

**GEOG 5600/PECO 5501: Empire and Colonialism**  
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

**DRAFT COURSE OUTLINE Aug 2025 – Full syllabus will be provided in class**

Fall Term 2025  
Wednesdays 11:35am to 2:25pm  
Office hours: by appointment  
Brightspace link: <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/373218>

Instructor: Dr. Emilie Cameron  
[emilie.cameron@carleton.ca](mailto:emilie.cameron@carleton.ca)

This course is divided into two parts. We begin with a survey of key theoretical approaches to, and analyses of, imperialism and colonialism both within and beyond the discipline of geography. We consider how colonial and imperial formations have been understood within postcolonial, poststructuralist, feminist, Black, Marxist, settler colonial, and Indigenous conceptual frameworks, and how these bodies of thought relate to the geographic contexts within which they arose. Next, we consider a range of anti-imperial, resurgent, and decolonizing writings and visions from a range of historical-geographical locations, as well as emerging scholarship that both questions the limits of past approaches to the study of empire and aims to conceptualize imperial, colonial, and decolonizing processes in new ways.

The purpose of this course is:

- To situate major approaches to empire and colonialism within the discipline of geography and in relation to key source texts across the social sciences and humanities;
- To become familiar with critiques and analyses of colonial and imperial domination emerging from Indigenous, Black, Marxist, feminist, settler colonial, poststructuralist, and postcolonial frameworks;
- To engage with anti-imperial, resurgent, liberatory, and decolonizing writings and visions from a range of historical-geographical locations;
- To support the development of your own research projects, as well as your writing, reading, critical thinking, and presentation skills.

**Readings:** Students are **required to bring hard copies** of the readings to class. Readings are available for download from ARES (estimated printing cost via Carleton Library/ CU on the Go App= \$50-60).

**Content Note:**

This course engages with a range of texts containing content that may be triggering or upsetting for some students, including discussions of colonial and imperial violence, police and state violence, sexual violence, and other forms of oppression and discrimination. Students are encouraged to build in extra time for the readings to make space for any reactions that might arise. Please speak with me if you have questions about specific weeks or readings, or if you would like a more detailed content description in advance of any materials.

**I. Approaches to Empire**

**Sept 3– Introductions**

### **Sept 10 – Power/Knowledge and Postcolonialism**

Required:

- Said, E. 1978. "Introduction" in *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage, pp 1-9.
- Foucault, M. 2003 [1976] Chapter 11, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*, New York: Picador, pp 239-264
- Said, "Foucault and the Imagination of Power." Foucault: A Critical Reader. Couzens Hoy. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986. 149-55.
- Harris, C. 2004. How Did Colonialism Dispossession? Comments from an Edge of Empire. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 94, 165-182.

### **Sept 17 – Colonialism and Primitive Accumulation**

Required:

- Marx, K. 1976. *Capital Volume 1*, Chapters 26-33.
- Coulthard, G. 2014. Introduction to *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp 1-25.
- Glassman, J. 2006. Primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession, accumulation by 'extra-economic' means, *Progress in Human Geography*, 30 (5): 608-625.

### **Sept 24: Colonialism, Imperialism, and Global Political Economy**

- Cesaire, A. 2000. *Discourse on Colonialism* New York: Monthly Review Press, pp 31-46 (note page numbers!)
- Bhabra, G. K. 2020. Colonial global economy: Towards a theoretical reorientation of political economy. *Review of International Political Economy*, 28(2), 307-322.
- Johnson, D. K. 2023. Walter Rodney and the method of political economy: retrieving a critical-historical IPE. *Review of international political economy*, 30(2), 421-436.

### **Oct 1: Settler Colonialism**

Required:

- Wolfe, P. 2006. Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native, *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (4): 387-409
- Kelley, R. D. 2017. The rest of us: Rethinking settler and native. *American Quarterly*, 69(2), 267-276.
- Englert, S. 2020. Settlers, workers, and the logic of accumulation by dispossession. *Antipode*, 52(6), 1647-1666.
- Agha, Z., Esson, J., Griffiths, M., & Joronen, M. 2024. Gaza: A decolonial geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 49(2), e12675.

