

# European Imperialism:

**Expansion *and* Contraction?** – 1870 - present

History 223: Spring 2015

**Lecturer:** Lane Sunwall

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## Course Description and Introduction

Welcome to History 223! This course will introduce you to nineteenth- and twentieth-century European imperialism, provide you a framework to better describe of how European empires helped shape modern world history, and discuss the continuing influence European “empires” have on the world on which we live today.

When we think of the European empires we often conjure images of pith helmets, the French Legionnaires, or gunboat diplomacy. For many of us, imperialism is something in the past, something ended. Our knowledge is spotty at best. In this class we will work together to fill in our knowledge gaps and discover how the small disunited nations of Europe came to dominate much of the world’s landmass. Yet the geographical largess of Europe’s empires is but one piece of a much larger puzzle. To provide you with a better means of interpreting imperialism, this course will push you to discover the multiple origins, and heterogeneous nature of imperial systems. More importantly, we will challenge the very definition of empire and explore the imperial system’s method of political, economic, military, social, and religious control. Furthermore, this course will endeavor to contextualize European imperialism within the framework of world empires and in the process destabilize the myth of European imperialism as something entirely unique in human history. In addition, we will explore the final collapse of Europe’s empires in the twentieth century, not as the inevitable outcome of historical forces, but a result of multiple contingent factors that finally dissolved Europe’s political control over far-flung empires. Finally, we will then examine the implications of colonial dissolution for Europe itself. Given the decline of their political and military control over their former colonies, European imperialism is now commonly seen as a bygone relic of a now defunct age. This course will question this assumption, and reexamine traditional narratives to understand how imperialism, via social, economic, political, and even military influence and/or pressure, continues to influence world affairs to this day.

History 200 will be composed of online and in-class lecture, discussion, and readings. The readings are designed to supplement and compliment lectures and facilitate discussion; they are not a substitute for attendance or participation, nor are lecture and discussion sections substitutes for reading. Finally, efficient communication is important to all professional walks of life and History 200 is designed to assist students in improving oral and written communication through papers, online discussion, and face-to-face discussion sections.

## Course Objectives

History is so much more than the memorization of facts, or discussion of the stale details of powerful *men* long-since dead. The study of history, when done thoughtfully, opens us to the lives and stories of those variety of people who set the stage for the world in which we now live, it forces us to re-examine our own prejudices and values, and finally, it enables us to judge better between competing claims of truth.

By the end of the semester you will be able to:

1. Describe the basic structure and history of modern European Imperialism, appraise the impact European empires had upon global history, and interpret the influence Europe’s colonial past continues to wield in the world today.

2. Discuss the various political, cultural, religious, and economic manifestations of imperial power, and challenge interpretations of European imperialism that are narrowly focused on political power, military violence, and geographic control.
3. Identify the day-to-day impact empire had upon imperial subjects, illustrate the ways in which people from all walks of life negotiated the confines and contradictions of empire for their own ends, and demonstrate that empire not only ruled through hegemonic control, but via negotiated, if unequal, relationships that required a level of cooperation from all parties involved.
4. Explain your own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs to a group of peers in strong, concise, and thoughtful manner utilizing either written text, oral argumentation, audio-visuals or a combination of all three.
5. Compose a research paper that effectively lays out a logical argument, is well structured, supported by carefully sifted evidence, and is grammatically polished.
6. Effectively yoke the expertise and perspectives of a group of peers to aid you in the formation of your own ideas and in fulfilling the learning objectives of this course.

### **Contact Policies**

Please do not hesitate to contact me whenever the need should arise. If you find that you are having any difficulty with the class, it is best if we talk sooner rather than later in order to get you back on the right track.

For contact purposes, email is the best method to reach me. I check my inbox each weekday, with the exception of university holidays, and will return your email within 48 hours.

