HUMS 069: Dismantling Narratives of Modern Empire

### **Course Schedule:**

Class meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-2:15pm, Location TBD

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30, Humanities Quad C59 (lower level) OR via Zoom. Also happy to meet at other arranged times.

### **Instructor:**

Victoria Hallinan, PhD

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Office location: Humanities Quad C59 and the Poorvu Center

### **Course Description:**

Modern empires depicted themselves as purveyors of progress whose endeavors contributed to a “civilizing mission.” These hegemonic narratives frequently used specific ideas around race, religion, gender, technology, and politics to justify their violent acquisition of places and peoples. Through this course, we will apply a critical lens to the material expression of these narratives in a variety of forms – from music to film, architecture to comic books – including engaging with specific objects from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and the Yale University Art Gallery. We will delve into the power of narrative, who the narrative left out, and how it continues to impact our understanding of nations today. In turn, students will construct a response to imperialistic narratives while honing their own argument and critical analysis skills.

**Course Goals:**

Through this course, students will:

* Analyze how metropoles constructed narratives to support and rationalize imperialistic projects
* Identify the way objects and ideas reflected and influenced these narratives
* Demonstrate an ability to engage with primary and secondary sources and situate them within the larger narrative and themes of the course through critical thinking and research
* Construct a critical response to imperialistic narratives

**Grading Breakdown:**

* **Weekly assignments – 20%**
* **Participation – 20%**
* **Final project – 40%**
	+ **Project proposal (1 pages, due 9/22) – 2%**
	+ **Literature Review and Primary Source Identification (6 pages, due 10/13) – 5%**
	+ **Primary source analysis (4 pages, due 10/27) – 5%**
	+ **Mid-project presentation (1 page reflection, 10/18) – 3%**
	+ **Final Presentation (1 page summary, due 12/8 and 12/10) – 10%**
	+ **Final Project submission (page number varies but minimum 2 page reflection)– 15%**
* **Feedback to peer on final project (2 pages, due 12/8 and 12/10) – 5%**
* **Facilitate a class discussion (to be assigned during week 2 of class) - 15%**

**Major Assignments:**

**The final project for this course entails constructing a response to imperialistic narratives – this can take the form of a paper, podcast, plan for a curated exhibition, musical piece, comic, lesson plan, video, or other form of media. Regardless of format, this final project will entail: a literature review of secondary sources, analysis of primary sources, a mid-semester presentation, receiving and incorporating feedback from the instructor and from peers, a final presentation, and a final submission of the project.**

**Late Submissions and Extensions:**

**All students may “opt out” of one week’s regular assignments (i.e., that week’s readings and corresponding assignment based on the reading), no questions asked, by emailing me. Additionally, students may request an extension on one of the final project components, so long as they do so by the start of class on that due date.**

**Required Course Materials:**

**We will read three books this semester – any version of these and used/new are fine and approximate cost is listed below. They will also be available on reserve at the library:**

* **Jamaica Kincaid’s *A Small Place* (1988) - $12**
* Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958) - $7
* Carmen Aguirre’s *Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter* (2011) - $7

**Commitment to an Inclusive Learning Environment:**

Your experience in our class together is important to me. To that end, we will work together to create an inclusive learning environment where a variety of perspectives and ideas are welcome and that diversity is viewed as a way to support a strong community. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. That being said, I may make mistakes or take missteps – I encourage you to voice any issues or problematic actions and to give me feedback at any point. I have built in structured feedback opportunities and support informal feedback avenues through email and office hours. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course in terms of supporting student learning for you personally or for other students or student groups.

If you have already established accommodations with Student Accessibility Services, please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through SAS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but are not limited to: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact SAS at 203-432-2324 to make an appointment. General information for students can be found on the [Student Information](https://rod.yale.edu/student-information) page of the Student Accessibility Services’ website.

The above is adapted from the Poorvu Center’s webpage “[Diversity Statements](https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/DiversityStatements).”

**Academic Honesty**

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, I ask you to be honest and truthful. Plagiarism is the use of someone else’s work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. In our class we will be working together in developing and honing writing skills which utilize multiple perspectives and sources to undergird your own voice and argument. This entails documenting any text or ideas you take from another source. If you have any questions about what may/may not be proper citation or plagiarism, simply ask! Plagiarism is a serious offense and Yale punishes academic dishonesty severely. The most common penalty is suspension from the university, but students caught plagiarizing are also subject to lowered or failing grades as well as the possibility of expulsion. Please be sure to review [Yale’s Academic Integrity Policy](http://catalog.yale.edu/undergraduate-regulations/policies/definitions-plagiarism-cheating/).

