

Social Studies 98pl: Empire and colonialism in the modern world
Tuesday, 4:00-6:00pm, WJH 305

Daragh Grant

Office hours: Wednesday 9am-11am (by appointment)

I. Course description

This tutorial will expose students to the scholarship on modern empire from across the fields of anthropology, history, law, and political science. Students will be asked to consider the differences and commonalities in empires across space and time. They will also explore how relations of empire and colonialism were constituted through structures of law and of economic relations, as well as how notions of race and culture were shaped by imperial encounters. Finally, the readings for this tutorial will introduce students to a range of methodological approaches to the study of empire, with an emphasis on historical methods, and will invite them to consider the strengths and weaknesses of these different approaches.

II. Course Objectives and Requirements

In addition to familiarizing you with prominent scholarly contributions to debates on empire and colonialism, this course will improve your ability to:

- Read closely and critically
- Read across disciplinary divides
- Engage in scholarly conversation with your peers
- Develop and refine a research question of your own
- Craft a research paper that contributes to existing scholarly debates

The writing assignments for this class are designed with these objectives in mind.

Participation

This tutorial will be run in seminar format, and students are expected to have completed the readings before class and to be prepared to engage actively in class discussions. The cultivation of an effective classroom discussion depends on each student being willing to play different roles. Rather than thinking about a discussion seminar as an environment for students to pose questions about the texts to the instructor, a more effective classroom discussion will result from students being willing to pose questions of interpretation or clarification not only to the instructor, but also to their peers. Students are encouraged to pose questions about the text, to volunteer to answer those questions, and to ask one another, as well as the instructor, to clarify key concepts or ideas that are being used in the discussion.

- Attendance at all tutorials is mandatory, and absences will be excused only in case of illness or emergency.
- Please be aware that laptops and tablets are only permitted in class for the purposes of accessing readings posted online. A failure to abide by this restriction will lead to a ban on

such devices. You are not permitted to use your cell phones in class under any circumstances.

Analyzing a primary text

On Tuesday, February 7, students will be required to submit a short paper (4 page) analyzing one or more of the primary texts that we read in week one. This paper should draw attention to the imperial or colonial logics that are evident in the text, but it should also seek to uncover the context of the author's writing and to be sensitive to the historical specificity of the concepts that the author is using. Finally, and most challenging, students are expected to try to uncover information about indigenous forms of life by reading these sources *against the grain*. Because the documentary records of colonists and imperial officials are often the only records we have of forms of indigenous resistance to empire and colonialism, it is imperative that we learn how to read these sources against the intentions of their authors, to discover information that the author might not even know that they know and to use this to identify clues and hints about indigenous life that lurk beneath the surface of the author's text. The goal of this assignment is to give students a sense of the challenges of working with primary materials, and to invite them to think creatively about addressing such challenges.

Weekly Presentations

Beginning on Tuesday, February 7, one or more students will be asked to prepare a short presentation (5 double-spaced pages) each week based on the assigned reading. Presentations should address the strengths and weaknesses of the assigned text(s) and should identify puzzles that arise out of the reading assignments. Students will also be expected to make connections to previous weeks' readings as well as to materials studied as part of Social Studies 10. Most importantly, students should use their presentations to take a position on the author's argument by stating and developing a thesis and defending that thesis with evidence from the text. Students should circulate their presentation to their peers 24 hours ahead of class, and all other members of the tutorial are expected to arrive having read the presentation and prepared to respond to the presenter's remarks. Each student will present twice in the semester (once in collaboration with another student)

Research Prospectus

Identifying and crafting an appropriate research question is a difficult skill to hone, and it is one that will be crucial to your thesis-writing process. In developing your final paper topic, you will be required to fulfill four short writing assignments.

