

COURSE SPECIFICATION
DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department: Social Sciences and Humanities

Programme: International History
International Relations
American Studies

FHEQ Level: 6

Course Title: Culture, Power and Empire

Course Code: HST 6101

Total Hours: 160

Timetabled Hours: 45
Guided Learning Hours: 15
Independent Learning Hours: 100

Credits: 16 UK CATS credits
8 ECTS credits
4 US credits

Course Description:

This course examines the causes, consequences and significance of empires throughout history from a broad range of comparative and international perspectives, including the economic, political, social and (by way of postcolonial theory) the cultural. It investigates why empires are significant, who are the empire-makers, how and why empires rise and fall, whether they are good or bad, how they are defined and how they can be resisted. The subject matter ranges from the earliest land superpowers of the ancient world to the 'New Rome' - the United States. The sources studied range from the visual to the virtual, including primary and historiographical. The course finishes by suggesting other potential contenders for imperial hegemony, including Multinational Corporations, individuals and religious organisations. It examines the question as to whether or not all history is essentially a history of empire, with the legacies of this imperial past (if not some of the empires themselves) still alive and well despite decolonisation. Where possible the course will make use of museums and collections within London.

Prerequisites:

One of the following:

HST 5210 Of Myths and Monsters - A History of History

SCL 5200 Social Research

PLT 5201 Research Methods: Social Sciences

HST 4101 Atlantic Slave Trade and Memory

HST 4105 Versailles to Vietnam

HST 5105 The Rise of the Right - A History of Fascisms

HST 5110 Nationalism and Conflict

Aims and Objectives:

- To demonstrate the complexities and ambiguities of empire across time and space
- To provide an understanding of some of the key theoretical approaches to studying empires and imperialism
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of international history
- To foster the acquisition, development and consolidation of a variety of historical and transferable skills through the study of particular themes in international history
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of primary and secondary historical sources, and the development of both a succinct writing style and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

International History: A6(i); A6(iii); B6(i); B6(ii); C6(i); C6(iii); C6(iv); D6(ii); D6(iii); D6(iv)

International Relations: A6(ii), A6(iv), B6(ii), B6(iv), C6(I), C6(iii), C6(iv), D6(ii), D6(iii), D6(iv)

American Studies: A6i, A6iii, B6i, B6ii, C6i, C6iii, D6ii, D6iii, D6iv

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic insight into, and sophisticated understanding of, the cultural, economic, geographical, political and social dimensions of empire
- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of key texts and debates in imperial and postcolonial theory
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the relevance of the study of empire
- Demonstrate the ability to make comparisons and connections about empire across a broad geographical and temporal range, and to identify the possibility of new concepts
- Demonstrate the ability to gather, organise and deploy complex and abstract ideas and information about empire in order to formulate arguments

cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or other forms

Indicative Content:

- The significance of empires
- Are empires good or bad?
- Defining empire, imperialism & colonialism
- Why & how empires are formed: security, economics and ideology
- Responding to empire: resistance and collaboration
- Theorizing empire: postcolonialism and its problems
- Types of empires: ancient, Islamic, European & US
- Post-imperialism? – decolonisation, globalisation

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar classes. Lectures are primarily designed to give an overview of the issues and problems on a particular topic, and thereby provide guidance for seminar discussion. Seminars will be used for debates and group/sub-group discussion and are intended to provide an interactive and participatory learning environment. Students are expected to do the set readings for each week, and to be prepared to contribute to class discussion and discussion sub-groups. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of learning. Where possible the course will make use of museums and collections within London. Whilst students will be given a list of seminar and essay questions the class encourages them to formulate their own questions and to pursue their own particular research interests. Students are expected to use the external trips as an opportunity to apply concepts and ideas developed in lectures, as well as to collect further information and impressions to provide a basis for subsequent class discussion.

Indicative Texts:

Streets-Salter, Heather & Getz, Trevor R., *Empires and Colonies in the Modern World: A Global Perspective*. Oxford. OUP 2016.

Bush, Barbara, *Imperialism and Postcolonialism*. Harlow: Pearson, 2006.

Howe, Stephen, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP, 2002.

Said, Edward, *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus

See syllabus for complete reading list

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	

