

INTRODUCTION TO POSTCOLONIAL POLITICS:

THE CASE OF THE MIDDLE EAST (PS 179)

Seminar Leader: Dr. Hanan Toukan
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Office Hours: Thursdays (12:30-2:30 by appointment)
Seminar times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:45-12:15.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

While postcolonial scholars have had enduring impact on disciplines such as anthropology, history, art history and comparative literature their influence on the study of political structures and political thought from and about the “Global South”, or the non-western world, has been less impactful. This opposition to postcolonialism as a theoretical and conceptual lens in the study of Comparative Politics is related to the endurance of Eurocentric perspectives on the Global South and the impact of their colonial histories. Dominant theories of democracy, development, violence and displacement, for instance, continue to be trapped in orientalist frameworks of analysis. Against this backdrop, this course has two central aims and is structured accordingly. The first is to encourage students to question the epistemological foundations of the study of postcolonial societies and politics so they learn to critically question the context in which the scholarly body of knowledge about non-western history, politics and society has been constructed and produced. The second aim of the course is to contextualize such theories by focusing on the region known as the “Middle East” with some cross-reference to Asia, Africa and the Americas in order to uncover the relationship between the political and the postcolonial. The course will run thematically and cover topics such as colonialism and decolonization, indigeneity, the post-colonial state, nationalism(s), the politics of gender and sexuality, the politics of culture, military states, development and humanitarian aid, oil, the “global war on terror”, and displacement and revolutions.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Also please to consult the BCB Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Assessment and Grade Breakdown

Class Participation_(20%): Participation will be evaluated at the end of each session. Students will be assessed based on the general enthusiasm, frequency and quality of the

questions they raise. Regular attendance and completion of all reading assignments is also required. Recurrent absences will substantially decrease the final grade. (up to two unexcused absences are allowed).

Class Presentations (20%): Each student will be expected to make at least one 15 minute presentation about a particular week's readings of their own choice. Presentations should address the author, central question and argument of the work, methodology used, and three critically engaging questions and concluding thoughts posed to the class to spark discussion. Class presentations will always take place in the **Thursday** class and students can sign up to present on the week of their choice by the first two weeks of classes.

Weekly diary Entries: (20%):

Students are expected to keep a weekly diary where they reflect on and think about the class's weekly topics and related questions. The point of this exercise is to informally think creatively and critically about the class's central discussion and how it relates to the outside world, to news watched, to a gallery exhibition attended, a film previewed, an article read etc. that the student feels is worthy of documenting. This can be presented in note form, a mini visual essay, personal reflections etc, once again it is a DIARY. We will then use these entries and the questions raised in them to guide and/or contribute to class discussions.

Due date: The diary entries must be sent a day **before** each week's Thursday class **by noon at the latest**. Penalty for late submission is one full grade point every day.

Final essay: (40%)

The final paper for the class consists of a 5000 word paper that addresses a particular theme or concept related to the readings and/or artworks discussed. Students will discuss the paper topics with the instructor during the set office hours and after first submitting an abstract and proposed bibliography by email. Late assignments will be penalized per day. Written assignments should include a creative title followed by your name, date, and course number. Pages should be double-spaced with 12-pt. font and one-inch margins. **Thursday December 12, 2019**

Policy on Late Submission of Papers (and Diary Entries)

Syllabi for core and elective classes should note or refer to the following policy from the Student Handbook on the submission of essays: *essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C.*

Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

WEEKLY READINGS

(All readings will be posted on google classroom unless stated otherwise)

1. WEEK 1 (September 1-September 3)

Modernity, Imperialism, Eurocentricism

Tuesday

Vladimir Lenin. *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. New York: International Publishers, 1969, Preface to the French and German Editions, chapters. 4-7, 10.

Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), pp.13-45 (Ch.2 “Colonialism” and Ch. 3 “Imperialism”)

Thursday

Samir Amin. *Eurocentricism* (NYU Press, 1989). Chapter 1.

W.E.B Du Bois. *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (1945) . Chapter 2.

2. Week 2 : (September 8, 10)

Unlearning History

Tuesday

Mitchell, Timothy, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). Introduction and Ch. 1

Ariella Azoullay Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism. Introduction.

Uday Chandra (2013) The Case for a Postcolonial Approach to the Study of Politics, *New Political Science*, 35:3, 479-491

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07393148.2013.813700?journalCode=cnps20>

Thursday

Fieldtrip to Hause Der Kulturen Der Welt: Errata Ariella Azoulay, Pauline Curnier Jardin, New Red Order and others, organized by Anselm Franke
2020, Sep 11, Fri — 2020, Oct 18, Sun

3. WEEK 3 Confronting Empire (September 15,17)

Decolonization and National Liberation

Tuesday

Aime Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism (all)

Film: *The Battle of Algiers, 1966, Dir, Gillo Pontecorvo*

Thursday

Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence," in *Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

<http://www.openanthropology.org/fanonviolence.htm>

Amilcar Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture" (1970)

<https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/1970-amilcar-cabral-national-liberation-and-culture/>

4. Week 4 (September 22 and 24)

Anti-colonial Politics

Tuesday

Mark Berger, "After the Third World?: History, Destiny, and the Fate of Third Worldism," *Third World Quarterly* (2004)

Robert J.C. Young, "The National Liberation Movements: Introduction, "Marxism and National Liberation Movements," in *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001)

Thursday

Dipresh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp.3-27. Available online at:
<http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/i8507.pdf>

5. Week 5 (September 29, October 1)

(Neo)Imperialism: Dependency, Underdevelopment, and "Decolonization"

Tuesday

Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), introduction and chapter 2

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1973), pp.75-90, 135-154, 164-180, 223-238.

