Legal Studies & History 502:  
LAW & COLONIALISM  
Prof. Mitra Sharafi  
Spring 2013

Class Time: TTh 11-12.15  
Class Location: Sewell Social Sciences 4308  
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Phone: (608) 265-8428  
Office: Law 6112 (Directions: the Law Building is halfway up Bascom Mall on the left. When you enter from Bascom Mall, turn right and take the elevators or stairs to the sixth floor. Other routes will not necessarily lead to 6112.)  
Office Hours: Th 1.30-3.30pm or by appointment  
Course Page: Moodle course page accessible via UW Law School Moodle webpage: http://moodle.law.wisc.edu/ or via Learn@UW link on right side of UW-Madison website (under “My UW-Madison”)

Course Description:

This course explores the role of law in the context of empire. We will consider the uses of rule-of-law ideology in justifying colonial rule and in unraveling it; the negotiation of cultural and racial identities in the legal arena; and the circulation and transformation of legal concepts and personnel across empire. The course begins with a general introduction to the history of European colonialism. We will then examine the operation of colonial legal institutions including the courts, police, prisons and penal colonies. The latter half of the course links particular areas of law and social life. Among other themes, we will consider indigeneity, sovereignty and property law; criminal law and violence; gender and family law; and race, class, and labor. The course puts special emphasis on the Anglosphere—regions once part of the British Empire—during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Grades & Course Requirements:

Your final grade will be based upon the following:

- **Midterm Exam (25%)**: in-class closed-book exam on **T, March 12, 2013 in Sewell Social Science Computer Lab, room 3218. Please note that the midterm will *not* be held in our usual classroom.**

- **Reading responses (15%)**: you will be required to write five 600-word responses to class readings (approx. 2 pages each, double-spaced) on the five days when you are “on call” (see below for description of this system). You may choose to write about the day’s “Reading and Discussion Questions” (listed for each class) or you may decide to write on some other aspect of the readings. These responses are
intended to give you an opportunity to explore themes in the readings that are thought-provoking, and to engage critically with the authors’ arguments and approach. They are also meant to provide us with a starting point for discussion in class the following day. Your reading responses will be due electronically (using the dropbox on our Moodle website) Mondays by 12 noon for a Tuesday class or Wednesdays by 12 noon for a Thursday class. Each response will be graded with a check, check-plus or check-minus; late responses will be penalized by the loss of one “grade” (for example, a response normally earning a “check-plus” would receive a “check” if late). I will not accept responses received after 5pm on the day before class.

- **Final exam (40%):** two-hour closed-book exam; **Friday, May 17, 2013 at 2.45pm-4.45pm in Sewell Social Science Computer Lab, room 3218. Please note that our exam will *not* be held at the official exam location posted on the university’s timetable.

- **Class participation (including attendance) (20%):** you are expected to attend class and contribute regularly to class discussions. We will be using the on-call system: you should be particularly well prepared on the days when you are “on call.” Your performance in **two in-class “Colonial Moot Court” sessions on Th, Feb.7 and Th, March 7** will also contribute to your participation grade.

“On Call” System:

- **Groups:** At the beginning of the semester, I will divide the class into the following five groups of roughly four students each: red, orange, green, blue and purple. The color identification refers to the color of name card you will be assigned. You should bring this card with you to class.

- **Rotations:** Each group will be on call for approximately five classes over the course of the semester. I have indicated which group will be on call for each class. **Know when you are on call, and be sure to be well prepared for those classes especially. Your reading responses will be for these classes. If you must miss a class when you are scheduled to be on call, arrange with a classmate to switch days and inform me of the change, or contact me at least one week in advance so that I can help you coordinate such a change.**

**Written Work:**

- **Format:** Your reading responses must be typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. They must be double-spaced and submitted electronically via our Moodle course page.
Course Materials:

All readings for the course are available electronically through our Moodle course website. It is therefore imperative that you secure access to our website. Please contact me if you have any difficulty logging on.

Technology:

- **Laptop ban:** For pedagogical reasons, the use of laptops or other electronic devices (like iPads and smartphones) is not permitted in class. In order to ensure a full and engaged learning experience, the use of any type of electronic device in class is prohibited unless required for properly documented medical reasons and/or arranged through the McBurney Center. Any recordings made of our class (using the medical/McBurney exception) shall be for students’ own study purposes. Such recordings shall only be made with prior permission from me and are not to be made available to anyone outside of our class.

