

## Syllabus

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|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title of the Course:</b>    | Introduction to Postcolonial/Decolonial Theory | <b>Course Breakdown:</b>      | 28 teaching hours online, 92 or 182 hours independent study             |
| <b>Name of the Instructor:</b> | Bülent Somay (invited by) Julia Strutz         | <b>Weekly class time:</b>     | Fridays, 12.00 – 16.00 (CEST)   |
| <b>Language:</b>               | English  |                               |   |
| <b>Hosted by:</b>              | Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin                 | <b>Certificate issued by:</b> | Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin |

## Meet your instructors

Dr. Bülent Somay

Had his BA and MA degrees in English Language and Literature in Bosphorus University, Istanbul, and his PhD in Psychosocial Studies in Birkbeck College. Bülent Somay was a Lecturer in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies in Istanbul Bilgi University between 2000 and 2017, and the director of the Cultural Studies Graduate Program between 2008 and 2017. He has published seven books in Turkish, and four books in English (*The End of Truth* 2021; *Something is Missing*, 2021; *The Psychopolitics of the Oriental Father*, 2014; *The View from the Masthead*, 2010), one more forthcoming in 2022 (*Beyond Family: A Case for Another Regime of Reproduction, Sexuality and Kinship*). Since 2017, he is living in exile in Brussels (Researcher in the ULB), Oslo (Researcher in the UiO), Berlin (Academy in Exile fellow), and most recently he is working at Off-University as a Researcher and Instructor.

Dr. Julia Strutz

Julia Strutz is one of the co-initiators of Off-University and a sociologist (HU Berlin), historian (Bilgi University Istanbul) and urban geographer (KU Leuven) by training. She conducts research in the fields of memory politics, urban renewal, the urban history of Istanbul, and the various ways this history gains importance in heritage and non-heritage contexts today. More recently, this has led her to a transregional investigation into the idea of the *mahalle/mahalla/mohalla/mahalleh* as a repertoire of living together in cities. She works at the Institute for Asian and African Studies at Humboldt-University in the exploration project "[Beyond Social Cohesion - Repertoires of Living Together \(RePLITO\)](#)" where she coordinates the cooperation with Off-University in different digital teaching, publishing and research formats.

## Description of the course

How (and when) was the world divided into two (East/West, Orient/Occident, and later, North/South), and when (and how) did this division assume the form of *domination*? This course intends to search the roots of this division (and later, a unilateral, cultural, political and economic domination) from the fundamental characteristics of ancient civilisations throughout the globe, to the more recent establishment of capitalism and its gradual ascension to a world order. The concepts of 'Colonialism', 'Imperialism', 'Postcolonialism' and 'Orientalism', as well as 'Westernisation', 'Modernisation' and 'Development' will be discussed, expanded and problematized, from historical, sociological, anthropological, cultural, political and psychoanalytic perspectives.

## Learning Aims

1. Introduction of the concepts of 'Civilisation' and 'Culture', suggesting different outlooks in Cultural Studies and Social and Human Sciences.
2. Application of the basic concepts of 'Colonialism', 'Imperialism', 'Postcolonialism' and 'Orientalism', to Cultural Studies and Social and Human Sciences as well as the current international political situation.
3. Recognition of the major encounters between Postcolonial Studies and other trans-disciplinary world-outlooks, such as Marxism and feminism.
4. Softskills: Read and critically evaluate texts

## Upon the successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Apply basic concepts of 'Colonialism', 'Imperialism', 'Postcolonialism' and 'Orientalism', to Cultural Studies and Social and Human Sciences;
- Recognize the major encounters between Post-/De-colonial Studies and other trans-disciplinary world-outlooks, such as Marxism and feminism;
- Apply these concepts to current international political situation, as well as to the domestic clashes within 'Western Democracies' and 'Developing Countries'.

## Course requirements

Course components include:

- Lectures/Discussions
- Readings
- Weekly Annotations
- Final Paper (only for 7 ECTS)

The final grade for the course will be based on the following:

**4 ECTS:** 25h of presence in class (not graded), 50h reading and two annotations per week, 25h response paper (500 words)

**7 ECTS:** 25h of presence in class (not graded), 50h reading and two annotations per week, 25h response paper (500 words), final paper of 3000-3500 words (10-15 pages, double-spaced).

For 7 ECTS, the student will be expected to write a final paper on a topic to be determined together with the instructors. The grading will depend on not only the paper itself, but also how the topic, the bibliography and possible avenues of discussion have been decided.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1: 22.04.2022

Introduction: What is a 'Colony'? Importing Biological Terminology to History, Political Economy and Sociology

### Week 2: 29.04.2022

Three types of Colonisation: 1. India and China (One Civilisation Takes Over another); 2. South Africa, Oceania, North America and most South America (One Civilisation 'Civilises' Pre-Agrarian Cultures or Declining Civilisations); 3. Central Africa and the Amazon Basin (One Civilisation Plunders a 'Non-Habitable' [that is, for itself] Area from Afar)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhMO5SSmiaA> Trevor Noah

### Week 3: 06.05.2022

Ancient Civilisations: Why was Greco-Roman (Slave/Rain-Farming) Civilisation fundamentally different from the 1. Chinese (Yangtze and Huang He); 2. Indian (Punjab and Ganga); 3. Mesopotamian (Euphrates and Tigris); and 4. Egyptian (Nile) Civilisations (All of them Great-River-Farming)?

