

**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.

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:

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

## 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  
Greg Woolf, "An Imperial People," in Woolf, ed., *Cambridge Illustrated History of Rome*, 68-89
- Sept. 12 Discussion: "Further Schemes of Dumnorix" from *Caesar's War Commentaries*, ed. and trans. John Warrington, pp. 8-11; "Shih chi: The Account of Ta-yuan" [mission of Chang Ch'ien to the steppe peoples], *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, trans. from the *Shih chi* of Ssu-ma Ch'ien by Burton Watson, vol. 2: 264-274
- 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  
J. Moreland, "The Carolingian Empire: Rome Reborn," in S. E. Alcock *et al.*, eds., *Empires*, pp. 392-418.
- Sept. 19 Discussion: Corpus Iuris Civilis, 6<sup>th</sup> 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:  
Leslie Pierce, "An Imperial Caste: Inverted Racialization in the Architecture of Ottoman Sovereignty," forthcoming in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*
- Paper due in class:** document analysis based on Ottoman documents from Bernard Lewis, *Islam: From the Prophet Mohammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, Vol. 1, pp. 135-48.
- 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)  
J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* 137 (1992): 48-71
- 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:  
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. 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. 24 Discussion: Mongol Immunity Charter to Metropolitan Peter (ca. 1313), from  
*Reinterpreting Russian History: Readings, 860-1860s*, comp. and eds. Daniel H.  
Kaiser and Gary Marker, pp. 101-102; Catherine the Great's Charter on the Rights  
and Benefits for the Towns of the Russian Empire, from *Catherine II's Charters  
of 1785 to the Nobility and the Towns*, ed. Daniel Kaiser, pp. 22-26
- Oct. 25 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): 763-794.
- 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:  
Marc Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 1-15, 89-132
- 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:  
John Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa," in *Tensions of Empire*, pp. 163-97
- Nov. 20 Continental Empires: Dilemmas of Power and Reform  
Readings:  
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 11  
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. 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:  
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. 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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**