



John Deakin, Pan-African Congress, November 1945

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Office Hours: Vollum 121, Thursday, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM and by appointment

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This course asks, how was the struggle for decolonization in the British Empire shaped by the politics of race? How was human difference theorized and how did imperial racisms constrain the possibilities for freedom in a post-imperial world?

To answer these questions we will examine freedom struggles in the British Empire, from the end of World War I to the present day. The course seeks to investigate experience, politics, and ideas. Thus, we will consider the experience of colonialism and the meanings of freedom, the question of how independence was won, and also how decolonization was a project of “world-making” that is, imagining the world beyond the hierarchies of empire. We will decenter the national frameworks of traditional decolonization narratives both by exploring the challenge of diversity within the colony/nation as well as transcolonial and international movements to instantiate freedom. We will consider the legacies of colonial rule that continued after formal independence and the ongoing struggles for decolonization that exist in multiple sites and take multiple forms

today. Throughout, we will pay attention to the ways that race and racisms operate through gendered difference.

Objectives

Students will be encouraged to:

- Become familiar with theories of race, racism, and decolonization;
- Think historically across space in comparative and connective ways;
- Gain an understanding of the British Empire and movements for decolonization;
- Identify and evaluate the mechanisms of decolonization and the continuities of empire;
- Strengthen critical reading skills through discussion, interpretation, and analysis of a range of scholarly and primary sources;
- Strengthen discussion and listening skills by making productive contributions to classroom conversation;
- Develop research and writing skills, including creation of a bibliography, analysis of secondary literature, close reading of primary sources, and writing a well-organized paper that presents a single, coherent argument.

Required Texts

This semester, we will encounter scholarly monographs, novels, articles, and primary sources.

Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*
Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age*
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *The River Between*

These books are available for purchase and rental at the Bookstore and are on reserve in the library. The remaining texts and assignments are available via Moodle.

Assignments

Along with classroom participation, your performance in the course will be evaluated through the following assignments (further information available on the course Moodle):

Map Quiz	Sept. 12 – On a blank world map, identify contemporary nation-states that won their independence from the British Empire
Chronology Quiz	Sept. 19 – On a timeline of the twentieth century, identify dates when nation-states won their independence from the British Empire
Mid-term Paper	Oct. 10 – 4–6 pages. 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Paper.
Final Paper	Dec. 19 – 12–15 pages. Research paper on a topic of your choice related to decolonization and the politics of race in the British Empire.

The Honor Principle and Classroom Conduct

At Reed, the honor principle governs the conduct of our community. Honor is not narrowly or negatively defined, but guides how we treat each other with fairness, respect, and dignity. These ideals must be expressed not simply in attitude, but in action.

Community requires participation, and to participate, you must show up. I expect attendance. If you have a reasonable excuse for missing class—religious holidays, illness, or family emergency—it is your responsibility to let me know ahead of time. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade, and more than one unexcused absence could lead to failing the course.

A successful conference depends on prepared and active participants. Please come to class having completed the assigned reading. Bring the readings, as well as a means of taking notes to class. For discussion, give the conference your undivided attention by turning off your cell phone. Consider how you can foster thoughtful dialogue. When you speak, support your claims with examples from the texts or reference to remarks made by others. Attentive listening is as important as speaking to facilitating conference discussion. Dismissive or hostile comments will not be tolerated. Food is prohibited in the classroom, unless you have brought something to share with everyone.

The honor principle not only applies to our discussions in class, but also to your written work. Your work must be your own. It is your responsibility (with the help of others) to learn the standards of proper citation and attribution. In this course, we will use the Chicago Manual of Style's Notes and Bibliography system for citations.

Accessibility

Each of you has necessary conditions that make your participation in conference possible, and I understand that you might have financial circumstances, disabilities, chronic conditions, or contingencies that make it difficult for you to participate in class in the way that you would wish. Here are some resources to make sure you have the assistance you need to succeed in this class.

Emergency loan funds: Business Office, Eliot Hall 306 & 308

Reed Community Pantry: <https://www.reed.edu/seeds/reed-community-pantry/index.html>

Reed Academic Support Services: https://www.reed.edu/academic_support

Reed Health and Counseling Services: https://www.reed.edu/health_center

If you need assistance or accommodation, please don't hesitate to see me to discuss resources that are available to you. If you have not yet met Disability Support Services to document your disability and create specified accommodations, we can discuss this process in office hours.

Communication

In addition to treating each other honorably in conference, I encourage you to help and support each other outside of the classroom. I am also available to talk about the readings, your papers, how conference is going, etc. When I am in my office and my door is open, you are welcome to come in. I also have confirmed office hours listed on this syllabus. If you cannot make it to my office hours, please send me an email proposing a few possible times to meet (Monday–Friday, 9 AM–5 PM). Email should primarily be used to inform me of an absence or to schedule a meeting outside of office hours. For everything else, let us talk in person.

