Decolonization: The End of Empire in the Twentieth Century  
(International and Area Studies Capstone)

Dr. Jessica Pearson-Patel  
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A decorative arch erected in Kigali on the occasion of Rwanda’s independence in 1962 (UN Photo)

"The best way to learn to be an independent sovereign state is to be an independent sovereign state."
– Kwame Nkrumah

The end of colonialism and the emergence of new independent states in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East has been one of the most formative processes that has shaped the world we live in today. This capstone will explore the process of decolonization in the twentieth century as the end of empire was negotiated between colonial states, former colonial subjects and citizens, international organizations, and a plethora of non-state actors. You will research and discuss several case studies of decolonization in different parts of the world, and we will especially emphasize the international dimensions and global interconnectedness that characterized the dismantling of imperial structures and regimes in the course of the twentieth century. You will produce a twenty-page research paper using primary and secondary sources. You will workshop your paper with your colleagues and will present your findings at the end of the semester to the class.

Required texts

Wayne Booth, The Craft of Research  
Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism  
Mark Mazower, No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations  
Ousmane Sembène, God’s Bits of Wood  
Todd Shepard, Voices of Decolonization  
Martin Shipway, Decolonization and its Impact: A Comparative Approach to the End of Colonial Empires

*Readings and other materials on the syllabus marked with an asterisk will be available on D2L.
Course goals

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain the internal and external causes of decolonization.
2. Understand way that the end of empire unfolded differently in different geographic and political contexts.
3. Evaluate the role that international organizations and institutions played in shaping the end of empire.
4. Understand the legacies of decolonization in newly independent states.

You will also be able to:

1. Formulate a research question.
2. Find appropriate sources to answer that question.
3. Analyze and evaluate both primary and secondary sources.
4. Synthesize your findings in the context of a major research paper.
5. Revise your own work and give written and oral feedback to your peers.
6. Present your findings orally.

Breakdown of course grade

200 points  Class participation
100 points  Discussion leader assignment
100 points  Research paper proposal and annotated bibliography
100 points  Primary source analysis
100 points  Research paper rough draft
100 points  Workshop assignment
200 points  Final paper
100 points  Research Presentation

-1000 points total-

Class participation: This is a capstone course, so the proper functioning of our class depends on your active participation!

More than one unexcused absence will result in a lower participation grade. You get one freebie. Attendance = arriving to class on time, with your reading completed, prepared to discuss. Attendance does not = texting, emailing, or using Facebook during class time. If I see you doing any of these things, you will receive a zero for the day.

Make sure you bring all the readings to class with you, including those readings posted to blackboard—either on your laptop or printed out. Readings should be completed by the day they are listed. Please make notes of important points you wish to discuss in class. On days when no discussion leader is assigned, everyone will contribute discussion questions in advance of our class meeting. On weeks where we discuss common readings, you will be asked to evaluate your own participation.
If you are absent due to illness or family emergency, you will be excused with proper documentation. Lateness will negatively affect your participation grade. It is the University policy to excuse absences that result from the observation of a religious holiday. If you need to miss class for a religious holiday, please let me know in advance. If you miss class for any reason, you are responsible for getting any information/assignments that you missed. For excused absences, I will ask that you substitute your in-class participation with a short written assignment. Unexcused absences may not be made up.

**Discussion leader assignment:** In pairs, you will take responsibility for leading the discussion during one class meeting. Prior to class you will circulate a critical response to the readings (2-pages) and a list of 6-8 discussion questions.

**Research paper proposal and annotated bibliography:** This 2-page proposal will explain your research question, identify a source base, and outline your hypotheses based on your preliminary research. Your annotated bibliography should include **at least four primary sources and four secondary sources.** Further instructions for this assignment will be explained in class.

**Primary source analysis:** You will write a 3-page paper analyzing a primary source that you plan to use for your final paper. You are welcome to use any type of primary source, including non-text primary sources like images, maps, and photographs. You may also use a literary source as long as you discuss the way you will incorporate it with your historical analysis.

