



Colonialism/Imperialism

Professor Matthew Bowser (Prof. Bowser)

HIST 2311, Section 01 (CRN # 38781), Spring 2022

Location: Snell Library 031

Meeting Time: WF 11:45 AM – 1:25 PM ET

Instructor Contact Information

Prof. Matthew Bowser

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Office Hours: MW 10:30 – 11:30 AM ET (physical), or by appointment (virtual)

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I. Course Description:

This course revolves around two fundamental questions of the human condition: How did we get to where we are today, and what is our best course moving forward? The object of this study, therefore, is to answer the first question so that students may answer the second for themselves. Imperialism and colonialism, more than any other single force, has shaped the global world-system of the present day. For better or worse, every aspect of our lives today deals with the ideological, social, economic, and political legacies and continuities of empire. We will examine each of these elements as we trace the development of imperialism from the Iberian empires of the 15th and 16th centuries to the waning of American global hegemony today. The focus of the course will be on the modern era (1750-Present) and on the “hegemons” among the imperial powers: first Great Britain from the 1750s to 1945, then the United States from 1945 to the present. That said, all modern imperial powers (including the Iberian, French, Russian, German, Dutch, Belgian, Japanese, and Soviet empires) will be discussed. This course takes a world-historical approach, meaning that events happening anywhere will be examined through the lens of their global influences/implications. As such, this course provides deep historical and global context to the actors, institutions, events, and issues that have been significant in modern imperialism and anti-imperialism worldwide. It also examines the most pressing issues of the modern period such as race, genocide, underdevelopment, migration, poverty, nationalism, insurgencies, and climate change, and reveals how none of these phenomena can be understood without reference to modern empire.

II. Learning Goals:

By the end of the semester, students in this class will be able to:

- Examine the nature of imperialism/colonialism today and how it has shaped – and continues to shape – the world that we live in today
- Understand the importance of global historical events for the political, social, economic, and cultural state of the contemporary world
- Learn critical thinking skills; recognize that past and present events are interpreted and learn how to critically evaluate different viewpoints on those events
- Construct a scholarly argument and defend it using evidence, both in written and oral form
- Express oneself clearly, articulately, and correctly in written and oral work
- Efficiently negotiate the demands of college-level reading and writing

III. Required Texts:

- Heather Streets-Salter and Trevor Getz, *Empires and Colonies in the Modern World: A Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. xvi, 574. **ISBN:** 9780190216375
- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), pp. 288. **ISBN:** 9780435913502
- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* (New York: Pantheon, 2004), pp. 160. **ISBN:** 9780224080392

All of these can be found in the university bookstore and in used copies online. Any edition or printing is acceptable for any of the books, I've just listed the versions I have.

Other Readings: The other readings for this course will be posted directly on Canvas.

IV. Grading:

All grades are based on the following scale:

A 94-100	A- 90-93	B+ 87-89	B 84-86	B- 80-83	C+77-79
C 74-76	C- 70-73	D+ 67-69	D 64-66	D- 60-63	F <59

V. Course Requirements:

- Attendance & Participation: 25%
- Conversation Board: 25%
- Discussion Leader: 5%
- Two Reading Response Papers: 20%
- Final Paper: 25%

Class Participation and Attendance (25%): Attendance is mandatory, but each student will have a total of THREE absences available WITHOUT an excuse or a penalty to their grade. Please use these three absences for sickness, doctor's appointments, mental-health days, social life, etc.; they are yours to use and there's no need to send me an e-mail to let me know. In exchange for these three free days, there will be no further excused absences (except under extreme circumstances) so use them wisely. Each additional absence beyond three will lower your participation grade by 10%. The other half of this grade is for class discussion. Discussion sections will feature heavily in this course. This participation half of the grade will be determined by your level of engagement with the course materials (for example, if you speak well and substantively, you will get an "A"; if you don't speak much or are shy in public settings, make sure your discussion posts are spectacular and demonstrate a critical engagement with the readings and you can still get an "A"; if you speak little and your discussion board contributions are passable, you will get a "B"; total or partial disengagement is what will merit a "C" or below).