### **Oct 8: Racial Capitalism and Black Life**

Required:

- Robinson, C. Racial Capitalism pp 9-28 in *Black Marxism: the Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. London: Zed Press (excerpted here: <http://racialcapitalism.ucdavis.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/robinson-black-marxism-selections.pdf>)
- Harris, C. I. 1993. Whiteness as Property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1707-179
- Sharpe, C. 2015. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham: Duke University Press, Ch 1 pp. 1-24.

### **Oct 15: Feminist Materialist Approaches to Empire and Colonialism**

Required:

- Spivak, G. C. 1988. Can the Subaltern Speak? In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. C. Nelson & L. Grossberg, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 271-316.
- Federici, S. 2004. Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 2 of *The Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, pp. 7-19 and 61-131.

## **Oct 22 – NO CLASS (Reading week)**

## **II. Against, After, Outside Imperialism/Colonialism**

### **Oct 29 – The Fourth World**

- Dene Declaration. 1975 (<https://publicautonomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/indian-brotherhood-of-nwt-dene-nation-the-dene-declaration-1975.pdf>)
- Coulthard, G. 2019. Introduction: A Fourth World Resurgent. In Manuel, G., & Posluns, M. *The fourth world: An Indian reality*. U of Minnesota Press, pp. ix-xxxiii
- Coulthard, G. 2025. "Palestinians and Native Peoples are Comrades": The Political Economy of Indigenous/Palestinian Solidarity. *Native American and Indigenous Studies*, 12(1), 151-159.
- Watts, V. 2013. Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Amongst Humans and Non Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go On a European World Tour!), *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 2 (1): 20-34.

### **Nov 5 – On Violence**

Required:

- Fanon, F. 2004 [1963]. On Violence. Ch 1 in *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, Pp. 1-62
- Li, Darryl. 2020. *The Universal Enemy : Jihad, Empire, and the Challenge of Solidarity*. Stanford University Press. Introduction and Ch 6, pp 1-26; 170-192.

### **Nov 12 – Refusal, Resurgence, Self-Determination**

Required:

- Simpson, L. 2017. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Chapters 10-12, pp 175-231.
- Tuck, E. and W. Yang. 2012. Decolonization is not a metaphor, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1 (1): 1-40.
- Barichello, J and L. Charlie. 2022. "We have our footsteps everywhere": The Ross River Dena's fight to protect Dena Kēyeh/Kaska Country. *Briarpatch* 5 Jan 2022, <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/we-have-our-footsteps-everywhere>

### **Nov 19 – Land Back and Reparations**

Required:

- Yellowhead Institute, 2019. *Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper*. <https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/>
- Coates, T. 2014. The case for reparations, *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- Taiwo, O. 2022. *Reconsidering Reparations*. Oxford UP, Ch 5: What's Next, Why Reparations Require Climate Justice, pp 149-190

- Ramirez, M. 2020. Take the houses back/take the land back: Black and Indigenous urban futures in Oakland, *Urban Geography*, 41:5, 682-693

## **Nov 26 – Worldmaking and Dreaming Otherwise**

Required:

- Getachew, Adom. 2019. *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Ch 1, Ch 5, Epilogue, pp 1-36; 142-181.
- Yaffe, H. 2020. Introduction: ‘¡Somos Cuba! ¡Somos Continuidad!’ in *We Are Cuba!: How a Revolutionary People Have Survived in a Post-Soviet World*, Yale University Press, pp 1-12.
- Gumbs, A. *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons From Marine Mammals*. Chico, CA: AK Press, 2020. Introduction plus one chapter of your choice.

## **Dec 3 – TBD**

## **Evaluation**

### **20% Participation**

- Participation is a crucial component of a graduate-level class.
- Participation includes arriving in class having read all of the assigned readings carefully and critically, offering thoughtful comments and questions to the discussion, being mindful of balanced participation across the class, and being generous and respectful with each other.
- Participation also includes reading others’ materials before class (e.g., annotated bibliographies, synthesis reports) and generally preparing for a fruitful discussion.

