

*This course is open for everyone. Having taken part I of the course (“Critical Theory and Social Change: I- the Age of Great Revolutions”) is NOT a prerequisite for taking this course. Duration: eight weeks.*

## **Critical Theory and Social Change: II- A Dying Colonialism**

The struggle for social and political change has always been a major driving force behind the movement of history. In this [sequence of courses](#) we aim to investigate historical political and social movements through their intellectual contribution, and analyze critical theory in the light of the historical movements that shaped them.

Throughout the twentieth century, the anticolonial struggle constituted a major driving force of world history; it defined the political terrain, shaped the attempt to understand and re-imagine the world, constituted the moral force behind world revolution, and translated itself into major intellectual contribution in the fields of theory, literature, and arts.

In this course we seek to analyze how anticolonial critique, postcolonial theory, and political theory at large, took shape under the conditions of the struggle between the forces of colonialism and anticolonialism. The course will thus start by examining a set of anticolonial revolts and the intellectual work they entailed. This will provide us with the arsenal of critical tools with which we can move between the colony and the metropole.

The Western world was also shaped, on many levels, by the colonial experience. Our anticolonial lens, therefore, is valid in the “Western” world as much as it is valid in Africa, Asia, and South America. This also meant that the struggle of social and political equality in the West was never divorced from the larger anticolonial struggle.

Although we are privileging anticolonialism as an analytical lens, we are not proposing it as the only lens. Instead, we will allow the discussion to take us through an eclectic set of analytical and critical lenses.

**N.B:** We acknowledge that colonialism started neither in the late nineteenth century nor in the Arab World, and that the colonization of the Americas 4-5 centuries earlier has shaped and continues to shape the modern world. For the confines of space and time, however, we start our inquiry in the Arab world in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. Hopefully there will be other courses on the colonization of the Americas and the invention of the modern world.

Tentative Flow (subject to change according to the participants' interest and the flow of the discussion)

I-     **Early Anticolonial Movements in the Arab World** (tentatively 2 sessions)

- 1- Anti-Colonialism in Egypt; the case of the 'Urabi and the 1919 Revolts (excerpts from the press of the time will be provided)
- 2- Genesis of the Palestinian Revolution  
Ghassan Kanafani, (students can choose from a selection of novels, short stories, and critical essays in the original format and in translation. Kanafani's works will be discussed against the backdrop of Palestinian history since early Zionist colonization until the 1967 war).

II-    **The Theory and Practice of Anti-Imperialism** (tentatively 2 sessions)

- 1- Revolution in the Tricontinent  
Frantz Fanon, "A Dying Colonialism"  
Che Guevara, "Message to the Tricontinental."  
Amilcar Cabral, "The Weapon of Theory."  
Frantz Fanon, "The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness."  
Nelson Mandela, "I am Prepared to Die."
- 2- The Case of Frantz Fanon  
Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*  
Fanon, "On Violence."

III-   **The Palestinian Revolution and the Culture of Resistance** (tentatively 2 sessions)

- 1- Palestine in Literature  
Students are encouraged to choose works of literature that deal with the Palestinian question. Suggestions from Palestinian novels, theatre, and poetry will be provided, both in the original and in translation.
- 2- Imaging Palestine, Envisioning the Struggle  
This session aims to move beyond literature that represents the Palestinian struggle to how Palestine became a battle cry for world liberation; how the Palestinian cause became a linchpin for the (armed and unarmed) anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle worldwide.  
The themes of the discussion may include: the uprising in South Oman (Known as the Revolution of Dhufar), solidarity networks worldwide, the phenomenon of

“urban guerillas” in Europe, the Civil War in Lebanon, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and so on.

Suggested literature includes (but isn’t limited to):

Jean Genet, *Prisoner of Love*

Jean Luc Godard ,Pierre Gorin, and Anne-Marie Miéville *Ici et Ailleurs* (film)

Sun’allah Ibrahim, *Wardah* (Novel)

J. Smith and André Moncourt, *The Red Army Faction: A Documentary Study*

Ghassan Charbel, *Asrar al-Sunduq al-Aswad* (a collection of essays and interviews)

Naji al-‘Ali, (political cartoons).

**IV- 1968: *Here and Elsewhere*** (tentatively 1 session)

Radwa Ashur, *Blue Lorries (Farag)*.

*Hikayat Thawrah: Hanoi al-‘Arab & al-Karamah* (2 episodes of a documentary series)

**V- The Road to 2011** (tentatively 1 session)

This is meant to be an open discussion. Reading material may be provided if need be. Students are welcome to come up with their own suggestions.