United States and Empire
History 510:533
Fall 2012
Wednesday, 5:00-7:30

Professor Kornel Chang
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313 Conklin Hall
Office Hrs: Tuesday, 12:30-2:30, and Wed. afternoon by appointment

Description
This reading-intensive seminar focuses on U.S. empire-building, examining how it evolved from a white settler society to a global hegemon in the twentieth century. Drawing on both canonical and more recent scholarship, the course pays close attention to the ideals, rationales, and policies that animated and justified American imperialism over the course of two centuries. Students will track the evolution of American power, comprehending its shifting logic and contradictions, and examining how it has changed over time and space. This will involve studying the American Empire from the vantage point of class and political economy, race and gender, policing, public health, development, and the environment.

Course Requirements
I. Participation and Discussion (20%)
Class meetings consist of discussions with students debating historical evidence, research methods, and interpretations. Active participation and listening is expected for each session.

II. Critical Response Papers (40%)
Students will be required to write a 1-2 page response to the reading each week. The paper is due via e-mail prior to class. Late papers will not be accepted.

III. Final Historiographical Essay (40%)
For the final essay, students will have the opportunity to explore one of the major historiographical issues/questions raised in the class in depth, analyzing and synthesizing several texts of your choosing. (15-20 pages).

Required Texts
• Alfred McCoy, Policing America’s Empire (Wisconsin University Press, 2009)
• Anders Stephanson, Manifest Destiny (Hill and Wang, 1995)
• John Dowers, Embracing Defeat (Norton, 2001)
• Walter Johnson, Soul by Soul (Harvard University Press, 1999)
• Linda Gordon, The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction (Harvard, 2001)


• Peter Zinoman, *Colonial Bastille* (University of California Press, 2001)


COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

**Week 1**

Sept 6  
Course Overview

**Week 2**

Sept 13  
Defining the Terms

Barbara Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in American History.”

Ann Laura Stoler, “On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty.”

Paul Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World.”

Frederick Cooper and Jana

**Week 3**

Sept 20  
Slavery and American Capitalism

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*


**Week 4**  
Continental Expansion

Sept 27


**Week 5**

Oct 4  
Gender and the “Winning” of the West
Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis.”


**Week 6**
**U.S Imperialism in the Southwest**
**Oct 11**

David Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1-219.

Mae Ngai, Impossible Subjects, 56-90.

**Week 7**
**Empire of Capital**
**Oct 18**

William Appleman Williams, Tragedy of American Diplomacy, 1-161.

Jason Colby, “Progressive Empire: Race and Tropicality in United Fruit’s Central America.”

**Week 8**
**Oct 25**

Policing America’s Empire

Alfred McCoy, Policing America’s Empire, 1-174, and 293-346

Paul Kramer, “Colonial Crossings: Prostitution, Disease and the Boundaries of Empire during the Philippine American War.”

**Week 9**
**Nov 1**

Comparative Empire (The French Case)


**Week 10**
**Nov 8**

Occupying Empire

Bruce Cumings, Origins of the Korean War, 135-213.

John Dower, Embracing Defeat, Introduction, 319-442.

**Week 11**
**Cold War Imperialism**
**Nov 15**


**Week 12**
Nov 23  HOLIDAY BREAK

**Week 13**
Nov 29  Development and Modernization

Nick Cullather, “Foreign Policy of the Calorie.”

Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns.*

**Week 14**
Dec 6  Resurrecting Empire in the Middle East

Robert Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom: Myth Making on the Saudi Oil Frontier*

**Week 15**
Dec 13  TBD