

FYS 13:
“The White Man’s Burden”:
Foreign Aid, Development and Neo-Imperialism

Fall 2026

Professor ShahBano Ijaz

Pronouns: she/hers

Email: ijaz@oxy.edu

Office: Johnson Hall 208

Class Days: MWF

Class Hours: 12:15-1:10 p.m.

Location: Johnson 315

Common Hour: F 2:25 – 3:20 p.m.

Location/Schedule: [Here](#)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (and by appointment over email/Zoom).

Please sign up [here](#) for Wednesday office hours.



THE WHITE (?) MAN'S BURDEN.

This cartoon, published in March of 1899 in Life magazine, depicts the figures of Uncle Sam, John Bull, and Kaiser Wilhelm as three heavy burdens being borne on the backs of non-white people, who are stooped over under their weight.

Source: William. H. Walker, "The White(?) Man's Burden." Illustration, *Life* 33, March 16, 1899

Course Description:

Foreign aid is a key global fiscal flow that plays a pivotal role in the development of the global south. This course will provide an overview of foreign aid and ask the critical question: is aid always good for recipient countries? Beginning from the origins of foreign aid and its strategic use by donors during the Cold War, we will reflect on how foreign aid has been used for multiple objectives, from propping up autocratic regimes to furthering donors' goals of promoting democracy. The course will highlight some of the macroeconomic changes that are driven by aid's transnational nature, including the emergence of a large NGO economy in the global south. Students will also be familiarized with the domestic consequences of foreign aid: what does aid mean for different groups in recipient countries (politicians might engage in corruption; voters might engage in accountability) and what agency they have in ensuring the efficient use of aid money. Finally, it will inspire students to think of what the best uses of aid might be in a post-pandemic world where it continues to remain relevant (and, as evidenced by vaccination flows, useful in some ways). Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to question the ethics of foreign aid and the positionality of the "white men" in determining who gets aid and how.

Note that this is a 4-unit course. On average, you should expect to spend at least twelve (12) hours a week (including in-class time) on this course.

Learning Objectives and Goals:

There are three primary learning objectives for this seminar on foreign aid:

- Students will be able to articulate the complex strategic politics that underlie foreign aid as well as how the flow of foreign aid reaffirms global power structures.
- Students will be able to discuss concepts such as foreign aid, international loans and grants, development, imperialism, and neoliberalism.
- Students will be able to critically evaluate policies that focus on aid efficacy and development outcomes.

This course is also designed to fulfill the objectives of the First Year Seminar (FYS) at Occidental College. The mission of the FYS program is to prepare all first-year students for success at Oxy and beyond through shared intellectual experiences that develop effective college-level writing and enhance critical thinking.

FYS Course Objectives:

1. **Effective College-Level Writing.** Students will demonstrate proficiency in expository essay writing as they gain and refine their knowledge of the conventions of academic discourse.
2. **Critical Thinking.** Students will be provided with opportunities to develop, strengthen, and demonstrate their ability to think critically and engage in academic discourse.
3. **Scholarly Inquiry.** Students will demonstrate understanding of the practices of scholarly inquiry by identifying research questions; collecting, evaluating, and interpreting evidence; and communicating the findings.

4. Transition to College. Students will become familiar with the norms of college academic life and demonstrate knowledge of the curricular and co-curricular resources available to promote their academic success.
5. Information Literacy. Students will be introduced to the concept of information literacy and be expected to understand how to find and evaluate academic sources. They will also learn about scholarly citation methods and purposes, and become aware of the importance of academic honesty.

FYS Learning Outcomes:

Effective College-Level Writing Outcome 1.1:

Students will develop writing that responds with insight and originality to the criteria and requirements of the assignment, demonstrating their understanding of the course materials and topics through the use of specific examples and evidence from scholarly sources.

Effective College-Level Writing Outcome 1.2:

Students will develop writing using features appropriate for college-level expository papers including: thesis or main idea, clarity of focus, organization, and conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and usage.

Critical Thinking Outcome 2.1:

Students will have the ability to clearly and accurately represent the precise question, problem, or issue under discussion.

Critical Thinking Outcome 2.2:

Students will have the ability to identify assumptions, implications, and practical consequences of the question, problem or issue under discussion.

