

WCH 248
Race, Empire, and U.S. Foreign Policy

Spring 2013 – UC Merced
TuThur 12:00-1:15
COB 272

Instructor: Professor Sean L. Malloy (smalloy@ucmerced.edu)
Office Hours: COB 311, TuThur 3:00-4:00
Course Website: Available via UCMCROPS

Description

This course will examine the notion of a U.S. empire from a variety of historical and theoretical perspectives. At the most basic level, we will examine what it means for a nation to be an empire and how that definition has shifted (and been contested) from the 18th through the 21st centuries. We will ground this discussion with an historical examination of the United States and its foreign policy from the British colonial period through the current war in Iraq. In doing so, we will pay particular attention to the role that ideas about race have played in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy and the evolving political and scholarly debate over empire. Using the lens of race will also allow us to examine connections between the “domestic” and the “foreign” as it pertains to the debate over empire. In addition to historical case studies, we will also read theoretical works exploring the nature of empire from a variety of perspectives. These theoretical works will take us beyond the borders of the United States and challenge us to consider where American historical engagement with empire fits in a broader global context.

Course Materials

Amy Kaplan, *Cultures of United States Imperialism*
James T. Campbell et. al, eds., *Race, Nation, and Empire*
Anders Stephenson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*
Reginald Horsemann, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*
Gary Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*
Edward Said, *Orientalism*
Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*
Prashad, *The Darker Nations*
Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*
Singh, *Black is a Country*
Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*
Bloom and Martin, *Black Against Empire*
Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*

Course Requirements

Attendance and informed participation in class discussions are the most important components of this course. If you do the readings and come to class prepared to discuss them with your fellow students and the instructor in a collegial fashion, then you will do well in this course.

Every student will sign up to lead two class discussions. On the week in which you lead class, you will be expected to come with questions to help guide discussion with your fellow students. You will also turn in a short (500-700) book review of the text for that day written in the style of an academic journal of your choice.

The major written work for this course will be a 20-30 page paper (due May 9) in which you will examine an historical or theoretical topic relevant to a scholarly understanding of race, empire, and U.S. foreign policy. You may pick an historical case study, such as the Spanish-American War or NAFTA, and examine the relevant scholarly literature to show how this fits into the themes of course. Alternatively, you may choose to explore in some depth a particular theory or theorist who engages with the issues of race and empire. For example, we will be reading Frantz Fanon's classic work *The Wretched of the Earth*. For your final paper, you might read additional works by Fanon as well as works by scholars who were either influenced by or critical of Fanon in order to assess his larger impact on our understanding of race and empire. In preparation for this final paper, you will turn in a brief (2-3 pages) prospectus on March 19 in which you outline your suggested topic and provide a bibliography of sources (which may include, but should not be limited to, the assigned class materials).

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

January 22: Introduction

No assigned reading.

January 24: Thinking About Race, Empire, and Nation.

Reading:

Barbara J. Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America," *New Left Review* (1990), 95-118 [CROPS]

Amy Kaplan, ed., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, pp. 1-40

January 29: Manifest Destiny (I)

Reading:

Anders Stephenson, *Manifest Destiny*

Kaplan, ed., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, pp. 41-108

February 5: Manifest Destiny (II)

Reading:

Reginald Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*

Kaplan, ed., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, pp. 164-184

February 12: Manifest Destiny (III)

Reading:

Gary Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*

Campbell, ed., *Race, Nation, and Empire in U.S. History*, pp. 75-102

February 19: Foundational Theory -- Fanon

Reading:

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Kaplan, ed., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, 456-473

February 26: Foundational Theory -- Said

Reading:

Edward Said, *Orientalism*

March 5: Literature and Imperialism

Reading:

Kaplan, ed., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, pp. 129-163, 292-311, 365-432

Campbell, ed., *Race, Nation, and Empire in U.S. History*, pp. 55-74

March 12: Foundational Theory -- Gilroy

Reading:

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*

March 19: Contesting Colonialism and White Supremacy (I)

Prospectus Due

Reading:

Singh, *Black is a Country*

April 2: Contesting Colonialism and White Supremacy (II)

Reading:

Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations*

April 9: Contesting Colonialism and White Supremacy (IV)

Reading:

Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*

April 16: Contesting Colonialism and White Supremacy (III)

Reading:

Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black Against Empire*

Sean L. Malloy, "Uptight in Babylon: Eldridge Cleaver's Cold War," *Diplomatic History*
(forthcoming)

April 23: Is Empire Male or Female?

Reading:

Campbell, ed., *Race, Nation, and Empire in U.S. History*, pp. 157-230, 250-306

April 30: Contemporary Global Perspectives on Empire (I)

Reading:

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*

May 7: Contemporary Global Perspectives on Empire (II)

Reading:

Campbell, ed., *Race, Nation, and Empire in U.S. History*, pp. 307-374