World Cultures: Empires and Political Imagination
MAP: V55.0500
Fall 2007
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 under 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 political structures 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 political association. 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 a coursepack.

Exams and papers: There will be a midterm examination held in class on October 18 and a final examination on December 20. In addition, students will write two short papers. The first paper, due on October 2 in class is a 2-3 page document analysis. During recitations on October 3, students will discuss their interpretations with the rest of the group. The second paper, due on December 3 at 4:00 pm, is a 4-5 page review of a novel or a film or a museum exhibit with a strong focus on questions of empire. We will distribute a list of appropriate novels.
and films. 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. Exams must be taken at the scheduled time. Incompletes are not allowed.

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<tr>
<td>Recitations:</td>
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<td>Document Analysis</td>
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<td>Mid-term examination:</td>
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**Books and Coursepack**

The following book is available for purchase at the NYU bookstore:

David Morgan, *The Mongols*.

**Coursepack:**

The coursepack is in three parts. Part 1 is the manuscript of a book by Professors Burbank and Cooper, *Empires and The Politics of Difference in World History*. Installment 1a consists of chapters 1-6, and installment 1b, chapters 7-13, will be made available in October. 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

**Sasha Disko**  
Tuesdays, 12-1 in KJCC 5W. Email: sasha.disko@nyu.edu

**Trina Hogg**  
Wednesdays, 10:45-11:45 in KJCC 5W. Email: trina.hogg@gmail.com

**Reynolds Richter**  
Wednesdays 11-12, in KJCC 5W. Email: reynolds.richter@nyu.edu

**Karen Weber**  
Wednesdays, 2-3 in KJCC 5W. Email: kew311@nyu.edu

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Lecture Schedule and Readings

Sept. 4  Introduction: Why Empires Matter

Sept. 5  Discussion: George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," in *An Age Like This, 1920-1940*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 235-242.

Sept. 6  Toward Empire: Rome and Its Antecedents
Reading:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 1

Sept. 11 Rome: How It Worked
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 2


Sept. 13 Toward Empire: Early China
Readings:
Mark Edward Lewis, "Imperial Cities," from *The Early Chinese Empires Qin and Han*, 75-101

Sept. 18 Empire Space: The Mediterranean and Beyond
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 3

Sept. 19 Discussion: Corpus Iuris Civilis, 6th century civil law code, prologue and section of marriage, from "Medieval Source Book"

Sept. 20 Empire Space: Eurasia
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 4
Sept. 25 The Mongols' Empires
Readings:
    David Morgan, The Mongols, 32-111

Sept. 26 Discussion: excerpts from Khwandamir's Habibu's-Siyar, on Mongol rule

Sept. 27 Putting Empire Together: The Ottomans
Readings:
    Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 5 (section on Ottomans)

Oct. 2 Ottoman Empire: How it Worked
Readings:


Oct. 3 Discussion: Ottoman documents cited above and your papers

Oct. 4 Putting Empire Together: Spain
Readings:
    Burbank and Cooper, chapter 5 (rest of chapter)

Oct. 9 Empire Space: The Atlantic and the Americas
Readings:
    Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 6

Oct. 10 Discussion: Bartolomé de las Casas, A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies, pp. 9-13, 31-36

Oct. 11 Empire Space: The High Seas and Merchant Empire
Readings:
Oct. 16 Empire, Slavery, and Indigenous Peoples
Readings:
C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 6-61

Oct. 17 Review session

Oct. 18 Midterm

Oct. 23 Empire Space: Russia between Europe and Asia
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 7, sections on Russia
Morgan, *The Mongols*, 136-45


Oct. 25 Continental Empires: Autocracy, Enlightenment and Difference
Readings:

Oct. 30 China: Imperial Transformations
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 7, sections on China
Morgan, *The Mongols*, 113-35

Oct. 31 Discussion: The Qing Emperor's Message of 1731, from Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: the Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, pp. 571-574

Nov. 1 China: Manchus and Empire
Readings:

Nov. 6 Empire in a Revolutionary Age: The "French" Revolution, Haiti, and Napoleon
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 8
James, *Black Jacobins*, 85-117
Nov. 7 Discussion: Declaration of Independence (US, 1776), The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (France, 1789), Constitution (Haiti, 1801).

Nov. 8 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. 13 Colonial Empires: Europe in Asia and Beyond
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 10
Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 57-106

Nov. 14 Discussion: Thomas Babington Macauley, "On Empire and Education," from "Modern History Sourcebook"

Nov. 15 Colonial empires: Europe in Africa
Readings:

Nov. 20 Continental Empires: Dilemmas of Power and Reform
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 11

Nov. 21 No recitations

Nov. 22 Thanksgiving

Nov. 27 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. 28  Discussion: Woodrow Wilson's Speech on the Fourteen Points, Jan. 8, 1918, from Modern History Sourcebook

Nov. 29  The USSR's Alternative to Empire
Readings:

Dec. 3 (Mon.) Essay due at 4:00 pm in preceptor's mailbox

Dec. 4  World War II and the End of Empire
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 13

Dec. 5  Discussion: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 13-25

Dec. 6  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. 11  Concluding discussion (whole class)

December 20 (Thursday) 8AM-9:50AM Final Exam