

# **HSTCMP 485**

## ***Comparative Colonialism***

### **Course Introduction**

5 credits

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Welcome to HIST 485 A, “Comparative Colonialism.” In this class, we’ll be studying the emergence, spread, decline and reconfiguration of modern colonialism beginning 1500, with emphasis on Western imperial systems. The course uses an inter-disciplinary and comparative approach, combining readings of historical documents with extended commentaries and analysis, still images and films. It is intended to encourage students to think critically about the world in which they live in, and to imagine other worlds linked to theirs by way of overlapping histories of colonialism, and the various sorts of responses to the invasion, settlement, and expropriation of non-European territories by Europeans and American colonizers.

### **Course Objectives**

#### ***Course Goals***

To think critically about the history of the present made up by the legacies of competing empires, uneven colonial projects, and various resistances to these projects.

#### ***Course Learning Objectives***

At the end of this class you will be able to:

1. Analyze similarities and differences among various colonial histories and Empires and the role played by the colonial state and agents of empire such as colonial militaries, European settlers, merchants, missionaries, and others;

2. Interpret documents, images, films and other media from the past and present that relate to colonialism in its various manifestations;
3. Critically write about the responses —ranging from collaboration to resistance— to colonialism from colonized subjects, including slaves, women and native peoples;
4. Critically examine and write about the rise of nationalism as one of the important responses to colonialism;
5. Explain the different ways that the history of colonialism and responses to it continue to shape our present world.

### ***Course Prerequisites***

A background in World, European, US, Latin American, Middle Eastern, Pacific or East or Southeast Asian history courses is recommended, but not required.

### ***Technology Requirements***

Check the technology requirements for this course at <http://uwodashboard.pce.uw.edu/techTest.html>

### ***Completion Requirements***

To successfully complete this course, you must do the following:

- read this syllabus and the assigned sections of the texts;
- watch all films and videos
- complete and submit all written assignments, these include:
  - 1 short quiz
  - 1 writing assignment
  - one mid-term essay exam
  - one final essay exam
  - 7 discussion forums

## ***Communicating with Your Instructor and Student Peers***

In addition to e-mail, your course may offer any or all of the following tools for communication:

- profiles, where you can post information about yourself—your instructor may have specific instructions about what to post;
- discussion forums, where you can post your opinions about weekly topics, and carry on a conversation with your classmates, at any time;

## ***Course Materials***

There are two required books, the rest of the reading are available in the course website (Canvas LMS). Assigned readings are listed below by corresponding topic.

### ***Required Materials***

- Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., *The Classic Slave Narratives*, New American Library, 1987.
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 1991.

We will devote extensive time to discussing these readings. The lectures in fact are woven around these texts, and take them as their points of departure. It would be impossible to understand the lectures without having read these texts.

### ***Required and Optional Film and Video Rental***

- King Kong 1933 version
- The Women Outside: the US Military and Prostitution in Korea
- The Invisible War (dir. By Kirby Dick)
- Twelve Years of Slave (optional)
- Private Warriors

*You'll find links to some of the films and videos in the readings and viewing section of your course website (canvas LMS), but links occasionally change or disappear. If you find that a film or video you need to watch is no longer accessible, you may need to rent it through Netflix, YouTube or another online streaming service.*

These films and videos constitute important pieces of information that further amplify many of the points we'll be discussing in the lectures and that are taken up in the readings.

## **About This Course**

In this course we will begin by asking a series of questions: What is colonialism and how is it related to the history of imperialism in the modern era? How do Western encounters with the non-West shape such fundamental ideas as civilization, humanity, freedom and justice? Indeed, in the midst of the contemporary resurgence of empire in the guise of globalization, do these categories “Western” and “non-Western” still make sense? What are some of the ways by which colonized people have responded to their colonization? What role does nationalism play in determining the limits and possibilities of colonial rule and resistances to it? Finally, how can we understand the re-assertion of and challenges to imperialism in the wake of 9/11 and the rise of “political Islam” as the most visible and problematic challenge to empire today? In addressing these questions, this course will examine a variety of historical, ethnographic and cinematic productions set in colonial and postcolonial contexts ranging from the Americas to Asia and Africa. In doing so, the course will treat colonialism as a world historical event whose effects continue to be felt and whose power needs to be addressed.