The above is adapted from the Poorvu Center’s webpage “[Sample Plagiarism Warnings for Syllabi](https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/writing/wr-instructor-resources/addressing-academic-integrity-and-plagiarism/sample-plagiarism-warnings-syllabi).”

**Materials/Readings:**

| **Week** | **Assignments, Readings, and/or Materials** |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 1: Early Modern Empires Focus Event(s): 1521 Fall of the Aztec Empire** |
| **Week 1**Topic(s): tropes of imperialistic narratives, defining “empire” and “modern” | Wednesday, 9/1:* In class: Priyamvada Gopal, “Redressing Anti-Imperial Amnesia,” Institute of Race Relations, 57:3 (2016): 18–30.
 |
| Friday, 9/3:* Review recorded mini-lecture
* *The Oatmeal* comic “Columbus Day” 2012 <https://theoatmeal.com/comics/columbus_day>
 |
| **Week 2** Topic(s): 1521 The Fall of Tenochtitlan, maintaining power over an overseas colony | Monday, 9/6: NO CLASS  |
| Wednesday, 9/8: **Visit to** **Beinecke*** María Gembero-Ustárroz, “Integrating musical Otherness in a new social order: indigenous music from Moxos, Bolivia, under Spanish Governor Lázaro de Ribera (r.1786–1792),” *Early Music,* 40:2 (2012), 237–251, <https://doi-org.yale.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/em/cas045>
* Complete early course survey
 |
| **Week 3** Topic(s): Atlantic slave trade | Monday, 9/13: * Video “The Transatlantic Slave Trade,” Crash Course Black American History <https://youtu.be/S72vvfBTQws>
* “Francois Dominique Toussaint L’Ouverture - For Liberty of Haiti” *Black History Podcast*, <https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/theblackhistorypodcast/episodes/2017-10-01T11_12_26-07_00>
 |
| Wednesday, 9/15:* Review Yale’s resources on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and choose one source to analyze <https://guides.library.yale.edu/african-primary-sources/slave-trade>
* Jamaica Kincaid’s *A Small Place* (1988)
 |
| **Section 2: Industrial Empires Focus Event(s): 1884-5 Berlin Conferences** **1898 Spanish-American War** |
| **Week 4**Topic(s): 1884-1885 Berlin Conferences & the “Scramble for Africa” | Monday, 9/20: * Allan D. Cooper, “Reparations for the Herero Genocide: Defining the Limits of International,” African Affairs, 106:422 (Jan., 2007), pp. 113-126.
* “Germany officially calls colonial-era killings in Namibia 'genocide,'” *NBC News*,28 May 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/germany-officially-calls-colonial-era-killings-namibia-genocide-n1268895>
 |
| Wednesday, 9/22: **Visit to Yale University Art Gallery*** Final project initial proposal due
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| **Week 5**Topic(s): culture and empire, orientalism | Monday, 9/27: * Philippa Levine, “Sexuality, Gender and Empire” in *Gender and Empire, NY: Oxford University Press*, 2007
* *Carmen* summary of the opera
 |
| Wednesday, 9/29: * Excerpts from Edward Said’s *Culture and Empire* (1994).
 |
| **Week 6**Topic(s): 1898 Spanish American War, US overseas territories | Monday, 10/4: * “The Dark History of Bananas,” *TED-Ed,* November 2020, <https://youtu.be/esvycD1O3cM>
 |
| Wednesday, 10/6:* Tabe Ritsert Bergman, “Polite Conquest?: The New York Times and The Nation on the American Occupation of Haiti,” *Journal of Haitian Studies* 17:2 (2011): 33-49.
 |
| **Week 7**Topic(s): Human Zoos, Scientific Racism, and Expositions  | Monday, 10/11: * W. Putnam, "Please don't feed the natives": Human zoos, colonial desire, and bodies on display. French Literature Series, 39 (2012), 55-68.
 |
| Wednesday, 10/13:* Literature review due
 |
| **Week 8: Presentations and consultations** | Monday, 10/18: Presentations  |
| Wednesday, 10/20: NO CLASS |
| **Week** | **Assignments, Readings, and/or Materials** |
| **Section 3: Empires in the Postcolonial Context Focus Event(s): 1952-60 Mau Mau Uprising** **1954-62 Algerian War** |
| **Week 9**Topic(s): colonial troops in WWI and WWII; post wars decolonization debates | Monday, 10/25: * Christian Koller, “The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War,” Immigrants & Minorities, 26:1-2 (2008): 111-133.
 |
| Wednesday, 10/27: * Primary Source Analysis due
 |
| **Week 10**Topic(s): 1952-60 Mau Mau Uprising | Monday, 11/1: * Frantz Fanon excerpts
 |
| Wednesday, 11/3: * Mau Mau Oral History Project
 |
| **Week 11**Topic(s): 1954-62 Algerian War | Monday, 11/8: * Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958)
 |
| Wednesday, 11/10: * 1:1 consultations
 |
| **Week 12:**Topic(s): Cold War cultural exchange; Cold War conflicts | Monday, 11/15: * David Carletta,“’Those white guys are working for me’: Dizzy Gillespie, Jazz and the Cultural Politics of the Cold War During the Eisenhower Administration” International Social Science Review, Vol. 82, No. 3/4 (2007), pp. 115-134
* Excerpts from Penny von Eschen’s *Satchmo Blows up the World* (2004).
 |
| Wednesday, 11/17:* Carmen Aguirre’s *Something Fierce: Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter* (2011).
 |
| THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS ON MONDAY, 11/22 or WEDNESDAY, 11/24 |
| **Week 13:** Topic(s): 2011 protest movements in the Middle East, considering empires today | **Monday, 11/29:** * Brian Glyn Williams, “Hidden ethnocide in the Soviet Muslim borderlands: The ethnic cleansing of the Crimean Tatars,” Journal of Genocide Research, 4:3 (2002): 357-373.
* Second reading chosen by class
 |
| **Wednesday, 12/1:*** Paolo Gerbaudo, “Protest Diffusion and Cultural Resonance in the 2011 Protest Wave,” The International Spectator, 48:4 (2013), 86-101.
* Second reading chosen by class
 |
| **Week 14:** Final presentations | **Monday, 12/6:** Final presentations round 1 |
| **Wednesday, 12/8:** Final presentations round 2 |