Week 1	Introduction: Narratives of Decolonization
September 3	Introduction
September 5	William Roger Louis, <i>The Dissolution of the British Empire</i> , <i>Oxford History of the British Empire</i> , Vol. IV <i>The Twentieth Century</i> Adom Getachew, "Introduction," in <i>Worldmaking After Empire</i>
Week 2	What was Empire?
September 10	Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, "Imperial Repertoires and Myths of Modern Colonialism," in <i>Empires in World History</i> Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence," in <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>
September 12	Adom Getachew, "A Political Theory of Decolonization," Moodle Assignment: The British Empire in 1910 *** Map Quiz ***
Week 3	Imperial Violence and the limits of Self-Determination
September 17	Taylor Sherman, "Jallianwallah Bagh, the Punjabi Disturbances of 1919 and the limits of State Power in India, 1919–1920," in <i>State Violence and Punishment in India</i> Susan Kingsley Kent, "The Amritsar massacre, 1919–1920," in <i>Aftershocks: Politics and Trauma in Britain, 1919–1939</i>
September 19	Susan Pedersen, "Getting Out of Iraq—in 1932: the League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood" Adom Getachew, "The Counterrevolutionary Moment," in <i>Worldmaking After Empire</i> *** CHRONOLOGY QUIZ ***
Week 4	Labor Migrations and Critiques of Empire
September 24	Lara Putnam, <i>Radical Moves</i> , pp. 1–122
September 26	Lara Putnam, <i>Radical Moves</i> , pp. 123–240
Week 5	Postwar Possibilities
October 1	Hakim Adi, "Pan-Africanism in Britain: Background to the 1945 Manchester Congress" George Padmore, ed., <i>A History of the Pan-African Congress</i>
October 3	Anupama Rao, "Dalits as a Political Minority" Uditi Sen, "Developing Terra Nullius: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Indigeneity in the Andaman Islands"

Week 6	Gender, Sex, and the Family
October 8	Sanjam Ahluwalia, "A Fractured Discourse: Colonial Attitudes on Birth Control in the Twentieth Century," in <i>Reproductive Restraints</i> Nicole Bourbonnais, "The Answer, an Aid, a Right," <i>Birth Control in the Decolonizing Caribbean</i>
October 10	Jessica Namakkal, "Decolonizing Marriage and the Family: the Lives and Letters of Ida, Benoy, and Indira Sarkar" Christopher Lee, <i>Unreasonable Histories</i> *** Paper 1 Due ***
Week 7	Thinking Decolonization
October 15	Adom Getachew, <i>Worldmaking After Empire</i> , pp. 71–141
October 17	Adom Getachew, <i>Worldmaking After Empire</i> , pp. 142–182 *** FALL BREAK ***
Week 8	Migrations, Minorities, and the Problem of Nation
October 29	Anna Belogurova, "The Malayan Communist Party and the Malayan Chinese Association: Internationalism and Nationalism in Overseas Chinese Political Participation," c. 1920–1960 Jayita Sarkar, "Rohingyas and the Unfinished Business of Partition" Jayita Sarkar, "How World War II Shaped the Crisis in Myanmar" Jonathan Saha, "Rohingya Identity and the Limits to History"
October 31	Sana Aiyar, <i>Indians in Kenya</i> , 218–295
Week 9	Negotiating Freedom in the Cold War World
November 5	Claudia Jones, "American Imperialism and the British West Indies" "A Peoples' Art is the Genesis of their Freedom" "The Caribbean Community in Britain" Moodle: Articles from the <i>West Indian Gazette</i>
November 7	Vijay Prashad, "Bandung" in <i>The Darker Nations</i> <i>Asia-Africa Speaks from Bandung</i>
Week 10	Post-imperial Re-engagement
November 12	Radhika Natarajan, "Performing Multiculturalism: The Commonwealth Arts Festival of 1965" Jordanna Bailkin, "Young Britons: International Aid and 'Development' in the Age of the Adolescent" Moodle: Commonwealth Arts Festival Image Gallery

November 14	Timothy Mitchell, "The Prize from Fairyland," in <i>Carbon Democracy</i> Chibuike Uche, Oil, British Interests, and the Nigerian Civil War
Week 11	Decolonization was not an Event
November 19	George Manuel and Michael Posluns, "Introduction" and "The Fourth World" Glen Sean Coulthard, "Introduction" Joel Hebert, "Sacred Trust": Rethinking Late British Decolonization in Indigenous Canada
November 21	J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "A Structure not an Event": Settler Colonialism and Induring Indigeneity Ranginui Walker, <i>Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle without End</i> Moodle Assignment: Maori Protest Movements
Week 12	Decolonization as Ongoing Politics, 1
November 26	Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor" Moodle Assignment: Ongoing Politics of Decolonization *** THANKSGIVING ***
Week 13	Postcolonialism? Reckoning with the Colonial Past
December 3	Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, <i>The River Between</i>
December 5	Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, <i>The River Between</i>
Week 14	Decolonization as Ongoing Politics, 2
December 10	Moodle Assignment: Ongoing Politics of Decolonization
Reading and Exam Week	
December 19	*** FINAL PAPER DUE ***