### **20% Reading Responses**

- Responses are meant to ensure that all students come to class with a solid grounding in the readings, with questions and challenges to discuss, and also to cultivate critical reading and writing skills, particularly the development of nuanced, fair, and generous critique.
- We will spend the first 20 minutes of each class writing responses to the assigned readings. Responses will be written by hand, on paper. You are encouraged to bring in hard copies of the readings for this assignment as well as hand written notes, but students will not be permitted to use a computer or to transcribe a pre-written response.
- Reading responses should aim to provide a concise summary of the main arguments of each reading and identify questions or matters for discussion in the seminar. Responses may also reflect on connections or contradictions across the readings, evaluate the merits of a reading’s argument (either on its own terms or from outside of its terms), or consider the implications of the readings for your own research.
- Students must submit at least six reading responses per term (on the other days, you can use the time to free write about the readings) and are not permitted to submit a response on the day they submit an annotated bibliography. Responses must be submitted at the end of the in-class writing period.
- Responses will be evaluated out of 3: responses that meet the basic requirements of the assignment, demonstrate engagement with and reflection on the readings, and are not overly long or short will be graded 3/3. Responses of poor quality or that appear to have been developed using generative AI will have marks deducted accordingly.
- Students might want to consult Joe Dumit’s essay, “How I read” (<https://dumit.net/how-i-read/>) to get some ideas about how to approach graduate-level reading.

## 20% Annotated Bibliography and Discussion Primer

- Each week a student will be responsible for preparing an annotated bibliography (8-10 sources, including assigned readings) in relation to the week's theme, for briefly presenting their bibliography to the class, for providing a brief oral "primer" regarding the assigned readings, and for identifying 3 discussion questions to guide our conversation about the assigned readings.
- The annotated bibliography is an opportunity to deepen your understanding of the assigned readings and extend your learning in a particular direction. It should have an introduction describing the collection of materials, explaining the scope of the additional readings, and commenting on how the additional sources expand or extend our understanding of the weeks' theme. For example, a bibliography prepared for the "Power/Knowledge" week might annotate a range of articles written by geographers that take up Foucault's and Said's work, and help us further understand the ways in which geographers have engaged empire. An annotation is not the same as an abstract; annotations should **situate, summarize, and critically evaluate** the text and its claims:
  - **Situating** a text means identifying who produced it, where, when, for what purpose and audience, guided by which questions or priorities;
  - **Summarizing** a text means summarizing the main argument(s) or claims developed in the text and its structure (how the argument is developed);
  - **Critically evaluating** a text means assessing its strengths and weaknesses, what unique contributions it makes, and critically engaging with the text both internally (on its own terms) and externally (from outside of its terms).
- Students are encouraged to discuss their ideas for the annotated bibliography with me in advance. I can provide ideas on additional sources and help refine your plans. Please also see Brightspace for more guidelines about the Annotated Bibliography assignment and a sample.
- You are welcome (and encouraged) to select readings from the "supplementary" list.
- Annotated bibliographies are to be **posted on Brightspace by 11pm on Tuesdays** and a **hard copy** is also to be submitted in class. All students are expected to review the annotated bibliography before class each Wednesday.
- Students will have approximately 15 minutes in class to briefly present their annotated bibliographies, provide a primer about the assigned readings/authors, and to identify 3 questions to guide our discussion of the assigned readings.
  - When providing a brief snapshot of your annotated bibliography, **do not read** your bibliography aloud. Instead, step back and ask yourself what the bibliography accomplished overall, what you learned from it, and what interesting angles it develops that might interest your peers. Share this with us.
  - An **opening statement or primer about the assigned readings** helps set the stage for our conversation. It could include biographical information about the authors, information about the larger body of work the assigned reading is connected to, a summary of how it fits into broader debates, etc. You cannot cover everything that is possible to discuss about the assigned readings/authors – choose some interesting bits that you think are relevant and will help us better understand the texts and their significance.
  - Finally, outline three discussion questions for the class. **These should emerge from the assigned readings only**, not from your annotated bibliography or from other contextual information you have just presented. A good discussion question opens up ideas and possibilities (rather than direct people to specific conclusions),

allows for discovery for everyone involved, and is generative of ideas and connections. A good question can be deceptively simple (“what do you think is Said’s core argument?”). It should not contain the desired answer or tell people what to think.

