

## **INTRODUCTION TO POSTCOLONIAL POLITICS (PS 179)**

Seminar Leader: Prof. Hanan Toukan  
Email: h.toukan@berlin.bard.edu  
Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-1:30 or 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, violence, indigeneity and global solidarity, the post-colonial state, nationalism(s), the politics of gender and sexuality, the politics of culture and (under) development, archival violence, military states, the “global war on terror”, and revolutions and resistance.

### **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. All written assignments must be worked from the beginning and submitted on a Google document to the instructor by email.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

To plagiarize is to “steal and pass off as one’s own the ideas, words, or writings of another” (Merriam-Webster). This dictionary definition is quite straightforward, but it is possible for students to plagiarize inadvertently if they do not carefully distinguish between their own ideas or paper topics and those of others. It is also possible for

students to think that they can use technology such as ChatGPT. This is NOT permitted and is considered Plagiarism as it steals the ideas of another, even if not human. Listed below are guidelines on format to help students avoid committing plagiarism:

- phrases, sentences, and excerpts that are not the author's must be identified with quotation marks or indentation.
- Footnotes, endnotes, and parenthetical documentation (called in-noting) must identify the source from which the phrases, sentences, and excerpts have been taken.
- All ideas and data that are not the author's must also be attributed to a particular source, in either a footnote, endnote, or in-note (see above).
- Bibliographies must list all sources used in a paper. Students who have doubts as to whether they are providing adequate documentation of their sources should seek guidance from their instructor before preparing a final draft of the assignment

### **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 consult the BCB Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

### **Class Conduct**

“**Active**” participation is a significant component of your grade; you should come to class prepared to discuss the readings. This means bringing a copy of your weekly diary response as well as any questions you may have. Your contribution to the discussion should be based on the material you have read (and thought) about. Identify important passages while reading for closer examination in class. Two classic novels of colonial and postcolonial literature will be assigned as part of the course. Students are expected to read them in an engaged way by writing notes and coming to class having thought through the assigned pages for that week.

**Do not** take out your cell phones, laptops or other devices and do not allow them to interrupt class.

### **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 as well as the quality of the work they will submit as part of the Errata Workshop and the cooking assignment. 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.

### **Two Short Reflection Pieces:(30%)**

Students are expected to completed **TWO short** reflection pieces where they think about the topics and related questions of 3 relevant writers from the reading list that they would like to compare and contrast. The point of this exercise is to think critically and in an organized manner about the chosen readings' central discussions and arguments and how they relate to the themes and concepts highlighted in classroom discussions. **Due dates: March 28, 2023 and April 20, 2023 at midnight.** The pieces of a maximum of **550 words** each are to be written directly in to a google doc and emailed to me with the name and reflection piece number in the email title. Please submit the docs with permission granted to me to access them. Penalty for late submission is one full grade point every day.

### **Final essay: (30%)**

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](mailto:h.toukan@bard.berlin.edu). **Deadline: Midnight Friday May 12, 2023.**

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

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. Any essay submitted within four weeks of the deadline cannot receive a grade of higher than C. *Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment*

### **Course Material**

Students are expected to download articles from JSTOR or EBSCOHOT which can be accessed from the BCB library website anywhere on campus.

Book chapters and inaccessible material that is \* will be sent to google classroom.

### **Course Schedule**

This syllabus is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class.

### **Communication**

- Please treat email as a **formal** means of communication. As such use appropriate language and form. Templates and guidelines are available here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>
- Please note that I do not respond to questions for which the answer can be found here in the syllabus or through a simple internet search.
- Unless urgent, please allow me **48 hours** to respond to your email.

- Do not expect a response between **Friday 5pm** and **Monday 9am**.
- You are responsible for any work you miss. If you are absent, you are encouraged to make your colleagues your first point of contact to find out about missed work. Make sure you have the contact information of **at least two classmates**.

## WEEKLY READINGS

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

### 1. WEEK 1- (Jan 31-Feb 2)

#### Modernity, Imperialism, Eurocentricism

##### Tuesday

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

##### Thursday

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

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07393148.2013.813700?journalCode=cnp20>

### 2. Week 2 (Feb 9-Feb 11)

#### Race and Capital

##### Tuesday

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

##### Thursday

Rosa Luxemburg (1913). *The Accumulation of Capital*. Read Chapter 27 in Section III. The struggle against Natural Economy.

