

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title	: Bachelor of Education (Honours) (History)
Programme QF Level	: 5
Course Title	: The Making of Modern Asia: Decolonization and Independence
Course Code	: HIS3011
Department	: Department of Literature and Cultural Studies (LCS)
Credit Points	: 3
Contact Hours	: 39
Pre-requisite(s)	: Nil
Medium of Instruction	: English
Course Level	: 3

Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Sub-degree, Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate, Professional Doctorate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- Professional Excellence;
- Ethical Responsibility; &
- Innovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
- 4a. Oral Communication Skills
- 4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

1. Course Synopsis

The nineteenth century witnessed a consolidation of European colonies in Asia. By 1818 the East India Company was master of all of India and by the beginning of the twentieth century France's empire in Indochina was nearly 50 percent larger than the mother country. However, the period between the wars saw the dismantling of these global empires and the rise of independent nation states in Asia with widespread repercussions around the world. This course will commence with an overview of colonialism in the nineteenth century, and will examine how and why the British, French, Dutch, Japanese and Americans, among others, all successfully established extensive empires throughout Asia. The course will then move on to focus primarily on the anti-colonial and nationalist struggles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries culminating in decolonization and independence. Topics to consider include the ideological motivations and legacies of colonialism, the impact of the colonial system on the colonizer as well as the colonized, the rise of nationalist movements, the processes of decolonization and the formation of postcolonial identities in Asia. In addition to the study of primary documents and historical narratives, we will also encounter cultural texts such as films, visual art and literature including political speeches, poetry, essays and memoirs.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CILO₁ Explain and analyse the trajectories and processes of colonialism and decolonization in 19th and 20th century Asia;
- CILO₂ Demonstrate knowledge of the anti-colonial nationalist movements in Asia of the 20th century;
- CILO₃ Pursue in-depth historical research using a wide range of sources and research methods; and
- CILO₄ Articulate academic and reflective responses to the historical events covered in the course.

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
● Survey of colonialism in the nineteenth century – the British, the Dutch, and the French in Asia.	CILO _{1,4}	Lecture, reading, and class discussion.
● The movements for independence in the early twentieth century.	CILO _{2,3,4}	Student presentations, reading, and class discussion.
● The Second World War: The Conquest and loss of Southeast Asia and the rise of Japan.	CILO _{2,3,4}	Reading, and class discussion.
● Independence and after, with special reference to India and Singapore.	CILO _{2,3,4} (etc.)	Lecture, reading, and class discussion.

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting	CILOs
(a) One midterm exam covering key dates, events and facts.	30%	CILO _{1,2,3}
(b) Leading discussion: Students will be responsible for introducing and leading a discussion once during the semester on specific anti-colonial movements (Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, Viet-Minh Independence Movement, The Indonesian war of independence, etc.). Students will be expected to provide powerpoints and/or handouts.	30%	CILO _{3,4}
(c) Research essay on an assigned topic (1,500 words): Students will be given a list of suggested topics to choose from.	40%	CILO _{1,2,3,4} (etc.)

5. Use of Generative AI in Course Assessments

Please select one option only that applies to this course:

☐ **Not Permitted:** In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

☒ **Permitted:** In this course, generative AI tools may be used in some or all assessment tasks. Instructors will provide specific instructions, including any restrictions or additional requirements (e.g., proper acknowledgment, reflective reports), during the first lesson and in relevant assessment briefs.

6. Required Text(s)

TBD

7. Recommended Readings

- Bayly, C. A. (2004). *The Birth of the Modern World*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bayly, C. A., & Tim, H. (2006). *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Borthwick, M. (2013). *Pacific Century: The Emergence of Modern Pacific Asia*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bose, S., & Jalal, A. (2004). *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy*. 2nd Ed. New York: Routledge.
- Bose, S. (2006). *One Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burbank, J. & Cooper, F. (2011) *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Cesaire, A. (1972). *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

- Chamberlain, M.E. (1999) *Decolonization: The Fall of the European Empires*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Christie, C. J. (1997). *A Modern History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separatism*. I. B. Taurius and Co. Ltd.
- Cooper, F. (2005). *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Darwin, J. (2008). *After Tamberlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000*. London: Penguin.
- Duara, P. (Ed.). (2003). *Decolonization: Perspectives from Now and Then*. New York: Routledge.
- Harper, T. (1999). *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jansen, J.C. & Osterhammel, J. (2017) *Decolonization: A Short History*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Kennedy, D. (2016) *Decolonization: A Short History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramer, P. A. (2006). *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press.
- Memmi, A. (1967). *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Metcalf, T. (1995). *Ideologies of the Raj*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nandy, A. (1983). *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ngugi Wa'Thiongo. (1986). *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.
- Omissi, D. (1999). *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters, 1914-1918*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Owen, N. (Ed.). (2005). *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Porter, A., & Louis, W. R. (1999). *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Pluvier, J. M. (1974). *South-East Asia from colonialism to independence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rothermund, D. (2006). *Routledge Companion to Decolonization*. New York: Routledge.
- Sardesai, D. R. (1997). *Southeast Asia: Past and Present*. 4th Ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- _____, (Ed.). (2006). *Southeast Asian History: Essential Readings*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sheppard, T. (2015) *Voices of Decolonization: A Brief History With Documents*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

