

## HIS 617 Modern European Imperialism and Colonialism Seminar

Kenneth J. Orosz  
Spring 2026  
Class Meetings: Chase 341  
T 4:30-7:15

Office Hours: T 1:30-2:30  
W 10:00-12:00  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar explores modern European imperialism in Africa and Asia. During the first half of the seminar we will examine in detail current as well as classic theories of imperialism. The remainder of the course will be devoted to readings that highlight some of the current areas of historical enquiry within the field of modern European imperialism, including education, gender, race, culture, missionary activities, and decolonization.

### COURSE POLICIES

1. Students must complete all work on their own. There are no group projects.
2. **The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly forbidden and will be considered cheating since it is a computer, rather than the student, completing assignments. As with other cases of academic misconduct, the minimum penalty will be an F on the assignment.**
3. Except for cases of documented emergencies, I do not accept late work without prior arrangement. It is your responsibility to keep track of what is due each week by checking the syllabus.

### REQUIREMENTS

Academic misconduct (including cheating, plagiarism, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to do your work for you) will not be tolerated. Buffalo State College policies on academic misconduct, including the possible use of textual similarity detection software, are outlined in the college catalog.<sup>1</sup> **Please note that the minimum penalty for cases of academic misconduct will be an F on the assignment.**

Please note that in order to pass this course you must make a good faith attempt to complete all components and requirements. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PRIOR ARRANGEMENT.** Incompletes will be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor and require a written application outlining the rationale behind granting the incomplete, a list of outstanding assignments and a timetable for their completion. This application must be signed and, if granted, will constitute a formal contract for the completion of the course.

Readings, which include required texts as well as supplementary readings, are to be completed by the dates listed on the syllabus. Please note that J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism a Study*, Bernard Porter's *Absent Minded Imperialists*, Lora Wildenthal's *German Women for Empire*, and Smith and Jeppesen, *Britain, France & Decolonization of Africa* are all available

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<sup>1</sup>Buffalo State University, *Graduate Catalog 2025-2026*, [Academic Misconduct](#)

as free ebooks through the campus library's databases. Any reading listed on the syllabus that does not come from a required textbook is either a website, has been posted to Brightspace, or is a journal article. To further help you identify them, supplemental readings are in italics. They can be accessed in one of 3 ways: 1) If it is a website, there will be a link to it from the electronic version of the syllabus available in Brightspace or on my [web page](#). 2) Materials highlighted in blue have been uploaded to weekly folders in the Supplemental Readings section of Brightspace. A) If the item is a PDF, simply click on it to open and read. B) If it is a PowerPoint, click the down arrow next to the file name and select download from the menu (files are large, so do on WiFi only). Navigate to your download folder and open the file. Follow the directions on the first slide to get it to play. 3) Journal articles are available in the library's JSTOR or Project Muse databases.

All written assignments must conform to the broad stylistic guidelines outlined in the [History Style Sheet](#). When it comes to citation and bibliography formats, Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis and Dissertations* 8<sup>th</sup> ed. is **the** bible for historians. The rules spelled out in her manual are simple and easy to understand. Come see me if you have questions regarding citation format, presentation of quotations, or other writing concerns.

### SUBMITTING PAPERS

1. Dropboxes for each assignment will appear in the Assignments section of the Course Activities tab. You must upload your paper as a word document (.doc or .docx only) to the Turnitin dropbox by **3:00 PM** on the due date.
2. You must bring a printed and stapled copy and turn it in during class time on the due date. **I will not grade any papers that have not been submitted to the dropbox and for which I do not also have a paper copy.**

Note: You may submit revisions of your paper up until the due date. Among the things you should check is the Turnitin Originality Report to help guard against plagiarism. To see the report click on the colored rectangular icon next to your submission. If the icon is gray, your report is still being processed; check back within the next 24 hours.

- 30% **Discussion:** Regular attendance and active participation in weekly class discussions is required. As part of their discussion grade, all students will be required to prepare and lead at least one class discussion of the assigned readings. These readings, which are to be completed by the dates given, include required texts, journal articles, and selected book chapters. Most journal articles can be accessed through the library's electronic databases; highlighted readings are available in Blackboard under the Content tab.
- 20% **Precis:** Students will write **eight** 2-3 page précis analyzing weekly assigned texts (4 on theories of imperialism, 4 on topics readings). Each précis should identify the main thesis of the work(s) in question and outline the key arguments/pieces of evidence used in advancing that thesis. It may also include a description of the work's ideological orientation and its contributions to the larger historiography of imperialism. A précis thus provides its reader with a brief summary of a larger work. While the choice of which works to write your précis on are up to you, each précis is due in class on the day that the

work in question is scheduled for discussion. Hence, if you are writing on Hobson, that precis would be due in class on February 3.

