Empire and State Violence

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| **Credit level:** 5 |
| **Length:** Semester 2 |
| **ECTS credit value:** 8 |
| **College and School:** Lazarski University in Warsaw, Faculty of Economics and Management |
| **Module Leader:** Dr. Christopher Lash |
| **Host Course:** BA International Relations |
| **Pre-requisites:** N/A |
| **Co-requisites:** N/A |
| **Special features:**N/A |
| **Access restrictions:**N/A |
| **Summary of module content:** This module deals with historical and contemporary examples of the ways that Empires operate and violence that states have instituted on their citizens, especially those of different ethnic identities. The first part of the module focuses on empire as a theoretical construct, its historical precedents, its legacies and the actions of states which could be considered to act imperially. The second part of the module looks at examples of extreme cases of violence (ethnic cleansing and genocide) carried out by states and sub-state bodies from both a theoretical and case study perspective. |

**Assessment Methods**

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| Rank | Assessment type | Assessment name | Weighting | Qualifying set (where the minimum mark required applies across multiple assessments) |
| 1 | Essay | Essay (empire) | 30% |  |
| 2 | Presentation | In-class PP presentation (state violence and ethnic cleansing) | 30% |
| 3 | Closed Book Exam | Final exam | 40% |

**Synoptic assessment**

N/A

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module the successful student will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the development and contemporary relevance of imperialist ideologies, with reference to global security concerns and international relations in the post-Cold War context.
2. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of imperial behaviour, assessing their significance within broader geopolitical narratives and regional dynamics.
3. Analyse the impacts of imperial legacies on the international world order, especially in terms of regional conflicts and global power relations.
4. Critically evaluate the actions of states and societies in times of war.
5. Develop a critical understanding of what led to the most important examples of state and sub-state level violence historically and in the present, considering their implications for regional and global security.
6. Critically evaluate strategies for post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, with attention to regional dynamics, international responses, and theoretical approaches to peace and justice.

**Course outcomes the module contributes to:**

* L5.1 Detailed understanding of the contemporary agenda of global security and the key issues that have dominated International Relations in the post-Cold War era.
* L5.3 An ability to critically identify the geopolitical dimensions of International Relations and key events into a broad narrative on post-Cold War politics.
* L5.4 An appreciation for the regional dynamics of International Relations, with specific focus on the politics of Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa.
* L5.5 An understanding of the varieties of approaches to understanding, constructing and interpreting the international system, especially through concepts and theories derived from the social sciences.

**Indicative syllabus content**

* Theories of Empire, imperialism and neo-imperialism
* Histories of imperialism
* Contemporary imperialism and neo-imperialism
* Analysis of the behaviour of current great powers through the lens of imperialism
* Theories of state violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide
* Historical case studies of state violence, ethnic cleansing and Genocide
* State violence in the present and international attempts to solve issues related to it
* International peacekeeping and its problems

**Teaching and learning methods**

The module is conducted in the form of seminars which will cover the indicative content. Students will be expected to go through guided readings before each class. which refers to the topic of the previous seminar. Each class will revolve around a particular case study related to empire and state violence and ethnic cleansing. They will not only be encouraged to understand these case studies but also think of how the situations could have been avoided and how to solve related issues in the present. In terms of the part focused on state violence and ethnic cleansing, students will do an in-class presentation on a chosen topic. Presentations will not only assess important aspects of ethnic cleansing and analyse case studies, but presenting students will also be encouraged to provide a debate prompt which will lead to a wider class discussion.

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| Activity type | Category | Student learning and teaching hours\* |
| Lecture | Scheduled |  |
| Seminar | Scheduled | 60 |
| Tutorial | Scheduled |  |
| Project supervisor | Scheduled |  |
| Demonstration | Scheduled |  |
| Practical classes and workshops | Scheduled |  |
| Supervised time in studio/workshop | Scheduled |  |
| Fieldwork | Scheduled |  |
| External visits | Scheduled |  |
| Work based learning | Scheduled |  |
| Scheduled online learning | Scheduled |  |
| Other learning | Scheduled |  |
| Total scheduled |  | 60 |
| Placement | Placement |  |
| Independent study | Independent | 140 |
| Total student learning and teaching hours |  | 200 |

\*hours per activity type are indicative and subject to change.

