

**PAPVB\_35 “The Archaeology of Colonialism”**  
Masaryk University / Spring 2013

Final essay assignment

This assignment requires you to answer one (1) of the two discussion questions provided below. In your response essay, I encourage you to draw on course materials as well as in-class discussions.

An essay is a piece of writing that poignantly lays out an argument, so I expect you to provide me with critical reflections on the essay question you decide to answer. This essay is a way for me to assess how well you comprehend the class materials and to what extent you are able to critically engage with the contents of the course. I encourage you to express your opinion, but do so in an informed manner by linking your arguments to the readings of the class. Your responses are expected to be problematic-focused, that is, they need to demonstrate both your mastery of the course materials and your analytical engagement with the problems posed in the discussion question.

Discussion question 1:

In this course, we have explored colonialism as a cultural practice. This means that colonialism is not simply a hegemonic force pushing economic exploitation and political domination onto local populations, but that colonized people have agency too. In other words, they are able to negotiate unequal power relations and resist or subvert colonial domination.

As archaeologists, we are most interested in the material correlates that are able to inform us about the practices of local/indigenous people. In your essay, describe how we can use material culture to understand the cultural practices of colonized people, including practices of resistance. While you may come up with your own examples, draw specifically on the readings from Sessions 2 and 3 to compose your essay.

In your answer, please also consider why a binary view of practices as either resistance (on the part of the colonized) or domination (on the part of the colonizers) is insufficient for a nuanced understanding of colonialism.

Discussion question 2:

Throughout this course, we have explored how colonialism relies on the construction of essentialized knowledge, which typically centers on binary categories such as “us/the Other,” “primitive/modern,” or “civilized/uncivilized.”

We have seen that notions of race and gender play an important role in this context. We have also analyzed how received ideas regarding race and gender are not “given” or “natural,” but how they are culturally constructed. Based on this understanding and on the readings from Sessions 4 and 5, explain why race and/or gender should not merely be considered concepts, but practices (in your response, you may talk about either race or gender, or both).

Drawing on readings and class discussions, also describe how racialized and/or gendered practices functioned within colonial contexts and how they structured the relationships between colonizers and colonized.

Format of essay and due date:

Papers are supposed to be 10 pages long (double-spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman) (excluding bibliography). Please, submit your essay via email to me ([mstarzmann@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:mstarzmann@zedat.fu-berlin.de)) no later than **Monday, 8 April 2013, at noon (12 pm)**. Submit your essay in either Microsoft Word or OpenOffice format (no PDFs accepted!). A bibliography is not required unless you use literature that we have not read in class.

Note:

This assignment requires you to follow the standard format used in the social sciences for citations and bibliographic references. This also means that you need to cite the sources you use as you can otherwise be charged with plagiarism! Guidelines for citations will be available online in two PDF documents titled ‘Social Science Citation Guide’ and ‘AAA Style Guide.’

**If you have any questions regarding the assignment, please don’t hesitate to contact me via email:**  
[\*\*mstarzmann@zedat.fu-berlin.de\*\*](mailto:mstarzmann@zedat.fu-berlin.de)