

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Spring 2018  
Thursday 3-6 p.m.  
College Hall 217

Professor Amy C. Offner  
College Hall 313  
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-4:30 p.m.  
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History 216.301

How to Rule an Empire: An Introduction to European and American Imperialism

Over the last five centuries, European and American powers developed changing strategies of empire designed to order societies at home and overseas. The practice of empire spurred worldwide debates that continue today: how did imperialism operate, what purposes did it serve, could it come to an end, and what might replace it? These questions have inspired some of the world's great historical writing, and this seminar introduces students to a sample of it. Together we'll explore varied forms of political, economic, military, and cultural power involved in imperial expansion; the experience and consequences of empire for both colonized and colonizer; and the emergence of anti-imperialist movements. We will read an average of 150 pages per week. No background is required.

The books we'll read reward slow, careful reading. What you learn in this class, and the quality of our experience together, depends on your reading closely, coming to class with informed questions, and being prepared to help your classmates answer theirs. Active, informed class participation will account for forty percent of your grade.

Required Readings: All readings on the syllabus are required. The following books are available for purchase at the Penn Bookstore. All other readings are on Canvas.

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013)  
Cathleen Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers* (2013)  
Jason Colby, *The Business of Empire* (2011)  
Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World* (2010)  
Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World* (2004)  
Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998)  
Andrew Needham, *Power Lines* (2014)  
Vũ Trọng Phụng, *Dumb Luck* (2002)  
Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country* (2001)  
John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (1998)

Books are also on reserve in Van Pelt Library. If you want to borrow a book for a longer period of time and it is checked out, I recommend using EZBorrow and Borrow Direct, both found on the Penn library website. These services deliver the book within a few days from another university library, and allow you to keep it for a few weeks. Plan ahead and order early!

Course Requirements

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1. Active, informed, responsive class participation (40%). Our seminar is an opportunity to get to know your classmates intellectually, ask one another questions, help others answer theirs, and finally decide what you think. Everyone must complete the readings before class and participate in discussion throughout the semester in an informed, responsive way. By “informed,” I mean informed by a close reading of our texts, and by “responsive,” I mean responsive to each other, taking one other seriously enough to respond to each others’ observations, analyses, and questions.

We’ll start each class with a go-round. Each student should come prepared to speak for about two minutes, raising one question, criticism, comparison to another book, or other response to the reading. You can read your response, speak from notes, or speak extemporaneously, whatever makes you most comfortable. Don’t be afraid to ask a question during this time: if there is something you don’t understand, it’s worth discussing. If there are specific passages from the book that relate to your comment, refer to them and we can look at the text together.

The go-round will provide a springboard for our conversation, so listen to others’ ideas. Where do you agree or disagree? What questions occur to you?

2. Paper 1: Primary source analysis (15%). A three-page paper giving your analysis of a primary source chosen from a small selection that I will distribute in class. A successful paper will explain the significance of the source, using course readings to contextualize it and, most importantly, closely analyzing the text. What was the social position and perspective of the author? For whom was the author writing, and what did he or she hope to accomplish by writing the document? What historical events, debates, and ideas informed the author? Why was the author’s perspective notable?
3. Paper 2: Manifesto on civilization and European imperialism (20%). A three-page creative paper demonstrating your understanding of two historical contexts and ways of thinking covered in our second unit. Writing in the voice of (1) a nineteenth-century European philologist (Lockman), (2) a Protestant missionary in Leopold’s Congo (Hochschild), Katherine Mayo (Sinha), or (4) a small business owner living in 1930s Hanoi (Phụng), write a manifesto evaluating the ideas of civilization and of Europe held by one of the other two figures. What does each of you think civilization is, what does each of you think about Europe and its role in the world, and what does each of you think about the state of places beyond Europe? Focus on identifying convergent or divergent assumptions between the historical figures, and explain what in your experience makes your view seem right and important. Do not spend any time summarizing the books: you are writing a manifesto to persuade the public that your view is right. (15%)
4. Paper 3: Your Choice (25%).

Option 1: Synthetic Paper. A seven-page paper that gives your comparative analysis of one historical problem discussed in two books on the syllabus. How have different historians studied this topic, what changes and continuities that they have found over time, what differences and similarities do they find between imperial contexts, and what are one or two questions that the books leave you wanting to understand?

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Option 2: Object analysis. In consultation with me and a specialist at the Penn Museum, choose one object from the museum's Near East collection and offer your own seven-page interpretation of its history and significance. Your paper must do the following: (1) Drawing deeply on Lockman, Jasanoff, Ousterhouf, and Bruce Kuklick, *Puritans in Babylon: The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), explain how the object ended up in the Penn Museum and what researchers at the time thought people should learn from it. What does the object's collection and display in Philadelphia show us about these experts' ideas, careers, and historical context? (2) Based on one other book that you choose from our syllabus, how might you study the object and its meaning differently? What is one historical question you would ask about the object, the society that produced it, or the later society from which it was excavated that researchers a century ago did not ask? What do you consider insightful or mistaken about the interpretations that Penn researchers offered a century ago?