## **Key Terms**

Colonialism, imperialism, orientalism, slave narratives, nationalism, neo-liberalism.

## **Grading**

The breakdown of grades is as follows:

- One quiz, (10% of your grade)
- One assignment (20% of your grade)
- A mid-term exam (30%)
- A final exam (30%)
- Seven discussion forums (10%)

## **Discussion Forums**

Each lesson includes a posted question or discussion prompt raising an issue from the lecture and/or readings from that week. It is designed to encourage students to share their ideas with the class and to exchange opinions with each other. They also help your instructor evaluate your understanding.

## **About the Lessons**

*See the Course Schedule document for list of readings, assignments and due dates.*

These are the topics cover in each lesson.

### ***Part I. Colonialism and the Formation of the West***

#### **Lesson 1: Definitions of Terms and Themes for this Course**

This lesson offers a working definition of the key terms you will be using in this class, such as colonialism and imperialism. We will also explore the tensions between empires and colonies.

## Lesson 2: Historical Overview

Topics to be covered: Colonialism and the emergence of modern Europe; difference between ancient and modern empires; broad historical survey of the three major waves of colonial expansion from the late 15th c to the present.

### ***Part II: The Representation of Imperialism and the Imperialism of Representation***

#### Lesson 3: Orientalism

This week's topics include: a recurring problem in colonialism: the problem of the “other” in relation to an emergent European “self”; orientalism as a kind of ethnocentrism; colonialism as the globalization of the West and the Westernization of the globe; the important role of representation in colonization; the three moments of colonial representation: 1. Enframing; 2. Ambivalence; 3 Disavowal

#### Lesson 4: European Encounters with ‘Indians’ in the New World

The topics we will be covering this week are: Columbus and the early encounter with Native Peoples; European images of Indians: as “monsters”; “pagans”; “noble savages”; North American colonial image of Indians: as “savages”; consequences of these representations.

#### Lesson 5: Popularizing Colonialism

The topics you will learn about this week are: the popularization of orientalism and other modes of colonial representation; the importance of film as a historical document; and the example of the movie “King Kong” (1933).

### ***Part III: Gender, Race and Empire***

#### Lesson 6: War and the Making of Imperial Agency

The topics you will learn about this week are: violence and war at the foundation of colonial projects; Key role of colonial militias; the example of the United States; importance of military bases; soldiers as agents of empire; the formation of soldiers as weaponized, hypermasculinized bodies of empire; the role of prostitution in the making and unmaking of colonial militias.

#### Lesson 7: Women and Empire

The topics you will learn about this week are: what are the different roles that women have historically played in the making of empire? Women as feminine agents for the reproduction of white colonial masculinity”; as feminist critics of empire; and as post-feminist agents of empire (the example of women in the US military).

### ***Part IV: Resistances, Reversals, and Repetitions.***

#### Lesson 8: Resisting Colonialism: the Slave Narrative

The topics you will learn about this week are: what does it mean to “resist” colonialism? Forms of responses to colonialism: collaborate and resist; comparing the two; example no. 1: the slave narrative as “prophetic witnessing”

## Lesson 9: Nationalism: Promise and Perils

The topics you will learn about this week are: What is nationalism and what is the nation? The nation as an “imagined community”; conditions of possibility for imagining the nation; styles of nationhood from the late 18th to the present; key role of national culture; limits of nationhood, especially in arena of gender; women and the promise and curse of nationhood.

### ***Part V: In the Wake of 9/11: Imperialism Today.***

## Lesson 10: Empire Today, in the wake of 9/11

The topics you will learn about this week are: the historical precedents for the attacks on 9/11: the end of the Cold War; decolonization in former colonies; US aid to Europe; emergence of neo-liberalism; what is neo-liberalism? How does it constitute the basis for a new global empire, with nation-states as its hubs; transformation of the US into part of neo-liberal network power?.

## **About Exams**

### **Mid-term Exam**

Mid-term exam questions to be handed out on this day. You’ll be given a set of 4-5 questions. The coverage will include the materials covered from **Lessons 1 to Lesson 5**.