- 50% **Historiographical Essay:** Students will write a 20 page historiographical essay on a topic you have chosen that is germane to the course. These essays should analyze the evolution of historical thinking on your chosen topic, identifying key historical camps and their arguments, shifts in interpretation, methodologies, and sources. Topics must be chosen by **March 3** with a preliminary bibliography to follow by **March 17**. The essay itself is due in class on **May 12**.

**BOOKS:** The following books are required reading and are available in the bookstore:

Daughton and White, <i>In God's Empire</i>	On reserve in library
J. A. Hobson, <a href="#"><i>Imperialism: A Study</i></a>	Ebook
James Lehnig, <i>European Colonialism since 1700</i>	
Vladimir Lenin, <i>Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism</i>	
Bernard Porter, <a href="#"><i>The Absent Minded Imperialists</i></a>	Ebook
Smith and Jeppesen, <a href="#"><i>Britain, France &amp; Decolonization of Africa</i></a>	Ebook
Mike Vann, <i>The Great Hanoi Rat Hunt</i>	
Lora Wildenthal, <a href="#"><i>German Women for Empire</i></a>	Ebook

#### CLASS SCHEDULE:

- January 27 **Introduction**  
[How to Write History Papers](#); [History Style Sheet](#)
- February 3 **Classic Theories of Imperialism: Hobson**  
 Hobson, [\*Imperialism\*](#)  
 Lehnig, *European Colonialism since 1700*, Ch 1-3
- February 10 **Classic Theories of Imperialism: Lenin and Schumpeter**  
 Lehnig, *European Colonialism since 1700*, Ch 4-6  
 Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*  
 D.K. Fieldhouse, "Imperialism: An Historiographical Revision," *Economic History Review* 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 14,1 (1961): 187-209  
 A. M. Eckstein "Is there a 'Hobson-Lenin Thesis' on late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Colonial Expansion?" *Economic History Review* 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 44, 2 (May 1991): 297-318  
[Joseph Schumpeter, "Imperialism as a Social Atavism" in \*The "New" Imperialism\*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Harrison Wright \(Toronto: D.C. Heath and Co, 1976\), 69-88.](#)
- February 17 **Theories of Imperialism: Robinson and Gallagher**  
 John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 6, 1 (1953): 1-15

John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Partition of Africa," in *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy*, ed. Wm. Roger Louis (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), 73-127.

D.C.M. Platt "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Some Reservations," *Economic History Review* 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 21, 2 (August 1968): 296-306

D.C. M. Platt, "Further Objections to an 'Imperialism of Free Trade,' 1830-60" *Economic History Review* 2<sup>nd</sup> series 26, 1 (February 1973): 77-91

D. K. Fieldhouse, "Imperialism and the Periphery" in *The "New" Imperialism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Harrison Wright (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Co, 1976), 181-201

Martin Lynn, "The 'Imperialism of Free Trade' and the Case of West Africa, ca. 1830-ca. 1870" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 15, no. 1 (October 1986): 22-40

#### February 24 **Theories of Imperialism: German and French Colonial Expansion**

Martin Denning Lewis, "One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The 'Assimilation' Theory in French Colonial Policy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, 2 (January 1962): 129-153

C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "Centre and Periphery in the Making of The Second French Colonial Empire, 1815-1920" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 16, 3 (May 1988): 9-34

Alice Conklin, "Colonialism and Human Rights, A contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914" *American Historical Review* 103, 2 (April 1998): 419-442

Hartmut Pogge von Strandemann, "Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Expansion Under Bismarck," *Past and Present* no. 42 (February 1969): 140-159

Hans Ulrich Wehler, "Bismarck's Imperialism 1862-1890," *Past and Present* no. 48 (August 1970): 119-155

P.M. Kennedy, "German Colonial Expansion. Has the 'Manipulated Social Imperialism' Been Antedated?" *Past and Present* no. 54 (February 1972) 134-141

#### March 3 **Theories of Imperialism: Orientalism and Subaltern Studies**

Gyan Prakash "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism," *American Historical Review* 99, 5 (December 1994): 1475-1490

Jon Wilson, "Agency, Narrative and Resistance," in *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, ed. Sarah Stockwell (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 245-268

Frederick Cooper "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99, 5 (December 1994): 1516-1545

Keith Windschuttle, "Cultural History and Western Imperialism: The Case of Edward Said," *Journal of the Historical Society* 1, 2-3 (2000-2001): 169-206

Elizabeth Elbourne, "'Race', Warfare and Religion in mid-Nineteenth Century Southern Africa: The Khoikhoi Rebellion Against the Cape Colony and Its Uses, 1850-58," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13, 1 (June 2000): 17-42.

Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney, "Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles," *Assemblage* 13 (December 1990): 34-59  
Historiographical paper topic due

March 10

**Topics: Science, Technology, Environment and Imperialism**

Daniel Headrick, "The Tools of Imperialism: Technology and the Expansion of European Colonial Empires in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," *Journal of Modern History* 51, 2 (June 1979) 231-263

Richard Roberts, "French Colonialism, Imported Technology, and the Handicraft Textile Industry in the Western Sudan, 1898-1918," *Journal of Economic History* 47, 2 (June 1987): 461-472

David Arnold, "Europe, Technology and Colonialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," *History and Technology* 21, 1 (March 2005): 85-106.

Londa Shiebinger et al, "Focus on Colonial Science," *Isis* 96, 1 (March 2005): 52-87.

Thaddeus Sunseri, "Reinterpreting a Colonial Rebellion: Forestry and Control in German East Africa, 1874-1915," *Environmental History* 8, 3 (July 2003): 430-451

James Boyce, "Canine Revolution: The Social and Environmental Impact of the Introduction of the Dog to Tasmania," *Environmental History* 11 (January 2006): 102-129

Gavin Bowd and Daniel Clayton, "Tropicality, Orientalism and French Colonialism in Indochina: The Work of Pierre Gourou, 1927-1982," *French Historical Studies* 28, 2 (Spring 2005): 297-327

March 17

**Topics: Colonial Cities and Exhibitions**

Vann, *The Great Hanoi Rat Hunt*

Matthew Stanard, "Selling the Empire between the Wars: Colonial Expositions in Belgium, 1920-1940." *French Colonial History* 6 (2005): 159-178

Jean Muteba Rahier, "The Ghost of Leopold II: The Belgian Royal Museum of Central Africa and its Dusty Colonialist Exhibition." *Research in African Literatures* 34, no. 1 (2003): 58-84

Preliminary bibliography for final paper due

March 24

**No Class**

March 31

**Topics: Race and Gender**

Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*

Margaret Strobel, "Gender, Race and Empire in Nineteenth and Twentieth

Century Africa and Asia,” in *Becoming Visible* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. Renate Bridenthal et al (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 389-414

April 7

**Topics: Education and Imperialism**

Catherine Hall, “Making Colonial Subjects: Education in the Age of Empire,” *History of Education* 37, 6 (November 2008): 773-787

Satadru Sen “The Politics of Deracination: Empire, Education and Elite Children in Colonial India,” *Studies in History* 19, 1 (February 2003): 19-39

Bob White, “Talk about School: Education and the Colonial Project in French and British Africa (1860-1960)” *Comparative Education* 32, 1 (March 1996): 9-25

Stafford Kay “African Roles, Response and Initiatives in Colonial Education: The Case of Western Kenya,” *Paedagogica Historica* 16, 2 (1976): 272-293

Gail Kelly, “Learning to Be Marginal: Schooling in Inter-war French West Africa,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 21, 3-4 (1986): 171-184

Frances Gouda “Teaching Indonesian Girls in Java and Bali 1900-1942: Dutch Progressives, the infatuation with ‘Oriental’ refinement, and ‘Western’ ideas about proper womanhood,” *Women’s History Review* 4, 1 (1995): 25-62

Anthony Sweeting “Language and the History of Colonial Education: The Case of Hong Kong,” *Modern Asian Studies* 41, 1(2007): 1-40

Sybille Küster, “‘Book Learning’ vs ‘Adapted Education’: The Impact of Phelps-Stokesism on Colonial Education systems in Central Africa in the Interwar Period,” *Paedagogica Historica* 43, 1 (February 2007): 79-97

April 14

**Topics: Missions and Imperialism**

Daughton and White, *In God’s Empire*

April 21

**Topics: Empire and Culture**

Bernard Porter, *The Absent Minded Imperialists*

Bernard Porter, “Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent Mindedness,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, 1 (March 2008): 101-118

John Mackenzie, “Comfort and Conviction: A Response to Bernard Porter,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, 4 (December 2008): 659-668

April 28

**World Wars and Empire**

Kenneth J. Orosz The Dwarf, the Goetzen and C. S. Forester’s African Queen: A Reassessment of Naval Operations in First World War Africa,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 44:4 (2016), 592-621

Melvin Page, “The War of Thangata. Nyasaland and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918,” *Journal of African History* 19/1 (1978), pp.

87-100

Christian Koller, "The recruitment of colonial troops in Africa and Asia and their deployment in Europe during the First World War," *Immigrants and Minorities* 26/1-2, (2008): . 111-133

Adrienne M. Israel, "Measuring the War Experience: Ghanaian Soldiers in World War II." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25, no. 1 (1987): 159–68.

John H. Morrow, "Black Africans in World War II: The Soldiers' Stories." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 632 (2010): 12–25

C.A. Bayly, "'The Nation Within': British India at War 1939-1947" in *Proceedings of the British Academy* v. 125, edited by P. J. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 265-285

May 5

**Topics: Decolonization**

Lehning, *European Colonialism since 1700*, Ch 7

Smith and Jeppesen, [\*Britain, France & Decolonization of Africa\*](#)

May 12

Final Paper due