**Research paper rough draft:** You will submit a rough draft of their final research paper (15 pages), which will be workshopped in small groups. A preliminary bibliography should be included in your draft. Papers should have a title and your research question should be stated clearly underneath the title.

**Workshop assignment:** In small groups, you will discuss your paper-in-progress and give feedback on your classmates’ drafts. You will be expected to provide written feedback as well as to participate in an active discussion of the drafts. I will give instructions in class on how to circulate papers to your group and how to use Microsoft Word’s editing functions to give written feedback.

**Final research paper:** Your final research paper should be at least 20 pages in length and use five primary and five secondary sources. Your paper should have a clear argument and please keep in mind that in addition to content, you will be graded on style and proper use of grammar. You must use Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian for citations. Papers should be in 12pt Times New Roman font, with 1" margins on all sides. I will provide more details on paper requirements in class.

**Research presentation:** You will give a ten-minute research presentation during the final two weeks of the course. You should plan to speak for the first five minutes and answer questions for the second five minutes. You are required to have a PowerPoint presentation (or Prezi) of at least five slides. You will earn points on both your own presentation and your engagement with your classmates’ presentations.
**Extra credit:** You may earn up to **25 points** of extra credit throughout the term, or up to 2.5% of your total grade. There will be numerous opportunities for extra credit, including, but not limited to, attendance and response to any of the many International and Area Studies events that take place throughout the course of the semester. You may attend any IAS event and write a **1-page response** for up to five points of extra credit. Some events that pertain more directly to the topic of our course will be eligible for more points.

**Grading Policy**

Late assignments will be deducted 5 points per day late, with the exception of the final paper, which will be deducted 10 points per day late. I will not accept any assignment handed in more than 72 hours after the due date without proper documentation. Late papers will not receive the same level of comments from me as those that are submitted on time. All assignments will be submitted to our D2L Dropbox in .doc or .docx format. Your document should be titled as follows:

First Name Last Name_Name of Assignment.doc (or .docx)

For example:

Donald Draper_Annotated Bibliography.doc (or .docx)

Your final grade is based on the following formulation:

A 900-1000  
B 800-899  
C 700-799  
D 600-699  
F 599 or below

**Resources for student writers**

You can get help and feedback at all stages of the writing process at the Writing Center and through their resources online:

http://www.ou.edu/writingcenter

I highly encourage everyone to reach out to the Writing Center to develop their writing skills in the context of our class assignments. The Writing Center is located in Wagner Hall.

**Plagiarism and academic integrity**

You are required to read and understand OU’s “A Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity,” including the definition of academic misconduct. The guide can be found here:

http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html
Accommodations

If you have a disability that prevents you from full participation in any aspect of the course, please get in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. Information on accommodation is available from the University Disability Resource Center:

http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html

Course schedule

Week 1: Historical approaches to empire and decolonization

Tues. 1/13
No reading, course introduction

Thurs. 1/15
Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact*, Introduction and Chapter 1
*Frederick Cooper, Colonialism in Question, "Introduction: Colonial Questions, Historical Trajectories"

Week 2: Challenging the colonial state

Tues. 1/20
Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact*, Chapter 2

Thurs. 1/22
Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*

Week 3: Self-determination and the first wave of decolonization

Tues. 1/27
Doc 14 in Shepard

Thurs. 1/29
Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact*, Chapter 3

Week 4: Decolonization in Southeast Asia

Tues. 2/3
Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact*, Chapter 4
Docs 3 and 4 in Shepard
Thurs. 2/5
Booth, *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 1
In-class primary sources workshop (How to use BDOEE, FRUS, and UN Yearbook)

Week 5: Decolonization in the Caribbean

Tues. 2/10
*Selection from Jason Parker, *Brother’s Keeper: the United States, Race, and Empire in the British Caribbean*
Doc 38 in Shepard

Thursday, 2/12 (Library visit)
Booth, *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 3 and 4

Research question due by Friday, 2/13 at 5pm

Week 6: African decolonization

Tues. 2/17
Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact*, Chapter 5
Docs 11-13, 30-31 in Shepard

