

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code, Number, and Title:

HIST 2229: The Rise and Fall of the British Empire

Course Format:

[Course format may vary by instructor. The typical course format would be:]

Lecture 3 h + Seminar 1 h + Lab 0 h

Credits: 3

Transfer credit: For information, visit bctransferguide.ca

Course Description, Prerequisites, Corequisites:

HIST 2229 is a survey of the British Empire from its beginning until present. Between the reigns of two Elizabeths, Britain expanded from the islands off the coast of Europe to encompass territories encircling the globe. The largest empire ever known lasted three centuries in one form or other and left an enduring stamp on the independent nations that emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Given that the British Empire was the world's first truly global empire and gave rise to the tradition of European statesmen thinking about the world in global terms. HIST 2229 reflects current interest in globalization and world history.

Prerequisites: None

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- identify and differentiate the main themes in British imperial history
- critically appraise the major theories explaining the creation and dissolution of the first global empire
- analyze the motives, economic and cultural, political and military for empire building using the specific example of the British Empire
- evaluate the diversified experience of colonialism in specific settings around the Empire by exploring specialized themes in Imperial history such as slavery, gender, migration, education and the environment
- analyze the motives and strategies nationalist leaders used to achieve independence and examine how the experience of being a British colony shaped the nations they became

Instructor(s): TBA

Office: TBA **Phone:** 604 323 XXXX **Email:** TBA

Office Hours: TBA

snəwəyət̚ leləm̚ Langara College acknowledges that we are located on the unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

Textbook and Course Materials:

[Textbook selection may vary by instructor. An example of texts and course materials for this course might be:]

Philippa Levine. "The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset". UK. 2007.

Selected readings on the British Empire

Note: This course may use an electronic (online) instructional resource that is located outside of Canada for mandatory graded class work. You may be required to enter personal information, such as your name and email address, to log in to this resource. This means that your personal information could be stored on servers located outside of Canada and may be accessed by U.S. authorities, subject to federal laws. Where possible, you may log in with an email pseudonym as long as you provide the pseudonym to me so I can identify you when reviewing your class work.

Assessments and Weighting:

Final Exam 30%

Other Assessments %

(An example of other assessments might be:) %

Assignments: 30%

Quizzes/Tests: 20%

Participation: 20%

Additional Information:

Number of assignments: 2

Participation format: Structured seminars based on the readings

Number and type of writing assignments: One will be an analysis of a documentary. Another will be a specific research assignment where students can choose from a number of topics. They will post their essays so that other students can learn from them. Final exam questions will be based on questions chosen from these pooled research assignments.

Proportion of individual and group work:

Individual: 80%

Group: 20%

Grading System: Letter grade

Specific grading schemes will be detailed in each course section outline.

Passing grade: D

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Topics Covered:

[Topics covered may vary by instructor. An example of topics covered might be:]

Week One: Introduction and Conquering the Home Islands

The relentless drive of England towards economic and political domination of the surrounding Celtic lands results in three Acts of Union stretching over three centuries. These will cement England's mastery, but issues of land holding, language and religion will continually mobilize discontent from the subject people, most powerfully in Ireland.

Reading: Levine Chapter One: Uniting the Kingdom

Week Two: The Great Atlantic Triangle

With colonies strung along the seaboard from the Caribbean to Newfoundland and trading posts dotting the west coast of Africa Britain came to dominate a triangular trade network around the Atlantic where sugar and slaves made her massive profits and provoked rivalry from her European competitors. In the course of numerous wars, Britain patronized adventurous privateers against her rivals, many of whom then turned to piracy, preying on the merchant navy. Meanwhile, Britain's own evangelicals spearheaded a very successful opposition to the trade in humans, which eventually ended slavery throughout the British Empire. A poignant chapter in this narrative sees Britain attempting to discharge her obligation to loyalist former slaves by settling them in Sierra Leone.

Reading: Levine Chapter Two: Slaves, Merchants and Trade

Week Three: Gaining (and Losing) British North America

Those who settled on the other side of the Atlantic saw themselves as British, even as they departed their homeland for religious or economic motives. Increasingly enmeshed in Britain's mercantile trade network, they (more or less) championed Britain's side in European wars as they spilled over the Atlantic. Britain's success ensured that North America would be British. But when Britain tried to pay for the expenses of war through a variety of taxes on trade, a majority of the settlers will opt for independence, while a sizable minority will migrate North, leaving those aboriginal nations who sided with the British to their fate in the new United States of America.

Reading: Levine Chapter Three: Settling the "New World"

Seminar based on Simon Schama's documentary Rough Crossings

Week Four: World Upside Down: "White" Dominion in the Southern Hemisphere

Britain's mastery of the high seas will see her construct a far flung Maritime Empire of South Pacific islands and settle Australia and New Zealand. While originally using Australia as a penal colony, as more "free" settlers came to the region Britain will import the model of gradual self-government to these white dominated colonies and extend the experiment to South Africa

Reading: Levine Chapter Four: After America
Quiz

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Week Five: Winning the Jewel in the Crown

Over the course of two and a half centuries, Britain will extend her hold on the Indian sub-continent, edging out her European rivals and forging alliances with a network of local rulers. The private enterprise East India Company, operating under Royal charter, accomplished much of this mastery, reaping enormous profits, including the huge trade in opium which would enmesh the British in two wars with China. Eventually its mismanagement which provoked the regional resistance of the Mutiny would see the British government assert direct control over much of the region.