Transition to College Outcome 3.1:

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge about academic and co-curricular resources and support services.

Transition to College Outcome 3.2:

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge about academic support services that aid in the transition to college from high school.

Grading Criteria

	Total	S	U
Attendance	31	≥ 28	< 28
In-Class Drafts	3	≥ 2	< 2
Essays	4	4	< 4
Peer Review Sessions	2	≥ 1	< 1
Conferences	2	2	< 2

In order to receive a grade of S (“Satisfactory”) in this course, students must complete and turn in all components of each of the major writing assignments (as designated on the syllabus). This work must be completed according to the specifications provided by the professor and as outlined in the assignment handout, syllabus, course Canvas page, assessment rubric, or other

materials provided. Moreover, this course is designed around a labor-based model that places emphasis on your efforts in throughout the semester. Completing all course requirements satisfactorily will ensure that you receive an S and pass this course.

Receiving an S grade in an FYS course is not indicative of whether you will complete the First-Stage Writing requirement without taking [CWP 201: The Art of Essay Writing](#). However, receiving an Unsatisfactory (U) grade in an FYS course immediately means that you will need to take CWP 201 and pass the class with a C or better in order to complete the First-Stage Writing requirement.

Required Readings

The following text is **required** and may be purchased through the campus bookstore online. The bookstore will ship to students.

Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. (2007) Penguin Books (or Oxford University Press).

You do NOT need to purchase a physical copy of the book. The e-book is available in the library catalog.

Additional **required readings** include articles and books chapters, all of which will be available in PDF format on Canvas. Where a PDF is not available there will be a link to the website where students can access the reading.

Some readings are available electronically on the Oxy Library website. You will need to create a (free) Open Library account to view them.

Course Requirements

Attendance:

Attendance and active class engagement are instrumental for achieving the learning outcomes of this course. Normally, a student who misses more than 4 class sessions will automatically receive an Unsatisfactory grade of "U"; if a situation beyond your control arises that causes you to miss class, please reach out to me or to the Dean of Students' Office as soon as possible so that we can work together to help you stay on track to succeed.

Participation:

Students are expected to attend class having completed all the required readings for that day. The participation grade also includes active participation in any peer review exercises, online discussion forums, group projects, etc. If you encounter circumstances that prevent you from participating in these ways, please contact me and we can discuss alternative forms of participation if needed.

In-Class Drafts:

We will work on two essay drafts in class. You will not receive a grade on these drafts but I will offer you feedback that will help you work towards your essays.

Essays:

As a course designed to facilitate your growth as an academic writer, essay writing will comprise a major component of your work this semester. To pass this course, you will need to complete all three assigned essays. More instructions will be provided as we progress through the course.

- *Argument Summary* (#1): Students will write an essay (2-3 pages) that summarizes the key argument of assigned readings, as well as student's reaction to those readings. This essay is due on 26th September at 11:59 p.m.
- *Documentary Essay* (#2): Students are expected to write a response to the documentary *Poverty Inc.*, linking the arguments back to at least 4 readings that they have done in class. This essay is due 11th October at 11:59 p.m.
- *Aid and Imperialism Essay* (#3): Students will write a thesis-driven essay (3-4 pages) about foreign aid and its impact on a region of their choice. This essay is due 7th November at 11:59 p.m.
- *Aid and Imperialism Essay* (#4): Students will revise their previous essay and expand on it by incorporating and critically reflecting upon neoliberalism and imperialism embedded in foreign aid. Given the added emphasis on imperialism, this essay should be 4-5 pages in length. This essay is due on 10th December by 11:59 p.m.

Peer Review Sessions:

During the course of the semester, we will hold two in-class peer review sessions that are designed to provide each student with additional feedback on how to improve their essay for the final draft. All students are required to participate in this process.

Conferences:

Students will meet for brief consultations with Professor Ijaz about their progress in the course during week 7 and week 14. These consultations will be held during the Wednesday and Friday sessions of those weeks. All students are required to participate in this process.