Thurs. 2/19
Booth, *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 5 and 6
In-class research proposal workshop (bring four copies to class)

Research proposal and annotated bibliography due by Fri, 2/20 at 5pm

Week 7: War, violence, and decolonization

Tues. 2/24
Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact*, Chapter 6
Docs 18-25 in Shepard, *Voices of Decolonization*

Thurs. 2/26
Booth, Chapters 7-9
Discussion papers and how to cite sources

Primary source analysis due by Fri, 2/27 at 5pm

Week 8: Writing the end of empire in Africa

Tues. 3/3
Shipway, *Decolonization and its Impact*, Chapter 7
Sembène, *God’s Bits of Wood*, pp. 1-90

**Thurs, 3/5**
Sembène, *God’s Bits of Wood*, pp. 91-248

**Week 9: No class, required individual meetings with Professor P.**

**Tues, 3/10**
Individual meetings

**Thurs, 3/12**
Individual meetings

**Week 10: Spring break – NO CLASS!**

**Tues, 3/17**
NO CLASS

**Thurs, 3/19**
NO CLASS

**Week 11: American perspectives on decolonization in the Middle East**

**Tues, 3/24**
*Selections from Aiyaz Husain, *Mapping the End of Empire*

**Thurs, 3/26**
*Selections from *Foreign Relations of the United States*
Docs 14-15, 37 in Shepard

**Week 12: Decolonization in international perspective, part 1**

**Tues, 3/31**
Mazower, Intro, Chapters 1 and 2

**Thurs, 4/2**
*Selected documents from the United Nations Special Committee on Non-Self-Governing Territories and the United Nations Trusteeship Council*
Docs 2, 5-9 in Shepard
Week 13: Decolonization in international perspective, part 2

Tues, 4/7
Mazower, Chapters 3 and 4, Afterword

Thurs, 4/9
Doc 32 in Shepard
Shipway, Decolonization and its Impact, Conclusion

Week 14: In-class film

Tues, 4/14
Docs 28 and 29 in Shepard
In-class film, Lumumba

Thurs, 4/16
No reading
In-class film, Lumumba

Rough draft due to me and group by Fri, 4/17 at 5pm

Week 15: Peer-review workshops + research presentations

Tues, 4/21
In-class peer-review workshops

Thurs, 4/23
Research presentations

Week 16: Research presentations

Tues, 4/28
Research presentations

Thurs, 4/30
Research presentations

Final papers due by Fri, 5/8 at 5pm
Selected bibliography

Primary sources – published archival documents

Archives of Empire, Volume I and Volume II
(available at Bizzell Library)

British Documents on the End of Empire
(select volumes available at Bizzell Library and at Professor P’s office)

Foreign Relations of the United States
(available online at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments)

United Nations Yearbook
(available online at http://unyearbook.un.org/)

Literary and other primary sources

Buchi Emechta, The Joys of Motherhood
Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks
Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth
Mouloud Feraoun, Journal
Albert Memmi, Decolonization and the Colonized
Ousmane Sembène, Xala
Ngugi wa Thiong’o, A Grain of Wheat

Additional secondary sources

Raymond Betts, Decolonization
Tony Chafer, The End of Empire in French West Africa: France’s Successful Decolonization?
Daniel Branch, Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War, and Decolonization
Roland Burke, Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights
M. E. Chamberlain, Decolonization: The Fall of European Empires
Frederick Cooper, Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present
Frederick Cooper, Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960
Frederick Cooper, Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa
Prasenjit Duara, Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then
Jennifer Foray, Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands
Christopher Goscha and Christian Ostermann, *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962*

Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow You Will Be Killed with Your Families: Stories from Rwanda*


Christopher Lee, *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives*

James Le Sueur, *The Decolonization Reader*

Stewart Lloyd-Jones and Antonio Costa Pinto, *The Last Empire: Thirty Years of Portuguese Decolonization*

William Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization*


Dietmar Rothermund, *The Routledge Companion to Decolonization*

Elizabeth Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea*

Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958*

Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*


Martin Thomas, *Crises of Empire: Decolonization and Europe’s Imperial Nation States, 1918-1975*