

HIS 589: Great Britain and the British Empire

3 Hours

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Welcome to the History of the British Empire. This is a three-hour, graduate credit course in the [Sam Houston State University History Department](#). Our emphasis on Military History means that though we survey the Empire, we stress military related topics. This semester we will explore the British experience in the First World War.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will learn the narrative history of the British Empire from the middle eighteenth century
- 2) Students will study the evolution of British military and political doctrines for controlling overseas territories
- 3) Students will learn the changing conditions of international politics affecting the Empire in this period
- 4) Students will perfect skills in electronic database use, book reviewing, and basic primary research.

Course Description and Objectives: This course will be conducted entirely on-line. The student will have no obligation to travel to the SHSU campus for any reason. Instead, we will use the Blackboard computer interface to read and comment on texts, to hold discussions about various assigned books, to write and share reviews and essays, and bring web resources to other members of the class. Each student will be responsible for reading and discussing our survey text of the Empire. After that, each student will have approximately six (6) weeks to read the assigned subject books, presenting reviews of each. Students will have a “library” of over 25 scholarly articles devoted to various topics in the Empire and the military, giving the background

of the empire in the nineteenth century. Students will also have access to JSTOR for locating articles of immediate subject interest to the various topics that will arise during the course. At the end of the class, students will produce a paper on a related subject of choice, selecting 5-7 scholarly articles and producing an historiographical essay of approximately 10 pages.

Getting Started in the On-Line Environment: The unique, fully on-line nature of the course will require you to take a few simple steps in preparation for the class. Please read the following section carefully to ensure a smooth transition into distance learning.

- 1) Please contact me at my email address as soon as you have registered for the course. Our interface will be in two dimensions: direct email contact and via Blackboard Discussions and Fora.
- 2) If you have never used it before, please inspect and familiarize yourself with [Blackboard](#). The bulk of this class will proceed utilizing this interface and students must be able to navigate it in order to do the class work.
- 3) Activate your SHSU Computer Account. You can do so on-line by beginning at the SHSU Home Page, clicking on Sam Info, and then scrolling down to click the link for Computer Accounts. You will need a user name and password to use SHSU electronic facilities like the on-line databases of the SHSU Newton Gresham Library. Most importantly, you will need access to JSTOR, an on-line compendium of thousands of scholarly articles from hundreds of top-level academic journals. The articles selected for this course will be available through JSTOR. .
- 4) If you do not already have one, please get an SHSU email account. This service is free to you as an SHSU student. **I will only respond to email from the SHSU account.** This is not to be picky but because many students attempt to utilize two or more personal email accounts. This causes confusion, loss of data, and defeats my email filter that routes graduate student correspondence into a special folder. **I will only communicate with on-line graduate students via their SHSU student email account.**

Determination of Grades:

The grading scheme for this course is very simple:

Discussion/participation on the Blackboard Discussion Forums = 30%

Combined book reviews = 50%

Final Essay = 20%

A student's grade will be determined strictly according to this formula. I am not able to allow extra work, extra credit or to curve. Grades of 90 or above will be A's; grades of 80 through 89 will constitute B's, etc.

Required Books: The following books are all required reading for the History of the British Empire. They are readily available at on-line book vendors like Barnes & Noble and can often be found on the shelves of well-stocked bookstores.

Lawrence James. [*The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*](#), (St. Martin's Press: pbk, 1997). **ISBN-10:** 031216985X This is our survey text of the Empire. We will be using it first and for just over one-half of the course. Additionally, it will be a handy reference throughout the course and for your final paper.

Paddy Griffith. [*Battle Tactics of the Western Front: the British Army's Art of Attack, 1916-1918*](#) (Yale University Press: 1996). **ISBN-10:** 0300066635

Peter Hopkirk. [*The Great Game: the Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*](#), (Kodansha America, Inc.: pbk 1994). **ISBN-10:** 1568360223 A brilliant history of the military, intelligence, and espionage duel fought under conditions of cold war between Britain and Russia for mastery over central Asia. It is particularly helpful for laying the groundwork for understanding contemporary anti-West tensions in the Islamic world.

George Robb: [*British Culture and the First World War*](#) (Palgrave Macmillan: 2002) **ISBN-10:** 0333715721 A brief but comprehensive survey of British society and culture during the First World War. George Robb concentrates not on military campaigns and battle strategies, but on the lives of ordinary Britons - how they responded to and were affected by the war, how they attempted to understand the conflict and to explain it to others, and how they have dealt with the war's legacies in the years since. (from the Amazon book description)

Scholarly Articles: The following constitute the basic selection of subject background articles. They should all be available on [JSTOR](#). Students should become very comfortable using JSTOR resources to enhance their comments regarding assigned texts as well as their written reviews of books.

