

History 190
The British Empire
MWF 11-11:50
AJLC 102

Ms. Diana Shull

Rice Hall, 315

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00-3:30; Thursdays, 1:00-2:30; also by appointment.

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Course Overview:

Britain, a small island nation, grew to have a global empire and dominate much of the world by the First World War. How did this happen? What were the justifications, criticisms, and goals of empire? How did these ideas change over time? This course explores the formation, development, and scope of the British Empire from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. It approaches the British Empire through several main themes: the way the empire both shaped and, in turn was shaped by, society and culture in Britain itself; formal and informal imperialism; collaboration and resistance; justifications for empire; and decolonization and the legacies of empire.

Course Requirements and Policies:

Class Discussion: You **must** read the assigned primary sources and textbook passages before coming to class and participate actively in class discussions. Your participation grade is primarily based on your willingness to engage in class discussion in a constructive and consistent manner.

Attendance: You cannot participate in class discussion if you do not attend class! Class meetings are mandatory. You may miss two meetings for any reason (I do not need to know the reason). Any further failure to attend will have a negative impact on your participation grade unless this absence occurs due to a medical condition or a family emergency.

Extensions and Late Assignments: I do not give extensions except in case of an emergency. If you turn in an assignment late, your grade will drop by a third of a letter grade (for example from a 'B' to a 'B-') for every 24-hour period for which it is late. You must submit a hard copy of your late work.

Honor Code: All students are expected to adhere to the Oberlin Honor Code on all written assignments. You must write and sign the honor code pledge at the end of each assignment. You can review the honor code here: <http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/honorcode.html>.

Accommodations: If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28.

Assignments and Grading:

You will receive more information about these assignments in handouts later in the course.

*Class Participation (20%)

*Map Quizzes (10% each): **Monday, 22 September and Monday, 3 November in class**

*Mid-term Exam (20%): **Friday, 17 October in class**

*Short Paper (20%): **Due Monday, 24 November in class**

*Final Exam (20%): **Tuesday, 16 December from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.**

Required Texts:

Readings for this course will combine historical scholarship with literature, memoirs, documents, and music from different periods and places. You are encouraged to view all of these sources as historical texts and to consider broader questions about the nature of imperialism, economic interdependence, "globalization," culture, race, gender, "progress," and modernity.

Texts available at the bookstore:

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

Winder, Simon. *The Man Who Saved Britain: A Personal Journey into the Disturbing World of James Bond*. London: Picador, 2007.

For each class meeting you will also be responsible for reading a selection of primary sources, articles, and/or chapters from larger works. The assignments for each class are listed on the detailed reading schedules handed out periodically throughout the semester.

Schedule of Topics:

Week 1: The Origins of the British Empire

Week 2: The Atlantic World

Week 3: War and Revolution

Week 4: The Second British Empire
Map Quiz in class Monday, 22 September

Week 5: Rise of Nationalism in the Empire: Ireland

Week 6: The British Raj

Week 7: Technology, Medicine, Science, and Pseudo-Science
Mid-term Exam Friday, 17 October

Fall Break: 20-24 October

Week 8: Africa and the “New Imperialism”

Week 9: British Imperial Culture: Colony and Metropole
Map Quiz in class Monday, 3 November in class

Week 10: War and Empire in the Early Twentieth Century

Week 11: From Empire to Commonwealth

Week 12: Internal and External Challenges of Empire
Short Paper due Monday, 24 November in class

Week 13: Post-War Crisis of Empire

Week 14: Decolonization and the End of Empire

***** Final Exam Tuesday, 16 December, 9:00 – 11:00am*****