Course Description: Over the last three decades, Postcolonialism has emerged as, depending on who is doing the describing, an epistemological framework to understand world history after 1492; a means by which to coopt the oppositional political energy of minority groups within western societies; a literary movement that seeks to elevate the status of provincial Englishes to that of England; a derivative and mimetic variant of postmodernism and post-structuralism from third world scholars; and in a number of other variants. This graduate seminar offers a particular 'take' on Postcolonialism that emphasizes three central characteristics: (a) its inextricable origins in histories of colonial resistance to occupation, underdevelopment, racism and imperialism and the consequent need to be relentlessly global and contrapuntal in our understanding of the present; (b) its frequently contradictory but explicit commitment to both anti-essentialism and a humanist project of emancipation; and (c) the continued, indeed increased, salience of Postcolonialism as a framing epistemology to understand the planetary crisis we face in terms of development, the environment and global neoliberalism.

This is a graduate seminar, which means informed class participation is an integral aspect of the course. While I will drop into a lecture-style monolog on occasion, for the most part students will lead and be part of discussions of the material that we cover each week. Students will volunteer to lead the discussion for the various readings, which entails preparing a one-page summary of the central ideas of that reading and raise provocative questions regarding the same. These summaries will be circulated to your seminar colleagues at the outset of class. Each student will volunteer for roughly the same number of such summaries by the end of the semester. Such summaries and class participation account for 25% of your final grade. The remaining 75% will come from a research paper on some aspect of third world development that you will write for this seminar (more on the research paper in class).

Important: (a) I generally do not assign an ‘incomplete’ for a course except under the most compelling circumstances. So please plan your work accordingly. (b) Please read the attached document on academic honesty carefully. As far as plagiarism goes, my policy is very simple: I will explain very clearly what plagiarism is at the beginning of the course, and tell you precisely what the consequences will be if you engage in it. Thereafter, one strike and you are out: an “F” for the course and handing the case over to the Office of Judicial Affairs for further punitive action. I will go over this in class as well.

Course Readings: We begin with a few background readings that introduce various ‘takes’ on Postcolonialism. These have all been uploaded onto the Laulima website for this course. From about the end of February onwards, we will be reading a book-a-week for the remainder of the semester. All the books bar one are available as Kindle editions and that will be the primary medium through which we’ll be reading them. In thematic terms, the early readings offer exemplars of ur-postcolonial texts; in the middle section we look closely
at the intersection of postcolonial and indigenous politics; and in the last part of the course we look at the relevance of Postcolonialism for the planetary crisis of sustainability and survivability we face today.

You may want to order the books as soon as you’ve decided you are doing the course. They are:


**Course Schedule:**

*Jan 16th:* Introduction to the course; course readings; participants; seminar rules and expectations; policy on academic honesty; and self-introduction by participants. To set the tenor for the course, we will read the following essay (and the comments that follow) by Mahmood Mamdani, “Beware Bigotry– free speech and the Zapiro cartoons” accessible at: http://kafila.org/2010/05/31/beware-bigotry-free-speech-and-the-zapiro-cartoons-mahmood/

*Jan 23rd:* Backgrounder: multiple approaches to the study of Postcolonialism; histories of Eurocentrism, Colonialism, Imperialism, Underdevelopment, Modernization etc.


**Suggested Readings** (up on Laulima): These readings will give you a general backgrounder in Postcolonialism. They are, of course, nothing but the tip of the tip of the iceberg. They are all uploaded on Laulima – I advise skim-reading them initially and going into greater depth in those instances where, for whatever reason, the work really grabs you:

Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (original 1955).
Robert Young, *A Very Short Introduction to Postcolonialism*.

Robert Young, short chapters on Colonialism, Imperialism, Neocolonialism and Postcolonialism from his book *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*.

Ashis Nandy, excerpts from “The Intimate Enemy” and from “At the Edge of Psychology.”

Jan 30th: One of the most influential texts that inaugurated Postcolonialism was Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). For today, we will read excerpts from that book as well as its sequel, *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) and “Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community,” *Critical Inquiry* (1982). (All on Laulima).

