

DOMINATION AND DECOLONIZATION

Fall 2018

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Course Description

Recent decades have witnessed a growing (and long overdue) interest in the relationship between political theory and imperialism. Much of this work focuses, for good reason, on canonical European thinkers' historical, political and conceptual entanglements with empire, and more broadly, on that history's contemporary repercussions. This has advanced a certain critical self-reflexivity within the discipline, as theorists have come to recognize the global, outward-looking cast of modern political thought rather than treating it, as has often been the case, as little more than a conversation among and about Europeans.

Because of course, Europeans were far from alone in grappling with the implications of that outward gaze. This course examines a body of 20th century political theory that responds to the legacies of imperialism, colonialism and slavery that shaped the modern world. We will read a wide range of texts from thinkers in the Americas, Asia, and Africa that resisted imperial and colonial power, struggled with its effects, and worked through the challenges of reconstituting their social, political, economic and cultural lives in the aftermath of centuries of political domination. We will consider their conceptualizations of political subjection, of the relationship between colonizer and colonized, of what a condition of non-domination might look like, and of how it might be achieved.

We begin our investigation with methodological questions through a (very) brief introduction to post-colonial and decolonial political theory, and to the critical historiography of the Subaltern Studies collective. The remainder of the seminar will (mostly) focus on primary texts by thinkers and activists writing in imperial/colonial contexts, or in societies shaped by colonialism, imperialism and slavery. We will consider two distinctive understandings of India's political future in the work of M. K. Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar, before turning our attention to Frantz Fanon's, Aimé Césaire's, and Leopold Senghor's treatments of negritude, identity and decolonization in African contexts. We then turn to the Americas: first, with Enrique Dussel's philosophy of liberation, and then, with reflections on the legacies of slavery in the United States (by W. E. B. Du Bois) and Haiti (by C. L. R. James). We conclude with Taiaiake Alfred's critique of ongoing colonial domination in Canada.

This course is a research seminar. As a seminar, it will require significant student participation; regular attendance, careful preparation and active involvement will be essential. As a research-focused course, students will be expected to read extensive primary and secondary texts, particularly in preparing the final paper.

Course Objectives

Students will develop

- their knowledge of political theories of decolonization
- their knowledge of methodological questions surrounding scholarship in the history of political thought

- advanced research, presentation, and critical thinking skills.

Required Materials and Texts

C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (Vintage, 1989).

B. R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, ed. S. Anand, Introduction by Arundhati Roy (Verso, 2016).

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox, with a forward by Homi K. Bhabha and a preface by Jean-Paul Sartre (Grove Press, 2005).

Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. Anthony Parel (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. by Joan Pinkham (Monthly Review Press, 2000).

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Penguin, 1996).

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Clydesdale Press, 2018)

The course will also draw on online journal articles that you will be responsible for acquiring (I will, of course, provide you with all necessary bibliographic information). On occasion, I will circulate articles/chapters on Avenue (the reading will be marked with “**Avenue**” in the course schedule below).

Class Format

The course will meet for a three hour seminar weekly. Each session will involve my brief introductory remarks, student presentations and group discussion.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Attendance and participation: 20%
2. In-class presentation: 15%
3. Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 15%
4. Research paper: 50%

Course Evaluation – Details

Your **participation** grade will be gauged by consistent attendance, and by active and informed participation. You will be expected to have completed the readings and be ready to discuss them. As an upper-year undergraduate seminar, the course will revolve around our discussion of the salient issues, rather than lectures; the expectation will be that you've read and understood the materials, and that you've thought about what we should discuss from them.

Each student will be responsible for one 15-minute **in-class presentation**, for which you will sign up on the first day of the course. The presentation should aim to do several things. First, it should introduce and provide some explanation of the central themes and ideas in the week's readings. Secondly, and more importantly, the presentation should raise what you think are the most interesting, controversial, and/or perplexing ideas, themes or questions stemming from the week's readings. You are welcome (but not at all obligated) to go beyond the readings themselves; you should feel free to introduce any additional ideas, examples or materials that you think will help us sort through what's most interesting or challenging about the week's topic. In short, the presentation should raise the ideas or arguments that you think we should discuss as a class, either to understand them better or because they pique your interest. Finally, to this end, the presentation should include a few questions that you want to put to the class to explore those themes. In sum, the presentation aims to have you critically evaluate what is most important for us to think about and to initiate our discussions on the subject, to which I will add my own questions and comments.

You are required to submit (a) a **one-page paper proposal**, along with (b) an **annotated bibliography with a minimum of 10 sources** at the beginning of class on October 16 (in hard copy). This aims to provide you with an opportunity to work out your topic, do some research, and get some constructive feedback ahead of writing the fuller paper.

The **research paper** will be 4000-5000 words and will be on a topic of your own choosing. It can be based on the themes/ideas/readings from the course, or on a different subject altogether (within the constraints of the course's subject, broadly speaking – you are free to write about issues relating to domination and/or decolonization not included in the syllabus, with my approval). The paper will be due in hard copy at the beginning of class on Nov. 20.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Sept. 4) – Introduction

No reading

Week 2 (Sept. 11) - Postcolonial and Decolonial Political Theory

Reading:

-Gurminder K. Bhambra, "Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues", *Postcolonial Studies* 17 (2) 2014: 115-151.

-Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage, 1978), "Introduction". **Avenue**

-Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality", *Cultural Studies* 21 (2-3) 2007: 168-178.

-Walter D. Mignolo, "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101 (1) 2002: 57-96.

Supplementary:

-Edward Said, *Orientalism* (remainder).

-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-314.

-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

-Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

-Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

-Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

-Margaret Kohn and Keally McBride, *Political Theories of Decolonization: Postcolonialism and the Problem of Foundations* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

-Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Duke University Press, 2011)

-Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America", *Nepantla: Views from South* 1(3) 2000: 533-580.

-Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanness as Concept: Or the Americas in the Modern World-System", *International Social Science Journal* 134 (1992): 549-557.

Week 3 (Sept. 18) - Historiography as Critique: The Project of Subaltern Studies

Reading:

-Ranjit Guha, "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India", "The Small Voice of History". **Avenue**

-Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Subaltern History as Political Thought". **Avenue**

-Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, pp. 1-16, 27-46. **Avenue**

Supplementary:

-Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography," *Nepantla: Views from the South*, 1 (2000): 9-32.

-Ranjit Guha, "Projects for our Time and their Convergence" and "Introduction to the *Subaltern Studies* Reader", in *The Small Voice of History* (Permanent Black, 2009).

-Partha Chatterjee, "After Subaltern Studies," *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVII (2012): 44-49.

-Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonialism and the Specter of Capital* (Verso, 2013).

[-Exchange between Vivek Chibber and Partha Chatterjee.](#)

Week 4 (Sept. 25) - Gandhi and the Corruption(s) of Civilization

Reading:

-Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*.

Supplementary:

-Uday Mehta, "Gandhi on Democracy, Politics and the Ethics of Everyday Life" *Modern Intellectual History* 7 (2): 355-371.

-Karuna Mantena, "On Gandhi's Critique of the State: Sources, Contexts, Conjectures," *Modern Intellectual History* 9 (2012): 535-563.

-Akeel Bilgrami, "Gandhi's Integrity: The Philosophy Behind the Politics," *Postcolonial Studies*, 5 (2002): 79-93.

-Uday Singh Mehta, "Patience, Inwardness, and Self-Knowledge in Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*", *Public Culture* 23 (2) 2011: 417-429.

-Bhikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition, and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse* (Sage Publications, 2003).

-Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action* (Columbia University Press, 2012)

-M. N. Roy, *India's Message* (Calcutta Renaissance Publishers, 1950).

Week 5 (Oct. 2) - Ambedkar on Caste and Constitution

Reading:

-Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*.

Supplementary:

-M. K. Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar, all materials in "The Ambedkar-Gandhi Debate", in *Annihilation of Caste*.

-B. R. Ambedkar, *The Essential Writings of B. R. Ambedkar*, ed. V. Rodrigues (Oxford University Press, 2004).

-Eleanor Zelliott, "The Social and Political Thought of B. R. Ambedkar," in *Political Thought in Modern India*, eds. Thomas Pantham and Kenneth L. Deutsch (Sage, 1986).

-Eleanor Zelliott, *Ambedkar's World: The Making of Babasaheb and the Dalit Movement* (Navayana Publishing, 2013).

Week 6 (Oct. 9) – Reading Week

Week 7 (Oct. 16) - Negritude and the Poetics of Identity

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

Reading:

-Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*.

-Aimé Césaire, "Culture and Colonialism," *Social Text* 103:2 (2010): 127-144.

-Léopold Sédar Senghor, "Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century". **Avenue**

Supplementary:

-Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World* (Duke University Press, 2015).

-Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "After Colonialism: The Impossibility of Self-Determination," in *Colonialism and Its Legacies*, ed. Jacob Levy with Iris Marion Young (Lexington, 2011), pp. 147-169.

-Jean-Paul Sartre, *Black Orpheus*, trans. S. W. Allen (Présence Africaine, 1976).

-L. G. Damas, *Poètes d'expression française [d'Afrique Noire, Madagascar, Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Indochine, Guyane] 1900–1945* (Seuil, 1947).

-L. S. Senghor, *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1948).

Week 8 (Oct. 23) - Fanon on Violence and Decolonization

Reading:

-Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 1-180, 235-239.

Supplementary:

-Homi Bhabha, Forward to *The Wretched of the Earth*, and Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*.

-Christopher J. Lee, *Frantz Fanon: Toward a Revolutionary Humanism* (Ohio University Press, 2015)

-Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove, 2008).

-Robert Bernasconi, "The Assumption of Negritude: Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and the Vicious Circle of Racial Politics", *Parallax* 8 (2) 2002: 69-83.

-G. W. F. Hegel, "Master-Slave Dialectic" from [*Phenomenology of Mind*](#).

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-Film: "The Battle of Algiers" (1966).

Week 9 (Oct. 30) - Center and Periphery: Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation

Reading:

-Dussel, [*Philosophy of Liberation*](#)

-Preface

-Chapter 1: entire.