Mid-Semester Progress Reports

All faculty are encouraged to provide students with a mid-semester progress report for every course. Mid-semester progress reports are not intended to be used as determinative or predictive of the final grade in a course, but to provide an opportunity for the faculty to communicate an approximate estimation of progress by the students in the course by the midpoint of the current semester.

Course Policies:

Classroom Culture, Participation, and Attendance:

This classroom is a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, gender identities and expressions, national origins, political affiliations, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, abilities, and other visible and non-visible identities. The wide array of perspectives that each of us contributes to this class is a resource that will strengthen and enhance our intellectual community. I firmly believe that we learn and grow best in settings in which we feel safe to express our ideas, but also to have our ideas challenged. Therefore, it is important that we cultivate a classroom culture that allows us to challenge each other without disrespecting each other. From the first day, we will work on developing a healthy classroom culture in which everyone feels comfortable participating because your active and informed participation is essential for success in this course.

Furthermore, attendance is mandatory, unless we mutually agree to an alternative arrangement. You should notify me via email if you are going to miss a class session. If you miss more than three sessions without discussing it with the professor, it will affect your grade in the course.

Masks:

Your health and well-being, and that of our community, are essential. Since COVID-19 continues to pose a threat to many of us, students are encouraged, *but not required*, to wear masks in class – KN95, N95, or surgical masks are best. Please use your best judgment to wear a mask, especially if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. If you are feeling any symptoms of illness, please refrain from attending class until you receive a negative COVID test or it has been 10 days since your symptoms began. Please work with Emmons and the COVID Operations team to confirm when and how you can end your isolation. Similarly, if you have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please follow all applicable College policies, and wear a high-quality mask when around other individuals for 10 days.

Laptops:

Laptops will not be allowed in sessions where we will be discussing substantive readings on aid and imperialism. However, I encourage you to bring laptops to class as we will use these during in-class writing activities which will include working on drafts, peer-reviewing others' work, or just doing an in-class writing session. Please use your best judgment to use laptops only for work related to the class; browsing the internet or using social media during the classroom is both disruptive and disrespectful to the class environment and your peers.

Communication:

Check your registered campus email regularly as well as announcements made to the Canvas site for the course. You are responsible for the material I send you electronically. I will respond to your email inquiries within 24 hours during weekdays, and on the first weekday if you email me after 5 p.m. on Friday (or over a break).

Class Recordings:

No recording of classroom instruction is permitted. The sharing, altering, or distorting of any audio-visual capture of a class session is not permitted. All content contained in the records shall be subject to the College's Policy on Intellectual Property.

Late Assignments:

All assignments are due on the dates specified in this syllabus. If you anticipate trouble

submitting an assignment on time, let me know as soon as you are aware, and we will come up with a plan.

Syllabus Change:

In the interest of flexibility, I may need to make small changes to the syllabus throughout the semester – but I will not add any required assignments or readings.

Statement of the Shared Academic Integrity and AI Usage:

Academic Integrity is a shared community value. It is built around trust and respect between members of the Occidental Community and embodies a commitment to honesty and integrity in every aspect of one's academic life.

FYS courses are designed to help students develop strategies for generating original, insightful work that features both the conceptual and technical conventions of academic writing. The use of generative AI programs (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and Microsoft Copilot) is antithetical to FYS objectives and therefore is not permitted in this course unless under direct instruction from your professor to do so in a specific setting/assignment. Students who use generative AI without explicit permission from their professor are in violation of this course's academic integrity parameters.

All members of the Occidental community are committed to upholding the highest degree of academic integrity. Unless stipulated otherwise, the academic work done for all assignments is expected to be the student's own; students are expected to give proper credit to the ideas and work of others.

Signing the Academic Integrity Commitment at the beginning of every semester represents a student's affirmation to uphold the shared values of honesty and integrity. When signing the Integrity Commitment associated with work in a course, students are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information; nor assisted others in these actions.

For more information, please see this [link](#) to Student Handbook.

Civil Rights & Title IX statement, and statement of role of faculty member as a mandatory reporter:

In the event that you write or speak about having experienced discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected characteristic or sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual and/or gender-based harassment), as a designated Responsible Employee, I must inform the Civil Rights & Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about resources and support services at Oxy, as well as reporting options both on and off-campus. You have no obligation to respond to the Civil Rights & Title IX Office or to meet with them to discuss support services and reporting options.