**Suggested readings:** While critiques of Postcolonialism, of the Said-ian turn and various other matters abound, the following three works summarize the various positions: Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory*, Arif Dirlik, “The Postcolonial Aura,” and Benita Parry, “Liberation Theory,” – all on Laulima. A useful distinction between Postcolonialism and other “posts” (-modernism, -structuralism etc.) can be found in Anthony Appiah’s essay “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern” from his *In My Father’s House* (on Laulima).

Feb 6th: How does one think about the past when what we know of our past has come to us through disciplines intertwined with imperialism and Eurocentrism? Is it possible to write de-colonial or non-Orientalist histories of the past? We will read Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History*, and the introduction to his *Provincializing Europe*, (Princeton, 1999). (On Laulima).

**Suggested readings:** Some essays have been especially nuanced about the difficulties (impossibility?) of recovering a prelapsarian past after the advent of colonialism and Eurocentrism, as well as on the multiple and complex ways in which the colonial instruments of governance have complicated the field of postcolonial identity and politics. I would recommend especially Nicholas Dirks, “Castes of Mind,” Lata Mani, “Contentious Traditions: the debate on SATI in Colonial India,” *Cultural Critique* (1987), and Arjun Appadurai, “Number in the Colonial Imagination”. (all on Laulima.) While the multiple volumes of Subaltern Studies remain the best sources by which to access that body of scholarship, influential pieces (up on Laulima) include Ranajit Guha, “On some aspects of the historiography of colonial India,” and “The Prose of Counter-insurgency” (under Guha.pdf), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” and “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography.” Homi Bhabha’s work on postcoloniality has been excerpted here from his book *The Location of Culture*.

Feb 20th: Movie: Battle for Algiers (discussion self-moderated by students as instructor will be out of town for this class).

Feb 27th: Along with Said’s work, Frantz Fanon’s is widely considered foundational to Postcolonialism. We read his enormously rich and complex book Black Skin, White Masks for today’s meeting. (The PDF of the book is up on Laulima).

Mar 6th: More from Fanon, this time on the “Pitfalls of Nationalist Consciousness” (excerpted from his The Wretched of the Earth) and excerpts from David Macey’s Fanon: A Biography (Verso, 2000) (all available on Laulima).

Suggested reading: on the nature of postcolonial African nationalism see the two essays by Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics” and “Provisional Notes on the Postcolony” – both on Laulima.

Mar 13th: We move towards recent works that engage Postcolonialism and Indigenous politics. For today we will read Glen Coulthard, Red Skin, White Masks: Rejection the Colonial Politics of Recognition (Minnesota, 2014-Kindle).


Mar 27th: Spring Break

Apr 3rd: Good Friday – Holiday.


Apr 17th: Julie Chu, Cosmologies of Credit: Transnational Mobilities and the Politics of Destination in China (Duke, 2010-Kindle).


May 8th: final class – presentations of their research papers by seminar participants.

May 15th: Final drafts of research papers due to me by e-mail at 4:00 pm.

Academic Honesty

The department holds its graduate students to the highest standards of academic integrity. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:
n Using the same paper for more than one class without explicit permission from the instructors.

n Cutting and pasting directly from a website or other source without attribution.

n Using sources or referring to sources without directly referencing the materials.

n Passing off work done by other students as your own.

n Cheating on tests.

No forms of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. If a student is found to have engaged in a form of academic dishonesty, consequences will range from failure in the course to suspension from the program. Evidence of academic dishonesty within a course will be forwarded first to the graduate chair and then, following the procedures for the University of Hawaii system, to the Office of Judicial Affairs. A record of charges will be kept in the student’s file. More information regarding this subject can be found on the Office of Student Affair’s website in the student conduct code.

Source: Graduate Student Guide, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii at Manoa. Accessible at: http://www.politicalscience.hawaii.edu/3-working/grad-documents/gradeguide12011.pdf p. 28