

George Mason University, Summer 2012

## **HIST 387 TOPICS IN GLOBAL HISTORY**

# ***History of the British Empire***

Course no. 40919

Section B01, June 4 - July 23

Class meets in Robinson Hall A208

on Mondays and Wednesdays 4:30-7:10 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Gail Hook

Office hours: Robinson Hall B, Room B373C, Wednesdays  
3:15-4:00 p.m., or by appointment

Email: ghook@gmu.edu

History Dept. Office: 703-993-1250, 8:30 am - 5 pm M-F



Queen Victoria, proclaimed  
Empress of India, 1877

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

Britain at one time controlled nearly 40% of the world's territories. She was a major participant in World War I and II and ranked the premier naval power in the world. The end of the British Empire in the 1960s led to the creation of numerous new nation-states around the globe.

The intent of this survey course is to help undergraduates situate the British Empire within its global context, to understand the dominant personalities and their roles in shaping British policy, and to understand the background to some of the world's conflicts still occurring today. **IMPORTANT:** Students should possess college-level reading and writing skills. If you have a question about this, please see the instructor or your academic advisor.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Define and describe the significance of key individuals and events in the British Empire
- Understand the chronology and geography of the British Empire
- Understand the main forces in the historical development of the British Empire
- Develop the skill to analyze historical sources and make conclusions based on that analysis
- Compose critical essays explaining the significance of historical events

### **REQUIRED BOOKS**

1. Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997 edition)
2. Alan Moorehead, *The White Nile* (any edition)

### **GRADING**

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = below 60.

Grades are based on 2 exams and 1 report (33% each). The exams will cover material from the lectures, reading assignments, and films. Students are responsible for all the reading, regardless if we discuss it in class. The report is based on attendance at a free lecture at the National History Center at the Library of Congress (during the British Empire Decolonization Seminar), and typing a 2-page report on the lecture and your experience of the meeting. Details are listed on Blackboard.

Attendance and participation in class discussion is expected.

### **APPROPRIATE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

***\*\*Appropriate classroom behavior is a requirement for remaining in this class. This means specifically that private conversations, sleeping, texting or other use of cell phones, or any other disruption in the classroom are strictly prohibited. This also requires you to be courteous and respectful of other students in the class in relation to ethnicity or religious beliefs.***

*You may use your laptop computer to take lecture notes, but not for any other purpose during class time. No work for other classes will be allowed during class time.*

*Students violating these rules will be asked to leave the class for the remainder of that class period. Repeated violations will be referred to the Dean of Student Services for additional action.*

*NOTE that arriving late disturbs the class, so IF you must arrive late for reasons beyond your control, be sure to not disrupt the class. Habitual tardiness will be reason for a conference with the Instructor, academic advisor, or Dean of Student Services about whether you should remain in the class. It is your responsibility to schedule your classes and personal schedule appropriately so you can be on time and remain in class for the duration of the class period.*

### **EXAMINATION POLICIES**

All students are required to take all exams at the scheduled dates and times, including the final exam, which is scheduled by the college. No makeup exams will be given without a medical excuse or other documentation or reason of extreme emergency beyond the students' control. *No final exams will be given earlier than the scheduled date and time without a medical excuse or reason of extreme emergency beyond the students' control, so students should take care not to schedule vacations or other personal activities until after the schedule final exam date.*

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

**\*\*Any student found cheating, including plagiarism, will receive a grade of "0" for the assignment or exam and may also be referred to the Dean of Student Services for additional disciplinary action.**

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class assignments and course materials are available on the course Blackboard site. Students should have access to the Internet, whether at home or at school. If there is any problem with this, please see the instructor. Please be prepared to participate in class discussions about the assigned readings.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Please let me know if you have documented special needs or require special accommodations, or if there is any other situation that may prevent you from fully participating in the class or completing the assignments so that I can help to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS**

If you choose to withdraw from this class, it is your responsibility to check the appropriate deadlines and proceed with the withdrawal process. PLEASE BE IN CONTACT with me if you are having problems attending class.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

### WEEK 1: June 4-6

Monday	Read: James, Part 1, Chapter 1, pp. 3-15 Discussion: Introduction to Class Britain's first colonies in America: Chesapeake Bay and The Virginia Company
Wednesday	Read: James, Part 1, Chapters 2-3 (pp. 16-36); Part 2, Chapter 1 (pp. 51-65) Discussion: The West and East Indies / The creation of the Commonwealth / British sea power, 1689-1748

*NOTE:* Begin reading *The White Nile*, by Alan Moorehead, for Exam #2.

\*Friday, June 8: Last Day to Drop with 100% tuition refund

### WEEK 2: June 11-13

Monday	Read: James, Part 2, Chapters 2-3, and 5 (pp. 66-121) Discussion: French and Indian War in America, 1749-1783, and the British settlement of America / The American Revolution
Wednesday	Read: James, Part 2, Chapters 6-7 (pp. 122-150) Discussion: Conquest and trade in India, 1689-1815 / The Pacific and Australasia / Power and Greatness, 1815-1870

\*Friday, June 15: Last Day to Drop without special permission, with 50% tuition refund

\*June 16-June 22: Elective Withdrawal Period for undergraduate degree-seeking students only. See the University catalog for details.

### WEEK 3: June 18-20

Monday	Read: James, Part 3, Chapter 3, and the article "Imperialism and Free Trade," by Robinson and Gallagher (on Blackboard) Discussion: Britain and the "New Imperialism," 1880-1902
Wednesday	Read: James, Part 3, Chapter 4, and Part 3, Chapter 6 Discussion: India, 1815-1905: The Indian Mutiny / South Africa Exam review

### WEEK 4: June 25-27

Monday	<b>EXAM #1</b>
Wednesday	Read: James, Part 3, Chapters 7-8 and excerpts from <i>Africa and the Victorians</i> (on Blackboard) Discussion: The "Scramble for Africa"

WEEK 5: July 2-4

Monday      Read:          James, Part 4, Chapters 1-2  
                  Discussion:    Britain and World War I / The Irish Troubles / Film: *Michael Collins*

Wednesday    **NO CLASS. July 4 Holiday**

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WEEK 6: July 9-11

Monday      Read:          James, Part 4, Chapters 3- 4 and excerpt from *Britain's Moment in the Middle East*, by Elizabeth Monroe (on Blackboard)  
                  Discussion:    Egypt and the Middle East 1919-1942 / Lawrence of Arabia

Wednesday    Read:          James, Part 4, Chapter 10; and Part 5, Chapters 2-3  
                  Discussion:    The Empire at War 1937-1941 / India and the Liquidation of Empire 1945-1947 / The End of the Palestine Mandate

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WEEK 7: July 16-18

Monday      **NO CLASS:** In lieu of class, attend the Decolonization Seminar at the National History Center on Tuesday, July 17, and write a report (due July 25)

Wednesday    Read:          James, Part 5, Chapters 6-7  
                  Discussion:    Tying Up Loose Ends, 1959-80 / Unfinished Business: The Falkland Islands (1984) to Hong Kong (1997)  
                  Exam review

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WEEK 8: July 23-25

Monday, July 23    **EXAM #2**  
                  (If you would like to receive your final exam, please bring a self-addressed, stamped manila envelope to the exam.)

Wednesday, July 25 **DECOLONIZATION LECTURE REPORT DUE by email at [ghook@gmu.edu](mailto:ghook@gmu.edu)**

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