Thursday

Robert J.C. Young, "Neocolonialism," in *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*;

Ilan Kapoor, "Capitalism, Culture, Agency: Dependency versus Postcolonial Theory" in *Third World Quarterly* 23, 4 (2002), pp.647-664.

6. Week 6 (October 6, 8) Colonial Conquest, Indigeneity and Indigenous Internationalism

Tuesday

Vine Deloria Jr., "Chapter II: Laws and Treaties," in *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (1969). Chapters 1 and 5.

Thursday

Jonathan Crossen., Another Wave of Anti-Colonialism: The Origins of Indigenous Internationalism. *Canadian Journal of History* 2017; Volum 52 (3)

7. WEEK 7 (October 13 and 15)

Constructing the "Other":

Tuesday

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (Penguin Books, 1978): pp. 1-15 and 25-28 and especially 'The Latest Phase' pp.284-328.

Thursday

Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). Ch. 1

8. Week 8 (October 20, 22)

Studying the "Other": Middle East Studies/Areas Studies as Fields of Knowledge

Tuesday

Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*. Chapter 2.

Thursday

Dipesh Chakrabarty. "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts," In *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 97-116.

MID TERM BREAK

9. Week 9 (October 27, 29)

Empire, Democracy and the Colonial Presence

Tuesday

Gregory, Derek, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Blackwell, 2004).
Chapter 4 and 5

Thursday

Khalidi, Rashid, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (I.B. Tauris, 2004). Chapter 2

10. Week 10 (November 3,5)

Nation and/or State

Tuesday

Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1994).
Chapters 1 and 5.

Thursday

Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: the Failure of Nation-Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), Chapter 1.

Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: the Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). Chapter 3.

11. WEEK 11 (November 10, 12)

Citizens, identities, subjectivities

Tuesday

Mitchell, Timothy, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics" in *The American Political Science Review*, 85:1 (March 1991), pp. 77-96.

Thursday

Wedeen, Lisa, "Seeing like a Citizen Acting like a State: Exemplary Events in Unified Yemen" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45: 4 (Oct 2003): 680-713.

12. WEEK 12 (November 17,19)

The Cultural Politics of Gender & Sexuality: Feminist and LGBTQ Methodologies

Tuesday

Shohat, Ella, "Area Studies, Gender Studies, and the Cartographies of Knowledge" in *Social Text* 20.3 (2002) 67-78.

Pratt, Nicola. "The Queen Boat Case in Egypt: Sexuality, National Security and State Sovereignty" in *Review of International Studies* 33 (2007), pp. 129–144.

Thursday

Ritchie, Jason "Pinkwashing, Homonationalism, and Israel-Palestine: The Conceits of Queer Theory and the Politics of the Ordinary." *Antipode* 47.3 (2015): 616-34.

Film: *Oriented* Jake Witzenfeld dir, 2015

13. WEEK 13-(November 24, 26)

Authoritarianism and Oil

Tuesday

Khalidi, Rashid, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (I.B. Tauris, 2004). Chapter 3

Thursday

Davis, Mike, "Fear and Money in Dubai" in *New Left Review* 41 (2006), pp. 47-68.

11. WEEK 14-(December 1, 3)

Politics from Below: Subversion, Struggle and Survival.

Tuesday

Bayat, Asef, "From 'Dangerous Classes' to 'Quiet Rebels': Politics of the Urban Subaltern in the Global South" in *International Sociology* 15:3 (September 2000), pp. 533-557.

Mitchell, Timothy, *The Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (University of California Press, 2002). Chapter 5 "Nobody Listens to a Poor Man".

Thursday

How are politics subverted in everyday life and through cultural production?

Wedeen, Lisa, *Ambiguities of Domination* (Chicago University Press, 1999) Chapter 5

Cooke, Miriam, *Dissident Syria: Making Oppositional Arts Official* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007). Chapter 4

15. WEEK 12-December 8, 10

Understanding Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions

Tuesday

Abrahamian, Ervand, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution" in *MERIP Reports* 87 (May 1980), pp. 21-26.

Charles Tripp. *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). chapter 1

Thursday

Asef Bayat. *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017). Chapter 10

13. WEEK 13-December 10, 12

The Global War on Terror: What kind of unit of analysis is "terror"?

Tuesday Seminar

Tilly, Charles, "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists" in *Sociological Theory* 22:1 (2004), pp. 5-13.

Stephen Morton (2007) Terrorism, Orientalism and Imperialism, *Wasafiri*, 22:2, 36-42, DOI: [10.1080/02690050701336774](https://doi.org/10.1080/02690050701336774)

Thursday Seminar

Puar, Jasbir K. and Amit S. Rai, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots" in *Social Text* 20:3 (2002), pp. 117-148.

14. Week 14-December 17

Refugees, Displacements, Diasporas

Tuesday

Claire Gallien (2018) Forcing displacement: The postcolonial interventions of refugee literature and arts, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 54:6, 735-750, DOI: [10.1080/17449855.2018.1551268](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2018.1551268)

Thursday

Mariangela Palladino & Agnes Woolley (2018) Migration, Humanitarianism, and the Politics of Salvation, *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 29:2, 129-144, DOI: [10.1080/10436928.2018.1463591](https://doi.org/10.1080/10436928.2018.1463591)