

## The British Empire in the Nineteenth Century

The British empire was the dominant world power of the nineteenth century, its reach extending from Calcutta to Cape Town, from Montreal to Melbourne. As such, the British empire played a crucial part in shaping the world as we know it today. Through empire, distant corners of the globe were united in sometimes unprecedented ways, resulting in intensifying flows of commodities, labour, and ideas. A wide range of people, from merchants, migrants, and missionaries to sailors, soldiers, and slaves, all found themselves swept up in the currents of these largescale historical developments. At the same time, empire was also a theatre of war and resistance, as European powers competed for land, resources, and profits while local communities adapted to and defied economic penetration, political encroachment, and evangelisation. Many of these conflicts continue to resonate into the present day.

This course will focus on a series of key events in the history of the British empire, which will not only bring the historical breadth and diversity of the empire to life, but will also help us to reflect on empire's modern-day legacies. Over five classes, we will delve into the history of war, rebellion, politics, trade, exploration, religion, and science, all while thinking about how empire and ideas about empire changed over the course of a very eventful century. Each class will begin with a brief lecture introducing the topic, followed by debate and discussion with the aid of primary source material provided during class. By engaging with nineteenth-century texts and images, from journal entries to cartoons and caricatures, it will be possible to step into the historian's shoes and gain a fleeting glimpse of a transformative period in world history.

### Class themes —

1. Introduction to the British Empire
2. Britain's Invasion of Afghanistan, 1839-42
3. The Opium War, 1839-42
4. The Indian Uprising, 1857
5. The Morant Bay Rebellion, 1865

### Introductory reading —

C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (1989)

John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (2012)

Philippa Levine, *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (2007)

P.J. Marshall, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (2001)

C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (2004)

Jurgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (2014)

**More detailed reading —**

William Dalrymple, *Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan, 1839-42* (2014)

Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China* (2011)

Biswamoy Pati (ed.), *The 1857 Rebellion* (2010)

William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857* (2006)

Gad Heuman, *The Killing Time: Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica* (1995)

Extra reading material will be provided in classes.

**Dr Callie Wilkinson** is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Warwick. Originally from Canada, she studied for a BA in History and Anthropology at McGill University in Montreal before moving to the Cambridge to pursue her graduate studies. Her recently completed PhD dissertation examines the attitudes and experiences of British diplomatic agents stationed at Indian royal courts in the early nineteenth century, tracing the contested process whereby the British East India Company established its imperial influence over nominally independent Indian kingdoms. She has also published on educational reform and the East India Company's college at Haileybury. Her new project examines how news about imperial expansion in India was disseminated in Britain in the early nineteenth century, focusing on the power of commercial monopolies and press censorship to mould public opinion.