

Anticolonial Political Thought

POLI 341D 001

Instructor: Nazmul Sultan, Assistant Professor of Political Theory, UBC.

Office Hours: Tuesday 2.00-3.00 PM, Buchanan C421 (also available via appointment)

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Class Meetings: MW 2.00-3.30 PM at West Mall Swing Space (SWNG), Room 222.

Course Description:

With the rise and consolidation of global empires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the political thought of the non-European world came to be organized around a shared set of concerns. The framing of modern Asian and African political thought as “anticolonial” dates back to the latter half of the past century, but its reach proved to be temporally expansive and conceptually capacious. As the course hopes to show, anticolonialism as a theoretical problem was neither limited to the specific project of independent postcolonial statehood nor confined within the territories of European empires. It was a language of political imagination as much as it was an answer to the question of empire. The problem of anticolonialism captured, at once, the rejection of empire, a new critique of the global racial order, the founding of democratic states in the non-European world, and the formation of a myriad of international agendas and organizations.

This course will take up the challenge of reconsidering the place of the anticolonial moment in the history of political thought. It invites a reconsideration of anticolonial political thought beyond its diagnosis of the imperial blind spots of modern European political thought. The course will consider how anticolonial thinkers recast foundational political ideas such as democracy and sovereignty in the process of resisting empire. Along the way, we will tackle some of the big questions in empire and anticolonialism studies: how did European understanding of empire and colonialism change from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century? What were the theoretical assumptions that helped reconcile empire and democracy in the global nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Was the nation-state an inevitable outcome of colonial rule? And how did the long history of colonial subjection shape the understanding of democracy in the postcolonial world? In so doing, the course seeks to explore how anticolonial thought simultaneously added to the conceptual content of modern political thought and offered resources to reflect on the global condition of modern political ideas and norms.

Course Requirements:

- 1) **Midterm Exam:** An in-class midterm exam will be held on March 1. The questions will seek to evaluate your knowledge of the assigned readings. There might also be a short essay

question designed to evaluate your critical interpretive skills. Further details about the midterm will be shared in class.

- 2) **Final Paper:** The final paper will be due on April 22. The paper will invite you to critically evaluate the broader themes of the course. You will be asked to write a paper within the word range of 2,000 words (further details about the final paper can be found on Canvas).
- 3) **Discussion Board Participation:** You will be required to submit your comments on the assigned readings **four times** over the semester via Canvas. You are free to choose the sessions you want to comment on. Please note that your comments will have to be submitted before a given class begins. **Please also keep in mind that your comments should address these prompts: (i) What, if any, is original about the arguments presented in the reading in question? (ii) What is the most significant weakness of the argument? (iii) Does this weakness undermine or negate the original dimension of the argument identified above?** You may write your response in 2-3 paragraphs, but the word count should not exceed 500 words. Each discussion board submission will count as 5% of your grade (overall 20%).

Attendance and Late Paper Policy:

Attendance is highly encouraged. You are unlikely to understand the driving themes of the course unless you regularly attend lectures.

Late papers will be penalized. I will deduct one full grade (A to B, for example) for each day of late submission. If you have a compelling reason and get in touch with me at least 24 hours prior to the deadline, an extension may be granted (no more than 48 hours).

Grade Distribution:

Midterm Exam: 30%

Final Paper: 50%

Participation: 20%

Academic Integrity:

Any instance of plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the paper, and likely of the class. It will also be referred to the University for further action. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Schedule:

Week 1: What is Anticolonial Political Thought?

Session 1 (January 9):

No readings required

Session 2 (January 11):

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, "The Psychology of Indian Nationalism," *The Review of Nations*, Geneva (1927).
2. Kwame Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom* (London: Panaf, 1973 [1942]), 13-41.*

Week 2: What is Anticolonial Political Thought? (Continued)

Session 1 (January 16):

Selected Documents of the Bandung Conference (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1955).

Session 2 (January 18):

David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 1-131.

Week 3: Enlightenment and Empire I

Session 1 (January 23):

1. Rammohun Roy, "Petition against the Press Regulation" and "On the Settlement in India by Europeans" in *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* (Calcutta: Sadharan Brahma Samaj, 1947 [1823, 1829]) 12-31, 79-86.*
2. Partha Chatterjee, "Equality of Subjects," in *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 134-158.

