

PSCI 3105 A: IMPERIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION

Wednesday 11:35 a.m.-2:25 p.m.
See location on Carleton Central

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Office Hour: TBA

<https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/451870>

Objectives

This course explores encounters between expanding states of Europe, North America and Asia and those subject to imperialism and colonialism from the nineteenth century to the present. How did, and do, empires express power? How did, and do, peoples subject to empire accommodate and resist colonialism? What have been the legacies of formal empire and late 20th century decolonization? Are we now living in an age of renewed (and/or declining) empire(s)? We examine imperial power as a relationship, but an unequal one. Expansion has wrought—and continues to wreak—violence and destruction. But it delivers opportunities to some categories of subject populations even if the “civilizing mission” has proven but a myth. We examine issues of race, gender, the environment and the transformations of imperial power and resistance. We will discuss how imperialism permeates our lives and discourse in the present—in Canada and globally.

Learning Outcomes

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

- *identify important concepts and motives that underpin imperial rule and decolonization
- *understand the complexity of the colonial relationship
- *consider the ways colonized peoples resist imperial power, past and present
- *demonstrate an understanding of how imperialism affects the modern world
- *analyze continuity and change between empires from the 19th century to the present
- *participate and communicate effectively in discussion with interventions based on ideas and evidence from class readings
- *learn and apply critical analysis skills through reading academic and popular literature and through writing exercises
- *expand research skills
- *synthesize important class concepts in an exam setting

Readings

Required readings (below) will be available on Brightspace. Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course.

Requirements

*Attendance/ participation (includes small group presentations):	20%
*Oral Quick Takes	5%
*Written Quick Takes	(4x5) 20%
*In class quiz/reflection 1 (Oct 14):	15%
*In class quiz/reflection 2 (Nov 25):	15%
*Final exam (in regular exam period):	25%

Attendance/participation grades

Attendance is mandatory: penalties for not attending (without medical self-declaration forms) are: 1 absence= 15% deduction from participation grade; 2 absences= 30% deduction; 3 absences= 50% deduction; 4 absences= 100% deduction. Students with valid medical or other issues for missing class will be allowed at the instructor's discretion to write short reactions on the readings to make up for missed participation marks.

Late arrivals (after 11:40) will result in a penalty of 25% of that day's attendance/ participation grade for every 15 minutes late.

Participation marks are based on: (a) attendance and attention level and (b) active participation that: (i) displays awareness of and interest in the subject (ii) contributes to the flow of conversation (iii) shows knowledge of the readings and (iv) offers critical analysis of the topic. Students will be marked on a **five-point scale each session**, ranging from 1 (attends but spends time on their device) to 5 (regular participation and active attention). Classes will include various exercises in small and larger groups.

Quick Takes

*Oral: Students will give **two** 90 second briefings to the class of an important theme that connects the class readings, a "why/so what" designed to stimulate discussion—and then will take the lead on small group exercises, etc. See guidelines on brightspace. (This is in addition to small group presentations, see below on those weeks).

*Written: Students will do **four** in-class writing assignments (15 minutes) of 150-200 words (based entirely on class readings) to address one of three themes given by the instructor. For classes where there will be opportunities to do written quick takes, the writing period will be 11:35-11:50 with the full class beginning at 11:50. (Students will choose four of the weeks to write). Writing weeks are noted below.

In Class Quiz/Reflection

The quiz/reflection exercises will be held in class on Oct. 14 and Nov. 25, each taking one hour and fifteen minutes. The exercises will blend analysis of class readings and lectures along with personal reflections (based on course knowledge) of imperial/decolonial legacies and current imperial actions. Further instructions will be given in class and on brightspace.

Artificial Intelligence: Minimal Use

AI use in this course: All course writing will be done in the classroom, without AI assistance. Students may use AI to research background course information, but credit for in-class discussion, assignments and exams will be based on the course material itself.

