

**AP/HIST 3420 6.0A**

**A HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE FROM 1600 TO THE PRESENT**

**2009-10 Term Y Wednesday 4pm – 7pm.  
Room HNE 033**

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**Course Description:**

**This course examines the rise, dominance and decline of a remarkable historical phenomenon: the British Empire. At its height in the early twentieth century, this small island state either controlled or “protected” at least one hundred separate territorial units across the globe, covering over 11 million square miles and including at least 400 million people. Since the 1980s there has been a renewed interest in studying the Empire, prompted by a focus on topics such as colonial encounters, transnational networks, globalization, and the ways in which the experience of empire profoundly influenced the culture and society of Britain itself.**

**The course is structured both chronologically and thematically. From the early attempts to establish colonies in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the attempts by England to dominate the Celtic nations, it examines the rise in the 18<sup>th</sup> century of a commercial empire based to a large extent on the slave trade, the acquisition of India and the loss of the American colonies. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the consolidation of settler colonies in Australasia, Canada and South Africa, as well as the race to grab more territory in Africa. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain began to experience more sustained challenges to its empire, from the aspirations of other European powers and the USA as well as the rise of nationalist movements amongst colonial peoples. By the end of the Second World War it was clear that decolonization was inevitable.**

**Integrated with this narrative framework are themes such as imperial culture in Britain, the experience of ruling and being ruled, resistance to imperial power, the importance of gender, sexuality, race and identity.**

**Weekly readings include short primary source documents (in Samson). Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss what they have read. The course includes a number of documentary and feature films, which will provide visual reinforcement for the readings, but will also provide material for discussions about the nature of historical documents.**

**Course weighting:**

First term essay (5 pages)	15%
Second term essay (10 pages)	30%
Participation	10%
Mid-term test	20%
Final exam	<u>25%</u>
	100%

**Readings:**

**Required:**

Philippa Levine, The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset. Pearson Longman, 2007.

Jane Samson, ed., The British Empire (Oxford Reader). Oxford University Press, 2001.

**Background and essay reading on reserve in Scott Library:**

P.J. Marshall ed., The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire. Cambridge University Press. DA 16 M29 1996.

The Oxford History of the British Empire. DA 16 095 1998.

Vol. 1 Nicholas Canny ed., Origins of Empire.

Vol. 2 P.J. Marshall ed., The Eighteenth Century.

Vol. 3 Andrew Porter ed., The Nineteenth Century.

Vol. 4 Brown & Louis eds., The Twentieth Century.

Vol. 5 Robin W. Winks ed., Historiography.

See also “Links” folder on course web site for BBC History readings

**Detailed Course Outline**

Sept. 9 Introduction & course organization.

Sept. 16 (1) Early Empire  
(2) Internal Colonialism?: England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales

**Reading:** Philippa Levine, The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset, Preface; Chapter 1 “Uniting the Kingdom.”  
Jane Samson, ed., The British Empire, Preface, Introduction.

- Sept. 23      The Atlantic: slavery and trade.  
  
Reading: Levine, chapter 2.  
Samson, Section 1.2 (pp. 27-41).
- Sept. 30      Slavery and trade continued.  
Film: Amistad
- October 7     Slavery and trade continued. The anti-slavery movement and abolition.  
  
Reading: Levine, chapter 2 (pp. 21-29); Samson, section 3.2 extracts 60, 61, 62, 63.  
Film: Amazing Grace
- October 14    FALL READING WEEK: NO CLASS
- October 21    The 'New World'  
FIRST ESSAY DUE  
Reading: Levine, chapter 3 (pp. 30-36); Samson section 1.1 extracts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.  
Film: History of Britain "The Wrong Empire"
- October 28    The 'New World' continued: "losing" the American colonies.  
Reading: Levine, chapter 3 (pp. 37-42); Samson, section 2.2.
- Nov. 4        Settler colonies in the Pacific: exploration and emigration.  
Reading: Levine, chapter 4 (pp. 43-51); Samson, section 2.1, introduction, extracts 25, 26; section 3.3, introduction, extracts 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76.
- Nov. 11       Settler colonies continued: land and resistance.  
Reading: Levine, chapter 4 (pp. 52-60); Samson, section 3.4, extracts 89-91. Film: The New Zealand Wars.
- Nov. 18       Britain and India: the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the East India Company.  
Reading: Levine, chapter 5 (pp. 61-71); Samson, section 2.4, Introduction, extracts 45-52.
- Nov. 25       Britain and India: the nineteenth century.  
Reading: Levine, chapter 5 (pp. 73-81); Samson, section 3.2, extracts 65, 66; section 3.4, extracts 82-88; section 3.5, extract 97.  
Film: A Passage to India

- Dec. 2            **MID-TERM TEST**
- Jan. 6            **Global Growth: Asia and Africa.**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 6 (pp. 82-94); Samson, section 3.4, extract 81; section 3.5, extract 94, 95, 96.
- Jan. 13           **Global Growth continued**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 6 (pp. 94-100); Samson, section 3.5, extracts 92, 98, 99, 100.
- Jan. 20           **Ruling an empire.**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 7 (pp. 103-111); Samson, section 3.2, extracts 64, 68; section 3.3, extracts 77, 79, 80, 93.
- Jan. 27           **Ruling an empire continued.**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 7 (pp. 111-122); Samson, section 3.5, extracts 99, 101, 102; section 41, extract 104.
- Feb. 3            **Being ruled.**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 8; Samson, section 3.2, extract 68; section 3.3, extracts 79, 80.
- Feb. 10           **Being ruled continued.**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 8.  
Film: The Rabbit-Proof Fence
- Feb. 17           **READING WEEK: NO CLASS**
- Feb. 24           **Gender and Sexuality: a masculine empire?**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 9; Samson, section 3.3, extracts 74, 75.
- March 3           **The Empire fights back.**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 10 (pp.166-179); Samson, section 4.2, Extracts 112, 113, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125.
- March 10        **The Empire fights back continued.**  
**SECOND ESSAY DUE**  
Reading: Levine, chapter 10 (pp. 180-190).  
Film: The Wind That Shakes the Barley.

- March 17**    **Decolonization**  
**Reading:** Levine, chapter 11 (pp.191-200); Samson section 4.3, extracts 126-133.
- March 24**    **Decolonization continued.**  
**Reading:** Levine, chapter 11 (pp. 200-209); Samson, sections 4.4, 4.5.
- March 31**    **Evaluating empire**  
**Reading:** TBA
- April 7-23**    **Exam period**