

**History 616:  
Readings in Late Modern European History**

***Violence, War, and Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries***

Rick Fogarty  
Spring 2017

Class time: Th 4:15PM - 7:05PM  
Location: BB 125  
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*“...colonialism...is violence in its natural state...”*

*--Frantz Fanon, “Concerning Violence”*

***Course Description***

This readings course will examine various topics related to violence, war, and empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will pay particular attention to French and German colonialism, though we will also examine British, Belgian, and other modern colonial empires. The following are some of the key questions that we will explore:

- Is violence systemic in all imperial formations and colonial situations? If so, what factors determine the exact nature and extent of that violence?
- Can we distinguish colonial violence from the more or less organized violence we customarily call “war”?
- What roles do indigenous soldiers play in the violence of empire and war?
- How does race and racism influence violence and war?
- Can we usefully and responsibly compare the violence of colonialism and empire across time, space, and cultures?
- Are there important differences between the violence of empire during the different phases of its development: conquest and building; rule and maintenance; dissolution, collapse, or decolonization?
- How do we properly use the terms we deploy to talk about these issues: violence, war, empire, imperial, imperialism, colonial, colonialism?
- What different insights can we gain from examining imperial and colonial violence and war from close-up, individual perspectives, versus more panoramic, state-centered perspectives?

## **Requirements and Grading**

Grades will be based upon the satisfactory completion of all of the following requirements:

- Attendance and active participation in seminar discussions (50%)
- Two 5-page book reviews (10% each)
- One 15-20 page review essay (30%)

**Attendance and active participation** in class discussions are mandatory. You must complete all of the week's assigned reading by the beginning of class that week, and be prepared to discuss it with the class.

Details about the **book review** and **review essay** assignments appear below.

Please take note of the policy of the Department of History on **plagiarism**: "Plagiarism is taking (which includes purchasing) the words and ideas of another and passing them off as one's own work. If in a formal paper a student quotes someone, that student must use quotation marks and give a citation. Paraphrased or borrowed ideas are to be identified by proper citations. Plagiarism will result, at the minimum, in a failing grade for the assignment." I will add that plagiarism violates the educational mission of the University, the ethical foundations of the scholarly endeavor, and the essential trust between instructors and students. Do not do it. If you do, and I catch you, I will enforce the appropriate penalty, including referral to University authorities for formal adjudication and sanction.

As you may imagine, the University at Albany as a whole also takes plagiarism and other issues of academic integrity very seriously. Please familiarize yourself with the **Standards of Academic Integrity** published in the Undergraduate Bulletin ([http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements\\_degree.htm#standards\\_integrity](http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_degree.htm#standards_integrity)).

I will make reasonable **accommodations** in this course for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please notify the Director of the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137, 442-5490). That office will provide the course instructor with verification of your disability, and will recommend appropriate accommodations.

## **Books**

- Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*
- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Norton Critical Edition (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> edition); and film, Francis Ford Coppola, dir., *Apocalypse Now Redux*
- Isabell V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*
- Michelle R. Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa*
- Benjamin Claude Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902*

- Martin Thomas, ed., *The French Colonial Mind, Volume 2: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism*
- Dick Van Galen Last, *Black Shame: African Soldiers in Europe, 1914-1922*
- Raffael Scheck, *Hitler's African Victims: The German Army Massacres of Black French Soldiers in 1940*
- Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, eds., *Empires at War, 1911-1923*
- Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power*
- Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*
- David Motadel, *Islam and Nazi Germany's War*
- David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*

## **Schedule**

Week 1, 1/26: Introduction: H.L. Wesseling, "Colonial Wars: An Introduction," and "Colonial Wars and Armed Peace, 1871-1914," in his *Imperialism and Colonialism: Essays on the History of European Expansion*

Week 2, 2/2: Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*

Week 3, 2/9: Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*; Coppola, dir., *Apocalypse Now Redux*; Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*;" Edward W. Said, "Two Visions in *Heart of Darkness*;" Pamela Demery, "*Apocalypse Now Redux* Returns to *Heart of Darkness*;" Louis K. Greiff, "Conrad's Ethics and the Margins of *Heart of Darkness*;" Margot Norris, "Modernism and Vietnam;" Linda J. Dryden, "'To Boldly Go': *Heart of Darkness* and Popular Culture"

Week 4, 2/16: No meeting, but review of Hull's *Absolute Destruction* due by 7:05 p.m.

Week 5, 2/23: Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*

Week 6, 3/2: No meeting, but read Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*

Week 7, 3/9: Thomas, *The French Colonial Mind*, Vol. 2

Week 8, 3/16: No meeting, spring break, but read Frantz Fanon, "Concerning Violence," from *The Wretched of the Earth*

Week 9, 3/23: Van Galen Last, *Black Shame*

Week 10, 3/30: Scheck, *Hitler's African Victims*

Week 11, 4/6: Gerwarth and Manela, eds., *Empires at War*

Week 12, 4/13: McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express*

Week 13, 4/20: Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*

Week 14, 4/27: Motadel, *Islam and Nazi Germany's War*

Week 15, 5/4: Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*

Final paper due no later than **Thursday, May 11**

## ***Book Reviews and Review Essay***

Each student will write two book reviews and a longer review essay. The first written assignment will be a 5-page review of Isabell Hull's *Absolute Destruction*, due by the end of our regular seminar meeting time on Thursday, February 16. The second will be a 5-page review of one book of your choice from among any of the books we read subsequently, due by the beginning of class the day we will be discussing the book you have reviewed. The third assignment, a review essay, will be 15-20 pages assessing the different approaches to writing the history of violence, war, and empire that we will have encountered throughout the semester, due on May 11. You will submit each essay via an email attachment in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx, or even .rtf). No .pdf or Mac formatted documents, please.

