

**PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY –  
in partnership with the Gap Year Association study abroad**

**HST 199: Colonialization and Western Influences**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**CREDITS:** 4 quarter-credits – Continuous Enrollment Course

Students who plan to use this course to fulfill specific curriculum areas should discuss transfer options and obtain written approval from a counselor or study abroad advisor at their own college/ university PRIOR to enrollment in this course.

**PREREQUISITES:** There are NO prerequisites for this course.

**METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:**

This course is field-based. The course instructor will be available via e-mail.

**INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD:**

PSU has approved the following Instructors of Record, one of whom will be assigned to you typically two+ weeks prior to the beginning of your program:

- Britt Basel, MS - [brittbasel@ecothropic.com](mailto:brittbasel@ecothropic.com)
  - Dianna Hahn, MA – [dianna.hahn@gmail.com](mailto:dianna.hahn@gmail.com)
  - Alexander Papouchis, MS - [alexpapouchis@gmail.com](mailto:alexpapouchis@gmail.com)
  - Cam Sylvester, MA – [ccamsylvester@gmail.com](mailto:ccamsylvester@gmail.com)
- Office: 503-206-7336  
Web: <https://gapyearassociation.org>  
Address: PO Box 17427, Portland, OR 97217

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed to provide hands-on learning opportunities for undergraduate students who undertake study away opportunities. In this study of colonialism and the history of Western influences, students will strive to understand the influences that colonialism has had on the host-country. Students will explore the ways local cultures have been impacted by the influences of “westernized countries” that might include infrastructure (roads, trains, and transportation), language, gender roles, world-view, social justice issues, sanitation, food, politics, political influences, natural resource management, etc.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

- **Environment of Respect:** Disagreement and diversity of opinions are encouraged. You will be challenged to think critically about the impact of cultural differences, which may include gender, race, the roles environment has in business and market development, socioeconomic status, physical and cognitive ability, sexuality and other forms of diversity. You are encouraged to ask difficult questions and engage in discussion and critical reflection. Please be respectful of others, listen, and try to understand differences.
- **Experiential Learning:** In this course, learning is an experiential process in which you have the opportunity to engage in and reflect on a variety of different experiences throughout the term. The richness of this class will depend on the questions, insights, and active participation that you bring.
- **Personal Responsibility:** You are expected to engage fully in this class and take action if you need help. Please communicate any concerns about assignments, deadlines, or classroom activities.
- **Academic Integrity:** Please adhere to university policies. Please take special note of policies regarding plagiarism and course withdrawal. It is expected that each student will prepare his or her own assignments and that any assignments submitted will be the sole work of the student. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information, will not be tolerated. The University’s Code of Student Conduct may be found at <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES:

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

- Examine differences and similarities between US and local cultures by working and/or volunteering in an international setting.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the history of cultural overlap and the positive and negative results of such influencing.
- Explore regional comparisons of several different cultures based on different colonial pasts.
- Analyze and summarize insights gained from engaging in varied local cultural experiences.
- Understand the resource management of that host-culture and the ways its relationships with a colonial past influence its policy decisions.
- Improve cross-cultural communication, interpersonal skills and enhance critical thinking of international development through volunteer activities.

## CONTACT HOURS, EXCURSIONS, AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

A total of 40 contact hours will be facilitated. These hours will come in the forms of:

- Homestays
- Language instruction and individual study on its role on world view
- Excursions to historical sites
- Excursions to markets and culturally significant sites
- Interviews with local contacts
- Service-learning projects focusing on social service
- Service-learning projects with an environmental focus

## STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:

**REQUIRED HOURS** – must complete 40 contact hours as described above. The Gap Year Association will provide verification of hours.

**A DAILY JOURNAL** in English will be a descriptive study/journal of your semester. Use it to keep brief narratives of your daily experiences. It should contain notes on places visited, interviews, daily purchases, oral language activities, student observations of different and unique cultural traits, etc. Self-reflection is also encouraged and is a significant part of your journal grade.

**REQUIRED READING** – must read at least one book from the Reading list and demonstrate knowledge learned and/or perspectives expressed (with citations) in your FINAL REPORT.

