

Social Studies 98pl: Empire and colonialism in the modern world
Tuesdays, 3:45-5:45pm, WJH 305

Daragh Grant

Office hours: Wednesday after 3pm (by appointment)

I. Course description

This tutorial will expose students to the scholarship on modern empire from across the fields of anthropology, history, and political science. Students will 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. By focusing on island colonies of the Caribbean, students will also be invited to explore the rich seam of anti-colonial and post-colonial theory that developed in that context. 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.

Weekly Presentations

Beginning on Tuesday, February 6, 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 26 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, March 5 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. The paper must also address the feasibility of conducting primary research on this question over the course of the semester.
- Third, in Tuesday, March 12, you will submit an annotated bibliography (5 page) of texts relevant to your research question. This annotated bibliography must include significant primary sources that you anticipate consulting.
- Finally, in Monday, March 25, you will circulate a prospectus (6 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, primary sources, etc.), and should include a rough outline of how the paper will be organized. Class on March 26 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

In our final class session on Tuesday, April 30, students will present the preliminary findings of their final research papers. Students will again receive feedback on their argument from their peers and while have an opportunity to further revise their papers. Students should aim to have completed most of their research and begun writing their final papers in time to meet this first deadline of April 30. Students would do well to note that the draft for and participation in this final workshop makes up a significant part of their final grade for the class.

The final paper is due (by email) on Tuesday, May 8th 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>.

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

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

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.

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

Participation	20%
Presentations	10%
Research memo 1: Topic	5%
Research memo 2: Refined question	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Prospectus	5%
Participation at prospectus workshop	5%
Preliminary draft and participation at workshop	15%
Final Paper	30%

V. Required Texts:

Students will need to purchase or otherwise obtain the following books. The books can be purchased or rented through the Harvard Coop (<https://tinyurl.com/300-W19-SSTD-98PL-1>). All of these books will also be placed on Reserve. Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on the course site.

1. Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2017)
2. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (Vintage, 1989)
3. Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Penguin, 1985)
4. Melanie J. Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation* (Louisiana State University Press, 2008)
5. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History, 20th Anniversary Edition* (Beacon Press, 2015)
6. David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Duke University Press, 2004)
7. David Scott, *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice* (Duke University Press, 2014)

VI. Required Schedule:

Tuesday,
February 5 **Structure, Agency, Culture, History: some key concepts**

*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.

*Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37, no.1 (2003): 113-24.

*Marshall Sahlins, "Introduction" and "Structure and History," in *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.

*Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness," in *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 7-28.

Additional reading (not required for class):

*Sherry B. Ortner, "Power and Projects: Reflections on Agency," *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject* (Duke University Press, 2006), 129-54.

Tuesday,
February 12

The Caribbean and the World

Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Penguin, 1985), entire.

*David Scott, "Modernity that Predated the Modern: Sidney Mintz's Caribbean," *History Workshop Journal* 58 (2004): 191-210.

Additional reading (not required for class):

*Marshall Sahlins, "The Sadness of Sweetness: The Native Anthropology of Western Cosmology," *Current Anthropology* 37, No.3 (1996):395-415.

*Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Motion in the System: Coffee, Color, and Slavery in Eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue," *Review* 5, No.3 (1982): 331-88.

Tuesday,
February 19

Haiti: Revolution and Emancipation I

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

Tuesday,
February 26

Haiti: Revolution and Emancipation II

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

Additional reading (not required for class):

*CLR James, "Lectures on *The Black Jacobins*," *Small Axe* 8 (2000), 61-112.

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

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

Tuesday,
March 5

Barbados: Race and Freedom in the Age of Emancipation I

Melanie J. Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation* (Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 1-140.

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

Tuesday,
March 12

Barbados: Race and Freedom in the Age of Emancipation II

Newton, *The Children of Africa*, 141-290.

**Annotated bibliography due in class.

Tuesday,
March 26

Workshop I: Prospectus Presentation

**Research prospectus due by 12pm on Monday, March 25.

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

Tuesday,
April 2

Haiti: The Problem of Silence in History

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

*Adom Getachew, "Universalism after the Post-colonial Turn: Interpreting the Haitian Revolution," *Political Theory* 44, no.6 (December 2016): 821-45.

Tuesday,
April 9

Haiti: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment

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

Tuesday,
April 16

Thinking through the Aftermath of Empire I

Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2017), 31-176.

*Stuart Hall (interviewed by Bill Schwarz), "Breaking Bread with History: C.L.R. James and *The Black Jacobins*," *History Workshop Journal* 46 (Autumn 1998), 17-31.

*David Scott, "Politics, Contingency, Strategy: An Interview with Stuart Hall," *Small Axe* 1 (1997), 141-59.

Tuesday,
April 23

Thinking through the Aftermath of Empire II

David Scott, *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice* (Duke University Press, 2014), entire.

*Stuart Hall, "An Interview with David Scott," *Bomb Magazine* (January 2005):
<https://bombmagazine.org/articles/david-scott/>

Tuesday,
April 30

Workshop II: Final Paper Presentation

Students will present the preliminary find