**Assessment rationale: why has this assessment been used for this module?**

In terms of the assessment for the module overall, the module has two parts, one related to empire and the other related to state violence/ethnic cleansing, that is the primary reason for having two separate assessments for coursework. In addition, by having three different forms of assessment in total, student engagement will be maintained, pressure will be reduced on students and more opportunities for feedback will be possible.

**Assessment 1: 1,500 words essay** (empire part)The essay is a short piece of work in the traditional essay format on an aspect of empire (either historical or contemporary) that allows for extended engagement with the material encountered during the module to assess students’ progress by the end of the module. The essay will especially address LOs 2, 3 and 5.

**Assessment 2: An in-class presentation** (state violence and ethnic cleansing part)

on an aspect of state violence, ethnic cleansing or a case study. The presentations will be done in pairs but will be assessed individually. Each pair will choose a topic from a list provided to them at the beginning of term. Within the pairs presenting each student will choose an aspect of the topic and present a power-point presentation for 10 minutes each (presentations will last 20 minutes in total). After the end of the presentations, students will be asked questions by other students and the module leader to test their analytical skills, comprehension and ability to think on their feet within the wider context of the topic and the course. The presentations will evaluate students' communication skills, analytical thinking, and application of theoretical concepts. In addition, the presentations will help to enhance public speaking and problem-solving. These skills boost employability in fields such as diplomacy, international organizations, business, consulting, policy analysis, public affairs, lobbying, and related careers, where clear communication and critical thinking are essential. This type of assessment directly addresses LOs 4, 5 and 6.

Students will also be informed about the ethical considerations of AI usage in preparing their essays and presentations. They may use it for tasks such as preliminary research, literature inquiry, brainstorming ideas, fact-checking, cross-referencing sources, and preparing for potential Q&A sessions.

**The final exam, 90 minutes,** consisting of essay-type questions, is designed to assess students' knowledge and understanding of key concepts covered in the module. One of the essay questions related to each part of the module will ask students to provide their solutions to current international problems related to empire and state violence/ethnic cleansing based on models discussed during the module. The exam will encourage students to think analytically, synthesise information and propose solutions to key issues related to empire and state violence/ethnic cleansing in the contemporary world. The essay questions will be answered in an exam because in careers such as diplomacy, policy analysis, international relations, and consulting, the ability to analyze and solve issues succinctly and under time pressure are highly valued. This type of assessment directly addresses LOs 1 and 4.

**Assessment criteria: what criteria will be used to assess my work on this module?**

**As for the essay** students’ work it will be evaluated based on five equally weighted criteria, each worth 20% of the final mark: the quality of writing, the use of evidence, the quality of argument and analysis, the understanding of context and factual accuracy, and the use of references and citations.

**As for the presentations**, it will be graded and assessed based on the following criteria, each worth 20%: (1) clarity of explanation, (2) use of sources, (3) quality of argument and analysis, (4) contextual understanding and factual accuracy, and (5) ability to answer questions.

**As for the final exam**, it will be graded and assessed based on the following criteria, each worth 20%: (1) consistency of knowledge, (2) background knowledge, (3) clarity, (4) critical analysis, and (5) quality of writing. Students will be expected to draw on some general literature related to the module during the exam and will be rewarded further if they use more developed literature related to case studies and theoretical works.

The assessments in general will examine to what extent the student has demonstrated the ability to:

* Critically evaluate suitably chosen case studies
* Illustrate an understanding of how these case studies fit into wider historical trends
* Apply theoretical frameworks in the analysis of relevant case studies
* Examine how imperial thinking and state violence still have relevance in the present
* Critically evaluate how imperial vestiges of power could impact the future

**Sources**

The sources below are a taster of what students will be expected to engage with over the module, more literature will be provided during the module itself.

**Essential Reading**

Cooper, F., Burbank, J., 2011. *Empires in World History*: *Power and the Politics of Difference*. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Naimark, N., 2016. *Genocide: a World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Recommended Reading**

Mann, M., 2009. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morefield, J., 2014. *Empires without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sagramoso, D., 2020, *Russian Imperialism Revisited: From Disengagement to Hegemony*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Zeynep Bulutgil, H., 2016. *The Roots of Ethnic Cleansing in Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.