

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION

1. Principal Investigator Name(s) and Academic Title(s): Dwight Codr, Associate Professor of English / Jean Marsden, Professor of English / Clare Costley King'oo, Associate Professor of English
2. Email Address(es): dwight.codr@uconn.edu / jean.marsden@uconn.edu / clare.kingoo@uconn.edu
3. Is this a new course or a currently existing course? New course
4. Course Name/Title/Dept: ENGL 2XXX / The British Empire and its Critics / Dept. of English
5. Describe your project and the work that will be done during the grant period on course content, course design, and/or teaching approach. Provide a clear statement of the objectives of the project in terms of student learning.

The British Empire and its Critics focuses upon literature that encouraged and/or criticized the rise of the British empire and the institution of slavery for which it was responsible (ca. 1550-1833). Topics of study might include exploration, colonization, missionary work, the spread of the English language across the globe, the philosophical and political underpinnings of global expansion, the role of Britain in the development of global financial enterprises such as chartered companies and especially the slave-trading companies. The voices of people of color, including both colonized and enslaved or formerly enslaved people, will feature prominently, regardless of which of the aforementioned topics are covered in this course.

One goal of this course is to show students that the progress of empire, colonization, and enslavement was not inevitable: it required frequent textual reiteration of empire's value and naturalness. This course thus shifts focus away from a traditional literary canon – itself arguably an *agent* of empire – toward writings that fomented support for and posed challenges to empire, illustrating the contestation between writers over the future of Britain at a time when its future was not yet known. Students will gain exposure to a more heterogeneous body of literature and they will learn how to situate that literature in sweeping historical processes and movements.

To develop this course, the developers – Codr, Marsden, and King'oo – will meet to allocate responsibility for different elements of the course. This may entail having each member develop different curricular options for the various major epochs and literatures with which the course shall deal. Team members will conduct surveys and reviews of peer and aspirant institutions to gain a better sense of how this subject matter is taught elsewhere. The team will spend time reading and will develop a series of syllabus modules.

6. How do you intend to evaluate project objectives once the course, as proposed, is offered? Please identify intended learning outcomes and assessment tools.

[Our answers to this question, in keeping with the recommendations of CETL for the construction of learning outcomes, make use of Bloom's terminology for learning outcomes (underlined).]

Outcomes. Students will:

Read the words of people of color who bore witness to and/or were victims of the rise of the British empire and the institution of slavery

Debate the roles played by various texts in the development and critique of empire and slavery

Analyze ideas and language used to support or resist activities tending toward British colonization, imperialism, and slavery

Compare early and later statements of support for British imperial missions and objectives

Identify important names and voices in debates both explicit and implicit over the meanings and values of imperial conquest and exploitation

Assessments: Students will be assessed using a combination 1. short papers, 2. quizzes and reading guides, and 3. discussion-based activities (debates, collaborative readings, open-form conversations about the assigned readings, etc.):

1. Students will demonstrate their knowledge by writing short reflective papers in which they might relate texts to one another in terms of the progress of empire, explore a single passage in depth, present outside research on a given topic pertinent to the readings, etc.
2. Students will be given assignments and examinations to test comprehension and retention as well as to put into practice the reading and critical thinking skills the course is designed to cultivate.
3. Classroom discussion will also provide students with the opportunity to highlight aspects of the assigned texts that may seem unrelated to the main themes of the course, while instructors will be there to help the students recognize and better understand the material.

7. Describe how the course will fit into UConn's General Education curriculum.

[The phrases in bold each constitute the language used to describe UConn's General Education criteria: <https://geoc.uconn.edu/criteria/>]

By increasing student exposure to and understanding of writing and reading – be it novels, sermons, plays, or poems – this course helps students to **become articulate**. By providing students with a diverse array of textual objects associated with England's rise to a position of global domination this course aims to give students **intellectual breadth and versatility**. By placing particular emphasis on both the critical and productive role played by imaginative literature in the development of English imperial formations – including both colonial agents and the institution of slavery – this course aims to cultivate **critical judgment**. By providing students with a glimpse of the experience of exploitation, colonization, dispossession, and subordination, this course encourages students to develop **moral sensitivity**. By providing students with an intimate look at the literature that initiated, promoted, and prolonged – and in the case of abolitionist writing, *fought to end* – British systems of domination and control the course aims to provide students with an **awareness of their era and society**, at least insofar as the long, unfinished project of modernity stretches from the earliest moments of exploration through to present global distributions of wealth and power. As this course requires students to read about individuals both real and fictional from a culture and time period distant – if not entirely distinct – from their own, it helps students to foster a **consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience**.