Option 3: Primary source analysis.

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School Digital Resource Center (<http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu>) contains hundreds of documents and photographs from this infamous Indian boarding school in Pennsylvania. Choose one to three primary sources on a narrowly defined topic (for instance, multiple letters from the same person, multiple records on a single student, or multiple issues of a single student publication that repeatedly address the same topic or event).

In a seven-page paper, offer your interpretation of your chosen sources. What do they show us about US Indian policy, the people who implemented and experienced it, and Native life in the United States at a particular moment in time?

Your paper must deeply engage Cahill. Do you think the sources confirm or contradict any of her arguments—say, her view of the purposes of Indian education programs, or the forms of collaboration and conflict they entailed, or maternalism, or “intimate colonialism”? Given what you learned from Cahill, did anything surprise you about the sources? What is one historical question that Cahill does not explore that these sources raise for you?

Communication: The great pleasure of teaching is getting to know students. Come by my office hours or make an appointment to discuss any of the course material. For brief, procedural questions about the class, email is fine.

Laptops: Laptops are not permitted in class. The only exception is when we are analyzing a reading in electronic format and you need to refer to the text.

Disability policy: If you have a disability that calls for accommodation, please let me know at the beginning of the semester and we will arrange it.

Academic integrity: Plagiarism and other violations of academic honesty can result in suspension and expulsion from Penn. Please review the university's guide on academic integrity ([www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity](http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity)), and do not hesitate to talk with me if you have any questions about the definition of plagiarism and academic honesty.

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Class Schedule

Jan 11        Introduction

Part I: European Empires in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800

Jan 18        Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, pp. 1-150  
Primary Source: Thomas Morton, *The Native Americans of New England* (1637)

Jan. 25        John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*,  
Introduction and chapters 1-6, 10  
Primary Source: Olaudah Equiano on Slavery (1789)

Feb. 1        Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World*, 1-151  
Primary Source: Free Citizens of Color, Address to the National Assembly,  
October 22, 1789

Feb. 8        Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World*, 151-308  
Primary Source: John G. F. Wurdemann, A Physician's Notes on Cuba, 1844  
**First paper due in class**

Part II: European Empires after the Age of Revolution

Feb. 15        Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp. 1-234, 275-291  
Primary Source: George Washington Williams, Open Letter to Leopold II, 1890

Feb. 22        Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, chapter 3  
Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, chapters 7-8  
Robert G. Ousterhout, "Archaeologists & Travelers in Ottoman Lands: Three  
Intesecting Lives," *Expedition* vol. 52, no. 2 (July 2010)  
**Trip to the Penn Museum**

Mar. 1        Mrinalini Sinha, "Introduction," 1-62, and Muthulakshmi Reddi, "Miss Mayo  
Answered," 276-286, in Katherine Mayo, *Mother India: Selections from the  
Controversial 1927 Text*

Mar. 8        Spring Break

Mar. 15        Vũ Trọng Phụng, *Dumb Luck*

Part III: The United States in the Long Twentieth Century

Mar. 22        Cathleen Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers*, 1-135  
Newspaper articles on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School  
**Second paper due in class.**

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- Mar. 29 Jason Colby, *The Business of Empire*, 1-148  
Primary Sources: Correspondence between UFCO officials in Costa Rica  
Chittenden to Blair, April 17, 1921  
Chittenden to Blair, April 20, 1921  
Chittenden to Cutter, April 22, 1921
- Apr. 5 Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World*, 1-133  
**Final paper proposal due in class.**  
Option 1: In one sentence, state the historical problem you will analyze. Then list the two or three books from the syllabus that you will compare.  
  
Option 2: In one sentence, name the object you will analyze and the specialist at the Penn Museum you have met with. Then list the one book from the syllabus you will use (aside from Lockman, Jasanoff, Ousterhout, and Kuklick, which are required). If you have chosen any other readings in consultation with me and the museum specialists, please list those, as well.  
  
Option 3: List the one to three sources that you have selected from the Carlisle digital archive, including links. Write a one-sentence description of them (e.g., These are three letters from X to Y about subject Z, written in years A, B, and C.)
- Apr. 12 Andrew Needham, *Power Lines*, Introduction and chapters 1, 4, 7  
Primary Source: “The Navajo Contribution to the War Effort”
- Apr. 19 Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* 1-80, 201-227  
**We will devote the end of class to 3-minute final paper presentations.** In no more than two sentences, tell us your thesis—the big argument you are making. Then spend 2-3 minutes explaining how you developed your thesis. What sources have you analyzed, and how have you interpreted them? The whole class will ask you questions and help you sharpen your argument.
- Apr. 26 **Final paper due by 10:00 a.m.**  
Please leave your paper in hard copy in my mailbox, located in the faculty mailroom on the second floor of College Hall.