**\*\*The above readings and assignments are subject to change\*\***

**Final project submission due on final exam date**

**Supporting Your Learning:**

Yale courses are challenging, and faculty expect students to use all resources at their disposal to navigate their coursework. Additionally, wellness is an important part of learning and Yale provides multiple resources to support students. Below are brief descriptions and links to the resources Yale students engage with most frequently to improve their success in their courses and support wellness.

**Writing Tutoring**

[**https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/undergraduates/writing-tutoring-and-programs**](https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/undergraduates/writing-tutoring-and-programs)

The Yale College Writing Center offers 3 free, one-on-one writing tutoring programs for all Yale undergrads. Residential College Writing Tutors and drop-in Writing Partners can work with you at any point in the writing process to discuss any piece of writing you’re working on. International students and other eligible students can also be matched with the same writing partner for multiple sessions.  Contact Paula Rawlins, Assistant Director for Undergraduate Writing and Tutoring, for more information: paula.rawlins@yale.edu.

**Academic Strategies Program**

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/academic-strategies-program>

Through workshops, small peer mentor groups, and 1-1 mentoring sessions, the Academic Strategies Program offers support to help you thrive academically at Yale. Topics we discuss include transitioning to college-level courses, time management, strategies for reading, approaching problem sets, and studying for exams, and navigating Yale’s hidden curriculum--the set of unwritten rules and expectations unique to Yale’s institutional culture. Academic Strategies also offers coaching support for students with learning differences, disabilities, and other conditions that can affect learning For more information, join their YaleConnect page <https://yaleconnect.yale.edu/PoorvuAcademicStrategies/club_signup>, or contact them at academic.strategies@yale.edu.

**Yale College Community Care**

<https://yalecollege.yale.edu/getting-help/yale-college-community-care>

**Community Care Clinicians**

Psychologists who can offer therapy appointments for students who may be struggling a bit but may not necessarily need ongoing therapy through Yale Mental Health and Counseling (YMHC), or need appointments while they are waiting to be matched with YMHC clinicians. Right now students can contact them through the following email address: college.care.clinicians@yale.edu.

**Community Wellness Specialists**

Counselors who can offer 1-1 non-clinical check-ins and programming to help with student wellness. They will work with students on things like establishing a good sleep schedule, healthy eating and exercise, holistic time management, goal setting, and finding balance. They can be reached through this email: community.wellness.specialists@yale.edu.

**Yale Mental Health and Counseling**

Yale Mental Health and Counseling offers treatment to students who would like to pursue formal therapy in a clinical setting, and the new staff expansion will make it easier and faster for students to be seen. Students can always call (203) 432-0290 during regular business hours to schedule appointments. They can also call that same number any time, day or night, to speak to a clinician immediately.