- Remember that you aren’t expected to be the **expert** on the readings; rather, you have been tasked with reading them a bit more closely, with thinking through how they fit within broader conversations and literatures (as developed in your annotated bibliography and opening primer), and with identifying productive discussion questions for our conversation that day.

## **20% Seminar Synthesis Reports/Presentations**

- Each week, a student will be responsible for acting as listener and recorder of our discussion and preparing a brief written report and oral presentation summarizing our collective discussion. This assignment supports skills in active listening, synthesis, analysis, and collegial academic engagement.
- Your report and presentation should: a) identify key themes, tensions, and questions that arose during seminar; b) distil the group’s thinking in a clear, meaningful way; and c) encourage connections and ongoing dialogue across seminars.
- During the seminar, your primary role is to listen, observe, and record (not to lead or dominate the discussion). You should focus on listening attentively to the full discussion and taking notes about it. The goal is not to record everything that was said, but rather to identify and reflect back to the group the **intellectual arc** of the conversation. To this end, take note of: key themes and arguments, key passages in the assigned texts, points of agreement or contention, moments of confusion or breakthrough, questions that remained unresolved, connections to past discussions.
- As soon as possible after class, review and organize your notes: be sure they make sense to you, make additional observations, identify gaps, and identify themes you intend to develop in your report.
- Prepare a brief report (1-2 pages) that summarizes the main themes and arguments discussed, key perspectives or disagreements, and your own reflection on the significance of the readings and discussion. **Report should be posted on Brightspace by 11pm on Tuesdays** and a **hard copy** is also to be submitted in class. You will briefly present your report to your colleagues at the start of class, before the in-class writing portion of the seminar. Presenters should not read the report but rather convey the gist of what you have covered in your written report.
- **You are not permitted to record the seminar discussion or use generative AI in preparing this assignment.**
- You will be evaluated based on: clarity and coherence of the summary; accuracy and nuance in representing multiple perspectives; insightfulness of your framing and reflection; relevance of follow-up questions or connections posed; professionalism in written and oral delivery.

## **20% Final Assignment - TBD**

# **COURSE POLICIES**

## **Grades**

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			

Standing in a course is determined by the course Instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the Instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean. Standing in the course will be shown by alphabetical grades.

### **Academic Regulations:**

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and related policies can be found on the university's website, here: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradregulations/>

### **Technology policy:**

To foster a focused and engaging learning environment, all students are required to bring **hard copies of assigned readings** to each class session. This policy supports close reading, annotation, and in-depth discussion, which are central to our work in this course. **Electronic devices, including laptops, tablets, e-readers, and mobile phones, are not permitted during class** unless otherwise specified. **Recording and transcription software is also not permitted.** If you have a documented accommodation that requires the use of electronic devices, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so we can make the appropriate arrangements.

### **Classroom Etiquette and Language:**

It is expected that everyone respectfully and meaningfully engages with course assignments and seminar discussion. This means approaching coursework with a curious and open mind, being prepared by doing required readings, responding thoughtfully with appropriate language and robust explanations, and thinking before you reply or engage with colleagues.

In a class, we all depend on a climate of mutual respect and engagement to make this an exciting intellectual environment. Please respect these basic guidelines.