Conversation Board (25%): In most weeks, students will complete a conversation board post (for a total of 8 posts). For each post, students will respond to conversation prompts in no less than two paragraphs (roughly 400-500 words), critically analyzing and providing their critical interpretation of the assigned readings for that week. However, this will not be a regular discussion board, but a conversation board. A conversation board works as follows: students will be split into groups and each group will have a rotating leader each week. The leader will respond most directly to the

prompt, and on the following day, the other students in each group will respond to and build on the leader's response. Leader posts will generally be due on Wednesdays; respondents on Thursdays.

Discussion Leader (5%): During Week 1, each group (the same groups as the Conversation Boards) will be assigned one out of our student-led in-class discussions throughout the semester. The dates and topics of discussions are listed in the course schedule below. When serving as discussion leader, your group will be responsible for coming up with questions about the readings in advance of the class meeting and for guiding the discussion through these questions. Each group will should convene before or during the week they will be leading discussion to go over the readings and come up with questions for in-class discussion. Discussions will generally last for roughly 60 minutes.

Two Reading Response Papers (20%): During the course of the semester, there will be TWO (2) reading response papers that correspond to our two assigned novels. The first, due in Week 6 on Thursday, February 24 at 11:59 PM ET, will address Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and the second, due in Week 12 on Thursday, April 7 at 11:59 PM ET, will address Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*. Response papers will be five double-spaced pages that 1) address the plot of the work and what it tells us about the experience of imperialism in that country, and 2) examine how it fits into the broader, global imperial project at the time (for Achebe, British imperialism in the 19th century and for Satrapi, American imperialism in the 20th century). Therefore, the response papers will not only test students' knowledge of the book itself, but also of their comprehension of the course materials and lectures as a whole.

Final Paper (25%): There is no final exam for this course. Instead each student will each write a final paper. The final paper for this course will be a short case study of decolonization (8-15 pages, double-spaced). Students will pick any formerly colonized nation of their choice and answer the following questions: Did decolonization improve conditions in this country? Why or why not? In what ways did things change in a positive direction and in what ways did they change in a negative direction? What are some of the most important colonial legacies that affect the postcolonial government, society, and/or culture? The paper can pull from the textbook but with the addition of at least 5 other peer-reviewed sources. We will discuss the paper structure/format in detail, including picking a country (a list of decolonized countries will be distributed) and how to find sources, during Week 7 on Wednesday, March 2. Final papers will be due on Canvas on **Sunday, May 1 by 11:59 PM**. I will not grant an extension 48 hours before the essay is due unless there is a medical or family emergency. There are also three "scaffolding" assignments to ensure students are working on the final paper during the semester:

- **Final Paper Hypothesis:** Students will submit a hypothesis statement in which they pick their country and list at least 3 scholarly sources in an annotated bibliography due in Week 8 on Thursday, March 10 at 11:59 PM
- **Final Paper Draft:** Students will submit a 3-page, double-spaced draft of their final paper on Canvas and to their Conversation Board groups during Week 13 on Thursday, April 14 at 11:59 PM.
- **Final Paper Peer Review:** Students will review their group's papers and write a brief peer review, praising what works and making suggestions for improvement. The Peer Review will be due to peers and uploaded to Canvas in Week 14 on Thursday April 21 at 11:59 PM.

VI. Academic Integrity:

Your instructor and Northeastern University are intolerant of **any form** of academic dishonesty. Cheating or plagiarism of **any** kind will result in an automatic **F** for the course. Students who cheat will immediately be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, and will receive the maximum university discipline possible. To ensure you understand Northeastern's policy on Academic Integrity, visit <http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academicintegrity/index.html>

VII. Accommodations & Support:

Reasonable Accommodation: Students with documented learning disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation in this class, in accordance with Northeastern University policy (https://www.northeastern.edu/policies/pdfs/Policy_on_Reasonable_Accommodation.pdf). If you have a learning disability, please let me know so that we can work out the details. To contact and register with Northeastern's Disability Resource Center, go to 20 Dodge Hall or <http://www.northeastern.edu/drc/>, or call 617.373.4428.