Reading: Levine Chapter Five: Britain in India

Seminar based on Simon Schama: The Wrong Empire and

Courseware readings: a collection of documents on the Opium Wars

Lin Zexu, "Letter to Queen Victoria (1839); Algernon Thelwell, "The Iniquities of the Opium Trade with China (1839)"; Samuel Warren, "The Opium Question (1840)"; "The Violent Death Inflicted upon the Lucrative Opium Traffic," Bombay Times (1839); "We Repudiate Their Claim..." Leeds Mercury 1839.

Week Six: How the Empire Grows

Was Britain's Empire constructed in "a fit of absence of mind" or did a consistent philosophy of profit seeking impose a coherence on the ramshackle and diverse structure? Was it an "Empire of Liberty," treating colonies as "trusts" to deliver into eventual self-government or was it an Empire of racial subjugation imposing a racial hierarchy? While reviewing major theories of imperial growth, this unit will focus on the expansion of British holdings in Africa.

Reading Levine Chapter Six: Global Growth

Quiz

Week Seven Masters of the World

How the British managed to dominate their subject peoples even though they were usually a tiny minority in distant lands. Young men would be educated to this service in the great public schools and universities and released to the far flung outposts of the empire where they would be expected to administer large swathes of territory and impose British ways on the local cultures. These encounters would shape not only the individuals but also impact British culture.

Reading: Levine Chapter Seven: Ruling an Empire

Seminar based on Courseware readings:

George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant"

Rudyard Kipling "The White Man's Burden"

Patrick Dunae, "Boy's Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1876-1914," Victorian Studies 24,1 (Autumn 1980): 105-121.

Week Eight: The View from Down Here

The consequences of colonization would profoundly alter the ways in which indigenous people lived in their land, introducing new ways of thinking, of law, culture and religion, in addition to upending their traditional

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economies and ecologies, forcing them to adopt strategies of resistance, collaboration, adaptation or rejection as they come to define their own nationalism. Ireland, whose relationship with Britain was the most intimate, would harden its emerging republican nationalism during the demographic catastrophe of the famine.

Reading: Levine Chapter 8 Being Ruled
Seminar based on Simon Schama, Empire of Good Intentions

Week Nine: Men and Women

Gender roles and gender relations cut to the most intimate region of cultures clashing. The British impose their views on the way men and women should behave and relate, often to the distress of their colonial subjects, but also find that their own gender assumptions are challenged and/or transformed in the Imperial setting.

Reading: Levine Chapter 9: Gender and Sexuality
Research Papers Due

Week Ten: The Empire at War

Emerging from the late nineteenth century African Wars where British forces combated local resistance, Britain will summon the troops of the Empire to serve her cause in World War One. The consequences of this experience for Britain and the colonies will accelerate the pace of anti-imperialist nationalism. In Ireland rebellion begins during the war and proceeds to partition and civil war as Ireland creates a post-colonial national identity.

Readings: Levine Chapter 11: Contesting Empire
Quiz

Week Eleven: "All Empires Die of Indigestion?"

Although the Empire grew even larger as a result of the post-war "mandate system" the British empire was assailed by demands for independence in old colonies and new. In the dominions, this took the form of a new partnership of ostensible equality through the "Westminster system," in India, to the emergence of an irresistible movement of non-violent mass resistance. Moreover, Britain will find her newest acquisitions in the Middle East very difficult to absorb into an increasingly fragile imperialist structure.

Seminar based on Courseware readings:
Documents by Jan Christiaan Smuts, Mohandas Gandhi, Indian National Congress, M.A. Jinnah, Chaim Weizmann, Arthur Balfour and The Arab Delegation to Winston Churchill (1921)

Week Twelve: World War Two and The End of Empire

World War One seemed to advertise the strength of the British Empire as colonial forces rallied to its defense; World War Two confirmed its weakness as Japanese forces over-ran British holdings in Asia and German forces threatened British colonies in North Africa and the Middle East, often aided by anti-colonial collaborators. Britain's post war political and economic dependence on the United States will occasion a retreat from Imperial responsibility, first in South Asia, then in the Middle East and finally in Africa, leaving the local populations to deal with the, usually violent, legacy of Empire.

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Readings: Levine Chapter 12: Decolonization

"A Time There Was: Stories from the Last Days of the Kenya Colony" NFB Live (streaming video)

Quiz

Week Thirteen: Small Island

More or less divested of Empire, Britain will still contend with the inheritance of her imperial past, both at home and abroad. At home, former British subjects come to the Home Islands to make a new life and British nationals must come to terms with a multicultural society. Abroad, the defiance of white rulers in Rhodesia and South Africa make visible the racist traditions at the heart of Imperialism, even as the home country apparently welcomes the "Wind of Change." The handover of Hong Kong to an assertively independent China brings the empire to a close.

As a student at Langara, you are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with the following policies:

College Policies:

[E1003 - Student Code of Conduct](#)

[F1004 - Code of Academic Conduct](#)

[E2008 - Academic Standing - Academic Probation and Academic Suspension](#)

[E2006 - Appeal of Final Grade](#)

[F1002 - Concerns about Instruction](#)

[E2011 - Withdrawal from Courses](#)

Departmental/Course Policies:

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