

PSCI 23911: Modernity and Coloniality, *or*, Decolonizing the Canon

**Department of Political Science
The College of Wooster
Spring 2020**

**Professor: Sid Simpson
Teaching Apprentice: Cat Long**

Course Information:

TR 8:00am - 9:20am
Kauke Hall 238

Contact Information:

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Office Hours: Wednesdays from 2pm to 4pm in Morgan 303 or by appointment

Course Description:

The “Western canon,” long associated with an education in the liberal arts, is undeniably intertwined with the history of colonialism and imperialism. In this course, we will explore what it means to “de-colonize” the canon by reading selections from post-colonial theorists (e.g. Fanon, Said, Gandhi, etc.) as well as de-colonial theorists (e.g. Quijano, Mignolo, Wynter, etc.) to criticize Eurocentric forms of domination and deconstruct the ontological and epistemological categories that the “Western canon” embodies. Questions we will wrestle with throughout the semester include: How are power and knowledge related? How does Eurocentric philosophy produce and enforce categories of race? What does it mean to be a subaltern voice or have disqualified knowledge? What are the political and ethical possibilities of colonized people? How are colonial categories internalized and reproduced? Why and how should we read the “Western canon” in light of de-colonial critique?

Course Requirements:

Students are required to complete all assigned readings, participate actively during class meetings (see section B), and write two papers.

A. Required Texts

Readings will either come from the books listed below or be available on Moodle.

Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Monthly Review Press, 2001.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2007.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press, 2008.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press, 2005.

Gandhi, Mohandas. *Hind Swaraj*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. University of California Press, 2001.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1979.

B. Grading

Grades will be based on two papers (12-15 pages each, due March 5th and April 30th by 5 p.m. for 30% each), and participation (40%).

Participation includes not only attendance and active engagement in class, but two presentations of scheduled readings (each worth 25% of your participation grade, or 10% of your entire course grade).

Late assignments will be deducted one third of a letter grade (e.g., from a B+ to a B) for every 24 hours that the assignment is late.

The grading scale is standard:

A: 93-100	C+: 77-79
A-: 90-92	C: 73-76
B+: 87-89	C-: 70-72
B: 83-86	D: 60-69
B-: 80-82	F: 59 or below

No incompletes will be given for this class.

Academic Honesty and the Code of Academic Integrity

The College's understanding and expectations in regard to issues of academic honesty are fully articulated in the Code of Academic Integrity as published in *The Scot's Key* and form an essential part of the implicit contract between the student and the College. The Code provides a framework at Wooster to help students develop and exhibit honesty in their academic work. You are expected to know and abide by the rules of the institution as described in *The Scot's Key* and the *Handbook of Selected College Policies*.

Learning Center: Academic Support and Disabilities.

The Learning Center (ext. 2595) offers services designed to help students improve their overall academic performance. Sessions are structured to promote principles of effective learning and academic management. Any student on campus may schedule sessions at the Learning Center. The Learning Center also offers a variety of services and accommodations to students with disabilities based on appropriate documentation, nature of disability, and academic need. In order to initiate services, students should meet with the director of the Learning Center, at the start of the semester to discuss reasonable accommodations.

Schedule of Readings:

January 14: *Kant and Democratic Peace Theory, Hegel and the End of History*

January 16: Christopher Columbus, *Letter to Luis De Sant' Angel 1493*; Ferdinand, King of Aragon, *Letter to the Taino/Arawak Indians*; and Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (pp. 3-17, "Synopsis, Prologue, Preface, Hispaniola," and "the Kingdoms of Hispaniola")

January 21: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism I* (pp. 31-53, beginning through section that ends "The idea, an annoying fly.")

January 23: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism II* (pp. 54-78, to the end)

January 28: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (pp. 89-119 "The Lived Experience of the Black Man" & pp. 198-206 "By Way of Conclusion")

January 30: Sylvia Wynter, *The Pope Must Have Been Drunk, the King of Castile a Madman: Culture as Actuality, and the Caribbean Rethinking Modernity*

February 4: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth I* (pp. 1-31, "On Violence")

February 6: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth II* (pp. 32-62 "On Violence" cont'd.)

February 11: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth III* (pp. 145-180 "On National Culture")

February 13: Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj I* (pp. 11-65, stop before "What is True Civilization?")

February 18: Mohandas Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj II* (pp. 66-119 "What is True Civilization?" to end)

February 20: Edward Said, *Orientalism I* (pp. 1-28 "Introduction")

February 25: Edward Said, *Orientalism II* (pp. 284-328 "The Last Phase")

February 27: Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe I* (pp. 3-11 "Introduction" up until "Subaltern Studies..." heading, and pp. 97-113 "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts")

March 3: Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe II* (pp. 237-255 "Reason and the Critique of Historicism")

March 5: *Guest Speaker:* Garrett FitzGerald, “From Postcoloniality to Decoloniality;”
First Paper Due by 5pm

March 24: Aníbal Quijano, *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America I* (pp. 533-556, stop before “Eurocentrism and Historical Experience in Latin America”)

March 26: Aníbal Quijano, *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America II* (pp. 556-574, “Eurocentrism and Historical Experience in Latin America” to the end)

March 31: Walter D. Mignolo, *Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom*

April 2: María Lugones, *Toward a Decolonial Feminism*

April 7: María José Méndez, ‘The River Told Me:’ *Rethinking Intersectionality from the World of Berta Cáceres*

April 9: Sylvia Wynter, *Is ‘Development’ a Purely Empirical Concept or also Teleological? A Perspective from ‘We the Underdeveloped’*

April 14: Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony I* (pp. 24-65 “Of Commandment”)

April 16: Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony II* (pp. 66-101 “On Private Indirect Government”)

April 21: Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony III* (pp. 102-141 “The Aesthetics of Vulgarities”)

April 23: Kyle Whyte, *Indigenous Climate Change Studies: Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene*

April 28: Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*

April 30: Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, *Decolonization is not a Metaphor; Second Paper Due by 5pm*