8. Content Area

[The phrases in bold each employ the language used in UConn's General Education CA-1 criteria: <https://geoc.uconn.edu/group-one-arts-and-humanities>]

This course provides a **historical analysis** of the rise and progress of the British empire from the time of its beginnings in the late sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. It entails **critical investigation of the philosophical and political motivations and arguments** made in defense of and against such institutions as slavery. The course will make extensive use of historical documents and traditional literary texts, both forms of **cultural or symbolic representation** that students will investigate. The course also fosters **comprehension of written**

art forms, and an appreciation for their importance in both positive and negative senses (as both agents and critics of empire).

9. How will the course add to and/or enhance existing course offerings?

We believe that this course *exemplifies* what is meant by the first of the priorities for this year's Course Enhancement Grant Competition: "the critical exploration of racism and colonialism." Beginning with a look at the literature that supported colonization through the literature of slavery and abolition, this course surveys the transatlantic history of colonialism and racism. Its emphasis not simply on imperial voices but also those resistant to empire – the critics of empire named in the course title – derives inspiration from and is guided by decolonial pedagogical praxis, wherein the voices of the oppressed are centralized in the conversation.

Further, the disciplines of Early Modern Studies and Restoration and Eighteenth Century Studies have, in recent years, shifted emphasis towards concerns with race and colonization. We believe this course reflects these disciplinary shifts in ways that go beyond current course offerings in English.

That said, we see this course as building upon some existing offerings in the English department. Professor Marsden teaches a special topics course at the 3000-level on eighteenth-century literary engagements with the British empire. Courses on empire and *US culture* (ENGL 2207) and postcolonial literature (esp. ENGL3319) would complement our longer and earlier survey of imperial formations and literatures. Our department's offerings in African American literature (ENGL2214, ENGL3213, ENGL3217), which frequently entail the study of early African American literary voices, will also be complemented by the course that we are proposing.

Courses outside of English that would resonate with this proposed course include HIST3618 (Comparative Slavery in the Americas), HIST3210 (Archaeology in the Age of Sail), AFRA3206/HIST3206 (Black Experience in the Americas), AFRA3208/LLAS3208/HIST3208 (Making the Black Atlantic), AMST3502/HIST3502 (Colonial America: Native Americans, Slaves, and Settlers, 1492-1760).

10. Will your course serve as a model to assist others in their efforts to improve the general education curriculum? If so, how?

Yes. Our goal is to begin the process of modifying the British Literature curriculum within the English Department to more accurately reflect current concerns of both the UConn student body as well as the larger disciplinary field of British literary studies. The old model of literary history for its own sake has been largely if not entirely superseded by investigation of history of empire, the history of slavery, colonization, sexuality and gender, disability, cultural issues, book history, performance history and so on. What these new concerns have in common is an interest in the larger social and cultural milieu for literary production; and, the discipline of English has largely shifted its focus away from literature narrowly conceived to other media and textual forms. Our hope is that this serves as the first of a series of course revisions within the department's British course offerings – of which there are several – that will reflect the new shape of the discipline.

11. Is your proposal linked to any others being submitted in this competition? NO

12. Has this course even been submitted for this grant in the past? NO

13. Has this course been funded *by this grant* in the past? NO

14. Has this course or will this course be funded *by any other* non-departmental source? NO

**2020-2021 GENERAL EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT GRANT COMPETITION
BUDGET FORM**

1. Proposer's Name (s)

Dwight Codr, Associate Professor of English (PI)
Jean Marsden, Professor of English
Clare Costley King'oo, Associate Professor of English

2. Proposal Title

ENGL 2XXX / The British Empire and its Critics

3. Proposed Budget and Allocations

Fiscal 2021	Amount budgeted	Fringe for Summer Salary **	Total
Summer salary or Spring Salary buyout*	1987.28/person	512.72/person	\$7,500 (\$2,500/person)
Supplies		None	
Travel		None	
Research (Faculty Account)		Usually none	
Other		Usually none	
Total	\$7,500 (\$2,500/person)		

