

INTRODUCTION TO POSTCOLONIAL POLITICS (PS 179)

Seminar Leader: Prof. Hanan Toukan
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Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-1:30 or by appointment.
Seminar times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:45-12:15.
Room: P98 Seminar Room 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

While postcolonial scholars and thought 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 Politics in its own right is related to the endurance of Eurocentric perspectives on the Global South and the impact of their colonial legacies. Dominant theories of democracy, civil society and development, and 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 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, produced and uncritically accepted as “objective”. 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 other contexts in Asia, Africa and the Americas in order to uncover the relationship between the political and the postcolonial. The course will run thematically and cover key texts in intellectual history that deal with topics such as colonialism, neocolonialism and decolonization, the post-colonial state, nationalism(s), the politics of gender and sexuality, cultural production, archival violence, memory, and the “global war on terror”.

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 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. Students are responsible for purchasing Waguih Ghali’s (1964) *Beer in the Snooker Club*. This can be found at Dussmann as well as other online books stores.

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 (25%): 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 (25%): Each student will be expected to make at least one 20-minute presentation about a particular week's readings of their own choice. In a ppt. presentation students 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 **Tuesday** class of each week and students can sign up to present on the week of their choice by the first two weeks of classes.

Mid-term reflection piece (in class) (25%)

Students are expected to complete an **in-class** reflection piece of 750 words where they think about the topics and related questions of **TWO** relevant writers from the reading list that they would like to compare and contrast. The point of this exercise is to think critically and make a case, in a concise manner and under time constraints, about the chosen readings' central discussions and arguments and how they relate to the themes and concepts highlighted in classroom discussions.

Final essay: (25%)

The final paper for the class consists of a 1200-word paper in answer to set questions which will be presented to the class beforehand. Precise essay guidelines will be provided. 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. Please use the Chicago manual of style citation method, which you can find at <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>. Papers should be emailed to h.toukan@bard.berlin.edu. **Deadline: Midnight Thursday December 21, 2023.**

Policy on Late Submission of Papers and Assignments

Late work will NOT be accepted, except in the case of a documented medical or personal emergency (i.e. a doctor's note written before contacting me in advance of the due date, i.e. sending an email the morning, day or evening before a due date does not suffice as an emergency unless supplanted by official documentation of a very grave emergency. 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 EBSCOHOST 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.

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**.

SCHEDULE AND WEEKLY READINGS

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

All readings will be posted on google classroom unless stated otherwise

1. WEEK 1 (September 5 and 7)

What is Postcolonialism?

Tuesday

Introduction to the course

Thursday

Robert Young. *Postcolonialism: An Introduction*. Chapter 1.

2. WEEK 2 (September 12 and 14)

Race, Capital, Imperialism

Tuesday

Chandra, Uday.(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=cnp20>

Thursday

Robinson, Cedric J. *Cedric J. (2019) Robinson: On Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism, and Cultures of Resistance*. Edited by H. L. T. Quan. Pluto Press,

<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvr0qs8p3>. Read chapter 1 "Towards a "Native" Theory of History.

3. WEEK 3 (September 19 and 21)

Colonialism and Imperialism

Tuesday

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

Thursday

Chinua, Achebe (1977). "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'" *Massachusetts Review*. 18.

- Watch *Black Girl*, Dir, Ousmane Sembene (1966).

https://archive.org/details/y-2-mate.is-la-noire-de...-black-girl-english-sub-1966-a-pc-ua-nbe-la-720p-1629687720861_202109,

4. WEEK 4 (September 26 and September 28)

The Violence of Colonization

Tuesday

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

Thursday

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

- Watch the film *Battle of Algiers*. Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo (1966). Please take notes as you watch and we will discuss them in class.

5. WEEK 5 (October 3 and 5)

Constructing the "Other"

Tuesday

Edward Said (1978, 2003). *Orientalism*. Read Introduction.

Thursday

Edward Said (1978, 2003). *Orientalism*. Read Chapter 1.

6. WEEK 6 (October 10 and 12)

Decolonization and National Liberation

Tuesday

Amilcar Cabral (1970). "National Liberation and Culture". Read it all.

Thursday

Robert Young (2001), *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing), pp.15-44 (Read Ch. 25 "Women, Gender and Anti-Colonialism")

7. WEEK 7 (October 17 and 19)

Nation and/or State

Tuesday

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

Ania Loomba (1989,2005), *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge (Read Chapter 3, Challenging Colonialism: Nationalisms and Pan-Nationalisms, p. 155—179)

Thursday

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

Winegar, Jessica. *Creative Reckonings: The Politics of Art and Culture in Contemporary Egypt*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Read Chapter 2.

❖ **In-class Mid-Term Reflection Piece (guidelines will be provided) (20%)**

_____ **MID-TERM Break** _____

8. WEEK 8 (October 31, November 2)

Resistance and Postcolonial Cultural Production

Tuesday

In-class Assignment (graded essay)

Thursday

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

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

9. WEEK 9 (November 7-9)

Gender, Identity, Nation

Tuesday

Young, Robert J. C. 'Gender, queering, and feminism in a postcolonial context', *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd edn, Very Short Introductions (Oxford, 2020; online edn, Oxford Academic, 22 Oct. 2020).

Thursday

Radhakrishnan, "Postcoloniality and The Boundaries of Identity" in *Callaloo* (Autumn, 1993) Vol. 16, No. 4, On "Post-Colonial Discourse": A Special Issue, pp. 750-771.

10. WEEK 10 (November 14-16)

The Postcolonial Body

Tuesday

Alloula, Malek, Myrna Godzich, Wlad Godzich, and Barbara Harlow (1986). *The Colonial Harem*. NED-New edition. Vol. 21. (University of Minnesota Press)

Thursday

- Class visit to the KW Institute for Contemporary Art to see the show "Coco Fusco: Tomorrow I will become an Island"

<https://www.kw-berlin.de/en/coco-fusco/>.

11. WEEK 11 (November 21-23)

Museums and the Politics of Restitution

Tuesday

Divya P. Tolia-Kelly (2016). "Feeling and Being at the (Postcolonial) Museum: Presenting the Affective Politics of 'Race and Culture'". *Sociology*. 50(5):896-912

- Museum Visit to PalaisPopulaire to see the show "The Struggle of Memory".
<https://palaispopulaire.db.com/exhibitions/current-exhibition/the-struggle-of-memory>

Thursday

Ariella Azoulay (2019) , *Potential History, Unlearning Imperialism*. (London:Verso). Read Preface and Chapter 1.

12. WEEK 12 (November 28-30)

Colonial & Decolonial Archives: The Cases of South Africa and Israel

Tuesday

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

Or

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.

Thursday

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

Workshop on family history and the archive: Details TBC

13. WEEK 13

Postcolonial : The Case of Ukraine and Russia

Tuesday

Chernetsky, V. (2003). "Postcolonialism, Russia and Ukraine." *Urbandus Review*, 7, 32–62.

Thursday

Ivakhiv, Adrian (March 23, 2023) . "Decolonialism and the Invasion of Ukraine." *E-Flux Notes*. Online. <https://www.e-flux.com/notes/457576/decolonialism-and-the-invasion-of-ukraine>

14. Week 14 WEEK 14 (December 12-14)

The Global War on Terror and the War on Postcolonial Studies

Tuesday

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

Thursday

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

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Conclusion