

Seminar on Colonialism

310-40100-01

Spring, 2005

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Description

In this seminar, we will engage colonialism as a set of practices that not only shaped the global capitalist economy, but also people's sense of themselves and of others across several continents and over several centuries. Three themes in particular will guide our engagement : the nature of the colonial encounter, specially as embodied in the tropes of discovery, barbarism, and progress; the psychological dynamics of the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, and the politics of both violence and liberation.

This seminar is as much an exercise in historical remembering as it is an attempt to uncover the possibilities inherent in the contemporary world for cross-cultural understanding. As such, my primary challenge as I see it is to try and make this connection between self and other, past and present, visible to you. Yours, I hope, will be to make this encounter *relevant* to you by exploring your own identity through the conceptual prisms and historical legacies of colonialism.

Pedagogy

I see the classroom as shared space and my role as facilitating critical thinking through dialogue. This model of active learning places upon you the obligation to read and attend class regularly and to risk sharing your views with others.

Readings:

Blaut, James. *1492: The Debate on Colonialism*, Africa World Press, 1992

Conrad, Joseph, *Heart of Darkness*, Hesperus, 2004

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, 1986

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, 2000

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions*, University of Chicago, 1992

Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Beacon Press, 1991

Nandy, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy*, Oxford, 2004

Orwell, George. *Burmese Days*, Harvest, 1974

Requirements and grades:

Responses / critiques / class discussions	20%
Journals	20%
Mid term paper	30%

Final paper

30%

All work must be turned in on time. I do not accept late papers.

Attendance: Please plan on attending class regularly since we meet only once a week. More than two unexcused absences may lead me to drop you from the class at any point during the semester.

Concept papers: A concept paper is a critical essay that should (a) engage the authors/texts we are reading; (b) be analytical and make a clear argument that tells your reader why you think about something in a certain way (this requires you to ask yourself why you want to write the paper and what you hope to get out of it); (c) be well organized; e.g., you should state at the outset what you will be writing about and why, and also give some indication of how the paper is structured; and (d) be spell-checked, paginated, and properly cited (*I mark down sloppy work*). Min. 10 pages, typed, and double-spaced.

Journals: I will not assign letter grades to journals and if you turn in all of them, you will get all the points. However, if a journal strikes me as too proforma and insubstantial, I will give it no points at all. 3-5 pages.

Student Response/Critique: Each of you needs to select a book to which you will be asked to offer a substantial response/critique on the days marked in the syllabus.

Schedule of Readings

January 19: Introduction: my teaching style; your expectations of the class

What is at stake in the debates on colonialism?

January 26: Blaut, *1492*. (Please read the whole book.)

February 2: Blaut, conclude. Student response/critique

Travel, discovery, barbarism, other

February 9: Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, Intro, Chapters 1-3

February 16: Greenblatt, conclude. Student response. **(Journal)**

Colonizers and Colonized

February 23: Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*. Student response

March 2: Cannibal Tours (film) Mid term concept paper due

Spring Break!

March 16: Orwell, *Burmese Days*. Student response **(Journal)**

March 23: Memmi, *Colonizer and Colonized*. Student response

March 30: Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*. Student response

Oppression and Liberation

April 6 Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (half)

April 13: Fanon, conclude. Student response (**Journal**)

April 20: Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (entire book)

April 27: Freire, conclude. Student response

April 29: Friday: FINAL PAPER DUE by 4:00 pm in my office.

May 4: Student responses, conclusion, evaluations.