

EUH3530 THE BRITISH EMPIRE: COLONIES TO COMMONWEALTH

FALL 2025 T 5-6 (11:45-1:40) Th 6 (12:50-1:40) Flint 101 Exam (presentations): 12/9/25 10:00-12:00	Professor Jessica Harland-Jacobs [she/her] 225 Keene Flint Hall harlandj@ufl.edu Office hours: M 10-12 & F 11-1 also available by appt.
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The British Empire

The British Empire was (is?) one of the most consequential empires in world history, lasting for over five centuries and by the late Victorian period extending control over 85% percent of the world (Burton & Mawani, 11). This course explores the history of the British Empire between the 1580s and the 1940s. Its geographic focus is on Great Britain and Ireland, North America and the Caribbean, South Asia, and Australia, although readings and discussions will cover many other regions as well. Primary themes include imperial power, hierarchies, and governance; resistance and anti-colonialism; colonization; and animal history. We will also attend to what empire means, both historically and in the present.

What you will learn

Students who complete this course will be able to “think historically” about the British Empire. This includes:

- knowing, conceptualizing, and discussing the broad outlines of British imperial history
- exploring the interrelationship of the human and the more-than-human worlds
- conducting analysis of primary sources with attention to historical concepts such as context, change and continuity over time, agency and structure, etc.
- reading and analyzing secondary sources to understand how historians have studied and interpreted key aspects of this history
- connecting and synthesizing sources to create historical interpretations
- learning actively, purposefully, and reflectively via a semester-long “Field Notes” assignment
- posing questions and developing arguments; expressing them effectively in writing and orally
- collaborating with others in pursuit of historical understanding

What you will need

Required

- EUH 3530 Sourcebook [available on Canvas]
- Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset*, 3rd edition (Routledge, 2020)
- Antoinette Burton and Renisa Mawani (eds), *Animalia: An Anti-Imperial Bestiary for Our Times* (Duke University Press, 2020)
- Kate Grenville, *The Secret River* (Canongate, 2018 (2005)), any edition

Recommended

- Mary Ann Rampolla, *Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (Bedford/St. Martin's) [any edition since the 7th]
- Samuel Wineburg, “Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts” *Kappanmagazine.org* 92, no. 4 (Dec 2010/Dec 2011): 81-94 [originally published in *Phi Delta Kappan* 80, no. 7 (Mar 1999): 488-99]

What you will do

Note: See Canvas for full assignment guidelines and grading scale and criteria.

I. *Map quiz* (5%) [Sept 9]

II. *Engagement & Field Notes* (35%) [checks throughout the semester; final submission Dec 2]

Over the course of the semester, students will keep a notebook [hard copy or electronic] in which they demonstrate their active engagement with the readings, lecture-discussions, and activities and reflect on what and how they are learning in class.

In addition to the Field Notes, engagement grades will be based on attendance, professionalism (e.g. arriving on time and being fully present during class time), and contributions to class discussions, activities, and projects. I strongly encourage you to stop by my office hours at least once (and hopefully more!) this semester, even just to chat.

III. *Document analysis* (10%) [Sept 18]

IV. *The Secret River paper* (5-7 pages; 20%) [Oct 7]

V. *Edwardian classroom lesson plan activity* (5%) [Nov 4]

IV. *British Florida Bestiary project* (25%)

A) compendium & sign up (week of Oct 7)

B) plan & bibliography (week of Nov 11)

C) final entry & presentation (Dec 9)

Policies & Resources

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's [Academic Policies and Resources](#) web page.

Attendance is required. Unexcused absences will impact your overall grade. [Note: failure to attend on Tuesdays will result in double deductions.]

See Canvas for AI usage policy.

Weekly schedule

DATE	TOPIC/ ACTIVITY	READ BEFORE CLASS
Aug 21	Course introduction	Woodward, <i>A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire</i> (1902), front matter
UNIT I EARLY MODERN FOUNDATIONS		
Aug 26	Keywords & British history basics	1) Caroline Elkins interview on death of Queen Elizabeth and the legacies of the British Empire 2) Levine, ix-xiv, 1-4 3) Animalia, 1-7
	Biocultural Empire	
Aug 28	Hierarchies	1) Levine, Ch 9, 140-43