- First, on Tuesday, February 21 you will draft a 1-2 page research memo identifying a focused topic for your final paper, three potential questions falling under the purview of this topic, and the significance of each of these questions. You will meet with me this week to discuss your topic in light of this memo.
- Second, in Tuesday, February 28 you will submit a research memo (1-2 pages) that presents a single refined research question. The memo must connect this question to a conceptual puzzle or problem and must make clear the stakes of resolving this puzzle or problem.
- Third, in Tuesday, March 7, you will submit an annotated bibliography (3-4 pages) of texts relevant to your research question.
- Finally, in Monday, March 20, you will circulate a prospectus (5 double-spaced pages) to the entire class. The prospectus should offer an account of why the question is important and

worth answering, it should indicate how you expect to answer the question (thesis, theoretical approach, method etc.), and should include a rough outline of how the paper will be organized. Class on March 22 will be replaced by a prospectus workshop. Students will discuss one another's research prospectuses and offer constructive criticisms.

When developing your final paper topics, you are welcome to suggest topics that were not directly covered by the readings but that are otherwise related to the themes of the class (empire, colonialism, race, slavery, etc.). Irrespective of what question is identified for the paper, it must be a question that can be answered within the confines of a research paper.

Research Paper

The final paper is due (by email) on Friday, May 6th before 6pm. The final paper should be 20-25 pages long, double-spaced, 12-font, with 1-inch margins.

Note: I will not read drafts of the final research paper, but students are welcome to meet with me in office hours to discuss their papers. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, verified by a Resident Dean.

III. Course Policies

Academic honesty

The Harvard College honor code reads:

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.¹

Any proven case of plagiarism will result in an automatic failure of the course, and will be referred to the University for further disciplinary action. In addition to the guidelines on academic integrity and plagiarism contained in the student handbook and the honor code, I consider any submission of work for which a student has received credit in another class to constitute academic dishonesty. If students remain unsure of the definition of plagiarism, please feel free to ask me for clarification in office hours or over email. To give a sense of how seriously plagiarism is taken in the academic profession, please read the statement from the American Historical Association at the end of this syllabus, which offers a succinct definition of plagiarism and its consequences.² For help citing sources, see: <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>.

Most importantly, should a student find that they are in a difficult situation, such that they are tempted to plagiarize, they should contact me instead. I can offer help and advice in such situations, but cannot be of help if I do not know that there is a problem.

¹ <http://honor.fas.harvard.edu/honor-code>

² American Historical Association, *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct* (Washington DC, 2011)

Harvard Grading Policy

A, A-	Earned by work whose excellent quality indicates a full mastery of the subject and, in the case of A, is of extraordinary distinction.
B+, B, B-	Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities.
C+, C, C-	Earned by work that indicates an adequate and satisfactory comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and participating in class activities.
D+, D, D-	Earned by work that is unsatisfactory but that indicates some minimal command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
E	Earned by work that is unsatisfactory and unworthy of course credit.

Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will be penalized by 2/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours they are late (e.g. an A- paper handed in a day late becomes a B). Exceptions will be made only for medical or personal emergencies, which must be certified by a doctor or a resident dean.

Office Hours

Office hours are a useful opportunity for students to talk through their plans for the final research paper. All students are required to meet with me to discuss their choice of topic for the research paper. I also require students to come to my office hours at least twice more during the semester to discuss the progress they are making on the final paper. I am also happy to meet with students to discuss the readings and assignments, and it is especially important that students see me if at any point they are struggling with the requirements of the class. Office hours are by appointment only.

Disability Accommodations

Any student with a documented disability who is in need of additional academic accommodations should contact me at the beginning of the semester.

IV. Grade Distribution

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Analyzing primary text	5%
Presentations	15%
Research memo 1: Topic	5%
Research memo 2: Refined question	5%

Annotated Bibliography	5%
Prospectus	5%
Participation at prospectus workshop	5%
Final Paper	35%

V. Required Texts:

Students will need to purchase or otherwise obtain the following books (all of these books will also be placed on Reserve):

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Harcourt Inc., 1976)
2. Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)
3. Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Harvard University Press, 1997)
4. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (Vintage, 1989)
5. Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Harvard University Press, 2010)
6. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History, 20th Anniversary Edition* (Beacon Press, 2015)
7. David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Duke University Press, 2004)

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available in the files folder on the course site.