Documenting AI use: It is not necessary to document the use of AI for the permitted purposes listed above. If you have questions about a specific use of AI that isn't listed above, please consult your instructor.

Why have I adopted this policy? This policy ensures that student voices and ideas are prioritized and authentically represented, maintaining the integrity of the work produced by students while allowing basic support for background (with the awareness that AI is not the best tool for this). The goal of adopting a limited use of AI is to help students develop foundational skills in writing and critical thinking by practicing substantive content creation without the support of AI.

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

Note: Laptops/electronics are to be used ONLY for class activity and ONLY in lecture sessions. I would strongly prefer no electronic use. Using devices for non-class material will result in a 25% deduction from the ENTIRE participation grade for each instance.

Diversity

*This class aims to foster diversity in identity, profession and outlook. We can debate and disagree but must do so respectfully.

*Please contact the professor or teaching assistant if you wish to be referred to by different pronouns than in Carleton Central.

*Contact the professor or teaching assistant directly with any questions/concerns on this (or any other) issue.

Schedule (note- readings subject to revision)

Sep 9: Introduction

1. Opening Discussion: What is Imperialism?
2. Introductory Lecture: Empire, Imperialism, and Colonialism, Past and Present

Background/ Discussion Readings

Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism*, 1-12

Sep 16: From the Foundations of Modern Imperialism to Decolonization

(written quick take session 1)

1. Capitalism and Racism
2. The British Raj and India
- 3: Decolonization Today

Background Readings

Timothy H. Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914*, 9-51

Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (2011), 108-117, 128-131

Martin Thomas, *The End of Empires and a World Remade: A Global History of Decolonization*

(2024), 119-123 (Partition of India)

Quick Take/Discussion Readings

Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, 1-19

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978), 1-9

Bernard Cohn, "Cloth, Clothes, and Colonialism: India in the Nineteenth Century" *Imperialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (1996), 106-7, 121-9

Tina Curriel-Allen, "What Decolonization is, and What it Means to Me"

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/what-decolonization-is-and-what-it-means-to-me>

Ibtisam Ahmed, "The British Empire's Homophobic Legacy"

<https://theconversation.com/the-british-empires-homophobic-legacy-could-finally-be-overturned-in-india-81284>

Sep 23: Empire, Difference, and "Civilization"

(written quick take session 2)

1. Science and Technology
2. Civilizing Mission/ White Man's Burden/ Racism
3. Methods of Rule
4. Memories of Empire/ Imperial Nostalgia

Background Readings

Daniel R. Headrick, *Power over Peoples: Technology, the Environment and Western Imperialism, 1400 to the Present* (2010), 226-34, 212-17, 257-75

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 6-18

Quick Take/Discussion Readings

Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden"

<https://www.cfr.org/education/learn/resource-collections/primary-sources-us-overseas-expansion/rudyard-kipling-the-white-mans-burden-1899>

Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism*, 104-123

Empire and Memory in Great Britain and Its Colonies:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/11/uk-more-nostalgic-for-empire-than-other-ex-colonial-powers>

Christopher Claassen and Daniel Devine "The Politics of Imperial Nostalgia" *British Journal of Political Science* 55:167 (2025): 1-21

Sep 30: "High Imperialism" and Memories/Legacies of Conquest

(written quick take session 3)

1. Causes
2. Winners and Losers
3. Variations of Imperial Rule

Background Readings

M.E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa*, 15-27, 46-55

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 115-77

Roberto Cantoni et. al., "From Francafrigue to Chinafrica? Ecologically Unequal Exchange, Neocolonialism, and Environmental Conflicts in Africa" *World Development* 193 (2025)

Quick Take/Discussion Readings

Bianca Naude. "COVID 19 Travel Bans and the Reactivation of Colonial Trauma in Africa"
International Affairs 99, no. 3 (2023): 1109-26

Simukai Chigudu, "'Colonialism Had Never Really Ended': My Life in the Shadow of Cecil Rhodes"
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/jan/14/rhodes-must-fall-oxford-colonialism-zimbabwe-simukai-chigudu>