Academic Misconduct:

- **The stakes:** You have a lot to lose if found to have committed academic misconduct. Misconduct during your undergraduate years may be recorded and submitted to future potential employers and institutions for post-graduate study. If you plan to apply to law school or graduate school, you should realize that any academic misconduct could prevent you from being accepted, or from pursuing your desired profession later on (e.g. practicing law). It is therefore critical that you familiarize yourself with UW’s policies and procedures governing academic misconduct: [http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html](http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html)

- **Plagiarism:** Any intentional attempt to claim the work or efforts of another person without authorization or citation constitutes academic misconduct. This includes cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation, or paraphrasing from the web (or any other source) without crediting the original. I take such actions seriously. If I suspect that you have plagiarized, I may penalize you in grading your assignment. Alternatively or in addition, I may pursue disciplinary measures.

- **Other forms of misconduct:** Because I grade on a curve, any cheating by your classmates will affect your grade directly. If you believe that a classmate is cheating or committing any other kind of academic misconduct, report it to me.
Course Reading Schedule:

- **T, Jan. 22, Class 1 (no group on call today): Introduction**

  **Part I: The Big Picture**

  **GENERAL HISTORY OF EUROPEAN COLONIALISM**

- **Th, Jan. 24, Class 2 (red): Early Trade Colonialism**

  Reading and Discussion Questions: (1) Early colonialism grew out of trade. How did this give it a special character and set of methods? (2) What particular commodities drove the early colonial enterprise?

- **T, Jan. 29, Class 3 (orange): High Colonialism**

  Qs: A new type of justification for imperialism became popular in the later colonial era (i.e. from the late 18th c. on), as European colonizers turned their attention from the Americas to Asia and Africa. Identify and analyze these arguments.

  **THE BIG IDEAS**

- **Th, Jan. 31, Class 4 (green): What is Colonialism all about?**
  - George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1958), 143-8
  - Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 93-101 (“Ch.5: Sly Civility”)

  Qs: (1) Both Orwell and Bhabha write about the colonizer’s ambivalence. Describe Orwell’s figure of the reluctant imperialist. According to Bhabha, how were relations between the colonizer and colonized soaked in mistrust? (2) According to Gandhi in his letter to Hitler, what do the British Empire and Nazi Germany have in common? (3) What does Said say about the relationship between colonial rule or power, on the one hand, and knowledge or
information about the colonized population’s culture, on the other? Can the latter ever be characterized as apolitical?

- **T, Feb.5, Class 5 (blue): What is the Rule of Law all about?**

  **Qs:** (1) How would you define the concept of the rule of law? (2) What is the relationship between law (or rule-of-law values) and the ruling class, according to E. P. Thompson? (3) What is the relationship between law (or rule-of-law values) and colonialism, according to Jörg Fisch?

**COLONIAL MOOT COURT #1**

- **Th, Feb.7, Class 6 (no group on call today): The Hindu Joint Family—*Manish v Manish***
  - Read the *Manish v Manish* problem (distributed in advance and posted on our Moodle course page) and prepare your case. You must have met with your team in advance to plan your strategy and divide duties. You will argue your case in class today.

  **Part 2: Sites & Sources of Law**

- **T, Feb. 12, Class 7 (purple): Legislation & the Courts**

  **Qs:** (1) On Likhovski: Likhovski argues that child-related legislation passed for Palestine while it was a League-of-Nations mandate was not really about children’s rights, but about empire, audience and identity. What does he mean? Do you agree? Summarize the discussions surrounding the particular controversies that he examines. (2) On Haldane: this reading is an after-dinner speech delivered by Lord Haldane, a British judge of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in 1921. The JCPC, or Privy Council (as it was called for short), was the highest court of appeal for the British Empire. Lord Haldane relished the diversity of legal matters that he was asked to decide, and defended the Privy Council as an institution. Others were less positive. Identify Haldane’s
arguments in favor of the Privy Council. What counterarguments could be made against his views?

- **Th, Feb. 14, Class 8 (red): Legal Education**
  - Assaf Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine*, 106-23 with notes (“Ch.5: Legal Education and the Formation of Identity”)

**Qs:** (1) Macaulay’s famous "Minute on Indian Education" (1834) sums up one particular approach to educating colonized peoples in British India. What does Macaulay’s minute say about the creation of colonized, Anglicized elites? What does it say about the comparison between European and Asian intellectual traditions? (2) How does Likhovski’s chapter act as a sequel to Macaulay, exploring British anxieties about the education of colonized elites? How did those anxieties affect legal education for students from the League-of-Nations’ mandate of Palestine?

- **T, Feb. 19, Class 9 (orange): Lawyers**

**Qs:** (1) On McQueen: Wearing wigs and gowns in the Australian colonies was often expensive, hot and uncomfortable for lawyers. Yet some of them fought fiercely to retain or reintroduce this practice. Why? How did the wig and gown further the professionalization project, increasing the status, exclusivity, and earning power of lawyers? How did it magnify the “magical,” ritualistic and symbolic aura of the colonial legal system, and why did that matter? How did it affect the relationship between the Australian colonies and England? On the flip side, what types of arguments were made against wearing wigs and gowns? (2) On Mossman: How does the figure of Cornelia Sorabji, an early female lawyer in colonial India, bring together an unusual combination of values and identities?