### **Required Readings**

The required weekly readings will make use of both secondary literature concerning European empires. The goal of the course's readings is to provide you with a basic understanding of the empires in question, their historical construct, the various historiographical interpretations of them, and their impact upon contemporary people. Reading these texts will provide you with the basic information needed to develop your own interpretation of imperialism, the knowledge to discuss imperialism in an intelligent manner, and the tools necessary to justify your arguments concerning imperialism.

All of the online readings are in PDF form, and are available on Learn@UW. A few of the readings you will have to procure yourself. They are available at the library, at your favorite online retailer, or at the University Bookstore.

### **Required Readings - any edition will suffice**

1. Jane Burbank, Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.
2. Mark Mazower. *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000.
3. George Orwell, *Burmese Days*.
4. Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
5. Moloud Feraoun, *The Poor Man's Son*

### **Scaffolded Essays**

Amongst the most sought-after talents employees seek from college graduates are the ability to make clear and concise arguments, and the ability to express those arguments effectively both orally and in a written form. The keys to both are editing, peer-evaluation, and revision. No one produces a polished, well-argued paper in the first draft. Only by reflecting on what we have written, receiving feedback from others, and editing for clarity and argumentation can we produce essays that are both elegant and persuasive. Therefore this course's written assignments will be structured so as to reinforce the importance of editing and revision.

Over the course of the semester you will be assigned three two-page papers and one eight-page paper on a topic you select with guidance from me.

Each two-page paper will build upon the other, exploring conceptual and historiographical themes of the topic you selected, and will afford you the ability to conduct multiple revisions.

The eight-page paper will integrate into itself the three two-page papers and will also be revised via peer review. This paper will require you to further develop historiographical positions made in earlier papers and to support them with primary and secondary evidence.

In addition to developing your ability to weigh historical evidence and to create a logical argument from it, these assignments are designed to impress upon you the importance of revision, and improve your abilities as a writer.

### **Poster Session**

While many historical treatises lie ‘a moldering’ on library shelves the world over, that is not their purpose. History is meant to be shared and retold, engaging the hearer, challenging their biases, and sparking their curiosity.

Therefore, for your final assignment you will be asked to work with another classmate who has selected the same (or a similar) topic as yourself to create a “poster” presentation (based on your final eight-page paper) which you and your partner will present at a public symposium to be held at the end of the semester. This capstone project will allow you to identify how the medium in which a historical argument is presented (a paper, book, magazine, TV show) impacts the message and argument conveyed. Furthermore, this project will enable you to better reflect on how history is presented and consumed in popular culture. Finally, this project will improve your communication skills, help you work better with a group, train you to conduct and present original research, and demonstrate to you how the skills one develops as a historian can be used outside the study of history.

You will be granted wide latitude in the shape your poster takes and in the arguments you and your partner make. “Poster” presentations should incorporate visual, oral, and written elements, but beyond that, the form your presentation takes is *almost* entirely up to you! You may choose to create a traditional poster (glued to foam board or hanging from a stand), you and your partner may decide to create an interactive video presentation (using Power Point, Prezi, or Keynote) and display it with a projector, or you may create a presentation that incorporates both traditional poster board, presentation media (via iPads – which can be provided), handouts, or audio. Instructions and examples will be provided in class to get you started.

In preparation for this assignment we will receive training on the use of media creation tools from DoIT Student Training Services. DoIT STS provides a host of training programs (Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office Suite, Handbrake, Audacity, etc.) The types of software we receive training on will be decided by a class vote later in the semester after you have begun your project. There are a number of other resources available to you as well: Writing Center, and Digital Media Center (DMC).

We will work closely with the Writing Center and the Digital Media Center (DMC) in this assignment. If you choose, you may submit your presentation to the DMC’s annual student digital media competition.

Additional instructions will be made available by the fourth week of the semester.

**ADDENDUM ON POSTER COST:** For this project you may decide to print a poster (poster sizes are traditionally 3’ x 4’). The prices for such large-scale printing can be cost-prohibitive. There are however a number of printing services available on campus that will print your poster at a competitive price. I have scouted out a number of these campus printing services. The Geography Print Lab is – by far – the least expensive @ \$34.50 (for one 3’x4’ poster).

