HH 4026 Decolonisation of the British Empire in Asia and Africa

Module Convenor: Dr. Florence Mok

Seminar on every Monday 12:30-15:30
Student Consultation Hour on every Monday 15:30-16:30
(Venue: LHS TR+27)

Course Description:

After the end of the Second World War, the British Empire shifted its imperialist policy due to increased economic costs to sustain its colonies and the loss of strategically important spots, such as India and Suez. The rise of the United States and the Soviet Union also led to changing balance of power. With the rise of nationalist sentiments in Asia and Africa, it became increasingly uneconomical and difficult for Britain to hold on to colonies, leading to decolonisations in the 1950s and 1960s. This module explores the political, economic, social and diplomatic factors behind the decline of the British Empire and whether the Empire was strong or weak post-1945. It also examines how patterns of decolonisation varied in British colonies in Asia and Africa. Decolonisation was executed through diverging means in different pace. For example, democratisations and decentralisations took place in Malaya and Kenya soon after the Second World War while democratic reforms were absent in Hong Kong, which Sremained a British colony until 1997. Lastly, the module investigates various means employed by the colonial governments to suppress dissidents and capture the 'hearts and minds' of the locals during the transitional period, ranging from psychological tests conducted in the Malaya Emergency and secret opinion polling systems in Hong Kong, to repressive interrogation camps in Mau Mau Uprisings. In doing so, students will critically examine the relationships between the British Empire and its colonies, the Cold War and decolonisations, and culture and colonial statecrafts in Africa and Asia from 1945 to 1997.

Module Learning Outcomes:

- An in depth understanding of a specific historical topic using primary and secondary materials
- Ability to analyse original sources and relate primary and secondary materials to one another
- Familiarity with key debates and evolving historiography

Module Organisation:

The module divides into four elements, which map onto the assessment:

We pool knowledge and debate the dominant themes of the British Empire's decolonisation history. These slots will be organised informally, as workshops, and lay down foundation knowledge for all four modes of assessment: class participation; the annotated bibliography; the gobbet test and the assessed essay of 4,000-word.

1. Class Participation (10%)

Each student should at least present once throughout the semester. The presentation and class participation will count towards the final grade.

2. Annotated Bibliography (20%)

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. Due in Week 8 (**8 March, 2021).**

Creating an annotated bibliography calls for the application of a variety of intellectual skills: concise exposition, succinct analysis and informed library research. The creation of an annotated bibliography is to build towards the assessed essay. It should include: full bibliographic citation, author's background, scope of the work, main argument, methodology, sources, strengths and weaknesses, your voice and personal conclusion.

3. Test: Gobbet Analysis (30%)

Practices of gobbet analysis run from week 4 to 10 on each topic. In week 12 **(5 April, 2021)**, there will be a gobbet paper test, which is consisted of 6 questions. You need to choose 3 out of 6 to answer.

4. Assessed essay work (40%)

This element runs through the whole year, and involves independent learning. You must choose at least one of the case studies to be researched during the year. This 4000-word essay is due after Easter. Under my guidance (there will be seminar space and tutorial times to converse about your focus and findings), you will craft an assessed essay question and deploy published sources to answer it. (Due on **30 April, 2021.)**

Teaching Programme:

Week	Discussion Group	Learning Focus
1	Briefing	• Allocate tasks and presentations • Understand the structure of the course and assessments.
2	Introduction	• Set up the module • Introduce students to the course structure • Assign presentations and tasks • Get to know the British Empire and its strength in the pre-war period.
3	Decline of the British Empire?	• Understand prominent historical debates on decolonisation of the British Empire, i.e. why it took place after the Second World War. • Analyse how different factors, political (e.g. Labour Government in power and rise of the United States and the Soviet Union), economic (e.g. changing British economic policies and increased cost to sustain the Empire) and social