Title IX: Northeastern's Title IX Policy prohibits discrimination based on gender, which includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship or domestic violence, and stalking (for more information, see the website for the Office for University Equity and Compliance at <https://www.northeastern.edu/ouec/>). The Title IX Policy applies to the entire community, including male, female, transgender students, and faculty and staff. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, ***confidential*** support and guidance can be found through **University Health and Counseling Services** staff (<http://www.northeastern.edu/uahcs/>) and the **Center for Spiritual Dialogue and Service clergy members** (<http://www.northeastern.edu/spirituallife/>). By law, those employees are not required to report allegations of sex or gender-based discrimination to the University. Alleged violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Title IX Coordinator within ***The Office for Gender Equity and Compliance*** at: titleix@northeastern.edu and/or through **NUPD** (Emergency 617.373.3333; Non-Emergency 617.373.2121). Reporting Prohibited Offenses to NUPD does **NOT** commit the victim/affected party to future legal action.

WeCare: [WeCare](#) offers supports for students during times of difficulty or challenge. You can find WeCare at 226 Curry Student center Monday - Friday from 8:30-5:00, call at 617-373-7591, or email wecare@northeastern.edu

Mental Health Resources: In addition to mental health resources available through [Northeastern University Health and Counseling Services](#), Northeastern has added [Find@Northeastern](#), which is a 24/7 mental health consulting line and can be reached at 1-877-223-9477.

Peer Tutoring: [The Peer Tutoring Program](#) offers a wide range of tutoring services to meet the academic needs of undergraduate students. If you need academic assistance, contact the Peer Tutoring Program Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:30pm. Peer tutoring services are free and open to all NU undergraduate students. Peer tutoring begins the second week of classes and ends the last day of classes. The Peer Tutoring Program is located in 1 Meserve Hall. Call 617- 373-8931, email peertutoring@northeastern.edu, or visit the weblink above.

International Tutoring Center: The [International Tutoring Center \(ITC\)](#) provides current Northeastern University international students with free, comprehensive English language and academic support. The ITC includes English as a Second Language Tutoring (ESL), Language and

Culture Workshops, and Reading Workshops. For more information on available workshops and tutoring opportunities please visit the ITC weblink above.

Snell Library: [Snell Library](#) offers a variety of resources for undergraduate research, including subject-specific [Research Guides](#), help with citation and bibliography, and 24/7 chat support. The library also houses the [Digital Media Commons](#), which offers a variety of resources for instructors and students for multimedia projects.

COVID-19 Policy: As you're aware, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the academic experience will be different for all of us. When physically in person for this course, you'll be responsible for wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose, practicing physical distancing of 6 feet with other individuals, and keeping your desk and chair on the designated spots on the ground. You will also be responsible for wiping down your own desk, chair, and other frequently touched surfaces with alcohol wipes or other approved disinfectant upon arrival and departure from the classroom (or lab, studio, etc.). It is imperative that we work together as a community to uphold these standards to help mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. Failure to do so may result in a referral to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. For more information about expectations for the Fall, please review the information in the links below:

- [Reopening Northeastern](#)
- [COVID-19 Updates from the University](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources for all Northeastern Students](#)

Inclusion and Diversity: I value all students regardless of their background, country of origin, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability status, and am committed to providing a climate of excellence and inclusiveness within all aspects of the course. If you have any concerns in this area or are facing any special issues or challenges, I encourage you to discuss the matter with me as you feel comfortable, with assurance of full confidentiality (the only exceptions being mandatory reporting of NU Academic Integrity Policy violations and Title IX sex and gender discrimination).

VIII. Late Work Policy:

All assignments are due in class as noted in the Course Schedule. Except for emergencies, for everyday that your assignment is late, one half-letter grade will be deducted (i.e., a “B” assignment will receive a “B-” on the first day late, a “C+” on the second day late, etc.).

IX. Communication:

I encourage students to contact me or your TAs by email, after class, or during office hours. If you cannot make office hours, please email one of us and we can set up an appointment. Please check Canvas **and your syllabus** first before contacting us about scheduling issues or reading assignments, since much of that information is available to you. We will make every effort to respond promptly to questions, but please allow roughly 24 hours for an email response. Do not send essay drafts for review the day before they are due.

X. Course Schedule:

WEEK ONE: Introduction

Readings: Streets-Salter and Getz, Introduction

Wednesday, January 19:

Introductions/Syllabus/What is Empire?

