

Empires and Revolutions

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The period of the 17th and 18th centuries saw the major Western powers vying for control over continental Europe and large parts of the globe, trying different systems of government, and competing for resources and markets. The impact of the resulting conflicts resonates today and shapes much of what we think of as the modern world.

The first week of this course traces the development of European colonial empires in the period, the roles of trade, exploration and military power, and their impact upon modern society. The second week discusses the major revolutions of the period, the English Civil War, the American Revolutionary War and the French Revolution and its aftermath.

The course includes debates on key questions the studies have raised. Students will undertake a research project, writing up an academic report discussed in private tutorial.

Week Three:

Powerhouse to Counting-house

The European powers as they were in 1625.

The development of mercantilist competition.

Worldwide conflict 1625-1815.

The move from land-based military power to the importance of industry and global trade supported by naval power.

Research and Report: students' essays will be appraised in private tutorial.

Week Four:

The King is Dead! Long Live the King!

Changes in the political structure of Europe from absolutism to democracy.

The English Commonwealth and the Restoration of the Monarchy.

European colonialism in the Americas.

English, French and Dutch colonisation of North America.

Colonial America under the British empire: calls for autonomy, the war for independence; aftermath.

Causes and effects of the French Revolution.

Suggested Reading

There is no preparatory reading for this course but students interested in studying this topic afterwards are encouraged to read Niall Ferguson, *Empire* (2009) ISBN 978-0-141-03526-0.