

World Cultures: Empires and Political Imagination

MAP: V55.0500

Fall 2006

Professors Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper

Tuesdays, Thursday, 9:30-10:45, in Cantor 102

Course Description

Throughout history, few people lived for very long in a polity that consisted entirely or even mainly of people with whom they shared a language and culture. Any examination of the variety of human cultures must take account of the forms of power within which people tried to make their way, sometimes seeking higher degrees of autonomy, sometimes accommodating to rulers' authority, sometimes trying to extend their own power over others. Empires—polities which maintained and enhanced social and cultural distinction even as they incorporated different people—have been one of the most common and durable forms of politics. This course will focus on the comparative study of empires from the Romans and the Chinese to the present, and upon the variety of ways in which empires have inspired and constrained their subjects' ideas of rights, belonging, and power. The study of empire expands our ideas of citizenship and challenges the notion that the nation-state is "natural" and necessary. Students in this course will explore historians' approaches to studying empires. We will investigate how empires were held together—and where they were weak—from perspectives that focus on political and economic connections over long distances and long time periods. Readings will include historical scholarship on the Roman, Chinese, Mongol, Ottoman, Spanish, Russian, French, British, and American empires, as well as primary sources produced by people living in these and other imperial polities.

Requirements

Lectures, recitations, readings and documents: Attendance at lectures and active participation in the recitations are integral parts of the course. The recitations (on Wednesdays) have two elements. The first is discussion of the reading up to that point in the class, but focusing on the most recent topics. The second is a analysis of a short document, usually an original source from the place and time that is the subject of the week's classes. Students will be asked to analyze in class the meanings and significance of the document and how it can be used to further understanding of the historical questions being examined. Documents are in the coursepack.

Exams and papers: There will be a midterm examination held in class on **October 19** and a final examination on **December 21**. In addition, students will write two short papers. The first paper, due on **October 3 in class** will be a 2-3 page document analysis similar to those accomplished orally at the recitations. During recitations on October 4, students will discuss their interpretations with the rest of the group. The second paper, due on **December 4 at 4:00 pm**, will be a 4-5 page review of a novel or a film with a strong focus on questions of empire. We will hand out a list of appropriate novels and films later in the course. Students may choose a film or novel from outside this list, provided that this selection is approved by their preceptors well ahead of the due date.

Evaluation Policy:

Students are expected to participate actively in discussions and to hand in papers on the due date. Incompletes are not allowed.

Recitations:	25%
Document Analysis	10%
Mid-term examination:	15%
Essay:	20%
Final Exam:	30%

Books and Coursepack

The following book is available for purchase at the NYU bookstore:
Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early-Modern Europe*.

Coursepack:

The coursepack is in three parts. Part 1 is manuscript chapters from a book in draft form by Professors Burbank and Cooper, *Empires and Political Imagination in World History*. (The first 6 chapters are available at the beginning of the semester; a second set of chapters will be made available part way through the semester.) Part 2 consists of short articles and book chapters. Part 3 is a set of original documents, mostly from the period being studied in a particular week, that will be discussed in section on the day under which it is listed. Copies of the coursepacks are also on reserve at Bobst Library. The coursepack is available at New University Copy, 11 Waverly Place.

Instructors' Office Hours and Contact Information

Professor Burbank:	Thursdays, 11:00-12:00 or by appointment, King Juan Carlos Center 603 Tel: 212-998-8628 Email: jane.burbank@nyu.edu
Professor Cooper:	Tuesdays, 11:00-12:00, or by appointment, King Juan Carlos Center 708 Tel: 212-998-8606 Email: fred.cooper@nyu.edu
Marc Goulding	Tuesdays, 11:00-1:00, King Juan Carlos Center 5W. Email: marcgoulding@hotmail.com
Priya Lal	Tuesdays, 11:00-12:00, King Juan Carlos Center 5W. Email: priyalalista@gmail.com
Paul Sager:	Thursdays, 11:00-12:00, or by appointment, King Juan Carlos Center 5W. Email: paul.sager@nyu.edu
Lyuba Grinberg	Thursdays, 2:00-3:30., King Juan Carlos Center 5W. Email: li250@nyu.edu