- **Th, Feb. 21, Class 10 (green): Judges**
Norval Morris, “The Brothel Boy: A Fragment of a Manuscript” (by Eric Blair AKA George Orwell), Occasional Papers from the Law School, University of Chicago, No. 18 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 1-17

Thomas Strangman, Indian Courts and Characters (London: Heinemann, 1931), 20-2

Qs: (1) How does Orwell’s work give life to the figure of the reluctant European colonial official? How is the not-so-reluctant official from a colonized elite represented in Orwell’s work? (2) How does Thomas Strangman’s self-portrait compare or contrast with the judge in “The Brothel Boy”?

T, Feb. 26, Class 11 (blue): Juries


Qs: In what ways did the jury of matrons (like the old English "special jury") differ from the “jury of one’s peers” that we are most familiar with in the US today? What was the rationale for having juries of experts, rather than juries of average people with no special knowledge of the issues involved? When was the jury of matrons commonly used? When was it most and least effective? Would you favor the use of either the jury of matrons or the special jury today? Why or why not?

Th, Feb. 28, Class 12 (purple): Police


Qs: What was distinctly colonial about colonial policing? What imperial agenda did the Canadian Royal Mounted Police and the Texas Rangers advance in patrolling the borderlands of the Great Plains? What populations and interests were they working for and against?

T, March 5 Class 13 (red): Prisons, Penal Colonies & Detention Centers


**Qs:** Elkins’ chapter describes both the methods of subjugation used by the colonial state in its operation of detention camps during the Mau Mau rebellion, and survival strategies used by detainees in those camps. What were the central techniques used by the colonial state to torture, humiliate and degrade prisoners in an attempt to erode anti-colonial solidarity? How did detainees resist through the organization of their own forms of internal self-government? Describe the quasi-legal, education- and communication-based practices and bodies they created.

**COLONIAL MOOT COURT #2**

- **Th, March 7, Class 14 (no group on call today): Islamic Divorce—Amina v Abdul**
  - Read the *Amina v Abdul* problem (distributed in advance and posted on our Moodle course page) and prepare your case. You must have met with your team in advance to plan your strategy and divide duties. You will argue your case in class today.

- **T, March 12, Class 15 (no group on call today): *In-class Midterm exam—not in our normal classroom, but in 3218 Sewell Social Science Computer lab***

**Part 3:**
**Law & Social Life**

- **Th, March 14, Class 16 (orange): Sovereignty & Indigenous peoples**
  - Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), “Ch.8: Perfect Settler Sovereignty” and “Conclusion,” 183-210 with notes
  
  **Qs:** What shift occurred during the 1830s in the way governments in the US and Australia claimed legal power and control? Was the shift smooth and uncontested? Describe the players and power struggles, summarizing the relevant case law in both places.

- **T, March 19, Class 17 (green): Property & Indigenous peoples**
  
  **Qs:** Describe the doctrine of terra nullius. What role did agriculture play in the application of the doctrine? How did the doctrine’s use in the Australian colonies make the interaction between British and indigenous peoples different in Australia than in other white settler colonies? Why did the doctrine stick, lasting in Australian law until 1992?
• **Th, March 21, Class 18 (blue): Aaron Bird Bear's tour of native American sites on UW campus**
  o Optional: “UW Madison Cultural Landscape: First Nations (full version)” (27 minutes): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GARZPU1fvkI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GARZPU1fvkI)

  *Qs: How would you characterize Wisconsin’s colonial past vis-à-vis indigenous peoples? How has this history affected Wisconsin sites and politics over the past few decades? Given this background context, what approach seems most promising for the future?*

• **Sat., March 23 - Sunday, March 31, 2013: Spring Break**

• **T, April 2, Class 19 (purple): Law & Custom**
  o Assaf Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine*, 192-210 with notes (“Ch.9: ‘Arif al-‘Arif and Nomadic Identity”)

  *Qs: The documentation of customary law among the Bedouin by ‘Arif al-‘Arif was of use in the courts of mandate Palestine. It was also a central part of al-‘Arif’s own project of pan-Arab identity formation. Describe al-‘Arif’s relationship and interaction with the Bedouin as he collected material for his book, Law among the Bedouin. For what audiences was the book intended? How did al-‘Arif’s own position as a member of a colonized population affect his presentation of Bedouin custom? What effect did it have upon the book’s reception?*

• **Th, April 4, Class 20 (red): Law & Religion**
Qs: (1) On Rocher: Why did the British decide to apply Hindu law (rather than English law) to Hindus in colonial India? How did the British try to establish what Hindu law said when most Britons could not read Sanskrit? What were the difficulties and weaknesses associated with these processes? Can you think of any other ways in which the British could have carried out the project of applying Hindu law? What might have been the strengths and weaknesses of those approaches? (2) On Huxley: How was Buddhist law represented by Europeans like Jardine and Forchhammer? Does Huxley feel that this was a fair and honest depiction? Otherwise put: why is Huxley so critical of the characterization of Buddhist law during the late 19th century?