1960s and 1970s

Kenneth L. Moll, "Politics, Power, and Panic: Britain's 1909 Dreadnought 'Gap'", *Military Affairs*, 29, (3), 1965, 133-44.

Helen Taft Manning, "Who Ran the British Empire 1830-1850?", *The Journal of British Studies*, 5, (1), 1965, 88-121.

G. C. Bolton, "The Founding of the Second British Empire", *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 19, (1), 1966, 195-200.

Douglas A. Lorimer, "The Role of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in English Reactions to the American Civil War", *The Historical Journal*, 19, (2), 1976, 405-20.

Arnold P. Kaminsky, "Morality Legislation and British Troops In Late Nineteenth-Century India", *Military Affairs*, 43, (2), 1979, 78-84.

1980s

P. J. Cain; A. G. Hopkins, "The Political Economy of British Expansion Overseas, 1750-1914", *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 33, (4) , 1980, 463-90.

Andrew Porter, "Britain, the Cape Colony, and Natal, 1870-1914: Capital, Shipping, and the Imperial Connexion", *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 34, (4), 1981, 554-77.

Eileen P. Sullivan, "Liberalism and Imperialism: J. S. Mill's Defense of the British Empire", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44, (4), 1983, 599-617.

C. A. Bayly, "State and Economy in India over Seven Hundred Years", *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 38, (4), 1985, 583-96.

Andrew Porter, "'Commerce and Christianity': The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Slogan", *The Historical Journal*, 28, (3), 1985, 597-621.

Cain and Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Overseas Expansion I 1688-1850", *Economic History Review*, 39(4), 1986, 501-25.

Cain and Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Overseas Expansion II 1850-1945", *Economic History Review*, 40(1), 1987, 1-26.

Patrick O'Brien, "The Costs and Benefits of British Imperialism, 1846-1914", *Past and Present*, 120, 1988, 163-200.

Andrew Porter, "The Balance Sheet of Empire, 1850-1914", *The Historical Journal*, 31, (3), 1988, 685-99.

Brian Stoddart "Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30, (4), 1988,649-73.

Patrick K. O'Brien, "The Costs and Benefits of British Imperialism 1846-1914: Reply (in Debate), *Past and Present*, 125, 1989, 192-9.

1990s and 2000s

Andrew Porter, "The South African War (1899-1902): Context and Motive Reconsidered", *The Journal of African History*, 31, (1), 1990, 43-57.

Avner Offer, "The British Empire, 1870-1914: A Waste of Money?", *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 46, (2), 1993, 215-238.

Gordon T. Stewart, "Tenzing's Two Wrist-Watches: The Conquest of Everest and Late Imperial Culture in Britain 1921-1953", *Past and Present*, 149, 1995, 170-97.

Donald F. Bittner, "Shattered Images: Officers of Royal Marines, 1867-1913", *The Journal of Military History*, 59, (1), 1995, 27-51.

David Armitage, "Making the Empire British: Scotland and the Atlantic World, 1542-1707", *Past and Present*, 155, 1997, 34-63.

John Darwin, "Imperialism and the Victorians: The Dynamics of Territorial Expansion", *The English Historical Review*, 112, (447), 1997, 614-42.

Andrew S. Thompson, "The Language of Imperialism and the Meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics, 1895-1914", *The Journal of British Studies*, 36, (2), 1997, 147-77.

Glenn R. Wilkinson, "'The Blessings of War': The Depiction of Military Force in Edwardian Newspapers", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33, (1), 1998, 97-115.

Jeremy Black, "Britain as a Military Power, 1688-1815" , *The Journal of Military History*, 64, (1), 2000, 159-77.

Mary A. Procida, "Good Sports and Right Sorts: Guns, Gender, and Imperialism in British India", *The Journal of British Studies*, 40, (4), 2001, 454-88.

Web Resources: The following resources will provide you with additional information useful in discussion, book reviews and with your final paper. Please make frequent use of these handy reference and bibliographic databases.

- 1) Victorian Studies on the Web at <http://www.victoriandatabase.com/>

- 2) Victorian Research Web at <http://victorianresearch.org/>

- 3) The Institute of Historical Research at <http://www.history.ac.uk/>

- 4) The Encyclopedia of British History at
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Britain.html>

- 5) The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum at
<http://www.empiremuseum.co.uk/>

- 6) The Public Records Office at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/virtualmuseum/default.htm>

Class Assignment Resources: The following links will assist you in creating your class book reviews:.

<http://www.library.dal.ca/how/bookrev.htm>

and

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/bookreview.html>

and

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/review.html>

COURSE POLICIES:

NOTE: Student enrollment in this course confirms that you have read and accepted these policies.

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required

activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Instructor Evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

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