4. Justification

The three faculty members involved in the development of this course – Codr, Marsden, and King'oo – request that the funds allocated for the support of this project be distributed as one-time summer salary payments, divided equally between all three participants. This salary payment would constitute remuneration for the labor and time required to develop this course. The labor involved would consist of such things as reading, designing assignments, performing secondary research, and consulting with colleagues both within and without the English Department. Because the course spans historical periods that the discipline of English normally treats as discrete – Renaissance, Restoration, Eighteenth Century, Romantic/Georgian – we have elected to jointly develop this course, to leverage our different areas of research and teaching strength. While this decision will result in a better final product, and one more representative of a number of faculty in our department, there will be a need for meetings between faculty and a need for coordination that will take additional time and labor over the coming spring and summer.

The British Empire and its Critics

ENGL 2XXX

Sample Syllabus, Preliminary

The British Empire and its Critics focuses upon literature that encouraged and/or criticized the rise of the British empire and the institution of slavery for which it was largely responsible (roughly 1550-1833). Topics of study might include early English exploration, English colonization, missionary work, the spread of the English language across the globe, the philosophical and political underpinnings of global expansion, the role of England in the development of global financial enterprises such as chartered companies and especially the slave-trading companies. The voices of people of color, including both colonized and enslaved or formerly enslaved people, will feature prominently, regardless of which of the aforementioned topics are covered in this course.

An important goal of this course is to show that the progress of empire, colonization, and enslavement was not inevitable: it required frequent textual reiteration of empire's value and naturalness. This course thus emphasizes the study of writings that fomented support for and posed challenges to empire, illustrating the contestation between writers over the future of Britain at a time when its future was not yet known.

Course Learning Outcomes

Read the words of people of color who bore witness to and/or were victims of the rise of the British empire and the institution of slavery

Debate the roles played by various texts in the development and critique of empire and slavery

Analyze ideas and language used to support or resist activities tending toward British colonization, imperialism, and slavery

Compare early and later statements of support for British imperial missions and objectives

Identify important names and voices in debates both explicit and implicit over the meanings and values of imperial conquest and exploitation

Course Assessments

1. Reading Reflections (60%)

Your reading reflections – each 1-2 pages, roughly – will be worth from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) points. Some reflections will require you to respond to a specified question or problem that will be given to you on the day prior to the day on which your reflection is due, but most will be open-ended. Each, however, must demonstrate your comprehension of and/or serious engagement with the assigned text. Reflections may show that you have attempts to complicate your thinking by using rudimentary research tools (the Oxford English Dictionary, Wikipedia, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, etc.).

2. Quizzes and Occasional Assignments (20%)

Quizzes will be administered to ensure that students have completed the reading assignments. Occasional assignments, such as the Wikipedia assignment, will take the place of some reading reflections.

3. Discussion (In person and online) (20%)

Discussion means that you must either contribute to the class discussion or the online discussion board at least once weekly.

[COURSE POLICY STATEMENTS/BOILERPLATE/CLASS RULES]

Course Schedule

[This is a schedule of readings and does not include room for assignments and in-class learning activities, all of which would be TBD at this point. About 25% of these readings would need to be cut or removed to make space for such activities. Activities under preliminary consideration include: 1. using Perusall to collectively read and annotate a primary document like “The Several Declarations of the Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa” or 2. breaking into small groups to analyze clusters of lines from Alexander Pope’s 1704 paean to empire, *Windsor Forest* or 3. staging a scene from Bellamy’s *The Benevolent Planters* or Shakespeare’s *Tempest* or 4. working in a group to map Robinson Crusoe’s island based on his minute verbal description of it.]

