

HIST 7116: Research Seminar
The American Empire
Wednesdays, 5:00-7:30, Hellems 220

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What is an empire? Throughout its history – stretching back to colonial times to the present - was America an empire? Is it one today? What do we mean by an American empire? Is there a difference between empire and power; empire and domination; empire and hegemony? If America had/has an empire, how did it develop and project its power? What roles do diplomacy, politics, economics, and culture play in the creation and maintenance of the American empire? Did/does America engage in imperialism? Did/does labor-management relations, national expansion, ethnic and racial strife, suffrage, immigration, national security, consumerism, transnational links, technology, tariffs, war, anti-radicalism, consensus politics, slavery, the Cold War, and other issues in American history reflect on the making, building, and continuation of the empire? Is the empire getting stronger, or is it in decline?

It will be the cardinal objective of this course to answer one or more of these questions, in part or in whole. That is an ambitious task, but a prudently selected, wisely conceptualized, well-researched, and nicely written research paper will help you try. I expect each student to produce a publishable 25-30 page (including notes and bibliography) research paper by the end of the semester. Revisions may yield an article manuscript ready to be sent to a journal; at the least, the paper may be a candidate for a conference presentation.

This is not a course on diplomatic history, but on American history. Those students not familiar with this history must come up to speed on at least the basic contours of American history. Students may choose to focus on state-to-state exchanges and military topics, in the classic approach to diplomatic history, but others may opt for the newer conceptions of transnational, globalized exchanges among people, movements, and ideas that flow across and through borders. They may pursue the linkages between regional and global history, borderlands and frontiers, and do so by drawing on methodologies from other disciplines and across time periods. Such a “bottom up,” transnational approach may focus especially on economics, society, and culture.

Most of your time will be spent in consultation with me and individual research. We will, however, have some common readings as well as presentations on readings by each student.

Assignments and Grading: Each student will:

- 1) write two book reviews (5 pages each) and present the books to the class (10 points each for 20 points);
- 2) compile a 2-page annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources (10 points);
- 3) write a 1-page paper on a research paper topic idea and a 5-page prospectus of the research paper (10 points);
- 4) write a 25-30 page research paper, including notes and bibliography (40 points);
- 5) participation in class discussion, present the research paper, and critique a colleague's paper (20 points). Regarding participation, you will be judged especially on your contributions during classes with common readings.

Common Readings

Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (2003)
Alfred E. Eckes, Jr. and Thomas W. Zeiler, *Globalization and the American Century* (2003)

Jan 14 **Introduction**
Jan 21 **Empire: what is it?**

(You will receive copies of the readings below from me)

Andrew Bacevich, ed., *The Imperial Tense: Prospects and Problems of American Empire* (2003): Jedediah Purdy, "Universal Nation"; Martin Walker, "An Empire Unlike Any Other"; Victory Davis Hanson, "What Empire?"

Niall Ferguson, "Hegemony or Empire?", *Foreign Affairs* 82 (September/October 2003): 154-161.

Michael Doyle, *Empires*, chp. 1

Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Empire of Capital* (2003), chps. 1, 6

Mary Ann Heiss, "The Evolution of the Imperial Idea and U.S. National Security," *Diplomatic History* 26 (Fall 2002): 511-540.

Jessica Gienow-Hecht, "Shame on US?: Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War – A Critical Review," *Diplomatic History* 24 (Summer 2000): 465-535

Jan 28 **Culture and Empire.** Read Kaplan
Feb 4 **Globalization and Empire.** Read Eckes/Zeiler

Feb 11 **No Class.** TOPIC; 1-PAGE PAPER TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS.

Feb 18

State and Empire. Read one, write 5-page paper:

William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*
Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny*
William Weeks, *Building the Continental Empire*
Norman Graebner, *Empire on the Pacific*
Thomas Hietala, *Manifest Design* (Late Jacksonian)
James Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke*
William Robbins, *Colony and Empire* (West)
Catherine LeGrand, Gil Joseph, Ricardo Salvatore, *Close Encounters of Empire*
Frank Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion*
Richard Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala*
John Dower, *Embracing Defeat*
Michael Sherry, *In the Shadow of War*
Robert Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire*
Diane Kunz, *Guns and Butter*
Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback*
Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire*
Robert McMahon, *Limits of Empire*

Feb 25

Transnationalism and Empire. Read one, write 5-page paper:

Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti*
Emily Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World*
Matthew Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*
Reinhold Wagleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*
Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*
Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*
Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*
Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn of the Century China*
Marc Gallicchio, *Black Internationalism*
Brenda Plummer, *Rising Wind*
Bob Kroes, *If You've Seen One, You've Seen the Mall*
Richard Pells, *Not Like Us*
Walter LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*
Jessica Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible* (journalism, Germany)
Martin Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism*
Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*
Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson*
Ramon Ruiz, *On the Rim of Mexico*
Reed Ueda, *Postwar Immigrants in America*

Mar 3	BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PROSPECTUS DUE. Present in class.
Mar 10	Consultations/research on paper
Mar 17	Consultations/research on paper
Mar 24	Spring Break
Mar 31	Consultations/research on paper
Apr 7	Consultations/research on paper
Apr 14	Consultations/research on paper
Apr 21	Presentations.
Apr 28	Presentations.
May 5	Papers due.