Age of European Global Expansion

Course: 506: 110: H6. Instructor: Satyasikha Chakraborty (satyasikha.c@rutgers.edu)

Summer Session 3, July 10-Aug 16, 2017, Mon & Wed, 6pm to 9.40pm, Scott Hall 102

Course Description:

How did European states fighting Crusades, suppressing peasant revolts and reeling under the Black Death in the late medieval period, dramatically expand beyond Europe and establish global dominance during the next few centuries? This course looks at the rise of European powers through fierce commercial competition with each other and with various Asian, African and Native American powers to eventually create huge colonial empires. Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and British colonizers not only imported and imposed European norms and systems on the new territories they took over, but also adapted to local methods of governance and forged domestic ties with local peoples. This mutual but hierarchical cultural interaction not
only changed the political, economic and knowledge structures of non-Western societies, but in the process, also transformed Europe.

In this course, we will look at the crucial role played by ideologies of race, gender, class, religion, sexuality and morality in sustaining European colonial powers. We will examine how these concepts, especially race and gender, were produced through colonial cultural representations (paintings, poems, fictions etc.) as well as through colonial science (anthropometry, Social Darwinism, scientific racism etc.). Finally, we will trace the developments of anti-colonial resistances and nationalist movements in Asia and Africa; we will see how these movements deployed ideologies like “freedom”, “equality” and the concept of the “nation” itself from European history and used these to challenge and end European imperialism. The course concludes with the question if European global dominance ever really ended, and how we can see repercussions of colonialism in our contemporary globalized world.

Course Requirements:

Readings: Purchase of books is not required for this course. But you are expected to do daily readings comprising short primary documents, book chapters and articles, which will all be posted on Sakai.

Attendance: Since this is a very condensed course consisting of only 12 classes, attendance is mandatory in order to understand key concepts and develop critical reading skills. 30% of your final grade will depend on regular class participation, which makes attendance tied to your success in this course.

Assignments:

30 points for Class participation:

a) Doing daily readings, reviewing lecture notes and contributing to class discussions.

b) One brief (5-7 min) class presentation on July 24th on your chosen mid-term topic

25 points for Mid-term:

a) An essay (take-home, 1500 words) on the colonial history of any commodity of your choice, eg- tea, sugar, cotton, soap etc – 25 points. Due by Sat, July 29th.

b) An OPTIONAL article review (500 words. This article will help you write your mid-term essay and will be provided on sakai) – 5 extra credit points. Due by Sat, July 29th.

45 points for Final:

a) One take-home essay (1500 words) – 25 points. Topic will be provided one week before submission deadline. Due by Wed, Aug 16th.

b) In-class brief written analysis of two primary texts discussed over the course – 20 points. (1.5 hours) Wed, Aug 16th.

Class schedule and readings will be posted shortly. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have about the course.