Session 2 (January 25):

1. Michel de Montaigne, "On the Cannibals," in *The Complete Essays* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 228-241.*
2. Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (NJ: Princeton UP, 2003), 11-71, 258-83.*

Week 4: Enlightenment and Empire II

Session 1 (January 30):

1. Adam Smith, "Of Colonies," in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith, vol 2 ed. Edwin Cannan (London: Methuen, 1904) (selections)*
2. Barbara Arneil, "Jeremy Bentham: Pauperism, Colonialism, Imperialism," *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 4 (2021): 1147-1158

Session 2 (February 1):

1. Simón Bolívar, *El Libertador: Writings of Simón Bolívar*, ed. David Bushnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) (selections)*
2. Joshua Simon, *The Ideology of Creole Revolution: Imperialism and Independence in American and Latin American Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), Ch. 4.

Week 5: Empire and Anticolonialism in the Age of Progress

Session 1 (February 6):

1. John Stuart Mill, "Civilization," in *Dissertations and Discussions, Political Philosophical and Historical* (J.W. Parker, 1859), 160-205.
2. Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India," *New York Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1853.

Session 2 (February 8):

1. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, *Equality* [Samya], trans. Bibek Debroy (New Delhi: Liberty Institute, 2002 [1879]).
2. Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (NJ: Princeton UP, 2005), 1-22.

Week 6: Discourses of Backwardness: From the Economy to Gender

Session 1 (February 13):

1. R.C. Dutt, *England and India: A Record of Progress during a Hundred Years 1785-1885* (London: Chatto & Windus 1897) (selections).

Session 2 (February 15):

Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995).

Week 7: no classes (midterm break)

Week 8: The Gandhian Moment

February 27: M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, ed. Anthony Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 13-75*

March 1: In-class midterm exam

Week 9: Anticolonialism and/or Nationalism

Session 1 (March 6):

1. Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1918). (selections)
2. Sun Yat-Sen, "The Principle of Nationalism," in *Three Principles of the People* (Chungking: Ministry of Information of the Republic of China, 1943) (selections)

Session 2 (March 8):

The Tagore-Gandhi debate (selections)

Week 10: Decolonization: Meaning and History I

Session 1 (March 13):

1. Ho Chi Minh, *On Revolution: Selected Writings, 1920-1966* (New York: Praeger, 1967) (selections)
2. Kevin Duong, "Universal Suffrage as Decolonization," *American Political Science Review* 115, no. 2 (2021): 412-428.

Session 2 (March 15):

1. Stuart Ward, "The European Provenance of Decolonization," *Past & Present* 230 (2016): 227-260.
2. B.R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste* (New Delhi: Navayana, 2016) (selections)

Week 11: Decolonization: Meaning and History II

Session 1 (March 20):

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (NY: Grove Press, 2004), 1-51.

Session 2 (March 22):

Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 1-49.

Week 12: From Anticolonialism to Postcolonialism

Session 1 (March 27):

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, "Government and the People," in *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches*, vol. 3, March 1953-August 1957 (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958), 137-144.

2. Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Development: Uhuru na maendeleo. A selection from writings and speeches 1968-1973*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1973 (selections)

Session 2 (March 29):

1. Edward Said, "Empire, Geography, and Culture," in *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 3-15.

2. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for "Indian Pasts?" *Representations* 37 (1992): 1-26.

Week 13: Global Visions of Anticolonial Political Thought

Session 1 (April 3):

Tim Harper, *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021) (selections).

Session 2 (April 5):

1. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Color and Democracy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1945) (selections).

2. Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (NJ: Princeton UP, 2019), 142-82.

Week 14: Anticolonialism and the History of Political Thought

Session 1 (April 10):

1. Adom Getachew and Karuna Mantena, “Anticolonialism and the Decolonization of Political Theory,” *Critical Times* 4, no. 3 (2021): 359-388.
2. John Dunn, “Why We Need a Global History of Political Thought,” in *Markets, Morals, Politics*, pp. 285-310. Harvard University Press, 2018.

Session 2 (April 12): No readings (general discussion)

Acknowledgement

UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

General Academic Policies

Regular attendance in lectures and tutorials and participation (in tutorials) is expected. All assignments must be completed and handed in. Students who do not attend regularly or fail to hand in an assignment may be disallowed from writing the final exam.

Read the university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may affect you.

Students who wish to appeal grades assigned to their academic work may do so. The initial appeal should be made to the TA or course instructor. If the student remains unsatisfied with this process, he/she may proceed to the head of the department or further to a formal committee established in accordance with University policies.

Religious holidays – UBC permits students who are scheduled to attend classes or write examinations on holy days of their religions to notify their instructor in advance of these days and their wish to observe them by absenting themselves from class or examination. Instructors provide opportunity for students to make up work or examinations missed without penalty. (Policy # 65.)

UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC's policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to University services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and to create a welcoming environment. Students with a disability should first meet with an [Centre for Accessibility](#) advisor to determine what accommodations/services you are eligible for.

