

<b>Course Code &amp; Title</b>	<b>Counter/Mapping Research</b>		
<b>Convenor(s)</b>	Jenna Marshall, Sharri Plonski		
<b>Institution</b>	KCL, QMUL	<b>Department</b>	EIS & SPIR
<b>Academic Year</b>	2025-26	<b>Term</b>	3 (Summer)
<b>Number of Sessions</b>	6	<b>Length of Session(s)</b>	2 hours
	<b>Day, Date</b>	<b>Start and End time</b>	<b>Room Location</b>
	8/6/2026 9/6/2026 10/6/20206	9:30 - 11:30 (lecture) 11:30 – 13:30 lunch and 1-2-1 support) 13:30 - 15:30 (lecture) 15:30 – 17:30 (1-2-1 support)	GC205, <a href="#">Queen Mary, University of London</a>
<b>Enrolment Link:</b>	Available to book on SkillsForge from <b>Monday 2 March 2026</b> . Click the <a href="#">course link</a> to log in and register. Questions? Visit our Training FAQ here: <a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions - LISS DTP (liss-dtp.ac.uk)</a>		

## Course Description

Across Western academic traditions, methods of social-scientific research have been developed under and pursued with imperial demands. Bound up with conquest, capital accumulation and colonisation, extractive and experimental approaches to subjugated populations underwrite the racial ordering that shape methods of inquiry, notions of ‘objectivity’ and expertise, and the metrics of research. In other words, for Indigenous, colonised, poor and racialised communities the world-over, ‘research is a dirty word’ (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1998). At the same time, postcolonial and Indigenous scholarship have produced insurgent modes for reading the world, in which they make visible colonial silences; and, working with the stories and experiences of colonised peoples, develop systematic methods for excavating, cultivating and establishing alternative knowledge traditions (for and by the communities themselves). It is with/in this scholarly terrain, that this course finds its conceptual home. Mapping as a means of obscuring colonialism and distorting colonial relations .

Over three days, this course will trace and develop methodological-conceptual tools to help students unearth and make sense of the violence and complexities of doing research within the current global order. Deeply interdisciplinary, the course draws from methodological approaches across literature, history, sociology, geography, anthropology, and political science in order to equip students with new tools for counter/mapping histories, connections and relations shaped by empire; and the different struggles, experiments and modes of living that shape other stories, knowledges and approaches to the world. Tracing six key threads in postcolonial/decolonial research, a range of approaches, lenses and languages will counter/map how time, space, speech and crisis shape and disrupt the past, present and future.

## Meet your course convenor(s)

The course is convened by two of RA 5's co-leads: Jenna Marshall (KCL) and Sharri Plonski (QMUL) and facilitated by a collective of incredible scholars, experts on each of the themes in the course (details attached to each week).

**Jenna Marshall** is a Lecturer in International Studies at King's College London and former Sasoon Visiting Fellow in Black and South Asia History at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Her research interests focus on the political economy of developing countries and the intellectual traditions of the Global South. She is co-editor with Jasmine K. Gani of the 100th Anniversary Special Issue for *International Affairs* (vol. 98), "Race and Imperialism in International Relations: Theory and Practice" and co-editor of the forthcoming Special Issue for *European Journal of Development Research*, "Race, Anti-Racism and Development." She currently serves as co-convenor (2020–24) of the [Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial](#) working group of the British International Studies Association (BISA) and is a founding member of the Race and Development working group and the Caribbean Political Economy Group (C-PEG). Her research interests concern the political economy of the global South, non-western intellectual history, and critical/antiracist methodologies of knowledge production. Her current book project chronicles the intellectual and political histories of 'creole elites' within the Fabian Colonial Bureau and their impact on global economic governance.

**Sharri Plonski** is a senior lecturer in international politics at Queen Mary University of London. Her work focuses on the material - often violent - and imaginary geographies of colonial infrastructures, anchored in Israel, Palestine and the wider region. Her first book, *Palestinian Citizens of Israel: Power, Resistance and the Struggle for Space* (Bloomsbury, 2018) sets the stage for her work, investigating anti-colonial and decolonial disruptions to colonial and imperial re-makings of space. She has since published her work in *Antipode*, *Politics*, *International Affairs*, *Savage* and other venues, and is currently developing a second book project, *A Train to Nowhere: The Temporal Folds of Israel's Corridor Infrastructures*. In addition to her academic publications, she co-produces a story-telling podcast on the violence of infrastructure and those harmed by and organising against infrastructural power, called "[Surviving Society Presents: Material Crimes](#)". She is also a co-convenor of the [Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial](#) working group of the British International Studies Association (BISA) and co-vice president of the [British Society for Middle Eastern Studies \(BRISMES\)](#).