For each book you review in the shorter, single-book essays you will incorporate **two other scholarly reviews** into your analysis. These must be scholarly, i.e., published in a reputable academic source such as:

- A scholarly journal (e.g., *The American Historical Review*, not *Civil War Times*)
- A well-regarded periodical (e.g., *The New York Review of Books*, or even the Sunday book review sections of major national newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or the *Los Angeles Times*, not *People Magazine*)
- A trustworthy Internet resource (e.g., *H-Net Review*, not *Amazon.com*, or *Wikipedia*)

There is nothing inherently unworthy about the negative examples I've just listed here, perhaps, but for our purposes only scholarly sources will do. You can find reviews of books published in journals fairly easily via databases accessible through the library's web site (EBSCO, World Cat, etc.), and some internet sources (H-Net, or similar scholarly listservs). A word of caution: the Internet is laudable for its wealth of information and the democratic way in which that information can be both produced and consumed, but the overall lack of vetting and filtering results in a great deal of unreliable and inexperienced opinion. Not to put too fine a point on it, but any fool can publish anything on the Internet. Thus, you must use only scholarly reviews.

How to incorporate these reviews into your own reviews? More importantly, how to write a book review in the first place? The latter is what these assignments are to teach, but I'll just say for now that a review is not merely a summary, or "book report." Some summary will be necessary, but the preponderance of the review should be given over to analysis, i.e., your assessment of the book's arguments and evidence, even style (the way in which the argument and evidence is presented). Please note that I use words like "judgment" and "assessment," rather than "opinion." The subtle difference is that the former are terms that connote thoughtful and careful consideration, whereas opinions are often hastily arrived at and ill-informed. In short, anyone can have an opinion, but experts are in a position to make judgments that carry real weight.

We will talk more about the art of writing book reviews as the semester goes on, but for now let me point you to H-Net's guidelines for reviewers at: [http://www.h-net.org/reviews/guidelines\\_books.php](http://www.h-net.org/reviews/guidelines_books.php). Some aspects of these guidelines will not apply to the kinds of reviews you'll be writing in this class, but some will, so have a look. At the very least, you will be following the **technical guidelines** (header information, style, etc.) for H-Net book reviews, with slight modifications. Please disregard, though, most of the instructions in the "Text Guidelines" section, which are designed to make the reviews easier to publish on-line. In this class, your reviews will conform to the following **technical parameters**: **typed, double-spaced, numbered, and stapled** pages, with **one-inch margins** and **12-point Times New Roman font**. You will cite all the sources you've consulted, including the other reviews, in footnotes, according to standard scholarly practice and format (*Chicago Manual of Style*; for quick reference, see: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)).

Your format should look like this example:

David A. Bell, *The First Total War. Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. x + 420 pp. \$27.00, (cloth) ISBN 978-0-618-34965-4.

Reviewed for History 626/628/642 by Your Name—in **boldface**, Department of History, University at Albany, SUNY

Your title for the review—something creative, but appropriate

Body text—double-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font. Use footnotes, formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, for references, including references to other reviews.

Another way to learn the standard conventions of scholarly review-writing is to read other reviews, which this assignment, not coincidentally, requires you to do. The publications listed above (*AHR*, *NYRB*, H-Net) are all good places to find models (and sometimes anti-models, since there are certainly badly done reviews out there!).

But what about the first question, about incorporating other reviews into your own? This should, actually, be very easy. You will have read the book, and you will have before you the opinions of two other scholars who have also read that same book. They will likely be specialists in the field, and so they may have insights that you yourself may not have. This should enrich your own analysis, even while you give full and proper credit to these other scholars in your own review. However, you may find yourself in disagreement with the analysis of one or both of these other scholars. You may even find yourself wondering if they've read the same book you did. One scholar might love everything about a book you thought had serious problems. Another might dismiss as shallow a book you found to be thoughtful and informative. It happens. But don't let the exalted status or tenured professorships of these other reviewers intimidate you or prevent you from asserting your own right to make a judgment. Now, you must support your evaluation of the book, of course, and provide a convincing argument about why you don't share another's assessment. And, conversely, it's possible that a reviewer can make observations that radically alter your own perception of a given text, that you find his or her analysis convincing. But whatever the case, remember that you've read the book, perhaps (I hope!) even more carefully than other reviewers, and you ought to present the strongest, most honest case you can.

The purpose of the longer review essay is to allow you to explore what you have learned over the semester about different ways of studying and writing about violence, war, and empire. Ideally, this will put you in a position to make more sophisticated and more informed judgments about all the texts and issues under consideration. The idea is NOT for you to write a dozen separate reviews and splice them together. A review essay is just that, an essay—a substantial piece of writing that grapples with difficult issues and makes mature, reasoned assessments. Use the texts under consideration as a platform to ask questions, make judgments, think broadly about important issues that the works raise or address. Again, remember that this is a class on violence, war, and empire, so your essay should discuss the books under review in light of what they can teach us about the broader relationship among these three phenomena.