

Empire: Subjects, Networks, Resistance.

Convenors:

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Description:

This reading group examines empires, ancient and modern, as a way into understanding our own presence as subjects in the neoliberal contemporary. We seek to untangle complex networks fabricated by empires where "all roads lead to Rome" but "all routers lead to the NSA," and where movements such as Idle No More and Anonymous challenge these structures. We will investigate "Empire" across temporal, cultural, and disciplinary divisions to create a broader conversation amongst academics, technologists, artists, and other interested individuals, as we emphasize self-reflexivity alongside critical thinking illuminated by the humanities.

Reading Schedule:

Week 1 [17th September]: Introduction

Discussion Topic: What is Empire?

Reading:

-Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, 2000. "Preface" and "Part One: The Political Constitution of the Present" in *Empire* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2009): xi-xvii; 3-66.

-Antoinette Burton, "Introduction: On the Inadequacy and the Indispensability of the Nation" in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and Through the Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003): 1-26.

- [video] Recommended: Monty Python: [What Have the Romans Ever Done for Us?](#)(1979)

Week 2 [24th September]: Empire in History.

Discussion Topic: Two Approaches to the History of Empire

Reading:

-Thomas R. Metcalf *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 1-65.

-Catherine Hall; Sonya O Rose, "Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire," in *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 1-31.

Week 3 [1st October]: Subjectivity.

Discussion Topic: **Subjectivity of Empire.**

Reading:

-Foucault, Michel, "The Subject and Power," *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, edited by H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983):pp. 208-226.

-Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze "Intellectuals and power: A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze," (1972) [Text](#) or [Animated!](#)

-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak ["Can the Subaltern Speak?"](#) in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press,1988).

Week 4 [8th October]: Subjectivity.

Discussion Topic: **Racializing Subjects of Empire.**

Reading:

-Frantz Fanon. 1967. "The Black Man and Hegel" in *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann. (New York: Grove Press): 216-222.

-Glen Coulthard "Introduction;" "Seeing Red: Reconciliation and Resentment" in *Red Skin White Masks* (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2014): 1-24; 105-130.

-Micheal Witgen, "The Rituals of Possession: Native Identity and the Invention of Empire in Seventeenth-Century Western North America," *Ethnohistory* 54:4 (2007): 639-668.

Week 5 [15th October]: Subjectivity.

Discussion Topic: **Gendering Subjects of Empire.**

Reading:

-Chandra Mohanty, "[Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses](#)" *Feminist Review* 30 (1988): 61-88.

- Joseph Andoni Massad, "Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World," in *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007): 160-190.

-Félix Boggio, "[The Empire of Sexuality, an interview with Joseph Massad](#)," March 5, 2013.

Week 6 [22nd October]: Economy

Discussion Topic: **Expansion of a Liberal Market-Economy.**

Reading:

-Amartya Sen, "Introduction;" "Market, State, and Social Opportunity" and "Women's Agency and Social Change" in *Development as Freedom* (USA: First Anchor Books, 2000): 3-12; 111-145; 189-203.

-Lamia Karim, "Demystifying Micro-Credit" *Cultural Dynamics* 20: 1 (2008): 5-29.

-[UN Report on the Development of Women](#) (2009): v-xi; 55- 68.

-[video] Interview with David Graeber on Debt [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

Week 7 [29th October]: Economy

Discussion Topic: **Iterations of Money**

Reading:

-Walter Scheidel "The Monetary Systems of the Han and Roman Empires" in *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009):137-207.

-Mary Poovey "Introduction" and "Politicizing Paper Money" in *Genres of the Credit Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 1-24; 171-218.

-Bill Mauer, Taylor C. Nelms, and Lana Swartz "[When Perhaps the Real Problem is Money Itself! The Practical Materiality of Bitcoin](#)" *Social Semiotics* 23:2 (2013): 1-17.

Week 8 [5th November]: Infrastructure

Discussion Topic: **All Roads Lead to Rome**

Reading:

-Bruno Latour "Networks, Societies, Spheres: Reflections of an Actor-Network Theorist," *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): 796–810.

-read: Maas, Michael, and Derek Ruths. "Road Connectivity and the Structure of Ancient Empires: A Case Study from Late Antiquity," in *Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre-Modern World*, 5. Edited by Susan E Alcock, John P Bodel and Richard J A Talbert (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2012): 255-264.

-watch: [The Roman Empire](#)

-play: [The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World](#)

Week 9 [12th November]: Infrastructure

Discussion Topic: **All Routers Lead to the NSA**

Reading:

-Rebecca MacKinnon "Networked Authoritarianism" "Do No Evil" and "Facebookistan and Googledom," in *The Consent of the Networked* (New York: Basic Books, 2012): 31-50;131-148; 149-165.

- Jason Fekete and Ian MacLeod, "[Government of Canada Websites Under Attack](#)," *The National Post* (17th June, 2015).

-[video] Paola Antonelli, Gabriella Coleman, Jamer Hunt, and Lawrence Lessig. [Design & Violence Debate](#): The Internet, Wide Open. Museum of Modern Art Design & Violence Debate IV:(2015).

Week 10 [19th November]: Resisting Empire

Discussion Topic: **Indigenous Sovereignty**

Reading:

-[film] Alanis Obomsawin, [Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance](#) National Film Board of Canada, 1993.

-[Idle No More Manifesto](#).

-Rob Nixon. "Introduction" and "Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor," in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2011): 1-44; 128-149.

Week 11 [26th November]: Resisting Empire

Discussion Topic: **Transitional Justice: Truth and Reconciliation Commissions**

Reading:

-Paige Arthur "How 'Transitions' Reshaped Human Rights: A Conceptual History of Transitional Justice" *Human Rights Quarterly* 31:2 (2009): 321-367.

-Jeff Cornthassel and Cindy Holder "Who's Sorry Now? Government Apologies, Truth Commissions and Indigenous Self-Determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Peru" *Human Rights Review* 9:4 (2008): 465-89.

-[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#).

Week 12 [December 3rd]: Conclusions

Discussion Topic: **From Biopolitics to Algopolitics: Subjectivity and Empire in the Digital Age**
Reading:

Wendy Brown, "Foucault's Birth of Biopolitics Lectures: Charting Neoliberal Political Rationality," in *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. (New York, Zone Books, 2015): 47-78.

-Evgeny Morozov, "[The Rise of Data and the Death of Politics](#)," *The Guardian*. 20th July, 2014.

-Ian Bogost, "[The Cathedral of Computation](#)" *The Atlantic*. 15th January, 2015.