### **Discussion Board**

History is not something done by one’s self. We all can learn from the unique perspectives and interpretations we bring to class. Therefore, there will be a discussion board where I will post a series of questions about the week’s

readings. I ask that you make one (meaningful and unique) post per week for each discussion question. I will provide you with examples of “meaningful and unique” posts at the beginning of the semester.

### **Oral Presentations**

You, along with two classmates, will make one Pecha Kucha oral presentations (short 4 minute presentations composed of 20 slides). The presentation will be given the second week of class discussing your initial understanding of European Imperialism. More instructions and a demonstration will be given in class.

### **Map Quiz**

While the study of history is much more than rote memorization a working knowledge of the past requires a foundational understanding of places and locations. In week two you will be given a short map quiz covering \*basic\* locals important to British imperial history. The grade will be incorporated into your participation grade.

### **Tests**

There will be two tests given in this course: a midterm (15% of your grade) and a comprehensive final exam (25% of your grade). These exams are not designed to trick you, but ensure you are reaching the courses learning objects and enable me to better help you achieve those objectives.

### **Grading Breakdown**

Oral presentations (2 x 2.5% each)	5%
Two Page Papers (3 x 3% each)	9%
Paper revisions	15%
Eight Page Paper	15%
Midterm	15%
Final Exam	25%
Class Attendance and Participation	16%

### **Class Structure, Organization, and Expectations**

#### **“Blended” Class Structure**

I’ve organized class structure to accomplish the following goals: maximize the usefulness of our face to face time, provide greater opportunity for students to learn as a community, and better enable students to learn at their own pace.

Therefore this will be a *blended course*. This means that a good portion of the week’s lectures will be online for you to watch on your own, and that class participation will also involve an online component (discussion boards and posts). Face-to-face time in the classroom will feature an abbreviated lecture (which will work in tangent with the online lecture), small group activities, and time to reflect and discuss the material covered in that week’s readings.

I expect you to come to all in-class sessions having prepared all online material.

#### **Twitter**

To better facilitate participation and interaction there will be a class Twitter account set up for you to use should you have questions or ideas you would like to share with the class, but outside the confines of the discussion forums. In addition I will regularly post to the account throughout the semester with class news and updates.

To participate or receive class updates, please follow #UWHist200. If you wish participate but do not wish to use your own personal Twitter account you may use the course’s Twitter account to make posts, Login: UWHHistory, Password: IlikeHistory

**Attendance:**

The tests for this course will be based on the course-texts and both the online and in-class lectures. Furthermore, online and in-class participation will be graded. If you can't complete an online module or can't attend a face-to-face session you must come talk with me or your grade will be negatively affected.

**Weeks 1-2:** Introduction: What is Imperialism and what are empires? Who are the actors and why did they embrace imperialism?

**Week 1: Setting the Stage (January 21, 23)**

*Course Introduction; geography, historiography, and challenging the historian as unquestioned arbiter of truth*

**Readings**

Burbank and Cooper – Chapter 1  
 “History, Culture, and Text” Lynn Hunt  
 (Learn@UW)

**Week 2: (January 26, 28, 30)**

*Setting the stage, introducing the actors, and just what is an empire?*

**Readings**

Burbank and Cooper – Selections from Chapter 6, Chapter 9

**Friday, January 30** – Pecha Kucha presentations

**Weeks 3-5: New Imperialism****Week 3: (February 2, 4, 6)**

*1870's – A New Imperialism?; Opening of Africa; Race and gender as imperial motifs*

**Readings**

Burbank and Cooper – Chapter 10  
 Selections from Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire* (Learn@UW)

**Friday, February 6** – Map Quiz (grade will be incorporated into participation grade)

Burbank and Cooper – Chapter 11  
 Colonial Poetry (Learn@UW)

**Week 5: (February 16, 18, 20)**

*1900s: A Civilizing Mission, Colonial science, Towards a collision, Decline*

**Readings**

Selections from Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory* (Learn@UW)  
 Selections from Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Learn@UW)  
 Letters from priests and missionaries (Learn@UW)