VI. Required Schedule:

Tuesday, The Birth of Early Modern European Empire
January 31

*Christopher Columbus, "Letter to Raphael Sanchez," March 14, 1492/93, in Columbus, *The Writings of Christopher Columbus: Descriptive of the Discovery and Occupation of the New World*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1892), 33-51

*Hernán Cortés, "The First Letter, to the Queen Doña Juana and to the Emperor, Charles V," c. 1519, in *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Yale University Press, 1971), 3-46.

*Francisco de Vitoria, "On the American Indians," c. 1539, in Vitoria, *Political Writings*, ed. Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 231-92.

Tuesday,
February 7

The problem of “Culture” in the Study of Empire

*Talal Asad, “Conscripts of Western Civilization,” in *Dialectical Anthropology: essays in honor of Stanley Diamond*, ed. Christine Ward Gailey (University Press of Florida, 1992), 333-51.

*Sherry B. Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject* (Duke University Press, 2006), 1-18, 107-28.

*Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), *vii-xix*, 136-56.

*David Scott, “Criticism and Culture: Theory and post-colonial claims on anthropological disciplinarity,” *Critique of Anthropology* 12, no.4 (1992): 371-94.

*William H. Sewell, Jr., “The Concept(s) of Culture,” *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 152-74.

Recommended additional reading:

*Sahlins, *Islands of History*, 104-35.

**Analysis of primary text due in class.

Tuesday,
February 14

Law and Empire

Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-79, 127-66, 210-66.

Tuesday,
February 21

Empire, Slavery, Revolution I

C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (Vintage, 1989), 3-198.

**Research memo 1 (topic) due in class.

** Required Office hours meeting this week (by appointment).

Tuesday,
February 28

Empire, Slavery, Revolution II

James, *The Black Jacobins*, 199-378, 391-418.

**Research memo 2 (refined question) due in class.

Tuesday,
March 7

Race and Empire: The Problem of Silence

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 20th Anniversary Edition (Beacon Press, 2015), *xvii*-156.

**Annotated bibliography due in class.

Tuesday,
March 21

Prospectus Workshop

**Research prospectus due by 6pm on Monday, March 21.

Students to present prospectuses for final paper in a group workshop. Students should read all pre-circulated prospectuses.

Tuesday,
March 28

Liberty and Unfreedom: The Rise of American Empire I

Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 1-175.

Tuesday,
April 4

Liberty and Unfreedom: The Rise of American Empire II

Rana, *Two Faces of American Freedom*, 176-350.

Tuesday,
April 11

The New Imperialism

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Part Two: "Imperialism," xvii-xxii, 123-304

Tuesday,
April 18

Colonialism from Below

Ranjit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (Harvard University Press, 1997), 1-214.

Tuesday,
April 25

Rethinking empire and colonialism in the post-colonial moment

David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Duke University Press, 2004), 1-222.

historians. Although they recognize the legitimacy of restricting access to some sources for national security, proprietary, and privacy reasons, they have a professional interest in opposing unnecessary restrictions whenever appropriate.

Historians sometimes appropriately agree to restrictive conditions about the use of particular sources. Certain kinds of research, certain forms of employment, and certain techniques (for instance, in conducting oral history interviews) sometimes entail promises about what a historian will and will not do with the resulting knowledge. Historians should honor all such promises. They should respect the confidentiality of clients, students, employers, and others with whom they have a professional relationship. At much as possible, though, they should also strive to serve the historical profession's preference for open access to, and public discussion of, the historical record. They should define any confidentiality requirements before their research begins, and give public notice of any conditions or rules that may affect the content of their work.

4. Plagiarism

The word *plagiarism* derives from Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, to steal. **The expropriation of another author's work, and the presentation of it as one's own, constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship.** It seriously undermines the credibility of the plagiarist, and can do irreparable harm to a historian's career.