8. Related Web Resources

Digital South Asia Library at the University of Chicago:

<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/>

South Asia Resources, university of Virginia Library:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/spa/zohkohb0i282t94/Area%20Studies/public/SouthAia/southAsia.html>

Center for Research Libraries, Global Resources Network:

<http://www.crl.edu/>

The British Library:

<http://blpc.bl.uk/>

Australian National University's Asia Pacific website:

<http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/>

9. Related Journals

Journal of Contemporary History

The Journal of Asian Studies

Journal of Southeast Asian Studies

10. Academic Honesty

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity* (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/000000000016336798924548BbN5>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

11. Others

Nil

14 August 2025

Possible Cultural texts:

Literature:

- The Sandokan novels (1888 onwards) by Emilio Salgari portray the eponymous fictional pirate in his struggles against the British and The Netherlands Empires.
- Burmese Days (1934) by George Orwell is the somewhat autobiographical story of John Flory and a small, corrupt and bigoted group of British Imperialists living in Burma.
- Tai-Pan (1966) by James Clavell is the second book in Clavell's Asian Saga. It concerns European and American traders who move into Hong Kong in 1841 towards the end of the First Opium War (1839–1842).
- The Singapore Grip (1978) by J.G. Farrell is the final book in Farrell's empire trilogy. It is set in 1939 just before the Japanese invasion of Singapore and is a reflection on the final days of the Empire.
- Noble House (1981) by James Clavell is an epic novel set in Hong Kong in 1963.
- Confessions of a Thug (1839), a novel about Thuggee cult member Ameer Ali, and his adventures and murders in British India.
- The Man Who Would Be King (1888), about two deserters from the British Army discover a hidden kingdom in the mountains and pretend to be gods to control (and rob) the natives.
- The Jungle Book (1893-1894), a collection of stories about Mowgli, an Indian feral child in the jungles of 19th century British India.
- Kim (1901) by Rudyard Kipling portrays an orphan of British descent becoming a spy for Britain. A commentary on how 'British' you can be when you are born overseas.
- King of the Khyber Rifles (1916) by Talbot Mundy. Athelstan King is a secret agent for the British Raj at the beginning of the First World War.
- A Passage to India (1924) by E M Forster set against the backdrop of the British Raj and the Indian independence movement in the 1920s.
- Nightrunners of Bengal (1951) by John Masters is set at the time of The Indian Rebellion of 1857. The central character, Captain Rodney Savage, is an officer in a Bengal Native Infantry regiment.
- Bhowani Junction (1952) by John Masters set amidst the turbulence of the British withdrawal from India.
- The Deceivers (1952) by John Masters on the Thuggee movement in India during British imperial rule.
- Raj Quartet (1965 onwards) is a four-volume novel sequence by Paul Scott about the concluding years of the British Raj in India.
- The Ravi Lancers (1972) by John Masters concerns an Indian regiment which is sent to Western Front of the First World War.
- The Siege of Krishnapur (1973) by J.G. Farrell is a satirical novel set during the siege of an Indian town during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 from three perspectives: the British, the Indian sepoy and the Indian princes. Its point of view is very much of the early 1970s and, in its dealings with the Empire.
- A Flight of Pigeons by Ruskin Bond (1975) set against the backdrop of the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny.
- The Far Pavilions (1978) by M. M. Kaye is the story of an English officer during the Great Game. Based partly on biographical writings of the author's grandfather.
- Cracking India (1991) by Bapsi Sidhwa details the Indian Independence movement through the eyes of young Lenny Sethna.
- The Piano Tuner (2003) by Daniel Mason is set in 1886, in the jungles of Burma.

- *Water* (2006) by Bapsi Sidhwa set in 1938 India.
- *The Mutiny* (2007) by Julian Rathbone set during the 1857 mutiny.
- *The Cashmere Shawl* (2012) by Rosie Thomas set in pre-WW2 in north-western India during the last years of the British rule in India.

Films:

- *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (1977), a Satyajit Ray film set in 1856, on the eve of the Indian Rebellion of 1857.
- *Junoon* (1978), based on the novel *A Flight of Pigeons* by Ruskin Bond, is set during the backdrop of the Mutiny of 1857.
- *Gandhi* (1982), about the life of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the non-violent resistance movement against British colonial rule in India during the first half of the 20th century.
- *A Passage to India* (1984), based on the 1924 novel of the same name, is a British film about an Indian doctor accused of assaulting an Englishwoman.
- *Indochine* (1992), a French film set in colonial Indochina.
- *The Lover* (1992)
- *Dien Bien Phu* (1992)
- *Anna and the King* (1999), set in Thailand in the late 19th century

(list excerpted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire_in_fiction#Set_in_Asia)