		(e.g. rise of nationalist sentiments in Africa and Asia) constituted to general democratisations in British colonies in the 1950s and 1960s.
4	Decolonisation in Malaya	• Explore the British attempts to decolonise Malaya in the immediate post-war period and why the proposal of a Malaya Union failed in 1948. • Investigate ethnic tensions and democratisation in the Federation of Malaya from 1948 to 1963.
5	Malaya Emergency	• Examine the cause of the Malaya Emergency in 1948. • Analyse the strategies, psychological and military, used by the British bureaucrats to counter the insurgency. • Look at the British policy of deporting Chinese suspects during the Emergency and its impacts.
6	Colonial Governance in Kenya	• Discuss how indirect rule was implemented in Kenya in the post-war period. • Compare the case of Kenya to decolonisations in Malaya.
7	Mau Mau Uprisings	• Investigate the origins and development of Mau Mau Uprising. • Explore the repressive means used by the British to contain the rebellions. • Look at how colonial regime's policy of repression led to rising humanitarian concerns and undesirable international repercussions.
8	Hong Kong as an Anomaly?	• Explore how Hong Kong was 'decolonised' without the introduction of an electoral system, (such as use of covert opinion polls and changing relationship between the colonial government and the metropolis).
9	Decolonisation in Hong Kong	• Investigate why the British held on to the colony until 1997 despite decolonisations in other colonies. • Look at how geopolitical factors (such as, military indefensibility, China's resistance and the colony's role as a bulwark against communism in the Cold War) made Hong Kong an 'anomaly' in the British Empire.
10	Psychological Governance, Comparison and Reflections	• Look at how 'psychological governance' worked as an overarching policy of the British Empire after the Second World War. • Analyse the four case studies and compare their similarities and differences in the pattern of decolonisation. • Reflect on how colonial history should be written.

11	Test	• Gobbet Test
12	Tutor Meeting	• Set up essay questions (a 4,000-word essay) based on student's chosen theme with a title agreed by the tutor.

Key Text:

David M. Anderson, 'British Abuse and Torture in Kenya's Counter-insurgency, 1952-1960', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4-5(2012), pp. 700-719.

P.J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction, 1914-1990* (London, 1993)

John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (New York, 2009)

John Darwin, 'Hong Kong in British Decolonisation', in Judith Brown and Rosemary Foot (eds) *Hong Kong's Transitions, 1842-1997* (London, 1997), pp. 16-32.

Caroline Elkins, 'The Struggle for Mau Mau Rehabilitation in Late Colonial Kenya', *The Institutional Journal of African Historical Studies*, 33:1 (2000), pp. 25-57.

T. N. Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge, 1999)

A. G. Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonisation', *Past & Present,* 200 (2008), pp. 211-247.

Joanna Lewis: *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Oxford, 2000)

Erik Linstrum, *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2016)

Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Decolonization', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22:3 (1994), pp. 462-511.

Chi-kwan Mark, 'Lack of Means or Loss of Will? The United Kingdom and the Decolonization of Hong Kong, 1957-1967', *The International History Review*, 31:1 (2009), pp. 45-71.

Jurgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton, 1997)

A. J. Stockwell, 'British Imperial Policy and Decolonisation in Malaya, 1942—52', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 13: 1 (1984), 68-87.

WEEK 1 Briefing and Ice-breaking

WEEK 2 Introduction

The aim of this three-hour seminar is to get to understand the ideas of 'empire' and 'colonialism'. We will examine the origins and expansion of the British empire.

Readings:
A. G. Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonization', *Past and Present*, 20 (2009), pp. 211-247.

Ronald Hyam, 'The Primacy of Geopolitics: The Dynamics of British Imperial Policy, 1763-1963', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 27:2 (1999), pp. 27-52.

Jan C. Jansen and Jurgen Oserhammel, 'Nationalism, Late Colonialism and World Wars', *Decolonization: A Short History* (Princeton, 2017), pp. 35-70.

Krishan Kumar, 'The Idea of Empire' and 'The British Empire', in *Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World* (Princeton, 2017), chapters 1 and 6.

1. Lecture

2. Individual task and group discussion

Do background research online and read the key texts. Learn about the concept of colonialism and the British Empire. Write a paragraph describing your impression/understanding of the British empire, and how colonialism has affected/affect your everyday lives.

Think of examples in
- Language (spoken and written languages, and 'official languages')
- Politics (Political system, institutional changes and role of Governor etc.)
- Economy (Level of development)
- Society (Customs and culture)

We will have group discussions afterwards to exchange ideas.

3. Presentations

1. What are imperialism and colonialism? And what is an empire? Discuss.

2. How did the British empire expand (via religion, ideas, wars and commerce)?

4. Critically analysing our literature

Plenary level debate around some general questions:

What is significant about the history of colonialism and decolonisation? Why do we have to learn that?

What might have influenced how the history of the British empire has been written?

WEEK 3 Decline of the British Empire?

The aim of the seminar is to explore using a well-established but still expanding literature dating the fall of the British empire after the Second World War. Historians have been debating about the cause of decolonisation. For example, Hyam argued that decolonsation took place largely because of the geopolitical development. Cain and Hopkins believed that holding on to the colonies was an expensive commitment, relative to the alternatives, such as informal influence. In this seminar, we will revisit the reasons behind the 'decline' of the British Empire/ decolonisation in Asia and Africa.