Friday, January 21:

Lecture: The Asian World-System

WEEK TWO: Birth of the European World

Readings: Streets-Salter and Getz, Ch. 4/Locke/Rights of Man and Citizen/Equiano

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 1, Leader post due Monday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Tuesday, January 25 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, January 26:

Lecture & Discussion: The Slave-Plantation Complex, 1492-1603

Friday, January 28:

Lecture & Discussion: England, Enclosure, and Empire, 1603-1688

WEEK THREE: Age of Revolutions

Readings: Streets-Salter and Getz, Ch. 7/Blackburn/US Office of the Historian

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 2, Leader post due Wednesday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Thursday, February 3 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, February 2:

Lecture: Liberalism and the Age of Revolutions, 1688-1825

Friday, February 4:

Discussion: Limits of Liberalism

WEEK FOUR: The Great Divergence

Readings: Gaskell/Engels/Smith

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 3, Leader post due Wednesday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Thursday, February 10 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, February 9:

Lecture: The Great Divergence

Friday, February 11:

Discussion: Life under Industrial Capitalism

WEEK FIVE: Modern Empire

Readings: Streets-Salter and Getz, Ch. 8/Convention of Balta Liman

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 4, Leader post due Wednesday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Thursday, February 17 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, February 16:

Lecture: Modern Empire & the Imperialism of Free Trade

Friday, February 18:

Discussion: A Civilizing Mission?

WEEK SIX: “New Imperialism”

Readings: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Assignments: Reading Response Paper 1 due Thursday, February 24 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, February 23:

Lecture: The “New Imperialism” and Race

Friday, February 25:

Discussion: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

WEEK SEVEN: Race and Empire

Readings: Kipling/Lake & Reynolds

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 5, Leader post due Wednesday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Thursday, March 3 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, March 2:

Workshop: Final Paper Prompt (10 minutes)

Lecture: The Anglo World

Friday, March 4:

Discussion: Race and Democracy

WEEK EIGHT: Clash

Readings: Streets-Salter and Getz, Ch. 14

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 6, Leader post due Wednesday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Thursday, March 10 at 11:59 PM/Final Paper Hypotheses due Thursday, March 10 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, March 9:

Lecture: The Great War

Friday, March 11:

Discussion: Imperial World Wars

WEEK NINE: Spring Break

Wednesday, March 16:

Spring Break, NO CLASS

Friday, March 18:

Spring Break, NO CLASS

WEEK TEN: Decline and Fall of the European Empires, Part 1

Readings: Streets-Salter and Getz, Ch. 15/Fanon/Gandhi

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 7, Leader post due Wednesday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Thursday, March 24 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, March 23:

Lecture: Anti-Colonialism, or How to Topple a Global Empire

Friday, March 25:

Discussion: Violence and Non-Violence in Anti-Colonial Thought

WEEK ELEVEN: Decline and Fall of the European Empires, Part 2

Readings: Go/Kinzer

Assignments: Conversation Board Post 8, Leader post due Wednesday at 11:59 PM and Respondents due Thursday, March 31 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, March 30:

Lecture: World War II and Decolonization

Friday, April 1:

Discussion: Decolonization?

WEEK TWELVE: The American World-System

Readings: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*

Assignments: Reading Response Paper 2 due Thursday, April 7 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, April 6:

Lecture: Decolonization and the American World-System

Friday, April 8:

Discussion: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*

WEEK THIRTEEN: The Cold War and Empire

Assignments: Draft Final Paper (3 pages) due on Canvas and to Groups on Thursday, April 14 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, April 13:

Lecture: The Cold War and Empire

Friday, April 15:

In-Class Film & Discussion: Kim Bartley and Donnacha Ó Briain, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (Los Angeles: Vitagraph Films, 2003).

WEEK FOURTEEN: Imperialism Now

Readings: Streets-Salter and Getz, Ch. 17/Gordon

Assignments: Final Paper Peer Review due on Thursday, April 21 at 11:59 PM

Wednesday, April 20:

Lecture: Imperialism in the 21st Century

Friday, April 22:

Discussion: Imperialism Now

WEEK FIFTEEN: Final Paper

Wednesday, April 27: NO CLASS, Work on Final Papers!!

Wednesday, April 29: NO CLASS, Work on Final Papers!!

Sunday, May 1: FINAL PAPER DUE