Ibukun David, "Win-Win or Neo-Imperialism? Sino-African Economic Relations in the 21st Century" *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (2026): 1-16

Oct 7: Resistance, Decolonization and Recolonization

(written quick take session 4)

1. Hobson, Lenin, and the early critics of Imperialism
2. World War I, Postwar Settlements

Background Readings

J.A. Hobson, W.E.B. Dubois, Rosa Luxemburg, V.I. Lenin, (**READ 2 of 4**) *European Imperialism*

Martin Thomas, *The End of Empires and a World Remade: A Global History of Decolonization* (2024), 54-67 (World War I)

Nana Osei-Opare, "Ghana and Nkrumah Revisited: Lenin, State Capitalism and Black Marxist Orbits" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 65, no. 2 (2023): 399-421 **READ pp. 399-400, 407-411, bottom 415-420.**

Quick Take/Discussion Readings

Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration" *Imperialism* ed. Wm. Roger Louis (1976), 117-140

M.K. Gandhi, "Disease of Civilization"

https://www.mkgandhi.org/hindswaraj/chap06_civilization.htm

Nanjala Nyabola, "Why, as an African, I Took a Rhodes Scholarship"

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/may/05/rhodes-scholarships-african-perspective>

Oct 14: Postcolonialism/ Decolonization (and in-class quiz 1)

1. The Colonial Encounter
2. Palestine/Israel
3. The Road to Decolonization

Background Readings

Raymond Betts, *Decolonization*, 37-45, 61-70

William M. Matthew, "The Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate, 1917-1923: British Imperialist Imperatives" *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 3 (2013): 231-50

Discussion Readings

The Palestine Mandate (League of Nations, 1922)

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp

“The British Mandate and Palestine”

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/02/01/magazine/israel-founding-palestinian-conflict.html>

Quotes from Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* that Resonate 60 Years Later”

<https://theconversation.com/quotes-from-frantz-fanons-wretched-of-the-earth-that-resonate-60-years-later-173108>

Oct 21: SMALL GROUP SESSION 1: Mixing Past and Present: Legacies of Imperialism

*in small group sessions, students will meet for one hour each, in groups of 8-10. Each student will give a short (1-2 minute) presentation, followed by discussion

OCT 28: FALL BREAK

Nov 4: Imperial Russia, The Soviet Union and Russia Today

(written quick take session 4)

1. The Tsarist Empire and Asian Expansion
2. The Soviet Union: an Empire?
3. Russia’s Current Imperial Actions

Quick Take/Discussion Readings

Kate Brown, “Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana Are Nearly the Same Place “
American Historical Review 106 no. 1 (2001): 17-48 (**READ 17-22, 30-37**)

Douglas Northrop, “The Limits of Liberation: Gender, Revolution, and the Veil in Soviet Uzbekistan” *Everyday Life in Central Asia* ed. Sahadeo and Zanca (2007), 89-102

Serhy Yekelchuk, “Sorry, Mr. Putin: Ukraine and Russia are Not the Same Country” (2022)
<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/02/06/ukraine-russia-not-same-country-putin-ussr-00005461>

Lofti Sour, “The Matryoshka Strategy: Russia’s Hybrid Tactics in the Sahel” *Africa Spectrum* (2026): 1-23

Nov 11: The United States and Empire

(written quick take session 5)

1. Origins of the American Empire
2. The Cold War
3. The “Global Policeman”

Background Readings

Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *Empire in Retreat: The Past, Present and Future of the United States* (2018), chs. 7 and 12.

