies of Empire I
Nov 30: Legacies of Empire II
Dec 2: DISCUSSION: *The Colonial Impact*

**Reading:** Finish Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

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**WEEK SIXTEEN**

Dec 5: Conclusion

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***FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 12, 2011, 12-3pm***