

DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Spring 2019  
Thursday 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Professor Amy C. Offner  
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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. 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.

No background is required. This course is open to all students, and also counts as a Benjamin Franklin Scholars seminar.

Required Readings: All readings on the syllabus are required. The following books are available for purchase at the Penn Bookstore, 3601 Walnut Street. All other readings are on Canvas.

Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (2013)  
Megan Black, *The Global Interior* (2018)  
Cathleen Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers* (2013)  
Jason Colby, *The Business of Empire* (2011)  
Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World* (2004)  
Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998)  
Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire* (2016)  
Maria Montoya, *Translating Property* (2002)  
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

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, point you found especially interesting, comparison to another book, criticism, or some 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. A successful paper will not rehearse the content of the document, but instead give your answer to the question: what does this source show us about the time period under study? To substantiate your answer, you must closely analyze the text and use secondary readings from the syllabus to contextualize the document.

In preparing for this paper, think about the following questions: 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? When was the author writing, and what historical events, debates, and ideas informed him or her? Why was the author’s perspective notable at the time?

3. Paper 2: Manifesto on civilization and empire (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), (3) a slaveowner in the antebellum US south (Karp), or (4) a small business owner living in 1930s Hanoi (Phung), write a manifesto evaluating the ideas of civilization and of Europe held by one of the other three figures. Focus on identifying convergent or divergent beliefs between the historical figures, and explain what in your experience makes your view seem right and important. 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? Do not spend any time summarizing the books: you are writing a manifesto to persuade the public that your view is right.

4. Paper 3: Your Choice (25%).

Option 1: Synthetic Paper. A six-page paper that gives your comparative analysis of one historical problem discussed in two or three books on the syllabus. How have different scholars 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?

Option 2: Exhibit review. Write a six-page review of the Penn Museum’s new Middle East Gallery, which opens to the public on April 21, 2018. Your paper must draw deeply on Lockman, Jasanoff, and an article on the history of the museum that is available on Canvas: Robert G. Ousterhout, “Archaeologists & Travelers in Ottoman Lands: Three Intesecting Lives,” *Expedition* vol. 52, no. 2 (July 2010). Your paper should not describe the exhibit, but instead give your interpretation of it. Some questions to think about:

- Based on our readings, how did these artifacts end up in the museum? How did the process of collecting fit into European and US political and cultural projects in the Middle East during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?
- How does this exhibit, created in 2018, reckon with the museum’s own history of collecting? What does the exhibit tell visitors about the way these objects ended up in Philadelphia? How does it present the museum’s historical relationship to empire? Do you see evidence in the exhibit that the museum has a critical perspective on its own past?
- What did the researchers who originally collected these artifacts think people should learn from them? A century later, have the curators of this exhibit reinterpreted the artifacts in any way? What is one new question the exhibit poses about these artifacts, the societies that produced them, or the later societies from which they were excavated that the original collectors did not ask?
- The exhibit is meant to last 25 years. What measures do you think the curators took to make it “last” – to ensure that people in the future won’t see it as dated and purely reflective of the ideas and values of 2018? Do you see any aspect of this exhibit that might be considered debatable in 25 years?

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 six-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”?

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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: If you have a disability that calls for accommodation, please have SDS let me know at the beginning of the semester.

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.

My Very Strong Advice To You: Every student should bring drafts of all papers to the Writing Center. Please ask the specialists there to work with you on two issues: (1) Style, clarity, and organization (2) Checking that citations are complete and properly formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The *Chicago Manual of Style* is available as an ebook in at [library.upenn.edu](http://library.upenn.edu).

### Recommended Academic Resources

The Marks Family Writing Center: <http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/wc/>  
Bring a draft or paper outline. Appointments and walk-in hours.

Weingarten Learning Resources Center: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/>  
Come for help with academic reading, writing, study strategies, and time management. Individual appointments, walk-in hours, and workshops.

Student Disabilities Services: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/>  
If you have a disability or temporary injury, SDS will help you acquire documentation and secure accommodations.

Penn College Achievement Program: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/eap/penncap/>  
PENNCAP works with a diverse group of academically talented students, many from low-income and/or first-generation backgrounds, to support their academic success. Staff provide coaching, counseling, academic assistance, and cultural enrichment. Students must apply to participate.

### Other Recommended Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/>

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Free, confidential services from mental health professionals.

RAP Line (Reach A Peer): 215.573.2RAP

9 p.m.-1 a.m. Peer support, information, and referrals.

If you experience violence, stalking, sexual harassment, or sexual violence:

Special Services, Division of Public Safety: 4040 Chestnut St, 215.898.6600

- Advocates can discuss reporting options, provide hospital and court accompaniment, and assist with implementing any necessary safety measures.

Penn Women's Center: 3643 Locust Walk, 215.898.8611

- Education, advocacy, crisis counseling, support group for survivors. Serving all students regardless of gender identity.

Student Health Service: 3535 Market St., Suite 100, 215.746.3535

- Medical examinations, testing and treatment of STIs, emergency contraception, and referrals. Office visits are covered in full by the Clinical Fee and the Penn Student Insurance Plan (PSIP). Charges for lab tests related to sexual assault are waived.

Class Schedule

Jan 17        Introduction

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

Jan 24        Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, pp. 1-150  
Primary Source: Thomas Morton, *The Native Americans of New England* (1637)

Jan. 31        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. 7         Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World*, 1-151  
Primary Source: Free Citizens of Color, Address to the National Assembly,  
October 22, 1789

Feb. 14        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: Empires after the Age of Revolution: Debating Slavery, Capitalism, and Civilization

Feb. 21        Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire*, 1-150

Feb. 28        Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp. 1-234, 275-291  
Primary Source: George Washington Williams, Open Letter to Leopold II, 1890

SPRING BREAK

Mar. 14 Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, chapter 3  
Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, chapters 7-8

Mar. 21 Vũ Trọng Phụng, *Dumb Luck*

Part III: The United States in the Long Twentieth Century

Mar. 28 Maria Montoya, *Translating Property*, Introduction and chapters 2-5  
**Second paper due in class.**

Apr. 4 Cathleen Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers*, 1-135  
Newspaper articles on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School

Apr. 11 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. 18 Megan Black, *The Global Interior*, Introduction and chapters 1, 2, 4, 6

**Final paper proposal due in class.**

Paper 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.

Paper Option 2: State the date when you plan to visit the exhibit. Give yourself at least an hour.

Paper 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. 25 Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* 1-80, 201-227

May 2 **Final paper due by 1:00 p.m.**  
Please leave your paper in hard copy in my mailbox, located in the faculty mailroom on the second floor of College Hall.