Quick Take/Discussion Readings:

Robert Kagan, “The Benevolent Empire” *Foreign Policy* 1998, no. 111: 24-35

Makdisi Ussama, “Anti-Americanism in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History”
Journal of American History 2002 89(2): 538-557

Daniel Immerwahr, “How the US Has Hidden Its Empire”

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/15/the-us-hidden-empire-overseas-territories-united-states-guam-puerto-rico-american-samoa>

Timothy I. Mellish, "Neo-Imperial Coercion or Strategic Miscalculation? Trump's Intervention in Venezuela and Iran and the Geopolitical Ascendancy of China" *Journal of Global Faultlines* 13, no. 1 (2026): 11-25

Nov 18: SMALL GROUP SESSION 2: Imperialism and Canada

*student-led small group class (optional readings will be provided)

Nov 25: 9 /11, Oil and the Middle East

(written quick take session 6)

1. The Road to 9/11
2. Iraq and the Islamic State
3. Imperialism, Postcolonialism and anti-imperialism in 2026

Discussion Readings

a. A Clash of Civilizations?

Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (Summer 1993), 22-39

Edward W. Said, "The Clash of Ignorance" *The Nation*, 22 October 2001

Michael H. Hunt "In the Wake of September 11, the Clash of What?" *Journal of American History* 2002 89(2): 417-25

b. After 9/11

Paul Rich, "US Empire and Grey Zone Conflict in the Middle East: From the Cold War to Trump I and II" *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 37, no. 5 (2026): 1038-1067

Christopher Caldwell, "America is Officially an Empire in Decline" *New York Times* May 3, 2026

Current media articles TBA

Dec 2: SMALL GROUP SESSION 3: Global Imperialism Today

Dec 9: Racism and Migration/ Imperialism and the Environment

1. Keeping Europe (and North America) White
2. The European Right, Racism and Refugees
3. Russia and its "Blacks"
4. Natural resource extraction and Climate change

Background Readings

Lucy Mayblin and Joe Turner, "'Race' and Racism in International Migration" and "Gender, Sexuality, Colonialism and Migration in *Migration Studies and Colonialism* (2021), 49-77, 173-94

Jayati Ghosh, Shouvik Chakraborty and Debamanyu Das, "Climate Imperialism in the Twenty-First Century" *Monthly Review* 74, no. 3 (2022): 70-85

Discussion Readings

Li Zhou, "Resurgence of Germany's Far Right, Explained" March 12, 2024

<https://www.vox.com/world-politics/2024/3/12/24080074/germany-afd-far-right>

Tarsis Brito, "Is Migration an Invasion: How Whiteness, Borders and Colonialism Shape Europe's

Migration Discourse" Oct. 2, 2025
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2025/10/02/is-migration-an-invasion-whiteness-borders-colonialism-europe/>
 Asif Mohiuddin "Islamophobia and Religious Imagination in Europe" *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 39, no. 2 (2019): 135–156
 Nicole Dungca and Claire Healy, "Revealing the Smithsonian's 'Racial Brain Collection'" *Washington Post*, Aug. 14, 2023 and Zachary Small "Facing Scrutiny, a Museum that Holds 12,000 Human Remains Changes Course" *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 2023
 Leon Sealey-Huggins, "'1.5C to Stay Alive,' Climate Change, Imperialism and Justice for the Caribbean" *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 11: 2444-2463
 Herriott Mercer, "Colonialism: Why Leading Scientists Have Finally Acknowledged Its Link to Climate Change" <https://theconversation.com/colonialism-why-leading-climate-scientists-have-finally-acknowledged-its-link-with-climate-change-181642>
 Dorothy Guerrero, "Colonialism, Climate Change and Climate Reparations" <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/blog/2023/08/colonialism-climate-change-and-climate-reparations/>

POLITICAL SCIENCE OUTLINE APPENDIX

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

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/safety/resources/>

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/>
 Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
 The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University.

Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Religious obligation: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within **three working days** to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. [See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3](#)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's official withdrawal dates

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's Official Exam Period (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton Calendar](#).

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#). 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.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

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.

RESOURCES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

Department of Political Science (2777)
Registrar's Office (3500)

B640 Loeb
300 Tory