January 14, 2011

The Decolonization of the British Empire—Spring Semester 2011

History 350L (Unique # 39645)
Garrison 2.108
Spring Semester 2011
Thursday 3:30-6:30 p.m.

W. Roger Louis
HRC 3.202
Office Hours Thursday 2-3
and by Appointment

The British Empire at the end of World War II still extended over one fourth of the world and represented a complex, worldwide system. The seminar will focus on the era of decolonization.

This seminar is designed as a reading and research course in modern British history—and in the history of Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. Above all it is a class in professional writing. It includes a cartographical component in which students are required to master the geography of the British Empire.

The main requirement of the course is a research paper focusing on one of the three components of British decolonization: the decisions made in Britain itself; the international influence of the United States and the United Nations in the context of the Cold War; and the initiatives by nationalists in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. The paper in its final form will be about 6,000 words or 20 double spaced pages including notes.

The writing component will be fulfilled in three ways. First, critiques of books, approximately one a week (or comparable assignments), each less than 400 words or one page. Second, a draft of the research paper. The critiques and draft will be circulated to all members of the class who will make annotations on style as well as substance. The third stage is for each writer to take note of the comments offered by others and to rewrite the research paper for final submission.

The principal primary source on which the papers will be based is the extraordinary archival collection in British Documents on the End of Empire (BDEEP). The class sessions will be enriched by a film series produced by Granada Television entitled 'End of Empire'.

In a general way, the seminar upholds the principles of the Modern History Faculty at Oxford—to enhance (1) intellectual curiosity; (2) conceptual clarity; (3) intellectual flexibility; (4) accuracy and attention to detail; (5) critical engagement; (6) capacity for hard work; (7) enthusiasm for history, literature, and politics; and (8) historical imagination and understanding, that is, the possession of appropriate historical knowledge and the capacity to deploy it.

Grades are determined by attendance and participation in discussion (25%); weekly critiques (25%) and the quality of the final research paper (50%). Final grades include plusses and minuses.

Required Reading — John Darwin, Britain and Decolonisation; W. David McIntyre, Decolonization, 1946-1997; Geoffrey Best, Churchill; Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, Oh! Jerusalem; David Carlton, Suez Crisis; and Caroline Elkins, Imperial Reckoning.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

Schedule

January 20, 2011: Introduction—the meaning of decolonization
January 28: Chronological sweep and the Asian, African, and Caribbean historical contexts
February 3: The End of the British Empire; critique due of Darwin, Decolonisation
February 10: The Meaning of the Commonwealth: critique due of McIntyre, Decolonization
February 17: Churchill and the end of the British Empire: critique due of Best, Churchill
February 24: The Partition of Palestine: critique due of Collins and Lapierre, Oh! Jerusalem
March 3: The Suez Crisis: critique due of Carlton, Suez Crisis
March 10: The Legacy of the British Empire: discussion of Carlton, Suez Crisis
March 17: No Class Meeting: Spring Break
March 24: The Mau Mau and Kenyan Independence; critique due of Elkins, Imperial Reckoning
March 31: Summing up and assessing: the transformation of the colonial world
April 7: Discussion of Term Papers
April 14: Discussion of Term Papers
April 21: Discussion of Term Papers
April 28: Discussion of Term Papers
May 5: Term Papers Due

Wm. Roger Louis
Kerr Professor of English History and Culture and Distinguished Teaching Professor

B.A. University of Oklahoma, 1959
M.A. Harvard University, 1960
D.Phil. Oxford University, 1962
D. Litt. Oxford University, 1979

Assistant and Associate Professor, Yale University, 1962-1970
Professor of History, University of Texas at Austin, 1970-1985
Director of British Studies, 1975 —
Kerr Professor 1985 —
Fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1986 —
UT Distinguished Teaching Professor, 1999 —

Editor-in-Chief, Oxford History of the British Empire, 1992 —
Appointed Commander of the British Empire by the Queen for professional service, 1999
President of American Historical Association, 2001
Founding Director, AHA National History Center, 2001 —
US State Department Historical Advisory Committee, 2003 – 2009 (resigned on principle)
U.T. Professor of the Year, 2009
Kluge Chair, Library of Congress, 2010
Author or editor of some thirty books including Ends of British Imperialism (2006)

Edited books include Adventures with Britannia; More Adventures with Britannia; Still More Adventures with Britannia; Yet More Adventures with Britannia; Penultimate Adventures with Britannia; Ultimate Adventures with Britannia; Post-Ultimate Adventures with Britannia; and Burnt Orange Britannia