Readings:
John Darwin, 'Diplomacy and Decolonization', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 28:3 (2000), pp. 5-24.

WM. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Decolonization', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22:3 (1994), PP. 462-511.

W. David McIntyre, 'Global Dimension', in *British Decolonization, 1946-1997: When, Why and How* Did *the British Empire Fall?* (New York, 1998), pp. 89-94.

Sarah Stockwell, 'Britain and Decolonization in an Era of Global Change', in Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 1-22.

Sarah Stockwell, 'Trade, Empire, and the Fiscal Context of Imperial Business during Decolonization', *Economic History Review*, 57:1 (2004), pp. 142-160.

Nicholas J. White, 'Changing Colonial Societies' and 'The British Empire in the New World Order', *Decolonisation: The British Experience since 1945* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 45-59, 60-75.

1. Lecture and documentary

2. Presentations

1. How did financial concerns/motives lead to decolonisation of the British Empire after the Second World War?

2. To what extent did changes in colonial societies play an important role in decolonisation?

3. Group discussion

What do you think is the main cause behind the fall of the British Empire? Discuss in groups.

4. Gobbet analysis

We will apply our knowledge to a new question on the decolonisation of the British empire. Two gobbet abstracts will be provided on the day, not in advance. We will work through and discuss the gobbets together at class.

WEEK 4 Malaya Decolonisation

The seminar extends the analysis of last week, using Malaya as a case study. We will examine the British imperial policies leading up to independence of Malaya in 1957 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963. In particular, we will investigate how racial tensions and the Cold War speeded up the decolonisation process.

Readings:
Tim Harper, 'The Malayan Spring', in *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 55-93.

Sandra Khor Manickam, 'Common Ground: Race and the Colonial Universe in British Malaya', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 40:3 (2009), pp. 593-612.

A. J. Stockwell, 'British Imperial Policy and Decolonization in Malaya, 1942-52', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 13:1 (1984), pp. 68-87.

Tai Yong Tan, 'The "Grand Design": British Policy, Local Politics, and the Making of Malaysia, 1955-1961', in Marc Frey, Ronald W. Pruessen, Tai Yong Tan (eds), *The Transformation of Southeast Asia: International Perspectives on Decolonization* (Singapore, 2004), pp. 142-160.

1. Lecture

2. Presentations

1. What was the British imperial policy in Malaya from 1942 to 1952?

3. Group discussion

What do you think was the main cause of the fall of the British Empire? Discuss in groups.

4. Gobbet analysis

WEEK 5 Malayan Emergency

This seminar aims at investigating the Malayan Emergency, a guerilla war fought between the Malayan Liberation Army of the Malayan Communist Party and the British and Commonwealth armed forces in the Federation of Malaya from 1948 to 1960. We will look at its causes and how the British and colonial governments countered it. The Briggs' Plan devised by Harold Briggs, in particular, was significant and became a 'model' for the handling of insurgencies –not just in British colonies. The Emergency also led to more than 6,700 deaths. War crimes were also committed by the British troops, who detained, tortured, killed and deported guerrillas and civilians.

Readings:
Karl Hack, '"Iron Claws on Malaya": The Historiography of the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 30:1 (1999), pp. 99-125.

Karl Hack, 'The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32:3 (2009), pp. 383-414.

Choo Chin Low, 'The Repatriation of the Chinese as a Counter-Insurgency Policy during the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 45:3 (2014), pp. 363-392.

Marc Opper, 'The Malayan Emergency', in *People's Wars in China, Malaya and Vietnam* (Washington D.C. , 2020), pp. 175-203.

A. J. Stockwell, '"A Widespread and Long-concocted Plot to Overthrow Government in Malaya"? The Origins of the Malayan Emergency', *The Jorunal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 21:3(1993), pp. 66-88.

Yeo Kim Wah, 'The Communist Challenge in the Malayan Labour Scene, September 1936–March 1937', Journal *of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 49:2 (1976), pp. 36-79.

1. Documentary Screening

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BnWR5nvDUE

2. Lecture

3. Presentations

1. Discuss the cause of the Malayan Emergency and how the British regime countered it.

4. Group discussion

To what extent, the years of 1951-1952 was a turning point in the Malayan Emergency?

5. Gobbet analysis

WEEK 6 Colonial Governance in Kenya

An indirect rule was practiced in Kenya until the 1950s– there was no African representation in the political system until the 1950s. Some of the British laws and policies also enforced racial segregation and exclusion. The late introduction of individual land ownership, in particular, created problems of 'peri-urban'. This seminar explores how the British governed Kenya through techniques of surveillance, legislations and environmental policies.

