

## HIST 2259 Anticolonial Europe: A History of Transnational Solidarity

Wednesdays: 3:30-6:30pm  
Location: TBA

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment



Figure 1: League Against Imperialism Poster, 1920

In the spring of 1919, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam's revolutionary and future independence leader, was living in Paris. Around the same time, M.N Roy, a Bengali-born Marxist, moved to Berlin where he operated in the city's Marxist circles. Meanwhile, prior to and following the First World War, both Josephine Baker and Paulette Nardal moved in Paris' artistic milieus.

What role did Europe and European cities play in the production of anticolonial thought in the first half of the twentieth century? How and why did activists, committed to ending the world's racialized structures, converge in Europe's cities to condemn and critique the West's imperial hegemony? Finally, what roles did intellectual and political traditions, including Marxist-Leninism, Pan-Africanism, and international feminism, play in the history of anticolonial thought in the first half of the twentieth century?

This course investigates the history of anticolonial thought and practice while foregrounding the importance of Europe. As the course describes, Europe's cities—from Paris, London, Moscow, and Berlin—offered activists fertile terrain for developing theories and movements of anticolonial

resistance. Over the semester, we consider what events pushed Europe to become a site of anticolonial resistance. We will learn who populated its anticolonial networks. And we will consider what relevance the history of anticolonial thought and practice has for our contemporary moment. The course will conclude with students writing their own intellectual history of an anticolonial thinker of their choosing.

**\*\*\*Please note:** All students are expected to sign up for a “meet and greet” sessions during the first weeks of class. These meetings are informal and 5-10 minutes long. In them, I hope to discuss your learning goals and interests.

## **Readings and Evaluation:**

**Course Texts:** All readings will be available in your course readers.

### **Grading Percentages:**

Participation: 15%  
Weekly Responses: 15%  
Three Short Papers: 45%  
Final Paper Proposal: 5%  
Final Paper Presentation: 5%  
Final Paper: 15%

## **Assignments:**

### **Weekly Discussion Posts (140-400 words)**

Each week you are required to publish a Canvas post regarding that week’s readings. In these posts, you should seek to pose a question or unpack a tension that you observed in that week’s readings. Rather than summarize the readings, you should use these posts to open up a new line of analysis and conversation. Your discussion post is due by 8pm the evening before class.

### **Three Short Papers (5-7 pages each)**

Since the course is predominantly a reading seminar, the purpose of most of our class’s writing assignments is to help you develop a deeper level of comprehension of our class readings and to encourage you to see connections across our weekly sessions. Accordingly, three times during the semester, you will be asked to produce a short paper that engages with the class readings and respond to a prompt. These papers should be 5-7 pages in length.

### **Final Paper (5-7 pages)**

Anticolonialism, in addition to being a political and social movement, was also an intellectual current. As our readings document, across the twentieth-century writers, hailing from the global South and North, critiqued the perpetuation of European hegemony by drawing multiple – and conflicting – ideologies. For your final paper, you are invited to make an original argument about the anticolonial thought of one individual. You may choose to write about any individual of your choosing. The only requirement is that your chosen thinker grappled with the legacies or violence of imperialism in some manner, and you are able to access a number of her writings. In developing an original argument about your chosen anticolonialist, you should consider both the significance of

her writings on both an internal and external dimension. Therefore, evaluate not only the arguments, assumptions, and propositions which are internal to your collection of chosen texts. But also consider their relationship to external intellectual and political movements. How, for instance, do the arguments made by your chosen thinker relate to and/or depart from the anticolonial arguments made by his historical contemporaries? In addition to contextualizing your thinker in her historical moment and evaluating the construction of their anticolonial arguments, you should engage with the relevant historiography. What have previous historians said about your thinker? And how does your analysis affirm, nuance, or challenge the existing historiographical conversation?

### **Final Paper Proposal (2 pages)**

Prior to submission of your final paper, I invite you to submit a 2-page proposal describing the topic, source base, and historiographical intervention of your final paper. You should describe the central question you are seeking to answer in your paper, as well as how your work engages with or challenges the existing scholarship on your chosen topic/anticolonial thinker.

### **Final Paper Presentation (3-5 minutes in class)**

All students will briefly present on the topic and findings of their final paper. In your presentation, you should concisely describe your central argument, its historiographical significance, as well as how it relates to some of the themes and questions that we have examined in class.

### **Important Due Dates:**

September 29 <sup>th</sup>	Short Paper 1
October 27 <sup>th</sup>	Short Paper 2
November 17 <sup>th</sup>	Final Paper Proposal
November 30 <sup>th</sup>	Short Paper 3
December 4 <sup>th</sup>	Final Paper Presentation
December 15 <sup>th</sup>	Final Paper

## **Class Policies & Expectations**

### **Participation & Attendance**

This is a reading seminar. As such, its success depends on your engaged and consistent participation. I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the readings, be respectful of your classmates' time and contributions, and submit the required assignments promptly. If you are concerned about speaking in class, I encourage you to come to speak to me and do so as early as possible.