**Friday, February 20** – 1<sup>st</sup> two-page paper due

**Week 4: (February 9, 11, 13)**

*Rounding out the 19<sup>th</sup> century; European Imperial Culture; Selling the empire*

**Readings****Weeks 6-9: Clash of Empires****Week 6: (February 23, 25, 27)**

*1910s: Clash of Empires – understanding WWI as an imperial war, and its aftermath in imperial terms* (Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Austria); colonial soldiers; the role of colonial culture and economies in the war

**Readings:**

Burbank and Cooper – Chapter 12

**Friday, February 27** – 2<sup>nd</sup> two-page paper due

**Week 7: (March 2, 4, 6)**

*1920s: To their greatest extent, the height of empire – Britain, France; Total destruction: Germany, Russia, Austria, the Ottomans; questioning mission, civilization, and empire*

**Readings**

Selections from Mazower, *Dark Continent*  
 George Orwell, *Burmese Days*

**Friday, March 6** – 3<sup>rd</sup> two-page paper due

**Week 8: (March 9, 11, 13)**

*1930s: Rebirth of Germany's Imperial Vision; the Return of Russia; creating a colonial middle class*

**Readings**

Selections from Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*  
Selections from Hull, *Absolute Destruction* (Learn@UW)

**Week 9: (March 16, 18, 20)**

*1940s: Last march of the Empire, Weakness?, Picking the spoils; Empire comes to Europe*

**Readings**

Selections from Snyder, *Bloodlands* (Learn@UW)

**Friday, March 20** – In-class midterm exam

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**Weeks 10-12: Rethinking Empire, Rethinking Collapse**

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**Week 10: (March 23, 25, 27)**

*1940s-1950s: Interpretations of Empire, Unraveling of Imperialism – holding on and letting go; integrating the colony into Europe*

**Readings**

Burbank and Cooper – Chapter 13  
Aime Cesaire – *Discourse on Colonialism*

**Monday, March 23** – 1<sup>st</sup> draft of eight-page assignment due

**Wednesday, March 25** – 1<sup>st</sup> draft revisions due back to partner

**Readings**

Moloud Feraoun – *The Poor Man's Son*

**Wednesday, April 8** – 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of eight-page assignment due to peer reviewer

**Week 12: (April 13, 15, 17)**

*1970: End of Empire? Well who's going to rule in the colonies?; Questioning decolonization; Russia and Afghanistan*

**Reading**

Selections from Niall Ferguson, *Empire*

**MOVIE: [Available on Learn@UW]** - *The Last King of Scotland*

**Wednesday, April 15** – 2<sup>nd</sup> draft revisions due back to partner

**SPRING BREAK (March 28 – April 5) – No Class**

**Week 11: (April 6, 8, 10)**

*1960s: General Collapse, Imperial Welfare, Rethinking "empire"; opposing oppression*

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**Weeks 13-15: A much needed re-evaluation**

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**Week 13: (April 20, 22, 24)**

*1970-80s: Settler minorities, "Islas Malvinas," Shattered Remnants of Empire; economic and cultural influence*

**Readings**

Samson: *Settler Minorities*, 256-70 (Learn@UW)  
Selection from Belich *Replenishing the Earth* (Learn@UW)

**MOVIE: [Available on Learn@UW]** – *The 16<sup>th</sup> Man*, ESPN: *30 for 30*

**Friday, April 24** – Final draft of paper due

**Week 14: (April 27, 29, May 1)**

*1991 and beyond – Arriving at 'the end of history': Breakup of the Soviet Union, the Uniting of Europe; European influence today*

**Readings**

Burbank and Cooper: Chapter 14  
Selection from Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire* (Learn@UW)

**Week 15: (May 4, 6, 8)**

**May 4** – Symposium preparation, Final Poster due

**May 6** – Poster Symposium

**May 8** – Course Wrap-up

**May 9 - 16**

**Review session:** TBA

**Final Exam:** TBA