- **Class discussions:** please respect your fellow students by listening attentively during discussions.
- **Class times and breaks:** Please respect class times. If you have a regular reason for being late such as childcare, transportation issues or some other regular issue, please let me know. If you have to leave class early or come late please inform me. You are welcome to stim, stretch, or leave the classroom for a break at any time.
- **Food:** you are welcome to bring food and drink to class. If you have any serious allergies, please let me know by email and I will alert the class.
- **Scents:** many people have chemical/scent sensitivities. Please do not wear strong scents and go as "low scent" as possible for this class.
- **Children:** if you have children and encounter problems with childcare, your children are welcome in class. Please bring something to entertain them with.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/)). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Students are reminded of the seriousness with which Carleton University treats academic dishonesty of any form, particularly plagiarism. The University Academic Integrity Policy (<http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/>) defines

plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission or assessed content prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course. ***It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the regulations concerning academic integrity and to ensure that your course work conforms to the principles of academic integrity.***

#### **Statement on generative AI (i.e., ChatGPT):**

Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT and Grammarly) are now widely available and are being integrated into many aspects of peoples’ lives. Whether or not you are personally using AI, we all need to maintain and improve our skills in critical thinking, effective communication, discernment, analysis, and ethical judgment as AI expands.

The generative AI policy for this class is designed to allow **intentional, ethical, and sparing use** of AI that supports, rather than replaces, your intellectual development, while also ensuring that students who choose *not* to use AI are not penalized for their choices. The core expectation is that you will produce original, self-directed work and use AI only as a support, not as a substitute for your own thinking, analysis, and writing.

You are **permitted** to use AI for the following tasks: brainstorming ideas, improving grammar and sentence structure, requests for information and sources about a topic (however, beware of hallucinated information, sources, and arguments).

You are **not permitted** to use generative AI to: generate summaries of assigned readings; generate arguments; generate text for your written assignments; generate scripts for oral presentations; record and/or transcribe class discussion.

Any use of generative AI must be declared in a footnote (e.g., “used ChatGPT to brainstorm outline ideas” or “Used Grammarly to suggest sentence rephrasing”). Unacknowledged or excessive use of AI-generated content—especially when it substitutes for your own work—may be considered a breach of academic integrity and handled according to university policy.

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.



**Lateness and Missed Class Policy:** Attendance is mandatory in this class. Late arrival and early departure from class will impact participation grades. Students who miss class for medical reasons but are well enough to attend remotely can write ahead of class to request a Zoom link. Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day, including weekends and holidays. See below for policy re: extenuating circumstances. Students assume all risk for lost or missing materials. Please be sure to keep a back-up electronic copy of your assignments.

**Extenuating Circumstances:** Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with extenuating circumstances (i.e. out of your control). Any requests for deadline extensions should be made to the instructor in advance of the deadline, where possible. In case of missed deadlines due to unforeseen circumstance, a medical note (or other applicable form of documentation, including Carleton's self-declaration form) should be provided within 5 days of the missed deadline in order to negotiate new deadlines. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require accommodation for any other reasons.

**Statement on Student Mental Health:** As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

**Emergency Resources (on and off campus):** <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

**Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

**Off Campus Resources:**

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

**Academic Accessibility and Accommodations:** This course is intended for all Carleton students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that can affect one's equal access to education. If, at any point in the term, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are encouraged to contact me by email, phone, or during office hours to discuss your specific needs. Letters are not required in order to discuss accommodation needs.

“Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website ([students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)).”

**Assistance for Students:**

There are a variety of ways to get help if you are having difficulties with any of the course material, or managing to meet the requirements of a number of courses at once. In addition to support I can offer you as the course instructor, there are a number of support services and resources available on campus, including: The Centre for Student Academic Support (<https://carleton.ca/csas/>) to help you in achieving academic success in various aspects of your university program; Carleton Writing Services (<https://carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>) to help you improve your writing skills; and The MacOdrum Library ([www.library.carleton.ca](http://www.library.carleton.ca)) which offers library, research, learning, and IT support. Free counselling is available to students through Health and Counselling Services (<https://carleton.ca/health/counselling-services/>). See also the mental health resources listed above.