

United States and Empire
History 510:533

Fall 2012

Wednesday, 5:00-7:30

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313 Conklin Hall

Office Hrs: Tuesday, 12:30-2:30, and Wed. afternoon by appointment

Description

This reading-intensive seminar focuses on U.S. empire-building, examining how it evolved from a white settler society to a global hegemon in the twentieth century. Drawing on both canonical and more recent scholarship, the course pays close attention to the ideals, rationales, and policies that animated and justified American imperialism over the course of two centuries. Students will track the evolution of American power, comprehending its shifting logic and contradictions, and examining how it has changed over time and space. This will involve studying the American Empire from the vantage point of class and political economy, race and gender, policing, public health, development, and the environment.

Course Requirements

I. Participation and Discussion (20%)

Class meetings consist of discussions with students debating historical evidence, research methods, and interpretations. Active participation and listening is expected for each session.

II. Critical Response Papers (40%)

Students will be required to write a 1-2 page response to the reading each week. The paper is due via e-mail prior to class. Late papers will not be accepted.

III. Final Historiographical Essay (40%)

For the final essay, students will have the opportunity to explore one of the major historiographical issues/questions raised in the class in depth, analyzing and synthesizing several texts of your choosing. (15-20 pages).

Required Texts

- Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire* (Wisconsin University Press, 2009)
- Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny* (Hill and Wang, 1995)
- John Dowers, *Embracing Defeat* (Norton, 2001)
- Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul* (Harvard University Press, 1999)
- Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Harvard, 2001)

- David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, Updated Edition (University Texas Press, 2009)
- William Appleman Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (50th Anniversary Edition)
- Peter Zinoman, *Colonial Bastille* (University of California Press, 2001)
- Stephen Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, Revised and Expanded Edition (David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2005).
- Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Myth Making on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Verso Press, 2009)
- Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns* (Stanford University Press, 2008)

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1

Sept 6 **Course Overview**

Week 2

Sept 13 **Defining the Terms**

Barbara Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in American History."

Ann Laura Stoler, "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty."

Paul Kramer, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World."

Frederick Cooper and Jana

Week 3

Sept 20 **Slavery and American Capitalism**

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*

Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, 309-342.

Week 4 **Continental Expansion**

Sept 27

Phil Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 1-37.

Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right*.

Reginald Horsman, "Racial Destiny and the Indians," 189-207.

Week 5

Oct 4 **Gender and the "Winning" of the West**

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis."

Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Harvard, 2001).

Week 6 **U.S Imperialism in the Southwest**
Oct 11

David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 1-219.

Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 56-90.

Week 7
Oct 18 **Empire of Capital**

William Appleman Williams, *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 1-161.

Jason Colby, "Progressive Empire: Race and Tropicality in United Fruit's Central America."

Week 8
Oct 25 **Policing America's Empire**

Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 1-174, and 293-346

Paul Kramer, "Colonial Crossings: Prostitution, Disease and the Boundaries of Empire during the Philippine American War."

Week 9
Nov 1 **Comparative Empire (The French Case)**

Peter Zinoman, *The Colonial Bastille: A History of Imprisonment in Vietnam, 1862-1940*

Ann Laura Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers," 198-237.

Week 10
Nov 8 **Occupying Empire**

Bruce Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 135-213.

John Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, Introduction, 319-442.

Week 11 **Cold War Imperialism**
Nov 15

Stephen Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, Revised and Expanded Edition (David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2005).

Greg Grandin, "The Imperial Presidency: The Legacy of Reagan's Central American Policy."

Week 12

Nov 23

HOLIDAY BREAK

Week 13

Nov 29

Development and Modernization

Nick Cullather, "Foreign Policy of the Calorie."

Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns*.

Week 14

Dec 6

Resurrecting Empire in the Middle East

Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Myth Making on the Saudi Oil Frontier*

Week 15

Dec 13

TBD