## Learning Outcomes

- To situate the role of research (as the onto-epistemological arm) and the researcher in the global order
- To trace the colonial harm of the 'scientific method' and the work of different researchers, communities and others to decolonise research
- To develop awareness of and capacity with alternative modes of doing research
- To develop new concepts and approaches for mapping connections, and making concrete interventions in the way we know, understand and reveal histories of violence and the struggles that challenge them
- To develop reflexive capacities that help students consider how, when, why and where they do (critical) research, alongside the stakes, politics and responsibilities of doing this work

## Course Outline

### Day One

#### I. Introduction: Why (and how) do we do counter/mapping?

With Jenna Marshall (KCL) and Sharri Plonski (QMUL)

This first session introduces students to key questions that shape the course and asks them to think with their own research, their own starting points about:

- What it might mean to take empire seriously in the stakes of research
- How research methods shape what and who gets silenced, understood, made visible and invisible
- How we as researchers do the work of (counter)mapping what gets revealed, cultivated and generated as new and old knowledge traditions
- Who and what are we responsible to and who and what we learn from (what we consider as knowledge, knowledge makers and knowledge holders)
- How we produce new maps and modes of seeing the world

#### II. Counter/Mapping the Researcher/Researched

With Jasmine Gani (LSE)

In this session we consider what it means to be a researcher: the motives, the responsibilities, the limits, and the dangers of (re)producing violence and injustices stemming from the colonial past and present. Who gets to be a 'researcher'? Whose research and voice is deemed credible and heard? And who gets to be 'the researched'? These questions enable us to consider the roles of both objectivity and subjectivity in knowledge production, and how the role of the researcher may (or may not!) be pivotal in either the perpetuation or dismantling of coloniality.

## Day Two

### I. Counter/Mapping Time

With Sara Salem (LSE)

In this session we will explore the entanglements of time, history and politics, asking how we might complicate ideas of linear and progressive time. We will look at questions of the past and historical events that have been silenced, and what this tells us about how we understand time; and we will also explore how time feels as an embodied experience. Finally, we turn to the question of how we can think with time to understand contemporary events in all of their past complexities.

### II. Counter/Mapping Space

With Aya Nassar (Durham)

This session is about mapping space, but rather than working with a cartographic impulse we will explore together practices of writing and research that trouble the map, or that emerge from surprising starting points to think about charting place. In this session we will engage with geographical writing that grapples with colonial violence inherent in space and place-making, and that troubles what we expect writing about space to look like. We will also discuss contemporary political and creative examples that question the map and engage in different practices of countermapping. The aim is to think how we might work with maps, but crucially also against maps in our questions, grammars, modes of inquiry, and assumptions about knowledge.

## Day Three

### I. Counter/Mapping Thought

With Olivia Umurerwa Rutazibwa (LSE)

In this session, students will map different intellectual and epistemic traditions in postcolonial and decolonial research. The session will delve into how thinkers and authors across (primarily) anti-colonial, Global South sites - help shape the way we understand the world. It works to challenge historical and contemporary erasures of the thoughts, voices and epistemic approaches of black and other racialised communities (which stem from colonial, extractive violence and the material work of racial capitalisms); and helps to unearth forgotten aspects, new perspectives, and other possibilities and imaginaries, inherent in the writings and oral traditions left off the 'colonial map'.

### II. Counter/Mapping Crises [aka Polycrisis is the new capitalism]

With John Narayan (KCL)

The term polycrisis has gained currency in the West in the last couple of years – taken to signify the interlocking “A polycrisis is not just a situation where you face multiple crises” writes Adam Tooze, it is rather a situation “where the whole is even more dangerous than the sum of the parts” (Tooze 2022). Here pandemics, ecology, economic, war and democratic crisis seem to reveal multiple causes of crisis –

that suggest that “it no longer seems plausible to point to a single cause”. In this session we will examine what it means to map the polycrisis from beyond the West? And suggest that today’s crises suggest familiar causal points of capitalist imperialism – not so much polycrisis but rather the same old crises in ever dangerous climates and contexts.