

Sociology 446 “Colonialism and Society” (Fall 2020)

Instructor: Professor Matthew Lange
Class Location: Remote Delivery
Class Time: Wednesdays 12:45-2:15am
Zoom Office Hours: Tuesdays 11am and by appointment
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Course Overview

European colonialism caused dramatic social transformations wherever it occurred. This course provides a general overview of colonial-induced social change and explores how the colonial past helps us understand present social circumstances. The course does not have a temporal or geographic focus. Instead, the readings cover diverse former colonies located throughout the world and look at different social phenomena: social identities, gender, conflict, states, development, population, etc. Although all of the materials assigned for this course are based on empirical evidence, many also have normative components and take one of two sides: colonialism as a source of positive change or colonialism as a source of negative change. Similarly, many of our readings were written by scholars who were themselves colonial subjects, whereas others were written by scholars from countries that colonized large parts of the world. In the course, students are encouraged to consider and compare these different views.

The course is a seminar organized for advanced undergraduates and pursues two goals. First, the course pushes students to participate in critical assessments of the readings and topics related to colonialism. Students are encouraged to come to class with questions for discussion and must be ready to discuss the readings. Students will also provide written critical assessments of the material throughout the semester. The second goal is to support students in the completion of a large research project. For this, students will need to submit multiple assignments throughout the semester, culminating in a final paper.

The course grade is based on three primary components. First, students will be graded on course participation, with 10 percent of the grade dependent on participation. The grade for this component is based on attendance, participation in class discussions, and demonstrated knowledge of the reading materials. Students who are unable to attend class discussions for excusable reasons can contact Professor Lange about the possibility of making up for missed participation. Participation is a necessary component of the course, and students will receive an incomplete for the course if they do not participate in any way.

The second graded component of the course is one-page (double-spaced) written responses to questions given to students. These questions will deal with material covered in an upcoming course, and part of the subsequent course will be spent discussing responses to these questions, so answering these questions will help you to prepare for discussions. There are five of these assessment papers throughout the semester (see Course Schedule below), and each is worth 6 percent of the final grade. For three assignments, students must submit individual responses. For the remaining three assignments, students must work with two or three other students to submit a group response. Students must submit the assignments before class starts on the due date. The grades of late submissions will be reduced by 5 percent per day. Students who complete less than three of these assignments will receive an incomplete for the course.

The third and final graded component is a research paper. The paper must focus on colonialism and explore how it affected social change in some way. For the paper, students must review existing material on their chosen topic and provide an argument that is supported by evidence. The paper has a maximum length of 15 pages (double spaced, 12-point font, at least 1.5cm margins), is due by the beginning of the last class, and is worth 40 percent of the final grade. Paper grades will be reduced if they go over the limit. Students are able to submit the research papers late without penalty until December 2nd at 12:45pm Montreal time, after which paper grades will be reduced by five percent per day of late submission. Students who do not complete this assignment will be given an incomplete for the course. There will also be two additional assignments related to the final research paper. First, students are required to submit a brief statement (1 to 2 double-spaced pages) proposing a topic for the final paper. This should lay out the research question, present hypotheses, and list initial sources offering insight into the research question. This is due before class on October 14th and should be submitted through the assignments tool in my Courses. This assignment is worth 8 percent of the final grade, and you will not receive a grade on the final

paper if you do not complete it. Second, students are required to complete a four-page research prospectus and submit it through the assignments tool on myCourses before class on November 4th. This paper should clearly lay out the research question, describe its importance, consider potential answers to the question, and describe what types of material you will gather to answer the question. It should also include an annotated bibliography of five sources relevant to your research project (these should briefly describe the information provided by these works and what it says about your research question). This assignment is worth 12 percent of the final grade, and the grades of late submissions will be reduced by 5 percent per day. Students must complete the prospectus or they will not receive a grade for their final research project.

This course is a remote course and will not meet in a classroom. Classes and office hours will be held with Zoom using the link provided on myCourses. Each class will be held during our designated class time (12:45pm to 2:15pm). Classes will include a brief lecture, small group discussions, and discussions involving the entire class. The lecture component of each course will be recorded and posted on myCourses. Office hours will be held on Tuesdays at 11am. Professor Lange will be on Zoom waiting for students at this time. If no students are there by 11:10. He will end the office hours. Students can also contact Professor Lange to set up a Zoom meeting at an alternative time.

Academic Integrity and Rights

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

Notably, this syllabus can change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Course Schedule

Week 1: September 2: The History of European Expansionism—(1) Abernathy, David, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, 3-12, 45-63, 81-172.

Week 2: September 9: Reasons for European Colonial Expansion—(1) Abernathy, David, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, 175-253. *Assessment paper #1 due before class.*

Week 3: September 16: Consolidating and Losing Colonial Control—(1) Abernathy, David, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance*, 277-360.

Week 4: September 23: Views of Colonialism from Within—(1) Achebe, Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*; (2) Orwell, George, "Killing an Elephant."

Week 5: September 30: Colonialism and Development—(1) Ferguson, Niall, *Colossus*, 169-199; (2) Rodney, Walter, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Chapter 6; (4) Rist, Gilbert, *History of Development*, Intro and Chapter 3. *Assessment paper #2 due before class.*

Week 6: October 7: Colonial States—(1) Lange, Matthew, “State Formation and Transformation in Africa and Asia”; (2) Englebert, Pierre, “State Legitimacy and Developmental Capacity”; (3) Kohli, Atul, “Where Do High Growth Political Economies Come From?” *Assessment paper #3 due before class.*

Week 7: October 14: Colonialism and Population—(1) Diamond, Jared “Lethal Gift of Livestock,” *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 195-214; (2) Hochschild, Adam, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 115-166; (3) Ittmann, “The Colonial Office and the Population Question in the British Empire, 1918-62.” *1 to 2-page final project proposal due before class.*

Week 8: October 21: Colonialism and Ideas I—(1) Porter, Andrew, “Empires in the Mind,” 185-223; (2) Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 7-40; (3) Cohn, Bernard, “The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia” *Assessment paper #4 due before class.*

Week 9: October 28: Colonialism and Ideas II—(1) “What is Orientalism?”; (2) Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, 1-92 “Window on the World”; (3) Steinmetz, George, “The Devil’s Handwriting.”

Week 10: November 4: Colonialism and Ethnic Conflict—(1) Horowitz, Donald, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 141-184; (2) Mamdani, M., *When Victims Become Killers*, 41-102. *4-page final project prospectus due before class.*

Week 11: November 11: British and French Colonialism—(1) Cogneau, Denis and Alexander Moradi, “Borders that Divide”; (3) Lange, *Patterning Violence*, Chapters 1-4.

Week 12: November 18: Colonialism and Gender—(1) Van Allen, Judith, “Sitting on a Man”; (2) Hunt, Nancy Rose, “Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa”; (3) Stevenson, Winona, “Colonialism and First Nations Women in Canada. *Assessment paper #5 due before class.*

Week 13: November 25: No Readings. **Research papers due by the beginning of class.**