Readings:
Daniel Bruckenhaus, 'Identifying Colonial Subjects: Fingerprinting in British Kenya, 1900–1960', *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft*, 42:1 (2016), pp. 60-85.

Robert Home, 'Colonial Township Laws and Urban Governance in Kenya', *Journal of African Law*, 56:2 (2012), pp. 175-193.

Stacey Hynd, 'Murder and Mercy: Capital Punishment in Colonial Kenya, c. 1909-1956', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 45:1 (2012), pp. 81-101.

John F. Murphy, 'Legitimation and Paternalism: The Colonial State in Kenya', *African Studies Review*, 29:3 (1986), pp. 55-65.

1. Lecture

2. Presentations

1. To what extent was the colonial state in Kenya 'repressive'?

3. Group discussion

How was the experience of decolonisation in Kenya different from our previous case studies?

4. Gobbet analysis

Week 7 Mau Mau Uprisings

Hand in the annotated bibliography.

This seminar aims to investigate the history of the Mau Mau Uprisings in Kenya from 1952-1960. The uprising is often considered by historians as one of the most significant steps leading to Kenya's decolonisation and independence. After the Second World War, natioanlists from the Kenya African Union had been demanding political rights and land reforms from the colonial government. Radical activists within the Union soon organised themselves into militants, attacking political opponents and raiding white settlements. In October 1952, the colonial government declared a state of emergency, which marked the beginning of the confrontation between the Kikuyu fights and the British troops. The conflict did not end until 1960 and the counter-insurgency campaign had resulted in numerous casualties and deaths. Many Kenyans were tortured and executed. This seminar examines the repressive means the British used in countering the uprising, and questions to what extent are the existing historical narratives problematic.

Readings:
David M. Anderson, 'British Abuse and Torture in Kenya's Counter-insurgency, 1952–1960', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 23:4-5 (2012), pp. 700-719.

Aoife Duffy, 'Legacies of British Colonial Violence: Viewing Kenyan Detention Camps through the Hanslope Disclosure', *Law and History Review*, 33:3 (2015), pp. 489-542.

Caroline Elkins, 'Looking Beyond Mau Mau: Archiving Violence in the Era of Decolonization', *The American Historical Review*, 120:3 (2015), pp. 852-868.

Caroline Elkins, 'Alchemy of Evidence: Mau Mau, the British Empire, and the High Court of Justice', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39:5 (2011), pp. 731-748.

Winfried Speitkamp, '"Forgive and Forget"? Mau Mau Uprising in Kenyan Collective Memory', in Dominik Geppert (ed.), *Sites of Imperial Memory: Commemorating Colonial Rule in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 207-224.

1. Documentary Screening & Lecture

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYMVLbeAQ_o

2. Presentations

1. Why do historians argue that the colonial regime in Kenya was abusive?

3. Group discussion

What are the problems in some of the historical accounts of the Mau Mau Uprisings?

How are these problems related to the regulation of archives in the United Kingdom?

4. Gobbet analysis

WEEK 8 Hong Kong as an Anomaly?

In comparative terms, Hong Kong was a remarkably stable colony. Unlike other colonial societies that were experiencing rapid demographic change, industrialisation and the Cold War after the Second World War, it did not experience mass rebellions, high crime rates and regime change. The social history of post-war Hong Kong is undeveloped; perhaps because it presents no crises (with the possible exception of the riots in 1956, 1966, and 1967) to be accounted for. Unlike many other British colonies, Hong Kong also did not undergo significant 'democratisation'– there was no democratic electoral reforms. It also had no prospect of becoming independent. This seminar questions if Hong Kong was an anomaly in the British empire by tracing political reforms and political culture in Hong Kong.

Readings:
John Darwin, 'Hong Kong in British Decolonisation', in Judith M. Brown and Rosemary Foot (eds), *Hong Kong's Transitions, 1842-1997* (London, 1997), pp. 16-32.

J. S. Hoadley, 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese: Patterns and Trends', *Asian Survey*, 13:6 (1973), pp. 604-616.

Ambrose Yeo-chi King, 'Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong: Emphasis on the Grass Roots Level', *Asian* Survey, 15:5 (1975), pp. 422-439.

Lam Wai-man, 'A Critique of the Claims of Political Indifference', in *Understanding the Political Culture of Hong Kong: the Paradox of Activism and Depoliticization* (New York and London, 2004), chapter 1.

