



Weekend Courses 2023-24

The British Empire in two World Wars

Start date: 23 February 2024 **End date:** 25 February 2024

Venue: Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor: Dr Sean Lang **Course Code:** 2324NRX026

Tutor biography

Dr Seán Lang is a Senior Lecturer in History at Anglia Ruskin University, where he specialises in modern European history and the history of the British Empire. He has taught widely at school, sixth form and university level and is a regular broadcaster on radio and television.

He has published on British medical work in British India and textbooks on *Parliamentary Reform, 1785-1928*, *Nazi Foreign Policy, 1933-1939* and *Why the First World War Broke Out* as well as four history titles in the popular 'For Dummies' series, including *The First World War for Dummies*. He has recently published on young people's writings at the end of the First World War and contributed a chapter to *The Cambridge Companion to Winston Churchill*.

He has written extensively for the theatre and has had work performed in Cambridge, London, Oxford, Norwich, Canada, and at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Dr Lang is a former Honorary Secretary of the Historical Association and has worked both with government and with the Council of Europe on developments in school history.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Empires and diplomacy before 1914
22:00	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	The British Empire at war, 1914-1918
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Manoeuvring for the Middle East, 1914-1923
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free time
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	The Empire or the League? 1919-1939
18:00 – 18:30	Free time
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	The Imperial Life of Winston Churchill – on paper and on film
21:30	Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast (for residents only)
09:00 – 10:30	Empires at war, 1931-1942
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	The end of the beginning; the beginning of the end, 1942-1947
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will allow you to:

- understand the events of the two world wars in a different perspective from most traditional accounts
- relate the period of the world wars to current issues surrounding empire, race and identity
- appreciate the roles played in the two world wars by people of Britain's colonial empire, and the importance of imperial issues to strategic decision-making

Summary of content:

1. Imperial rivalry before 1914.
2. The role of colonial troops in the First World War.
3. Rival plans for the Middle East: the Arab Revolt, Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour declaration and the Treaties of Sevres and Lausanne.
4. The Empire and international relations between the wars.
5. Empire and strategy in the Second World War.
6. The development of nationalism in British colonies during and after the Second World War.

Presentation of the course:

There are no pre-requisites of knowledge or reading, though you may get more out of the course if you are able to look at some of the recommended reading in advance. The course will be taught through a series of illustrated lectures, with time for questions and discussion. The Saturday evening session will be based on extracts from Churchill's writings and filmed versions of Churchill's life.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, you should be able to:

- discuss decisions, events and issues relating to the Empire during the two world wars with confidence and understanding
- appreciate the role played in the two world wars by Britain's colonial empire and its peoples
- appreciate the impact of the two world wars on attitudes towards Britain's Empire
- understand the reasons for current controversy surrounding Britain's wartime role and its connection with colonialism

Reading and resources list

There are no compulsory readings for this course. However, you may find the below recommended reading list of interest to supplement your course.

Bourne, S, *Black Poppies: Britain's Black Community and the Great War*, London: The History Press (2019)

Bourne, S, *Under Fire: Black Britain in Wartime, 1939-1945*, London: The History Press (2020)

Edgerton, D, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: a twentieth-century history*, London: Penguin (2019)

Jackson, A, *The British Empire and the Second World War*, London: Continuum (2006)

Jackson, A, *The British Empire and the First World War*, London: Routledge (2015)

James, L, *Churchill and Empire: portrait of an imperialist*, London: W&N (2014)

Khan, Y, *The Raj at War: a People's History of India's Second World War*, London: Vintage (2016)

Lyman, R, *A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma and Britain, 1941-1945*, London: Osprey (2023)

Olusoga, D, *The World's War: Forgotten Soldiers of Empire*, London: Apollo (2019)

Overy, R, *Blood and Ruins: the Great Imperial War, 1931-1945*, London: Penguin (2023)

Schneer, J, *The Balfour Declaration: the origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, London: Bloomsbury (2011)

Toye, R, *Churchill's Empire: the world that made him and the world he made*, Basingstoke: Macmillan (2016)

Note: Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of 15 May 2023)