		2) Animalia, 8-16 & "L is for Lion" 3) Woodward, <i>Short History</i> , Preface & 9-11
Sept 2	Rivalries & internal colonialism	1) Levine, Ch 1, 4-12 2) "U is for Unicorn" 3) Jane Ohlmeyer, "Ireland, India, and the British Empire," <i>Studies in People's History</i> 2, 2 (2015): 169-77 4) Docs: Hakluyt (1584); Mac Marcais (c.1610); Conditions to be observed by undertakers (1610)
	The Irish laboratory	
Sept 4	Slaves, merchants, & trade	1) Levine, Ch 2, 13-21, 24-7 & Ch 5, 63-66 2) "C is for Cattle" 3) Docs: Fort Commenda accounting (1714)
Sept 9	Colonization	1) Levine, Ch 3, 31-35 2) "N is for N Atlantic Right Whale" 3) Docs: Bacon (1625) Map quiz
	Activity tba	
Sept 11	Researching the Atlantic slave trade	1) J. Morgan, "Kinship, the Middle Passage, and the Origins of Racial Slavery" (2019) 2) Docs: notices, <i>South Carolina Gazette</i> , 1766 3) Slave trade digital history sources
Sept 16	Imperial rivalries, 18 th c	1) Levine, Ch 2, 27-28 & 35-36 2) Docs: 1760s
	1763 as watershed	
Sept 18	Document analysis	
UNIT II EXPANSION & DIVERSIFICATION, 1760s-1840s		
Sept 23	"British Florida"	1) Levine, Ch 3, 36-42 2) "R is for Racoon" 3) Docs: 1770s-80s
	The American War: Patriots & Loyalists	
Sept 25	Special Collections	begin <i>The Secret River</i>
Sept 30	A swing to the east?	1) Levine, Ch 4 2) "B is for Boar"; "P is for Platypus" 3) <i>The Secret River</i> , Part I
	The New South Wales experiment	
Oct 2	<i>The Secret River</i> discussion	<i>The Secret River</i> , Parts II-IV
Oct 7	<i>The Secret River</i> discussion	<i>The Secret River</i> , entire <i>The Secret River</i> paper due
	Activity: British FL animal compendium/ sign up	
Oct 9	India & the "Company-State"	1) Levine, Ch 5, 69-76 2) "T is for Tiger" & "Y is for Yak" 3) Docs: EICo Charter (1813) & Macaulay speech (1833) animal sign up by 10/10
UNIT III PAX BRITANNICA(?)		
Oct 14	Abolition & the age of reform	1) Levine, Ch 2, 21-24 [abolition] 2) Marcus Rediker, "History from below the water line: Sharks and the Atlantic slave trade," <i>Atlantic Studies</i> 5, 2 (2008): 285-297 3) Levine, Ch 6, 83-93 [19 th -c empire] 4) Woodward, <i>Short History</i> , 3-8
	A not-so-accidental empire	
Oct 16	Animals, ruling, & settling	1) Levine, Chs 6-8, tba 2) "H is for Horse"; "K is for Kiwi"; "M is for Mosquito"
Oct 21	Resistance	1) Levine, Chs 6-8, tba

	Rivalries & race	2) "A is for Ape"; "D is for Dog"; "V is for Vulture"
Oct 23	Women, gender, & indentured labor	1) Levine, Ch 8, 130-1 & Ch 9, tba 2) Gaiutra Bahadur, "The Overseer of British Guiana," <i>History Today</i> 64, 1 (2014) & "Conjure Women and Coolie Women," <i>Small Axe</i> 22, 3 (Jul 2018): 244-53
Nov 4	Activity: Lesson plans for the Edwardian classroom	1) Woodward, <i>Short History</i> , Chaps VII-XII
Nov 6	Ireland: imperialism, unionism, & nationalism	1) Levine: review 88; 115; 165-6; 173 2) "F is for Fox" 3) Ohlmeyer, "Ireland, India, and the British Empire," tba 3) Docs: Hyde, "On the necessity of de-Anglicizing the Irish" (1892) & Ulster Covenants (1912)
UNIT IV LATE EMPIRE & ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALISM		
Nov 11	Veteran's Day – no class	BFI Bestiary plan & bibliography due this week
Nov 13	The empire at war	1) Levine, Ch 10, 162-68 2) Docs: recruiting posters & Proclamation of the Irish Republic (1916)
Nov 18	The British Commonwealth Ireland & India	1) "E is for Elephant"; "O is for Okapi" 2) finish Ohlmeyer, "Ireland, India, and the British Empire" 3) Docs: Statute of Westminster (1931) & Republic of Ireland Acts (1948)
Nov 20	Decolonization & WWII: India & Burma	Levine, Ch 10, 169-73 [India]; 178-79 [Burma]
Nov 25	[T-giving]	
Nov 27	[T-giving]	
Dec 2	Wrap up	George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" (1936) [broadcast on BBC 12 Oct 1948] "J is for Jackal (and Dingo)" "Q is for Quagga" Field Notes due
Dec 9 10:00- 12:00	British Florida Bestiary presentations	BFI Bestiary entry due