- Karl Wittfogel 'Total Terror-Total Submission-Total Loneliness' in *Oriental Despotism* (137-160)  
<https://cryptpad.fr/pad/#/2/pad/edit/URbnbqI52dd0Dj1i1-WmPTv3/>

**Week 4: 13.05.2022**

Centralisation, the State, Slavery, Leisure Time and Different Paths of 'Development'

- M. I. Finley 'Between Slavery and Freedom' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (233-249)
- Watch *Quemada* by Gillo Pontecorvo

**Week 5: 20.05.2022**

Colonisation and Capitalism: Colonialism—Primitive Accumulation, Plundering Resources and the Hierarchy of Races

- Robert Young 'Colonialism', in *Postcolonialism* (15-24)  
<https://cryptpad.fr/pad/#/2/pad/edit/H2f-LkJWvBmqa5PFjCbwUHfa/>

**Week 6: 27.05.2022**

The Empire and Capitalism: Imperialism—Capital Exportation, 'Modernisation' and Self-Determination of Nations

- Robert Young 'Imperialism', in *Postcolonialism* (25-43)

**Week 7: 03.06.2022**

Are Nationalism and Racism 'Essential' Human Traits? Should all Heterophobic Ideologies be categorised under 'Racism'?

- Robert Young 'Sex and Inequality' in *Colonial Desire* (85-110)

**Week 8: 10.06.2022**

Is East East and West West?: Orientalism—Mimicry, Cultural Transvestitism, Hybridisation and Liminality

- Edward Said 'Knowing the Oriental' in *Orientalism* (31-48)
- Bülent Somay. 'Is East East and West West?' in *The Psychopolitics of the Oriental Father* (17-39)

**Week 9: 17.06.2022**

The Irritating Case of the Non-Colonised 'Orient': Russia, Iran and the Ottoman Empire

- Bülent Somay 'The First Triangulation: Desire, Mimicry, Revolt' in *The Psychopolitics of the Oriental Father* (63-88)

## Week 10: 24.06.2022

Can the Orient 'Modernise'? Is 'Modernisation' any different from the (partly voluntary) importation of capitalism by the Orient or the (mostly coerced) exportation of capital by the West?

- Robert Young 'Disorienting Orientalism' in *White Mythologies* (158-180)

## Week 11: 01.07.2022

National Liberation: Is a 'Native/Local Capitalism' Possible in the Long Run? If so, at what cost, to whom?

- Franz Fanon 'Introduction' and 'The Negro and Language' in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1-27)

## Week 12: 08.07.2022

After Colonialism: Can the Orient and the Occident (or Global North and the Global South) coexist, peacefully or otherwise?

- Robert Young 'Postcolonialism', in *Postcolonialism* (57-69)
- Watch *The Party* by Blake Edwards

## Week 13: 15.07.2022

The End of Modernisation and Developmentalism: The Three-Body (or Three-Worlds) Problem

- Hamid Dabashi 'Can Non-Europeans Think?' in *Can Non-Europeans Think?*
- Immanuel Wallerstein 'The End of What Modernity?' in *After Liberalism* (126-144)

## Week 14: 22.07.2022

Wrap-up.

### Reading Materials (\*Required, the rest optional)

- \*Hamid Dabashi 'Can Non-Europeans Think?' in *Can Non-Europeans Think?*
- \*Franz Fanon 'Introduction' and 'The Negro and Language' in *Black Skin, White Masks*
- \*M. I. Finley 'Between Slavery and Freedom' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*
- \*Edward Said 'Knowing the Oriental' in *Orientalism*
- \*Bülent Somay 'Is East East and West West?' and 'The First Triangulation: Desire, Mimicry, Revolt' in *The Psychopolitics of the Oriental Father*
- \*Karl Wittfogel 'Total Terror-Total Submission-Total Loneliness' in *Oriental Despotism*

- \*Robert Young 'Colonialism', 'Imperialism' and 'Postcolonialism' in *Postcolonialism*
- \*Robert Young 'Disorienting Orientalism' in *White Mythologies*
- \*Robert Young 'Sex and Inequality' in *Colonial Desire*
- \*Immanuel Wallerstein 'The End of What Modernity?' in *After Liberalism*
- Homi Bhabha 'Of Mimicry and Man' in *Location of Culture*
- Franz Fanon 'Concerning Violence' in *The Wretched of the Earth*
- Nurdan Gürbilek 'Dandies and Originals' in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102:2/3
- Karl Marx 'British Rule in India' in *Collected Works*, XII
- Joan Wallach Scott 'Introduction' to *Politics of the Veil*
- Gayatri Spivak 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*
- Meyda Yeğenoğlu 'Veiled Fantasies' in *Colonial Fantasies*

### Visual Materials

- *The Party* by Blake Edwards
- *Quemada* by Gillo Pontecorvo
- *Afraid of the Dark* by Trevor Noah
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhMO5SSmiaA> (India)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COD9hcTpGWQ> (Immigrants in France)