University Values and Priorities:

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available [here](https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success) (<https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>)

Academic Accommodations and Concessions:

If you experience unanticipated events or circumstances that interfere with your ability to accomplish your academic coursework, you may be eligible for academic concession. For more information on concessions, please see Arts Advising:

<https://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/academic-performance/help-academic-concession/>

If you miss marked coursework (assignment, quiz) and you are an Arts student, review the Faculty of Arts' [academic concession page](#) and then complete Arts Academic Advising's [online academic concession form](#), so that an advisor can evaluate your concession case. If you are a student in a different Faculty, please consult [your Faculty's webpage on academic concession](#), and then contact me where appropriate.

If your situation is related to an experience of sexual violence, you have the option of contacting UBC's [Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office \(SVPRO\)](#) (604 822 1588) who can assist you with your academic concession.

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

UBC is committed to the academic success of students with disabilities. UBC's policy on Academic Accommodations for students with disabilities aims to remove barriers and provide equal access to University services, ensure fair and consistent treatment of all students, and to create a welcoming environment. Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the [Centre for Accessibility](#). The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with [Policy 73: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

Academic Accommodations for Religious or Spiritual Experiences

The University is obligated to comply with the BC Human Rights Code in accommodating students observances of sincerely held religious beliefs. If you would like to request an academic concession because of a conflict with a religious observance, please see your academic advisor. To learn more visit:

Academic Integrity and Responsibility

As a member of this class, you are responsible for contributing to the course objectives through your participation in class activities and your work on essays, exams, and other projects. In the process of coming into your own as an independent, responsible participant in the academic community, you are encouraged to seek advice, clarification, and guidance in your learning from your instructor and/or Teaching Assistant. If you decide to seek help beyond the resources of this course, you are responsible for ensuring that this help does not lead you to submit others' work as your own. If an outside tutor or other person helps you, show this policy to your tutor or helper: make sure you both understand the limits of this person's permissible contribution. If you are uncertain, consult your instructor or TA.

Academic communities depend on their members' honesty and integrity in representing the sources of reasoning, claims, and wordings that appear in their work. Like any other member of the academic community, you will be held responsible for the accurate representation of your sources: the means by which you produced the work you are submitting. If you are found to have misrepresented your sources and to have submitted others' work as your own, penalties may follow. Your case may be forwarded to the Head of the department, who may decide that you should receive zero for the assignment. The Head will report your case to the Dean's Office, where the report will remain on file. The Head may decide, in consultation with your instructor, that a greater penalty is called for, and will forward your case to the Dean's Office. After an interview in the Dean's Office, your case may be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Academic Misconduct. Following a hearing in which you will be asked to account for your actions, the President may apply penalties including zero for the assignment; zero for the course; suspension from the university for a period ranging from 4 to 24 months; a notation on your permanent record. The penalty may be a combination of these.

Academic communities also depend on their members' living up to the commitments they make. By enrolling in this course, you make commitments to an academic community: you are responsible for meeting deadlines, and attending class and engaging in class activities. If you find that you cannot meet a deadline or cannot participate in a course activity, discuss your situation with your instructor or TA before the deadline or before your absence.

Like any academic author submitting work for review and evaluation, you are guaranteeing that the work you submit for this course has not already been submitted for credit in another course. Your submitting work from another course, without your instructor's prior agreement, may result in penalties such as those applied to the misrepresentation of sources.

Illness and Absence

If you experience medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, please notify Arts Academic Advising. If you are registered with Access and Diversity, you should notify your instructor at least two weeks before examination dates. If

you are planning to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other commitments, you should discuss your commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

Reach out and ask for help if you need it

University students often encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer student's support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record. For more information: <https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert>

For information about addressing mental or physical health concerns, including seeing a UBC counselor or doctor, visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/health-wellness>

Respectful University Environment

UBC recognizes that “the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued.” The full *UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff* can be found at <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment/files/UBC-Statement-on-Respectful-Environment-2014.pdf>. Students should read this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct, at: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,750,0>

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office (<http://equity.ubc.ca>), or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students: <https://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca>

Equity and Harassment

UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All peoples should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC's Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: "unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents." Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment, you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC), and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life. Resources are available at:

Sexual Assault Support Centre, (SASC)
249M, Student Union Building, UBC
604-827-5180
sasc@ams.ubc.ca
<http://amssasc.ca>

Equity and Inclusion Office
2306 – 1874 East Mall (Brock Hall)
604.822.6353
equity@equity.ubc.ca
<http://equity.ubc.ca>