-Chapter 2: Section 2.3.4, 2.3.9, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6.

-Chapter 3: 3.1, 3.2.5, 3.2.6, 3.3.4, 3.3.6, 3.3.8, 3.3.9.

-Chapter 4: 4.1.7, 4.1.8, 4.3.8, 4.3.9, 4.4.3, 4.4.4, 4.4.6, 4.4.8, 4.4.9.

-Chapter 5: 5.7, 5.8, 5.9.

-Appendix B ("Dialectic Between Philosophy and Praxis") and C ("Exigencies for a Philosophy of Liberation")

Supplementary:

-Enrique Dussel, "The 'World-System': Europe as 'Center' and its 'Periphery' Beyond Eurocentrism," in *Colonialism and Its Legacies*, ed. Jacob Levy with Iris Marion Young (Lexington, 2011), pp. 97-120.

-Enrique Dussel, "From Critical Theory to Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for Dialogue," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1 (2011).

-Enrique Dussel, "[The 'Philosophy of Liberation', the Postmodern Debate and Latin American Studies](#)".

-Enrique Dussel, "Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)", *boundary 2* 20 (3) 1993, 65-76.

-George Ciccariello-Maher, "Decolonial Realism: Ethics, Politics, and Dialectics in Fanon and Dussel," *Contemporary Political Theory* 13 (2014): 2–22.

Week 10 (Nov. 6) – Slavery and Narrative

Reading:

-Douglass, *Narrative*.

-Frederick Douglass, "What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?" **Avenue**.

Supplementary:

-Nolan Bennett, "To Narrate and Denounce: Frederick Douglass and the Politics of Personal Narrative," *Political Theory* 44 (2016).

-Nicholas Buccola, *The Political Thought of Frederick Douglass: In Pursuit of American Liberty* (NYU Press, 2012)

-Peter C. Myers, *Frederick Douglass: Race and the Rebirth of American Liberalism* (University Press of Kansas, 2008)

Week 11 (Nov. 13) - How Does it Feel to be a Problem? Du Bois on White Supremacy

Reading:

- Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, chs. 1-4, 9, 14.
- Booker T. Washington, "[Atlanta Compromise Speech](#)".

Supplementary:

- Du Bois, *Souls*, remaining chapters.
- Robert Gooding-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America* (Oxford, 2011).
- Lawrie Balfour, *Democracy's Reconstruction: Thinking Politically with W.E.B. Du Bois* (Oxford, 2011).
- Thomas C. Holt, "The Political Uses of Alienation: W.E.B. Du Bois on Politics, Race, and Culture, 1903-1940," *American Quarterly*, 42 (1990): 301-323.
- Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Harvard, 1998).
- Manning Marable, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat* (Paradigm, 2005)
- Adolph L Reed Jr, *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line* (Oxford, 1997).
- This American Life, "[The Problem We All Live With, Parts 1 and 2](#)" (podcast).

Week 12 (Nov. 20) - C. L. R. James and the Haitian Revolution I

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Reading:

- James, *Black Jacobins*, pp. 3-198.

Supplementary:

-David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Duke University Press, 2004).

-Kent Worcester, *C. L. R. James: A Political Biography* (SUNY Press, 1995).

-W. E. B. Du Bois, "Evolution of the Race Problem," in *Proceedings of the National Negro Conference* (New York, 1909), 142-158.

-Anthony Bogues, *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C. L. R. James* (Pluto Press, 1997).

-Adam Dahl, "The Black American Jacobins: Revolution, Radical Abolition, and the Transnational Turn," *Perspectives on Politics* 15 (3) 2017: 633-646.

Week 13 (Nov. 27) - C. L. R. James and the Haitian Revolution II

Reading:

-James, *Black Jacobins*, 199-378, 391-418.

Supplementary:

-as above (Nov. 20).

Week 14 (Dec. 4) - Taiaiake Alfred on Indigenous Resurgences

Reading:

-Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism".

-Taiaiake Alfred, "Colonialism and State Dependency".

-Taiaiake Alfred, "Restitution is the Real Pathway to Justice for Indigenous Peoples".

-Taiaiake Alfred, "What is Radical Imagination? Indigenous Struggles in Canada".

All readings available at <https://taiaiake.net/publications/>

Supplementary:

- Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014).
- Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Duke University Press, 2014).
- Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (eds), *Theorizing Native Studies* (Duke University Press, 2014).
- Robert Nichols, "Indigeneity and the Settler Contract Today", *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 39 (2) 2013.
- Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor", *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1 (1) 2012: 1-40.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

The annotated bibliography and paper proposal are due in hard copy at the beginning of class on Oct. 17. The final paper will be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on Nov. 20.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-

MARK	GRADE
0-49	F

Late Assignments

All students will be granted a **one-week** extension on the final paper, by request. If you opt to use the extension, please let me know **by email a minimum of one week prior to the paper's due date**. Beyond this, late assignments will be penalized 3%/day, including weekends.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Beyond the above, extensions for the paper will ONLY be extended to students unable to submit in time due to extraordinary circumstances. This will require **official documentation** (for example, an official medical certificate) explaining your circumstances.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.