Date	Reading
Tuesday	Introduction
Thursday	-Richard Eden. <i>Voyage to Equatorial Africa</i> {1553?} -Richard Hakluyt. “Dedicatory Epistle” to <i>Principal Navigations</i> . {1599}
Tuesday	-Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe. <i>First Voyage...to Virginia</i> {1589}
Thursday	W. Shakespeare. <i>Merchant of Venice</i> (Acts 1-2) {1596}
Tuesday	W. Shakespeare. <i>Merchant of Venice</i> (Acts 3-5)
Thursday	-Andrew Marvell. “Bermudas” {1653} -Richard Eburne. “A Plain Pathway to Plantations” First ten pages {1624}
Tuesday	-William Castell “A Petition for the Propagation of the Gospel” {1641} -Francis Bacon. “Of Plantations” {1597}
Thursday	<i>The Tempest</i> (Acts 1-5) {1610}
Tuesday	<i>The Tempest</i> (Acts 1-5)
Thursday	John Locke. <i>Two Treatises of Government</i> (PDF on HuskyCT) {pub. 1690}
Tuesday	-Alexander Pope. <i>Windsor Forest</i> {1704 & 1713} -James Thomson. “Rule Britannia” {1740}
Thursday	-“The Several Declarations of the Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa / Inviting all His Majesties Native Subjects in general to Subscribe, and become Sharers in their Joynt-stock” {1667} -“Some Considerations on [a Joint-Stock Company with Exclusive Trading Rights in the Slave Trade]” {1700} -Sample page from an 18 th Century Accountancy Manual {ca. 1770}
Tuesday	Thomas Bellamy. <i>The Benevolent Planters</i> {1789}
Thursday	Thomas Bellamy. <i>The Benevolent Planters</i> {1789}
Tuesday	Aphra Behn. <i>Oroonoko</i> {1688}
Thursday	Aphra Behn. <i>Oroonoko</i> {1688}
Tuesday	Daniel Defoe. <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> {1719}
Thursday	Daniel Defoe. <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> {1719}

Tuesday	Daniel Defoe. <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> {1719}
Thursday	-“The Selling of Joseph” [very early anti-slavery sermon] {1700} -“The Abolition of Slavery: Contexts” {assorted, late 18 th century}
Tuesday	George Fox. <i>Gospel Family Order</i> excerpts {1676}
Thursday	London Society of Friends. [Petition against the Slave Trade] {1783}
Tuesday	Matthew Lewis. <i>Journal of a West India Proprietor</i> . {1833}
Thursday	Olaudah Equiano. <i>Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> {1789}
Tuesday	Olaudah Equiano. <i>Interesting Narrative</i> {1789}
Thursday	Olaudah Equiano. <i>Interesting Narrative</i> {1789}
Tuesday	Hannah More. “Slavery, a Poem” {1788} Hannah More. “The Sorrows of Yamba” {1795}
Thursday	Quobna Ottobah Cugoano. <i>Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Human Species</i> {1787}
Tuesday	Thomas Clarkson. <i>Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species</i> {1787}
Thursday	William Wilberforce addresses to Parliament
Tuesday	Joseph Sturge. <i>The West Indies in 1837</i> {1837}
Thursday	Slave Trade Act {1807} Slavery Abolition Act {1833} Jupiter Hammon. “Address to the Negroes of New York” {1787}

Reading Reflection Guidelines

Over the course of the term, you will compose 5 reading reflections. These reflections will be considered satisfactory (3/5 or 4/5) if the following conditions are met:

1. You demonstrate to me that you have read the text (“I read *Robinson Crusoe*. He was a sailor. He was shipwrecked. Personally, I don’t like boats.” = is not satisfactory).
2. You have made some attempt to research “simple” questions (e.g. When was a text written? What does such and such a word mean? Where, exactly, is the “West Indies”?). I mean the types of questions that can be answered with a quick trip to www.wikipedia.org or www.etymonline.com. For more complex philological questions, you might consult the Oxford English Dictionary, available through the Homer Babbidge Library Databases. (“I enjoyed reading the sermons, but I don’t know what Providence means. It would be interesting to know what Providence is, since that word sure keeps coming up a lot.” = is not satisfactory).
3. Your reflection is error free (for the most part): free of stylistic, mechanical, formatting, word choice, spelling, and syntax errors that obscure your meaning.
4. Your reflection flows from one idea to the next and does not take the form of a list.

Your reflections will be considered excellent (5/5) if you meet the above criteria AND you:

1. Ask a question that would inspire conversation among other students or scholars who have read the text and are interested in having a conversation about that work. OR
2. Offer an interesting and thought-out interpretation of the text. OR
3. Meaningfully bring into relation multiple texts assigned over the course of the semester.

Things to avoid in your reading reflections. There are some exceptions to these, but these are good, general rules:

1. Discussion of whether or not you liked the text or some part of the text. Chemists don't have to "like" or "dislike" Magnesium to do interesting things with it. Similarly, whether you like or dislike "Rule Britannia", for example, has nothing to do with your ability to do interesting things with it.
2. Hinging your reflection on a question of fact.
3. Going over the word count. (500 words)
4. Going under the word count. (250 words)