**Questioning Decolonization**

0.0 – Module Plan for Instructors

This module is part of the History for the 21st Century project (H21). History for the 21st Century is a collaborative project designed to serve students in introductory college history courses and their instructors. Together, we build, assess, and progressively improve free, online educative, enquiry-based curriculum. You can find out more about H21 by visiting <https://www.history21.com/> .

**Module Overview**

This module introduces students to decolonization in the twentieth century, as both a historical event having to do with political structures and a broader process encompassing economics, society, and culture.

This module poses three questions. Two historical problems are specifically aimed at the student:

* Historical problem 1: How and why did widespread political decolonization occur between about 1945 – 1990.
* Historical problem 2: Did colonialism end, or does it still survive in the world today?

A third problem is more aimed at you, the instructor, but you may wish to share it with students:

* Pedagogical problem: How do students learn to make history usable for orienting themselves to the present?

In the sections below, you will see a map of the module as a whole, followed by lesson plans designed for four days of work. You should feel free to condense or expand the lesson, or only use a few parts of the module, or to modify it. This is, after all, your class. At the end of the module, you will see four alternative assessments that might be useful for your class. You will probably select one of them, but you can try them all.

**Module Map**

## **Day 1 – Introduction**

**Assets:**

* 1.0 Presentation: What was colonialism?
* 1.1 Reading: Module introduction
* 1.2 Reading: What was colonialism?: Five takes
* 1.3a Discussion: Analyzing world maps, 1945 and today
* 1.3b Discussion Instructor Guide: Analyzing world maps, 1945 and today
* 1.4a Assessment: What would ‘decolonization’ mean?
* 1.4b Assessment Instructor Guide: What would ‘decolonization’ mean?

## **Day 2 – How and why did decolonization happen? (part 1)**

**Assets:**

* 2.1 Presentation: Why did decolonization happen?
* 2.2 Reading: Why did decolonization happen?
* 2.3 Primary source archive:
  + 2.3a Ho Chi Minh, *Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam*
  + 2.3b Declaration of the Front de Liberation Nationale (1954)
  + 2.3c Richard Wright, *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (1956)
  + 2.3b Nnamdi Azikiwe, “The Future of Pan-Africanism” (1962)
  + 2.3e Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador S. V. Chervonenko and Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai (1965)
* 2.4a Assignment: Interpreting a primary source: Why did decolonization happen?
* 2.4b Assignment Instructor Guide: Interpreting a primary source: Why did decolonization happen?

## **Day 3 – How and why did decolonization happen? (part 2)**

**Assets:**

* 3.1 Group-work: Comparing evidence on the causes of decolonization

## **Day 4 – What was decolonized?**

**Assets:**

* 4.0 Presentation: What was decolonized?
* 4.1 Secondary source archive: Voices of Postcolonialism
  + Kwame Nkrumah, “Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism”
  + Ngugi wa Thiongo, “The Language of African Literature”
  + Meera Sabaratnam, “Decolonizing the Curriculum”
* 4.2 Reading: What was decolonized?
* 4.3 Final Assignment: Colonialism in the world today
* 4.4 Final Assignment: Decolonizing the curriculum
* 4.5 Final Assignment: Decolonizing the museum
* 4.6 Final Assignment Instructor Guide

## **Day 1 – Introduction**

Prior to class:

* Have students read 1.1 Reading: Module introduction

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| Suggested Lesson | Resources |
| Instructor shares the two historical problems for the module with students. You may also wish to share the pedagogical problem. Discussion, if necessary. | Module problems:   * Historical problem 1: How and why did widespread political decolonization occurred between about 1945 – 1990. * Historical problem 2: Did colonialism end, or does it still survive in the world today? * Pedagogical problem: How do students learn to make history usable for orienting themselves to the present? |
| Instructor introduces the subject of decolonization by asking students to recall what they have learned previously about colonialism. If students have not studied colonialism, instructor may tell them they will be looking at decolonization and will have to understand what colonialism was first. Instructor introduces the ‘five takes’ on colonialism. | 1.0 Presentation: What was colonialism? |
| Instructor leads Discussion 1.3 on comparing maps and gives students instructions for Assessment 1.4, asking them to complete it for in class discussion during the next meeting. | 1.3a Discussion: Analyzing world maps, 1945 and today |

After class:

* Students are assigned 1.2 Reading: What was colonialism?
* Students are assigned 1.4 Assessment: What would ‘decolonization’ mean?

## **Day 2 – How and why did decolonization happen? (part 1)**

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| Suggested Lesson | Resources |
| Instructor collects responses to Assessment 1.4. Discussion as to what ‘decolonization’ might look like. |  |
| Instructor tells students that they will be discussing how and why decolonization happened, but tells students that decolonization in this case specifically means a transition in political authority and governance. | 2.1 Presentation: Why did decolonization happen? |
| Students are divided into groups to begin working with the primary sources, either those provided (2.3), or their own. Students are asked to consider what their sources tell us about why decolonization happened in this period, and are introduced to Assignment 2.4, to be completed for in-class group work during the next meeting. | 2.3a Ho Chi Minh, Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam  2.3b Declaration of the Front de Liberation Nationale (1954)  2.3c Richard Wright, The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference (1956)  2.3d Nnamdi Azikiwe, “The Future of Pan-Africanism” (1962)  2.3e Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador S. V. Chervonenko and Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai (1965) |

After class:

* Students are assigned 2.2 Reading: Why and how did decolonization happen?
* Students continue to work with their primary source (2.3) utilizing 2.4 Assignment: Interpreting a primary source: Why did decolonization happen?

## **Day 3 – How and why did decolonization happen? (part 2)**

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| Suggested Lesson | Resources |
| Instructor puts students back into their primary source groups to compare and prepare to present their answers and analysis from Assessment 2.4. Students are given 3.1 Group-work to help guide their discussion. | 2.4a Assignment: Interpreting a primary source: Why did decolonization happen?  3.1 Group-work: Comparing evidence on the causes of decolonization |
| Each group presents on their individual primary source. |  |
| Instructor invites students to discuss how local and global factors contributed to decolonization through comparisons across the sources they have read using the guidelines in 3.1 Group-work. This may be a continuation of student group work, or done together as a class. | 3.1 Group-work: Comparing evidence on the causes of decolonization |
| Instructor briefly introduces the final topic for the module, examining whether elements of colonialism still exist today. Students are asked to complete the reading Secondary Sources 4.1 and Reading 4.2 for the next class meeting. |  |

After class:

* Students are assigned 4.1 Second Source Archive
* Students are assigned 4.2 Reading: What was decolonized?

### **Day 4 – What was decolonized?**

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| Suggested Lesson | Resources |
| Instructor introduces the idea that decolonization might be more than just a political transformation, pointing students to back to their responses to Assessment 1.2. |  |
| Class reviews the arguments about the persistence of colonialism presented in Reading 4.2 and discusses different kinds of colonial continuities present in each of the secondary sources they have read from 4.1. | Readings 4.1: Secondary source archive |
| Instructor introduces the Final Assignment (4.3, 4.4, or 4.5). Students begin to brainstorm ideas, in groups. |  |

After class:

* Students complete one of the following three assessments:
  + 4.3 Final Assignment: Colonialism in the world today
  + 4.4 Final Assignment: Decolonizing the curriculum
  + 4.5 Final Assignment: Decolonizing the museum