Lau Siu-kai, 'Chinese Familism in an Urban-Industrial Setting: The Case of Hong Kong', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 43:4 (1981), pp. 977-992.

Florence Mok, 'Public Opinion Polls and Covert Colonialism in British Hong Kong', *China Information*, 33:1 (2019), pp. 66-87.

Steve Tsang, 'The Foundation of a Crown Colony', *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (London, 2004), chapter 2.

1. Lecture

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AxGm2eR9Og

2. Presentations

1. How did the British govern Hong Kong without a democratic electoral system amid widespread decolonisation in Asia and Africa after the Second World War?

3. Group discussion

Did the public in Hong Kong engage increasingly in the policy making process despite the absence of a democratic electoral system?

4. Gobbet analysis

WEEK 9 Decolonisation in Hong Kong

This seminar examines the changing relationship between Hong Kong, Britain and China, and how this and the Cold War influenced 'decolonisation' in Hong Kong. Geographically, the colony was militarily indefensible. The attitudes of the PRC also suggested that the colony's sovereignty was simply non-negotiable. In 1967, demonstrations broke out in May due to labour disputes in shipping, taxi, textile, cement and artificial flower companies. Pro-Beijing trade unions were involved. The demonstrations soon developed into violent riots between pro-Beijing leftists and the Hong Kong government. The riots demonstrated that Chinese nationalism and social discontent in the colony could be easily exploited by communists and turned into political turmoil. These factors which affected Hong Kong's trajectory of decolonisation will be discussed during the seminar.

Readings:
Gary Ka-wai Cheung, 'Introduction: A Watershed in the Postwar History of Hong Kong' and 'Impacts of the 1967 Riots', in *Hong Kong's Watershed: The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong, 2009), pp. 1-8 and 131-142.

Mark Hampton, 'The Uses of Monarchy in Late-colonial Hong Kong, 1969-97', in Robert Aldrich and Cindy McGreery (eds), *Monarchies and Decolonisation in Asia* (Manchester, 2020), pp. 225-242.

Chi-kwan Mark, 'Development without Decolonisation? Hong Kong's Future and Relations with Britain and China, 1967-1972', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 24:2 (2014), pp. 315-335.

Chi-kwan Mark, 'Lack of Means or Loss of Will? The United Kingdom and the Decolonization of Hong Kong, 1957-1967', *The International History Review*, 31:1 (2009), pp. 45-71.

Tracy Steele, 'Hong Kong and the Cold War in the 1950s', in Priscilla Roberts and John M. Carroll (eds), *Hong Kong in the Cold War* (Hong Kong, 2016), pp. 92-116.

Sebastian Veg, 'The Rise of "Localism" and Civic Identity in Post-handover Hong Kong: Questioning the Chinese Nation-state', *The China Quarterly*, 230 (2017), pp. 323-347.

1. Lecture

2. Presentation

1. How did the 'China factor' and Sino-British relations affect 'decolonisation' in Hong Kong?

3. Group discussion

To what extent was Hong Kong an 'anomaly' in the British empire?

How does colonialism affect today's Hong Kong? Is the history of colonial governance being presented accurately?

4. Gobbet analysis

How was Hong Kong's decolonisation process different from other British colonies? (Colonial governance, society's political culture, relations with China etc.)

Week 10 Psychological Governance and Comparison

This seminar investigates various psychological means employed by the colonial governments to suppress dissidents and capture the 'hearts and minds' of the locals during the transitional period of decolonisation. We will explore how 'psychological governance' worked as an overarching policy of the British empire after the Second World War. We will then analyse the four case studies and compare their similarities and differences in the pattern of decolonisation. Lastly, we will discuss the misrepresentation of colonialism in today's world, and reflect on the existing approaches used to write colonial history.

Reading:
Erik Linstrum, 'The Politics of Psychology in the British Empire, 1898-1960', *Past & Present*, 215 (2012), pp. 195-233.

Group discussion

What is 'psychological governance'? When and why did it emerge?

What 'psychological policies' did the British implement in Malaya, Hong Kong and Kenya?

How similar/different are decolonisation processes of our four case studies? Was that possible to establish a pattern? (for example, between demographic composition, geography and environment (both rural and urban), diplomatic relations, financial motives, culture and policies implemented?)

Do you agree that the history of colonialism has been misrepresented in today's world? Why?

Could we 'decolonise' the 'history of decolonisation'?

What approaches should historians take to mitigate the misuse and misrepresentation of colonial history?

Week 11 Quiz

Week 12 Tutor Meeting