This is an advanced course in how to read and write about how historians have approached the history of the French empire. Most of the readings cover the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries—a period through which the French empire expanded and declined, but never really fell. The course will explore the ways in which the history of the French empire itself muddled the categories of "colonizers" and "colonized."

With one exception, the course deals with secondary rather than primary literature. The readings vary widely in their methodological approaches and in their difficulty. The material is quite unforgiving in terms of historical context, which explains why the course has a prerequisite of History 102 or the equivalent, as well as why a general text is provided alongside the topical readings. Even so, students should expect to spend a considerable amount of time reading about places, events, and people they don't understand very well.

The course addresses two main tasks—obtaining a certain level of proficiency in learning what historians call the "facts" of the history of the French empire, and learning and critiquing approaches to writing that history. Reading and writing in different ways for different purposes is one of the most useful skills one can acquire in college.

Requirements:

The format of the course is discussion. Regular and intensive participation by each member of the class is essential to the success of the enterprise. Though grading remains more an art than a science, approximately 50 percent of each student's final grade will depend on her or his ability to contribute to class discussion.

I. Readings:

The following books have been ordered for purchase at the Oberlin College Bookstore:


Jean de Bruhnhoff, *The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant* (originally published 1933)


If they use the bookstore, students are advised to purchase early, as the bookstore returns unsold books at a certain point in the semester.

All of the required books are also on reserve. A number of other readings will also be made available through J-Store or Blackboard.

II. Presentations:

Students should expect to make several short (10-15 minute) presentations regularly over the course of the semester. The purpose of the presentations is to lay out the main issues of the assigned readings so as to initiate discussion. The presentations should lay out the methodologies at work in the readings, and begin to critique them. At least two and sometimes three students will present per week. Collaboration among students presenting in a given week is particularly encouraged. Particularly if two or three students are presenting on the same book, they should coordinate the content of their presentations in order to avoid overlap. I am happy to assist in dividing labor among presenters.

III. Papers:

The writing component of the course comprises three short (4-5 page) essays. These may be drawn from students' presentations, though this is not a requirement. As with the presentations, the purpose of the papers is to explain and critique methodologies of writing the history of the French empire. Students must write one paper before Fall Break, and at least two by Thanksgiving.

Rewrites will be allowed for the first two papers if students are not satisfied with their grades. Rewrites are due one week after the original paper is handed back. The rewrite grade will be recorded as the final grade for the paper. Students who wish to rewrite their papers may wish to have a conference with me to discuss problems with the original version. There is more to rewriting a paper than changing a sentence here and there.
**Schedule of Classes and Readings:**

**NOTE:** The course this year is broken up by three unavoidable out-of-town absences on Fridays on the part of the instructor. Consequently, I have scheduled one substantial make-up session for Saturday, November 17. Please arrange your schedules accordingly.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>September 7</th>
<th>Introduction: Reading aloud in class and discussion:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jean de Bruhnhoff, <em>The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant</em> (originally published 1933)</td>
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<th>September 14</th>
<th>Ideologies of Empire: Brute Force, Assimilation, and Association</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Robert Aldrich, <em>Greater France</em> (1996), Ch. 3, &quot;Ideas of Empire&quot;</td>
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<td>(Note: Hereafter, there will not be regular assignments from the Aldrich book. Please consult as necessary.)</td>
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<td>Raymond F. Betts, <em>Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914</em> (1961); Ch. 2,4, and 6 (Blackboard)</td>
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<th>September 21</th>
<th>The Empire and the Third Republic</th>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>September 28</th>
<th>Colonialism, Citizenship, and Gender</th>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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October 5  
Locating the Voice of the Colonized?

Readings:


October 12  
Léopold Senghor: Assimilated or Associated?

Readings:

Léopold Senghor, *Black Hosts* (1948) (Blackboard)

Janet G. Vaillant, *Black, French, and African: A Life of Léopold Sédar Senghor* (1990), Chapter 7 (Blackboard)

FIRST PAPER DUE

October 19  
No Class

Fall Break!!

November 2 and November 9  
No Class

Note: During periods between my absences (which are mostly on weekends), students are welcome to meet with me to discuss their first papers, and possible rewrites.

November 16  
Empire and Crisis in the Metropole

Readings:


November 17  
Make-up Session
**Morning:** The Anthropology of Empire

**Readings:**


**Afternoon:** Film: *The Battle of Algiers* (1967)

**SECOND PAPER DUE BEFORE THANKSGIVING**

November 23 No Class: Thanksgiving Break

November 30 The “Loose Ends” of Decolonization?

**Readings:**


December 7 The Empire Domesticated

**Readings:**


**THIRD PAPER DUE AT TIME FOR FINAL EXAM SET BY COLLEGE SCHEDULE**

**Additional Ground Rules:**

1. Deadlines and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.
Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including artistic performances and political activism; 3) work in other classes. Two possible exceptions exist for unacceptable excuse #3. I am prepared to exercise some indulgence concerning students doing Seniors Honors projects or, in the case of Conservatory students, Senior recitals. This is because of the "once-in-a-lifetime" character of these projects.

2. Papers must be double-spaced and have one-inch margins. They must also be word-processed with near letter quality resolution. I reserve the right to return any paper that is not legible. Papers must be submitted in hard copy. E-mailed papers will not be accepted.

3. All written work at Oberlin College is subject to the Honor Code, which must by sign on all work submitted for a grade. The Honor Code presently reads: “I have adhered to the Honor Code in the writing of this exercise.”

4. All written work for the course must be completed in order to pass. That is to say, if two instead of three papers are turned in, a student will fail the entire course. Incompletes are governed by college rules; unofficial incompletes will not be given.