### **Office Hours & Meetings**

I am available during office hours and by appointment to help you throughout the semester. I encourage you to drop by early and often.

### **Submission Process**

Please submit all your papers and drafts via the class's Canvas website. Unless otherwise noted, the deadline for your assignments is midnight on the stated due date.

### **Late Penalty**

I will deduct a full letter grade for every twenty-four hours that an assignment is tardy—meaning an A paper will become a B+ paper if you turn it in two days late. Assignments that are more than five

days late will not be accepted. If you know that you need an extension, please come talk to me. As a rule of thumb, I do not grant extensions.

### **Technology**

Students are prohibited from using any technology—including laptops or cellphones—during our class meetings. Please silence your cell phones.

### **Academic Integrity**

Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of the following Code of Academic Integrity. More information about the University's honor policy, can be found here:

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

### **ChatGPT & AI in the Classroom**

I encourage you to not consult AI for the writing of your discussion posts, analytical papers, and final research paper. Despite the ease and performance capabilities of ChatGPT, it will not support you in developing your skills in original research and analysis. If I suspect that you used AI for a particular assignment, you will not receive credit for the assignment.

### **Accommodations**

Students with disabilities or disabling conditions who experience barriers in this course are encouraged to contact me to discuss options for access and full course participation. The Weingarten Center is also available to facilitate the removal of barriers and to ensure access and reasonable accommodations. Students with documented disabilities or disabling conditions of any kind who may need accommodations for this course or who have questions about appropriate resources are encouraged to contact the Weingarten Center: [weingartenlrc@vpul.upenn.edu](mailto:weingartenlrc@vpul.upenn.edu).

### **Classroom Culture & Inclusivity**

The University community embraces diversity of age, background, beliefs, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and other visible and non-visible categories. I welcome all students in this course and expect that all students contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment. If you have any concerns about classroom climate, please come to me to share your concern

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## **Course Schedule:**

Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>

### **Class 1: Introductions and Class Overview**

*Secondary Sources:*

- Carol C. Gould, "Transnational Solidarities," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38, no. 1 (2007): 148-164

- Lawrence Blum, “Three Kinds of Race-Related Solidarity,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38, no. 1 (2007): 53-722

## Part I: Early Imperial Skeptics? Anticolonial Thought in the Nineteenth Century

Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>

### **Class 2: Anticolonialism: Definitions and Networks of Solidarity**

*Primary Sources:*

- W.E.B. Du Bois, “To the Nations of the World,” (1900)
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dark Princess: A Romance* (1928), 3-25, 157-180, 184-196, 199-209, 212-224

*Secondary Sources:*

- Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics*, (1993), 1-5
- Frederick Petersson, “From Versailles to Bandung: Interwar Origins of Anticolonialism,” (2017), 66-80

Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

### **Class 3: Pro-Imperial Arguments at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, or Liberalism’s Storied History**

*Primary Sources:*

- J.S. Mill, “The East India Company Charter,” (1852)
- Alexis Tocqueville, “Essay on Algeria,” (1841)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire* (1999), 1-17, 46-114
- Jennifer Pitts, “Introduction,” in *Writings on Empire and Slavery Alexis de Tocqueville* (2001)
- Michael Mann, “‘Torchbearers Upon the Path of Progress’: Britain’s Ideology of ‘Moral and Material Progress,’” in *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission* (2004), 1-13, 17-26

Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

### **Class 4: Skeptical Socialists, Empire’s Early Critics?**

*Primary Sources:*

- Karl Marx, “The British Rule in India,” (1853)
- J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), 1-67, 94-109, 113-152, 223-232, 356-368
- H.M. Hyndman, “Colonies and Dependencies,” (1904)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction* (2016), 98-112

**\*\*\*First Paper Due on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>\*\*\***

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Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

**Class 5: Anti-Atrocity, but Pro-Empire? The Ambivalence of Europe’s Humanitarian Conscious**

*Primary Sources:*

- Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, “The Shame of the Nineteenth Century,” (1900)
- Edmund D. Morel, *King Leopold’s Rule in Africa* (1905), excerpts

*Secondary Sources:*

- Dean Pavlakis, “The Development of British Overseas Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Campaign,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 11, no. 1 (2010)
- Kevin Grant, “The Limits of Exposure: Atrocity Photographs in the Congo Reform Campaign,” in *Humanitarian Photography* (2015), 64-88
- Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction* (2016), 75-87
- Roland Burke, “Human Rights and Empire,” in *The Routledge History of Western Empires* (2014), 468-474

**Part II:  
A Crescendo of the Anticolonial Resistance:  
“Let’s End the Empire!”**

Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Class 6: The Anti-Imperial Awakening of the Interwar Years (1919-1939) and the Promise of the City and of Racial Solidarity**

Location: Paris & Brussels

*Primary Sources:*

- Roger N. Baldwin, “The Capital of the Men without a Country,” *The Survey*, August 1, 1927, pp. 460-467
- *Anti-Imperialist Review* 1, no. 1 (1928)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (2010), 37-74, 77-110
- Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (2015) 1-44, 116-148

Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>

**Class 7: The Principle of Self-Determination in Interwar Europe**

Location: Paris & Cairo

*Primary Sources:*

- Woodrow Wilson, “Fourteen Points,” (1914)
- Covenant of the League of Nations (1920), excerpts
- Ho Chi Minh, “Claims of the Annamite People,” (1919)
- *The Egyptian National Claims* (1919)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (2007), 3-13, 15-44, 63-97, 137-140, 215-225; (Bookstore)
  - Wolfgang Danspeckgruber and Anne-Marie Gardner, “Self-Determination,” *Encyclopedia Princetoniensis*, 1-2
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Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>

**Class 8: Lenin’s Challenge: The Promises of Self-Determination following the Russian Revolution (1917)**

Location: Moscow & Berlin

*Primary Sources:*

- V.I. Lenin, “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” (1914)
- M.N. Roy, “Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson,” (1917)
- V.I. Lenin, “On the National and Colonial Questions,” (1919)
- V.I. Lenin and M.N. Roy, “Revisions to the National and Colonial Question,” (1920)
- M.N. Roy, “Awakening of the East,” (1920)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Sobhanlal Datta Gupta, “Communism and the Crisis of the Colonial System,” in *The Cambridge History of Communism* (2017), 212-230
  - S.A. Smith, “The Russian Revolution, National Self-Determination, and Anti-Imperialism, 1917-1927,” in *Left Transnationalism* (2019), 73-98
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Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Class 9: Pan-Africanism, Communism, and the “Negro Toilers”**

Location: London & New York

*Primary Sources:*

- Claude McKay, “How Black sees Green and Red,” *The Liberator*, June 1921.
- Claude McKay, *A Long Way from Home* (1937), 56-75
- “The 1928 Comintern Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States”
- George Padmore, *The Life Struggles of Negro Toilers* (1931), 5-7, 9-23, 46-55, 78-84, 121-126

*Secondary Sources:*

- Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism: A History* (2018), 1-5; 61-79
- Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (2017): 23-61

**\*\*\*Second Paper Due on Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>\*\*\***

Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>

**Class 10: Négritude: Black Humanism and the Politics of Aesthetics**

Location: Paris

*Primary Sources:*

- Surrealist Group in Paris, “Murderous Humanitarianism,” (1932)
- “Légitime défense: Declaration,” (1932)
- Léopold Sédar Senghor, “What the Black Man Contributes,” (1939)
- Léopold Senghor, “Négritude: A Humanism of the Century,” (1966)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Souleymane Bachir Diagne, “Négritude,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Richard Watts, “Négritude, Presence African and Race,” (2009), 227-237
- Shireen Lewis, *Race, Culture, and Identity* (2006), 1-19, 23-54

Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>

**Class 11: Anti-Imperialism and Feminism: A History of Friends or Foes?**

Location: Paris, London, and Moscow

*Primary Sources:*

- Marjorie Evans, “Women and the Egyptian Nationalist Movement,” (1925)
- Jane Nardal, “Black Internationalism,” (1928)
- Paulette Nardal, “The Awakening of Race Consciousness among Black Students,” (1938)
- Efwa Kato, “What We Women Can Do,” (1934)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Shireen Lewis, *Race, Culture, and Identity*, 55-69
- Antoinette Burton, “The White Woman’s Burden: British Feminists and ‘The Indian Woman,’ 1865-1915,” (1992), 137-158.
- Sarah Kimble, “Emancipation through Secularization: French Feminist Views of Muslim Women’s Condition in Interwar Algeria,” *French Colonial History* 7 (2006): 109-128

**Part III: Anticolonial Resistance in Practice:  
A Post-1945 History of Decolonization**

Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>

**Class 12: The Algerian Revolution and French Anticolonialism**

*Primary Sources:*

- Jean-Paul Sartre, “Colonialism is a System,” (1956)
- Jean-Paul Sartre, “Preface to Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*,” (1959)
- Raymond Aron, “The Algerian Tragedy,” (1956-1957)
- Albert Camus, *The Algerian Chronicles*, (1958), 23-35, 89-116, 149-184; (Bookstore)
- “Declaration on the Right to Insubordination in the War in Algeria,” (1960)

*Secondary Sources:*

- Todd Shephard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (2008), 1-15, 55-77
- David Drake, “Sartre, Camus, and the Algerian War,” *Sartre Studies International* (1999), 16-32

**\*\*\*Final Paper Proposal Due on Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>\*\*\***

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Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>

**Class 13: Anticolonialism and Postcolonial Nationalism**

*Secondary Sources:*

- Dane Kennedy, *Decolonization: A Very Short Introduction* (2016)
  - Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire* (2022), 1-36, 142-181
  - Tamara Sivanandan, “Anticolonialism, National Liberation, and Postcolonial Nation Formation,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* (2006), 41-65.
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Wednesday November 27 – *No Class: Happy Thanksgiving!*

**\*\*\*Third Paper Due on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>\*\*\***

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Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

**Class 14: Imperial Nostalgia and the Tragedies of Postcolonial Nationalism**

- Readings to be Announced
- Final Paper Presentations in class

**\*\*\*Final Paper Due on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>\*\*\***