

INTRODUCTION TO POSTCOLONIAL POLITICS

The Middle East and Beyond (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 and Errata Workshop Participation (25%): Participation will be evaluated at the end of each session and the two workshops undertaken. Students will be assessed based on the general enthusiasm, frequency and quality of the questions they raise as well as the quality of the work they will submit as part of the Errata Workshop. 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.

Short Reflection Pieces: (20%)

Students are expected to submit **TWO** reflection pieces where they reflect on and think about the topics and related questions of 3 relevant writers that they would like to compare and contrast. The point of this exercise is to think creatively and critically about the chosen readings central discussions and arguments and how they 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 discussing. This can be presented in note form, a mini visual essay, personal reflections etc, once again it is a creative assignment. **Due dates: October 13 and November 15 at noon.** The pieces of a maximum of **500 words** each are to be emailed directly to me with the name and reflection piece number in the email title. Please submit the emails as google docs with permission granted to me to access them, so that I may mark them directly without having to email you for the permission. Penalty for late submission is one full grade point every day.

Final essay: (35%)

The final paper for the class consists of a 1500 word paper in answer to set questions which will be presented to the class at the end of November. 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. Papers should be emailed to h.toukan@bard.berlin.edu. **Deadline: Midnight Thursday December 19, 2019.**

Policy on Late Submission of Written Work

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. 3-5, 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

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

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

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

Decolonization and National Liberation

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Tuesday

Aime Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (all) .

Film: *The Battle of Algiers*, 1966, Dir, Gillo Pontecorvo (you may watch it here <https://player.bfi.org.uk/sign-up?destination=subscribe/2151> by registering and paying or on Amazon Prime. Please keep your receipts and BCB will reimburse you by emailing Izabella Westphalia in accounting your receipts. Please title the email (PS179 film reimbursement receipt)

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)

Undoing Imperialism and the Politics of Restitution.

Tuesday

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>

Thursday

Ariella Azoulay, *Potential History, Unlearning Imperialism*. Verso, 2019. Preface and Chapter 1

Individual Visits 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

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 18.
You can find them online at:

<https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nkrumah/neo-colonialism/introduction.htm>

and

<https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nkrumah/neo-colonialism/>

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**

Workshop part II.

Thursday

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

MID TERM BREAK

8. Week 8 (October 27, 29)

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.

9. Week 9 (November 3, 5)

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 10,12)

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 17, 19)

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.

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.

12. WEEK 12 (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

Thursday

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

13. WEEK 13-(December 1, 3)

On Reading Revolution, Subversion and Popular Struggle

Tuesday

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

Laura Sojoberg, “The Arab Spring for Women? Representations of Women in Middle East Politics in 2011” in *Journal of Women Politics and Policy*. 36(3)(July 2015), pp. 261-284

Thursday

Wedeen, Lisa, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago University Press, 1999) Chapter 5

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.

14. WEEK 14-(December 8, 10)

Understanding 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)

Guest Lecture by the writer, Joshua Craze. <https://www.joshuacraze.com/about-me>

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)

*This class will be cancelled and we will instead meet on Friday October 2 for a workshop about the show "Errata" at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt <https://www.hkw.de/de/programm/projekte/2020/errata/start.php> with Hagar Ophir at Bulbul Berlin <https://www.bulbulberlin.de/bulbul-studio-room/>. Time tbc.

** This class will be cancelled and we will instead meet on Tuesday October 13 for part II of the workshop about the show "Errata" at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt with Hagar Ophir at Bulbul Berlin <https://www.bulbulberlin.de/bulbul-studio-room/>. Time tbc.

Workshop Summary "Immigrating Bodies" 2.10 and 13.10

Artist workshop and intervention in Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's exhibition: Errata.

This is part of my seminar course PS179 (Postcolonial Politics: The Middle East and Beyond). October 2 and 13.

Framework of the workshop:

In this workshop, the students will visit the exhibition ERRATA held at the Haus Der Kulturen De Welt independently, in small groups. Their visit will be guided by an assignment that will include different questions and interventions in the exhibition. One of the tour's focuses will be seeking ways and experimenting with ways of communications that involve bringing fellow students who are abroad and unable to attend Bard in person into the tour and the group experience.

In the following two meetings at Bulbul Al Berlin*, the students will work with their impressions from the exhibition and examine their connections to the narratives, histories, and objects they encounter at the exhibition, together with materials and objects, they will be asked to bring to the meeting. During the workshop, we will question our relations to immigration, movement of objects, ideologies, historical narratives, and the constructions of identities; we will ask how can we tear the threads of connections and weave them in new world orders.