If you do not want the Civil Rights & Title IX Office contacted, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with:

- Oxy's Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE (survivoradvocate@oxy.edu)
- Emmons Counseling (For appointments, call: 323-259-2657)
- Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (young@oxy.edu)
- Oxy 24/7 Confidential Hotline (323-341-4141)

The College's civil rights policies, along with additional resources, can be found at: <https://www.oxy.edu/civil-rights-title-ix>. If you would like to contact the Civil Rights & Title IX Office directly, you may email Civil Rights & Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at afulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.

Special Accommodations/Learning Differences:

All academic and housing accommodation requests are managed by Disability Services & Student Support (DSSS). It is a student's responsibility to contact DSSS if they need accommodations or additional support. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at accessibility@oxy.edu to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience:

Consistent with Occidental College's commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website: <https://www.oxy.edu/student-life/resources-support/orsl/academic-accommodations>.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation policy:

I strive to foster an inclusive classroom environment. Consistent with College policy on [discrimination, harassment, and retaliation](#), I seek to maintain an environment of mutual respect among all members of our community. Please come to me with any concerns.

Land Acknowledgement:

Occidental College occupies the traditional territory and homelands of the Tongva people. Please click through to read more about the [Gabrielino-Tongva tribe](#) and about the practice of [land acknowledgement](#)

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
Week 1			
Wednesday 8/26	Syllabus	- Course syllabus - First-stage writing proficiency portfolio available here.	
Friday 8/28	ChatGPT: Do we still need to know how to write?	- Robin, Corey. (2023). <i>The End of the Take-Home Essay: How ChatGPT changed my plans for the Fall</i>. The Chronicle of Higher Education. Available here. - Johnson, Russell (2023). <i>On ChatGPT: A Letter to my Students</i>. Available here.	
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 2			
Monday 8/31	Foreign Aid Planning and its Pitfalls	Easterly, William. White Man's Burden (WMB) Chapter 1	
Wednesday 9/2	Foreign Aid: The Big Push	WMB Chapter 2	
Friday 9/4	Writing Day	Turabian, K. L. (2019). Introduction: Writing, Argument, and Research. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i> (pp. 1-7). University of Chicago Press.	
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 3			
Monday 9/7	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY!		
Wednesday 9/9	Foreign Aid and Bad Governments	WMB Chapter 4	
Friday 9/11	Writing Day	Turabian, K. L. (2019). Part I: Your Research Project. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i>	

		(pp. 9-11). University of Chicago Press. • Turabian, K. L. (2019). Imagining Your Project. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i> (pp. 13-25). University of Chicago Press.	
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 4			
Monday 9/14	U.S. Aid in Numbers	• Scotto TJ, Reifler J, Hudson D, vanHeerde-Hudson J. We Spend How Much? Misperceptions, Innumeracy, and Support for the Foreign Aid in the United States and Great Britain. <i>Journal of Experimental Political Science</i> . 2017;4(2):119-128.	
Wednesday 9/16	Consequences of USAID Cuts	• Jablonski, Ryan S; Seim, Brigitte and Alex Yeandle. Aid Cuts Increase Demand for Government Services and Taxation: Evidence from USAID funding. (March 2026)	
Friday 9/18	Writing Day	• Resources on Writing a Summary uploaded to Canvas	First Draft Writing Session
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 5			
Monday 9/21	From Colonialism to Imperialism	• WMB Chapter 8	
Wednesday 9/23	Invading the Poor	• WMB Chapter 9	
Friday 9/25	Writing Day	• Turabian, K. L. (2019). Defining a Research Question. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i> . (pp. 26-44). University of Chicago Press. • Turabian, K. L. (2019). Working	First Essay Due on Saturday 26th September at 11:59 p.m.