**FINAL REPORT** of insights gained from this international service experience. Our expectation is that the papers you submit will reflect college-level writing. Your report will be 6-8 pages in length. Reports must be typed (double spaced) with a cover page that includes your name, the quarter (eg. fall 2021), the international program attended, and course number.

Submit a comprehensive analytical paper **selecting ONE of two options below** about a host-culture in which you interacted.

### Option #1: Historical Event

Research a historical event/topic and in detail explain and analyze how the historical legacy of colonialism/western influence of this event/topic impacts the host culture today.

### Option #2: Current Event

Research a current event/topic and in detail explain and analyze how the historical legacy of colonialism/western influence impacts or led to the current situation.

**Final Report will be graded as follows:**

- Research/description of the historical or current event (depending on chosen topic) - 40%
- Analysis of impacts - 20%
- Clarity and organization of ideas - 20%
- Grammar and punctuation -10%
- Ability to demonstrate knowledge from the required readings - 10%

**Guiding questions to help you find a topic:**

What were some of the major colonial/Western occurrences and what happened/is happening? How has society, politics and economics been influenced by colonial/ Western countries? What concrete observations have informed your understanding of the context? How do you think the social, economic, and political landscapes have fared since colonial/Western influences shaped it? What challenges might this country face (both internally and externally) in trying to shift the current social, economic, or political systems to ones that might be more beneficial?

**DUE DATES, SUBMITTING JOURNAL AND FINAL REPORT:****Calendar/Schedule:**

All course requirements must be submitted by:

- Fall Semester: January 20th
- Spring Semester: June 20th

**Submitting Journals & Final Reports:**

Please email your final report to the instructor, and post any necessary journals or supportive documents to:

The Gap Year Association  
PSU Grading Instructor  
PO Box 17427  
Portland, OR 97217

\*\*\* Purchase tracking for anything you post as some materials have gotten lost in the past.

**COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

**Daily Journal (30%):** Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, clearly presented observations, creative thought and appropriateness. Self-reflection is important and will be a significant part of your journal grade. Self-reflection will involve answering questions that force you to think critically about your experiences. When writing journals consider questions like:

- How is this experience different from my expectations?
- What challenges have I faced throughout this experience? How am I overcoming them?
- Explore differences, similarities to your home culture.
- What have been the most poignant learning experiences? How has that impacted my world-view?

**Final Report (70%):** Evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, insight, format, content appropriateness, organization skills, and analysis of topic.

**Required Readings:** This is a requirement for successful completion of this class and 10% of your paper grade depends on your referencing key lessons learned or examples. (Citations are required)

**Required Hours:** The Gap Year Association will provide verification of these hours.

**Grading:** This course is graded with letter grades; A - F. See more details about PSU's grading system [here](#).

**READING LIST:**

**Students must read and cite at minimum ONE book from this reading list. The following books have been approved for this course and are listed by program region. Any other books not a part of this list must first be approved by the Field Instructors.**

**All Regions:**

Confessions of an Economic Hit Man. Author: John Perkins

Drawing on interviews with other EHMs, jackals, CIA operatives, reporters, businessmen, and activists, Perkins reveals the secret history of events that have created the current American Empire.

Development as Freedom: Amartya Sen

Despite widespread opulence and inequality, Sen argues that it is still possible to it is still possible to practically and optimistically regain a sense of global social accountability.

**Central America:**

Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America: Walter LeFaber

This book explains the history of US/Central American relations, explaining why US government continues to keep in place a system of Central American dependency.

I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala: Rigoberta Menchu

The remarkable life of Rigoberta Menchú, a Guatemalan peasant who became a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

(Fiction) The Inhabited Woman: Giocanda Belli

The semi autobiographical story of Lavinia (Belli), an upper class Nicaraguan women, who joins with the Sandanistas in the bloody struggle to free her country from an oppressive military dictatorship.

The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics: Aviva Chomsky

A documentary history of Cuba, The Cuba Reader combines writing by historians, journalists, and others, as well as art, poems, short stories, speeches, cartoons and government reports to provide a broader understanding of this island nation. The selections in this anthology document the history of Cuba from the first account of the country by Christopher Columbus in 1442 to Fidel Castro to the present.

Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy: Carlos Eire

This memoir was the winner of a National Book Award and is written by Carlos Eire who was airlifted from Havana in 1962 as part of Operation Peter Pan. This book documents his life before Castro in Cuba and later, in America as a young adult.

**East Africa:**

When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda: Mahmood Mamdani

A critical look at how the genocide happened, especially that it was carried out by hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens, including even judges, human rights activists, and doctors.

The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History: Jean-Pierre Chrétien

This book is a concise synthesis of the history of the region, one still plagued by extremely violent wars.

(Fiction) Things Fall Apart: Chinua Achebe

This novel portrays the collision of African and European cultures in people's lives. Okonkwo, of Igbo traditional society, cannot adapt to the profound changes brought about by British colonial rule.

**India:**

India of My Dreams: Mohandas (Mahatma) K. Gandhi

An extended essay written by Ghandi before his death about the present and future of India.

(Fiction) A Passage to India: E.M. Forster

A Passage to India tells of the clash of cultures in British India after the turn of the century.

**Indigenous America:**

Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism: Noenoe Silva

Details Hawaii's fight against colonialism and the efforts to keep language, culture, and traditions alive.

An Indigenous People's History of the United States: Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

The centuries-long genocidal program of the US settler-colonial regimen has largely been omitted from history. This is the perspective from the Indigenous perspective.

From a Native Daughter: Haunani-Kay Trask

First published in 1993, this book offers a view on the oppression of Native Hawaiian rights, institutional racism, and gender discrimination. Trask uses her experience as a leader within the resistance to explore this fight.

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI: David Grann

This book tells the story of a sinister time in American history when individuals from the wealthy Osage tribe in the US were systematically murdered because of the oil under their land.

Off the Reservation: Reflections on Boundary-Busting, Border-Crossing, Loose Cannons: Paula Gunn Allen

In this collection of unpublished and published essays, Paula Gunn Allen, explores the symbiotic relationship between Native American culture and the larger Western world.

The Warmth of Other Suns: Isabel Wilkerson

*Details a mass migration within the US of black citizens who fled the south for northern and western cities in search of a better life.*

### **South America:**

The Last Days of the Incas: Kim MacQuarrie

The story of the fall of the Inca Empire to Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in the aftermath of a bloody civil war.

The Mapmaker's Wife: A True Tale of Love, Murder, and Survival in the Amazon: Robert Whitaker In 1735 Isabel Grameson survived ten years in the Peruvian Amazon. A testament to human endurance and female resourcefulness, her survival remains unprecedented in the annals of Amazon exploration.

(Fiction) Ines of My Soul: Isabel Allende

The fictionalized story of the real life Inés Suárez, wife of Pedro de Valdivia, war hero and field marshal to Francisco Pizarro.

### **South Pacific:**

Paradise Past: The Transformation of the South Pacific, 1520-1920: Robert Kirk

This book traces the last 400 years from Magellan's entrance into Pacific waters, to disease, to religious conversion and now globalization.

Kava in the Blood: A Personal & Political Memoir from the Heart of Fiji: Peter Thomson

Kava in the Blood is the intriguing story of hurricanes, haunted houses, kava consumption and coups.

Come On Shore and We Will Kill and Eat You All: A New Zealand Story: Christina Thompson

Christina Thompson tells the story of her romance and eventual marriage to a Maori man, interspersing it with a narrative history of the cultural collision between Westerners and the Maoris of New Zealand.

### **Southeast Asia:**

The Killing Zone: My Life in the Vietnam War: Frederick Downs Jr.

The Killing Zone tells the story of the platoon of Delta One-six, capturing what it meant to face lethal danger, to follow orders, and to search for the conviction and the hope.

Alive in the Killing Fields: Surviving the Khmer Rouge Genocide: Nawuth Keat

The real-life memoir of Nawuth Keat, a man who survived the horrors of war-torn Cambodia.

(Fiction) Anna and the King: Margaret Landon

The fictionalized story of Anna Leonowens who was governess to the sixty seven royal children of Siam in 1862 based on her journals showing the beginning of English colonialism in Southeast Asia.