You’ll be asked to choose one and answer to the best of your ability in 4-5 pages. You’ll be graded according to:

- a) Your ability to respond to the questions by synthesizing the lectures with the readings.
- b) The quality of your writing. Since this is an essay exam, your grammar and spelling will form part of your grade.

Please note that this is a “take-home” essay exam, not a research paper. It is meant to be a diagnostic exam with which to gauge your ability to follow and rearticulate the arguments in the lectures and integrate these with your understanding of the readings. You are not expected to do original research as in a term paper. Hence, you’re expected to keep your references within the scope of the lectures and readings. However, you can also, if you like, bring in outside sources from your own readings or other classes relevant to the materials at hand.

Citation: if you are quoting or paraphrasing one of the readings, you can cite it by putting the author’s name and page of the text in parenthesis. You do not need to footnote or a “Works Cited” section at the end. If you are citing or quoting from the lectures, just place in parenthesis “Lecture” and date.

### **Final Exam**

Final exam questions to be handed out on this day. Like the mid-term, it will be essay form. You’ll be given a set of 5-6 questions and asked to choose two. You’re expected to write 4-5 pages on each question for a total of 8-10 pages.

Coverage will include the materials we covered from **Lesson 6 to Lesson 10**.

As with the mid-term, your final exam will be graded according to:

- a) how well you answer the questions by synthesizing the readings with the lectures
- b) the quality of your writing, which includes proper grammar and correct spelling.

The same stipulations I mentioned in the mid-term exams regarding citation apply for the finals.

## **Assessment and Grading**

You'll be graded according to:

- a) Your ability to complete the quiz.
- b) Respond to the writing assignments with the option of participating in the discussion forum.
- c) Complete the mid-term and final exams. Since this is an essay exam, your grammar and spelling will form part of your grade.

Please note that the essay exams are not research papers. They are meant to be a diagnostic exams with which to gauge your ability to follow and rearticulate the arguments in the lectures and integrate these with your understanding of the readings. You are not expected to do original research as in a term paper. Hence, you're expected to keep your references within the scope of the lectures and readings. However, you can also, if you like, bring in outside sources from your own readings or other classes relevant to the materials at hand.

Citation: if you are quoting or paraphrasing one of the readings, you can cite it by putting the author's name and page of the text in parenthesis. You do not need to footnote or a "Works Cited" section at the end. If you are citing or quoting from the lectures, just place in parenthesis "Lecture" and date.

## **Assessment Criteria**

Your grades will be determined by the following criteria crafting a response to the questions.

1. Organization: the coherence and conciseness of your essay. .
2. Synthesis: your ability to synthesize the lectures and readings.
3. Writing: the written quality of your essay, that is, its use of proper grammar and spelling.

## **Grading Table**

Your grade is based on the mid-term and the final exams.

Quizzes	10%
Writing assignments	20%
Mid-term exam.	30%
Final exam	30%
Participation (in discussion forums)	10%
	Total = 100%

## **Study Tips**

1. Complete the readings associated to each week.
2. Make sure to look up words that seem obscure or have different meanings in the texts you're reading.
3. Check both off-line library resources and on-line resources to fill in gaps in the historical narratives, empirical data (such as figures, dates, names, etc.) that may not be covered by the lectures and readings.
4. Ask the professor to explain a concept or expand or repeat an argument if you don't understand it.
5. For the essay questions, sketch a brief outline of the two or three principal points that you intend to cover. The essay should include substantial content based on material from the text that is relevant to the question. Moreover, it should address the question, specifically, and not a peripheral aspect of it.
6. Participate in the discussion forums as a way of checking your understanding of the material and seeking clarification on other matters that you are not clear on.

## **About the Developer**

Vicente L. Rafael is Professor of History at the University of Washington, Seattle. He joined the History faculty in 2003, after having taught for several years at UC San Diego and before that Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa. He obtained his PhD in History from Cornell University in 1984. His research deals mostly with the political and cultural history of Southeast Asia and the United States, with special focus on the politics and ethics of translation and language in colonial and post-colonial contexts. He has also written on nationalism and language in the Philippines, as well as on the relationship among translation, empire and the historical imagination in the US and the Philippines.