



Middlebury

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Greetings, Alumni College Students!

I am really looking forward to meeting all of you at the beautiful Bread Loaf campus. Late August is a special time in Vermont, and I am glad we'll be able to spend a few days together.

Our course focuses on the English (later British) East India Company (EIC). We will proceed chronologically and cover its entire history, from 1600 to 1858. It's a long period to review in just three days, but we'll do the best we can by focusing on important themes, interesting questions and debates, and a number of crucial moments and people.

We will begin in the 17th century and examine why the EIC was founded, what kinds of trade it pursued, whether it was successful and admired (hint: a mixed bag), and who its European and Asian rivals were. We'll then turn to the 18th century and look at how and why the EIC began to build a land empire in India, whether it remained successful and admired (hint: still a mixed bag), what life was like working for and under the rule of the EIC, and its increasingly complex relations with Asian powers and the British state. Finally, we'll turn to the first half of the 19th century and focus on the rise of "liberal imperialism" and whether the EIC was successful and admired (hint: not so much).

There will be about 30 of us in the course, and so most classes will be a combination of lecture, Q&A, and discussion. We'll look at lots of images, read some primary sources, and, I hope, even visit the College's Special Collections on the main campus to see some of the books, images, and maps that we will be discussing.

There is no required homework for the course, but I do encourage you to buy my book, either as a physical or e-book. Feel free to read as much of it as you wish before we meet, or you can put it aside and just use it as a resource during our time at Bread Loaf. It can also serve as a handy text to return to after the conclusion of the course. The final section of the book does have selected primary source texts, and we will likely read some of these passages during class time. It would therefore be useful if you could bring a copy to class or have access to it via a tablet or computer. But even this isn't necessary, as I will copy and distribute passages for us to read together. The book is: Ian Barrow, *The East India Company, 1600–1858: A Short History with Documents*.

I wish you all a pleasant summer and safe travels to Bread Loaf.

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