In addition to the harm that plagiarism does to the pursuit of truth, it can also be an offense against the literary rights of the original author and the property rights of the copyright owner. Detection can therefore result not only in sanctions (such as dismissal from a graduate program, denial of promotion, or termination of employment) but in legal action as well. As a practical matter, plagiarism between scholars rarely goes to court, in part because legal concepts, such as infringement of copyright, are narrower than ethical standards that guide professional conduct. **The real penalty for plagiarism is the abhorrence of the community of scholars.**

Plagiarism includes more subtle abuses than simply expropriating the exact wording of another author without attribution. Plagiarism can also include the limited borrowing, without sufficient attribution, of another person's distinctive and significant research findings or interpretations. Of course, historical knowledge is cumulative, and thus in some contexts—such as textbooks, encyclopedia articles, broad syntheses, and certain forms of public presentation—the form of attribution, and the permissible extent of dependence on prior scholarship, citation, and other forms of attribution will differ from what is expected in more limited monographs. As knowledge is disseminated to a wide public, it loses some of its personal reference. What belongs to whom becomes less distinct. But even in textbooks a historian should acknowledge the sources of recent or distinctive findings and interpretations, those not yet a part of the common understanding of the profession. Similarly, while some forms of historical work do not lend themselves to explicit attribution (e.g., films and exhibitions), every effort should be made to give due credit to scholarship informing such work.

Plagiarism, then, takes many forms. The clearest abuse is the use of another's language without quotation marks and citation. More subtle abuses include the appropriation of concepts, data, or notes all disguised in newly crafted sentences, or reference to a borrowed work in an early note and then extensive further use without subsequent attribution. Borrowing unexamined primary source references from a secondary work without citing that work is likewise inappropriate. All such tactics reflect an unworthy disregard for the contributions of others.

No matter what the context, **the best professional practice for avoiding a charge of plagiarism is always to be explicit, thorough, and generous in acknowledging one's intellectual debts.**

All who participate in the community of inquiry, as amateurs or as professionals, as students or as established historians, have an obligation to oppose deception. This obligation bears with special weight on teachers of graduate seminars. They are critical in shaping a young historian's perception of the ethics of scholarship. It is therefore incumbent on graduate teachers to seek opportuni-

ties for making the seminar also a workshop in scholarly integrity. After leaving graduate school, every historian will have to depend primarily on vigilant self-criticism. Throughout our lives none of us can cease to question the claims to originality that our work makes and the sort of credit it grants to others.

The first line of defense against plagiarism is the formation of work habits that protect a scholar from plagiarism. The plagiarist's standard defense—that he or she was misled by hastily taken and imperfect notes—is plausible only in the context of a wider tolerance of shoddy work. A basic rule of good note-taking requires every researcher to distinguish scrupulously between exact quotation and paraphrase.

The second line of defense against plagiarism is organized and punitive. Every institution that includes or represents a body of scholars has an obligation to establish procedures designed to clarify and uphold their ethical standards. Every institution that employs historians bears an especially critical responsibility to maintain the integrity and reputation of its staff. This applies to government agencies, corporations, publishing firms, and public service organizations such as museums and libraries, as surely as it does to educational facilities. Usually, it is the employing institution that is expected to investigate charges of plagiarism promptly and impartially and to invoke appropriate sanctions when the charges are sustained. Penalties for scholarly misconduct should vary according to the seriousness of the offense, and the protections of due process should always apply. A persistent pattern of deception may justify public disclosure or even termination of a career; some scattered misappropriations may warrant a formal reprimand.

All historians share responsibility for defending high standards of intellectual integrity. When appraising manuscripts for publication, reviewing books, or evaluating peers for placement, promotion, and tenure, scholars must evaluate the honesty and reliability with which the historian uses primary and secondary source materials. Scholarship flourishes in an atmosphere of openness and candor, which should include the scrutiny and public discussion of academic deception.