		Toward an Answer. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i> (pp. 45-51). University of Chicago Press.	
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 6			
Monday 9/28	Critical Perspectives on Imperialism	Zakaria, Rafia. (2021). “The White Savior Industrial Complex and the Ungrateful Brown Feminist” in <i>Against White Feminism</i>. W.W. Norton	
Wednesday 9/30	Economists and Consent	Easterly, William (2026). “How Economists forgot Consent” in <i>Violent Saviors</i>. Basic Books	
Friday 10/2	Pasadena Playhouse! Writing Day	- Turabian, K. L. (2019). Doing your Research. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i>. University of Chicago Press. - Turabian, K. L. (2019). Engaging Sources. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i>. pp. 65-73). University of Chicago Press.	
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 7			
Monday 10/5	Development in Search of Dignity	Easterly, William (2026). “Development in Search of Dignity” in <i>Violent Saviors</i>. Basic Books	
Wednesday 10/7	Documentary: No Class	Please watch Poverty Inc. (available via Oxy's library website).	
Friday 10/9	Writing Day: No Class	Submit a response to the documentary	Documentary Essay due on

			10/11 at 11:59 p.m.
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 8			
Monday 10/12	Dead Aid	• Moyo, Dambisi. (2009). “The Myth of Aid,” in <i>Dead Aid</i>. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. • Moyo, Dambisi. (2009). “Aid Is Not Working,” in <i>Dead Aid</i>. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.	
Wednesday 10/14	Core event: Henry Hoke , author of Open Throat , Oxy’s 2026 Community Book Thorne Hall		
Friday 10/16	No Class (Fall Break!)		
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 9			
Monday 10/19	Understanding Neo-Imperialism	• Swetha Ramachandran, “From Empire to Aid: Analysing Persistence of Colonial Legacies in Foreign Aid to Africa” (2025) • Nick Malherbe and Abiodun Omotayo Oladejo, “Against Climate Aid Colonialism: The Case for Climate Reparations and South-South Solidarity” (2025).	
Wednesday 10/21	Guest Speaker	Samantha Custer	
Friday 10/23	Writing Day	• Turabian, K. L. (2019). Constructing Your Argument. In <i>Student’s Guide to Writing</i>	Second Draft Writing Session

		<i>College Papers</i> (pp. 74-85). University of Chicago Press.	
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 10			
Monday 10/26	From the Recipient's Perspective	Cruz, Cesi & Schneider, Christina. (2017). "Foreign Aid and Undeserved Credit Claiming," <i>American Journal of Political Science</i>. 61(2): 396-408	
Wednesday 10/28		Voeten, Erik. (2012). "Is Foreign Aid Effective? The View from Citizens in a Recipient Country," <i>The Monkey Cage</i>. Available here.	You might need a Washington Post subscription to access the post; you will be able to sign up for a subscription through the library.
Friday 10/30	Writing Day	Turabian, K. L. (2019). Revising Your Paper. In <i>Student's Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i> (pp. 143-146). University of Chicago Press.	Peer Review Session I
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 11			
Monday 11/2	Solutions to Development	WMB Chapter 10 (pp. 341-353)	
Wednesday 11/4		WMB Chapter 10 (pp. 353-364)	
Friday 11/6	Writing Day	Revising drafts	Third Essay Due on Saturday 6th November at 11:59 p.m.

	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 12			
Monday 11/9	Way Forward	WMB Chapter 11	
Wednesday 11/11		Ingram, George. (2019). “The Future of Aid: How the Global Development Business is Evolving,” <i>Brookings Commentary</i>. Available here.	
Friday 11/13	Writing Day	Turabian, K. L. (2019). Revising Sentences. In <i>Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i> (pp. 147-157). University of Chicago Press.	
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 13			
Monday 11/16	Conferences		
Wednesday 11/18	Conferences		
Friday 11/20	Conferences		
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		
Week 14			
Monday 11/23	Writing Day	Turabian, K. L. (2019). Learning from Readers’ Comments. In <i>Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers, Fifth Edition</i> (pp. 158-160). University of Chicago Press.	Peer Review Session II
Wednesday 11/25	Thanksgiving: No Class		
Friday 11/27	Thanksgiving: No Class		Feedback Returned on Third Essay
	Common Hour (2:25 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.)		

Week 15			
11/30	Wrapping Up and Celebration!		

Fourth Essay due on 12/10 at 11:59 p.m. Please upload to Canvas. [subject to change based on Finals schedule]