- T, April 9, Class 21 (orange): Subjects & Citizens

Qs: In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the white settler colonies of South Africa, Australia, and Canada developed legislation aimed at the exclusion of non-white populations, particularly from Asia. What specific populations were targeted in each of the three colonies? What specific types of rules were developed to achieve Asian exclusion? What problem did these rules present vis-à-vis professed British imperial ideals?

- Th, April 11, Class 22 (green): Sex & Gender

Q: In what ways did sexual interaction between colonized and colonizer complicate the project of imperial rule?

- T, April 16, Class 23 (blue): Violence & Crime
  - Trevor Burnard, “Theater of Terror: Domestic Violence in Thomas Thistlewood’s Jamaica, 1750-1786” in Daniels and Kennedy, *Over the Threshold*, 237-249, plus notes at 250-3

Qs: (1) Criminal law seemed absent in certain colonial settings. What types of power and privilege did this absence enable? (2) What role did criminal law play in the larger labor-related colonial project?

- Th, April 18, Class 24 (purple): *A Passage to India*
  - Plot summary for E. M. Forster’s novel, *A Passage to India*, 1-3

Qs: In class, we will watch excerpts from the film, A Passage to India (1984). The film is based upon E. M. Forster’s novel by the same name, first published in 1924. According to Morey, what are the leading themes in Forster’s novel? Can you connect these to themes we have addressed in this course so far? Consider linking today’s readings with other readings we have done. How did British Indians (i.e. British people living in colonial India) react to Forster’s work? What do you consider to be some strengths and weaknesses of Forster’s work, as described by Morey’s overview of the scholarly literature on Passage to India?

• T, April 23, Class 25 (red): Slavery
  © Alan Watson, Slave Law in the Americas (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 1989), “Ch.10: Conclusions on Slavery and Slave Law,” 130-4

Qs: (1) On Morgan: How did the experience of slavery differ across the various colonies of the British Empire? (2) On Watson: How was the law of slavery different in English-speaking colonies than in colonies run by other European colonizers? (3) On Morgan and Watson: What role did law have in the comparatively different experiences of slaves across New World colonies? Otherwise put: do you think that law played a leading role in determining the type of life conditions of slaves, or do you think some other factor was more important? If the latter, identify these other factors.

• Th, April 25, Class 26 (orange): Indentured Servitude
  © Amitav Ghosh, Sea of Poppies (London: John Murray, 2009), 3-24 (Ch.1)

Qs: (1) On Tomlins: How exactly did a contract of indentured labor work? (2) On Tomlins and Ghosh: Did indentured labor differ from slavery in significant ways? (3) On Ghosh: Describe the various types of labor referred to in the opening chapter of Ghosh’s novel. What types of labor seem coerced (or less free), compared to others? (Spoiler alert: Later in the novel, the main Indian characters will be tricked into being sent to territories like Mauritius and the Caribbean as indentured laborers or “coolies.”)
Part 4: The End of Empire?

- T, April 30, Class 27 (green): Lawyers, Independence Movements & Decolonization

  Qs: What role did non-European lawyers play in independence movements across the British Empire? How did Gandhi understand the relationship between law and empire? How did he want Indian lawyers to resist British rule?

- Th, May 2, Class 28 (blue): Empire & International Law

  Qs: People usually assume few connections between imperialism and international law. Anghie argues they are very much linked, focusing especially on the end of empire and the rise of international legal institutions in the early 20th c. What are his arguments? Are you convinced? Otherwise put: describe the contours of the argument that international human rights law is a western invention imposed upon the rest of the world in neo-colonial fashion. Do you accept this view or not?

- T, May 7, Class 29 (purple): Post-colonial Reverberations—Law & Empire today
  - readings TBA; to be posted on our Moodle course page

  Qs: What L&C course themes can you trace in today’s readings? Do any of the readings complicate conclusions you think we came to in our course? Do you see trends developing in current events that try to preserve or deny the memories and legacies of colonialism? To what extent is empire still with us today?

- Th, May 9, Class 30 (no group on call today): Final exam review

- *Friday, May 17, 2013, 2.45pm-4.45pm: *Final Exam (40%) in Sewell Social Science Computer Lab, room 3218 (Please note that our exam will *not* be held at the official exam location posted on the university’s timetable)