### 3. WEEK 3 (Feb 14-Feb 16)

#### Colonialism and Imperialism

##### Tuesday

Conrad, J., *Heart of Darkness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Modern Classics, 1982, first published 1902). Read the full text.

## **Thursday**

Robert Young (2001), *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), pp.15-44 (Read Ch. 3 “Colonialism” and “Imperialism”)

## **4. WEEK 4 (Feb 21-Feb 23)**

### **The Violence of Colonization**

## **Tuesday**

Aime Césaire (1950), *Discourse on Colonialism*. (Read it all)

## **Thursday**

Frantz Fanon (1961), *Wretched of the Earth*. Read “Concerning Violence”.

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

## **5. WEEK 5 (Feb 28-March 2)**

### **Decolonization and National Liberation**

## **Tuesday**

Amilcar Cabral (1970), “National Liberation and Culture”.

## **Thursday**

Watch the film *Battle of Algiers*. Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo (1966). Please take notes as you watch and come to class with questions and thoughts.

## **6. WEEK 6**

### **Nation and/or State (March 7-March 9)**

## **Tuesday**

Waguih Ghali. *Beer in the Snooker Club* (1964).

Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1994). Read Chapters 1 and 3.

## **Thursday**

Waguih Ghali. *Beer in the Snooker Club* (1964).

Dalia Saleh Abdel Wahab Farah (2022) State theatre in postcolonial Egypt and its role in affirming Egyptian cultural identity, *South African Theatre Journal*

## **7. WEEK 7 (March 14-March 16)**

### **Resistance and Postcolonial Culture**

#### **Tuesday**

Waguih Ghali. Beer in the Snooker Club

Riad Nasser (2019) Identity beyond borders: national identity and the post-colonial alternative, *Social Semiotics*, 29:2, 145-171

#### **Thursday**

Waguih Ghali. Beer in the Snooker Club

Zeina G. Halabi (2016) The literary lives of Umm Kulthūm: Cossery, Ghali, Negm, and the critique of Nasserism, *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 19:1, 77-98

## **8. WEEK 8 (March 21-March 23)**

### **Constructing the “Other”:**

#### **Tuesday**

Edward Said (1978, 2003). *Orientalism*. Read pages 1-15 and 25-28 and ‘The Latest Phase’ pp.284-328.

#### **Thursday**

Timothy Mitchell (1988). *Colonizing Egypt*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Read Chapter 1.

## **9. Week 9 (Neo)Imperialism and Neocolonialism: Dependency, Underdevelopment, and “Decolonization” (March 28-March 30)**

#### **Tuesday**

Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), introduction and chapter 18.

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

#### **Thursday**

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1973). Read chapter 3.

---

## **10. WEEK 10 (April 4-April 6) NO CLASSES SPRING BREAK**

---

## **11. WEEK 11 (April 11-April 13)**

### **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.

#### **Thursday**

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

## **12. WEEK 12 (April 18-April 20)**

### **Colonial & Decolonial Archives**

#### **Tuesday**

Rona Sela (2018) The Genealogy of Colonial Plunder and Erasure – Israel's Control over Palestinian Archives, *Social Semiotics*, 28:2, 201-229

#### **Thursday**

Cheryl McEwan (2003), "Building a Postcolonial Archive? Gender, Collective Memory and Citizenship in Post-Apartheid South Africa". *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol. 29, No. 3 pp. 739-757.

## **13. Week 13 (April 25-April 27)**

### **"Postcolonial" Research Methods: Feminist Archival Praxis**

#### **Tuesday**

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

Sana Tannoury-Karam (2022). "On the Vulnerability of Memory and the Power of Storytelling, or How my Grandmothers made me a Historian". *Life Writing*.

## **Thursday**

Workshop with artist Hagar Ophir at Soma Berlin on family history and archives.

## **14. WEEK 14 (May 2-May 4)**

### **Indigineity, Revolution and Global Solidarity**

## **Tuesday**

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

## **Thursday**

Alaa Abdel Fattah (2022), *You Have Not Yet Been Defeated: Selected Writings 2011-2021*. (Seven Stories Press)

Lecture by Dr. Alia Musallam on the prison writing of Alaa Abdel Fattah

## **15. Week 15 (May 9-May 11)**

### **The Global War on Terror and the War on Postcolonialism**

## **Tuesday**

Gregory, Derek (2004) , *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Blackwell Publishers). Read Chapter 1

## **Thursday**

Alain Mabanckou & Dominic Thomas (2022) “Who’s Afraid of Postcolonial Studies?”, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 26:4-5, 439-448