Lecture Schedule and Readings

- Sept. 5 Introduction: Why Empires Matter
- Sept. 6 Discussion: George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," in *An Age Like This, 1920-1940*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, pp. 235-242.
- Sept. 7 What Empires Do
Reading:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 1
- Sept. 12 Rome and Its Antecedents
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 2
- Sept. 13 Discussion: urbanism and architecture in the Roman empire (images and plans)
- Sept. 14 Rome: How it Worked
Readings:
Greg Woolf, "An Imperial People," in Woolf, ed., *Cambridge Illustrated History of Rome*, 68-89.
- Sept. 19 Empire Space: The Mediterranean and Beyond
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 3
J. Moreland, "The Carolingian Empire: Rome Reborn," in S. E. Alcock *et al.*, eds., *Empires*, pp. 392-418.
- Sept. 20 Discussion: Byzantine and Carolingian documents
- Sept. 21 Empire Space: Eurasia
Readings:
J. Fletcher, "The Mongols, Social and Ecological Perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46, no.1 (June 1986), pp. 11-51.
- Sept. 26 The Mongols' Empires
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 4
- Sept. 27 Discussion: excerpts from Khwandamir's *Habibu's-Siyar*, on Mongol rule

- Sept. 28 Putting Empire Together: The Ottomans
Readings:
Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, 1-97.
- Oct. 3 Ottoman Empire: How it Worked
Readings:
Goffman, 98-127, 131-136, 165-191, 227-34.
Paper due in class: document analysis based on document in Coursepack, part 3,
on Ottoman empire.
- Oct. 4 Discussion: Ottoman document and your papers
- Oct. 5 Putting Empire Together: Spain
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 5
J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* 137 (1992).
- Oct. 10 Empire Space: The Atlantic and the Americas
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 6
- Oct. 11 Discussion: Bartolomé de las Casas' history of the Spanish empire
- Oct. 12 Empire Space: The High Seas and Merchant Empire
Readings:
Geoffrey Parker, "Europe and the Wider World, 1500-1700: The Military
Balance," in James Tracy, *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*, pp. 161-
95.
- Oct. 17 Empire, Slavery, and Indigenous Peoples
Readings:
C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 6-61.
- Oct. 18 Discussion: Review for midterm exam
- Oct. 19 Midterm**
- Oct. 24 Empire Space: Russia between Europe and Asia
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 7
- Oct. 25 Discussion: Mongol Charter to the Russian Church, Catherine the Great's Laws

- Oct. 26 Continental Empires: Autocracy, Enlightenment and Difference
Readings:
Mark Bassin, "Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 96, no. 3 (June 1991): 163-194.
- Oct. 31 Empire Space: Asia
Readings:
Marc Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 1-15, 89-132.
- Nov. 1 Discussion: The Qing Emperor's Message of 1731
- Nov. 2 China: The Extent and Limits of Territorial Power
Readings:
R. Bin Wong, "China's Agrarian Empire: A Different Kind of Empire, A Different Kind of Lesson," in Craig Calhoun, Frederick Cooper, and Kevin Moore, eds., *Lessons of Empire*, 189-200.
- Nov. 7 Empire in a Revolutionary Age: The "French" Revolution, Haiti, and Napoleon
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 8
James, *Black Jacobins*, 85-117.
- Nov. 8 Discussion: Revolutionary documents: US, France, Haiti
- Nov. 9 From Continental Empire to Nation-State? The Case of the United States
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 9
Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A History of the American West*, 85-118.
- Nov. 14 Colonial Empires: Europe in Asia and Beyond
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 10
Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 57-106.
- Nov. 15 Discussion: empire and education in India
- Nov. 16 Colonial empires: Europe in Africa
Readings:
John Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa," in *Tensions of Empire*, pp. 163-98.

- Nov. 21 Continental Empires: Dilemmas of Power and Reform
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 11
Jane Burbank, "Jane Burbank, "An Imperial Rights Regime: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7, 3 (Summer 2006): 397-431.
- Nov. 22 No class
- Nov. 23 Thanksgiving
- Nov. 28 World War I as a Crisis of Empire
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 12
Philipp Ther, "Imperial instead of National History: Positioning Modern German History on the Map of European Empires," in Alexei Miller and Alfred Rieber, eds., *Imperial Rule*, 47-66.
- Nov. 29 Discussion: Wilson's 14 Points
- Nov. 30 The USSR's Alternative to Empire
Readings:
Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 414-452.

Dec. 4 (Mon.) Essay due at 4:00 pm in preceptor's mailbox

- Dec. 5 World War II and the End of Empire
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 13
- Dec. 6 Discussion: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
- Dec. 7 Imperial Formations after Empire
Reading:
Julian Go, "Imperial Power and its Limits: America's Colonial Empire in the Early 20th Century," in Calhoun, Cooper, and Moore, *Lessons of Empire*, 201-14
- Dec. 12 Concluding Discussion (whole class)

December 21 (Thursday) 8AM-9:50AM Final Exam