Reading Seminar: Comparative Studies in World Civilizations
Britain and India in the Age of Imperialism
3400: 610-001
Spring 2007 Syllabus

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Course Goals
The relationship between Britain and India has spawned some of the most innovative literature on imperialism in the last few decades. Whether asserting the feminist support of empire, the British invention of caste, or the role of empire in forming the national identities of both Britain and India, the historical scholarship at the conjunction of these two fields has pushed the limits of our knowledge of the interconnectedness of political and social developments in their global context. This course will examine some of the most important works in this body of scholarship and scholarship in other areas that has most influenced it.

Readings
Since we are reading from at least twenty-five publications, you are not required to buy any of them. In fact, some books on the schedule of readings are no longer in print. Those listed on reserve, can be obtained for two-hour periods from Bierce Library’s circulation desk. Some readings are available on-line. Either case is noted in parentheses after the title. Students who need background historical knowledge of India can order:


Assignments
Mini-Reviews (50 X 8) 400 pts.
Historiographical Essay 400 pts.
Participation (20X10) 200 pts.

Mini-Reviews: Every week that we have readings, students will be responsible for writing a comparative review of two of them (secondary scholarly works only), explaining when appropriate:
1. How one work owes its methodology to the other.
2. How both owe their approach to a common earlier work.
3. How the two differ, and why.
You should come to the seminar with enough copies of your review to distribute to all the members of the seminar, including yourself and me. You should also send me your review as an e-mail attachment in either Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect (but NOT Microsoft Works!). I shall use the revision tools in Word or WordPerfect to comment on your submission and return it to you by e-mail.

**Historiographical Essay:** The major assignment for the course, this essay should take an issue pertaining to the Indo-British encounter and explain the historiography surrounding it. It should be between 2,000 and 3,000 words (roughly 8-12 pages) long, type-written, and double-spaced, with page numbers. It should tap on at least ten secondary sources – books, articles, or chapters in multi-authored works. You must approve your topic with me no later than the fifth seminar session, and you must submit (as an e-mail attachment in Word or WordPerfect) a polished initial draft (complete and free of typographical and grammatical errors) by the tenth session. You will discuss your topic and findings with the rest of the seminar during the last two meetings of the semester.

**Participation:** This seminar requires extensive participation. You will be expected to read each reading ahead of the meeting in which it is discussed and analyze it verbally in class. I will grade weekly on how well you have contributed to discussion and suggest privately to you ways in which you can improve. Attendance is, of course, mandatory, and, if you miss more than two sessions, I reserve the right to drop you from the course.

**Schedule of Readings**

**Week 1** (Jan 18) Introduction

**Week 2** (Jan 25) The Cultural Turn in Imperial Studies
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**Week 3** (Feb 1) Empires Good and Bad


Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* “Introduction, ” ch. 4 “Heaven’s Breed,” and “Conclusion”.

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**Week 4** (Feb 8) The Appropriation of Knowledge


Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, chs. 1-4.


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**Week 5** (Feb 15) Interpreting Caste

*The Bhagavad Gita* 18:41-47.


Susan Bayly. *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*. “Introduction” and chs. 1-4. (reserve)

**Historiographical paper proposal due.**

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**Week 6** (Feb 22) Interpreting Class


Bernard S. Cohn, ‘Representing Authority in Victorian India’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*.

David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, “Preface” and chs. 4, 8, and 9. (reserve)

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**Week 7** (Mar 1) Gender and Ethnicity


Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, ch. 4 “Reading Indian Women” and ch. 5 ‘The White Woman’s Burden.” (online)
Week 8 (Mar 8) Religion and Empire
Cox, Jeffrey. *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940*, ch. 1 “Master Narratives of Religion and Empire,” ch. 6 “Gender, Medicine, and the Rhetoric of Professional Expertise,” and ch. 8 “Embracing India: Missionaries and Indian Christians Confront Imperial Fault Lines.”
John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India, and Progress in the Colonial Imagination*, “Introduction: Metropolis and India,” ch. 3 “The Intimate Connexion,” and ch. 4 “A Complete Cyclopedia.”

Week 9 (Mar 15) Imperial Mission and Religion in Britain

Spring Break (Mar 17-25) Class does not meet

Week 10 (Mar 29) British and Indian Identities
Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain*, Introduction and Conclusion. (reserve)

Weeks 11-12 (Apr 5 and 12) Work on Historiographical papers (Class does not meet)
**Historiographical paper initial draft due Apr 12.**

Week 13 (Apr 19) Return initial drafts.

Weeks 14-15 (Apr 26 and May 3) Present Historiographical papers
**Historiographical paper final draft due May 3.**