

COURSE SPECIFICATION
DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	Communications, Arts and Social Sciences
Programme:	History
FHEQ Level:	6
Course Title:	Culture, Power and Empire
Course Code:	HST 6225
Course Leader:	Dominic Alessio
Student Engagement Hours:	120
Lectures:	22.5
Seminar / Tutorials:	22.5
Independent / Guided Learning :	75
Semester:	Fall/Spring
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 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: HST 3200 or HST 4100 or DEV 4100

Aims and Objectives:

To engage with written, visual and oral primary sources, including painting, film/television, music, architecture, photographs and social media, over a wide geographical and chronological range, in order to foster comparative and interdisciplinary critical approaches to the study of empire that move beyond the modern and the western only. To demonstrate the complexities and ambiguities surrounding empire. To provide a understanding of some of the key theoretical approaches to studying empires and imperialism, such as Marxism, negritude, nationalism, postcolonialism, Orientalism, Subaltern Studies and Diaspora Studies. To enhance historical and transferable skills (written and oral) through presentations, exams, research papers, and where possible class visits/guest lectures and other media, as well as critical analysis of particular topics and problems.

Programme Outcomes:

6 A,i,ii,iii,iv/Bi,ii,iv/Ci.ii.iv/Dii,iv

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.

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.

Bibliography

Indicative Text(s):

- 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.

See syllabus for complete reading list

