History 724:
American Empire

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Office Hours: T: 11:00-1:00  
R: 7:00-8:30  
and by appointment

Course Description
Writing to James Madison in 1809, Thomas Jefferson described his vision of the United States as “an empire for liberty as she has never surveyed since the creation.” While our national mythology has cherished the connection between the United States and “liberty,” throughout most of the 19th and 20th century, Americans have viewed ourselves as the antithesis of empire, eschewing imperialism as an ‘old world’ problem. This course introduces graduate students to the historiography of American Empire, examining the ideological, political, economic, and social factors driving American expansion. The course also explores how diverse groups participated in and reacted to this expansion, including the roles of race, gender, class, and religion.

This course is a graduate readings course, and the weekly reading assignments can exceed 200 pages. Ensure that you schedule yourself adequate time to complete the readings and take notes/highlight to help you keep track. Carefully read introductions and conclusions of each book and chapter to analyze the central arguments and assess the evidence presented.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

I. Identify and describe the major themes in American expansion from the colonial times to the present.
II. Evaluate online resources related to the history of American expansion.
III. Analyze and evaluate the major arguments and theoretical approaches in the historiography of American expansion.
IV. Synthesize evidence from the scholarship to create a well-supported, independent arguments related to the major themes of American expansion.

Taking a Course Online
Online courses offer different benefits and challenges than face to face courses, and if you have not taken an online course previously, you should consider how your approach to time management and course participation might differ to meet the demands of the online format.

This course has a common readings and assignments calendar, which we will all move through on the same schedule. Although you have the flexibility of posting your discussions and working on your readings at a time of the day (or night) that is convenient for you, there will be weekly deadlines for discussion and common deadlines for all assignments. It is strongly recommended that you set aside regular blocks of several hours several times a week to
complete your readings, discussion comments, and upcoming assignments. You should anticipate logging into Blackboard at least four times a week.

To be successful in an online course, you must have reliable computer and Internet access. It is each student’s responsibility to have access to a dependable computer and Internet connectivity. It is strongly recommended that, in addition to your standard means of access, you have an alternative plan for acquiring course materials, should your computer fail to function or your Internet connectivity becomes disrupted. The MSU campus library is an excellent option if it is nearby; otherwise, most public libraries offer Internet access. If you have a laptop computer, then familiarity with local “hotspots” might also serve you well. It is your responsibility to actively and proactively address technical problems and develop a plan to address technical problems before they arise.

If you need assistance with Blackboard the MSU helpdesk can be reached by phone at 417-836-5891 or by emailing HelpDesk@MissouriState.edu. You can also visit the Help Desk website for a live chat option.

**Blackboard Ally:**
To help ensure you have access to your digital learning materials in formats that work for your different devices, learning needs, and preferences, Blackboard includes a new tool called Ally. Next to your course files, you’ll find an icon for a dropdown menu. Simply click the icon and select “Alternative Formats.” You’ll see a list of options from which to choose. Download speed will depend on the size file.

Depending on the type of document, you may find some or all of the options below available:

- An OCRed PDF which is used to improve the text of scanned documents
- A Tagged PDF with improved navigation, especially if you use a screen reader
- An HTML version that will be adjust text for your mobile devices
- An ePub version if you use an eReader or tablet
- An Electronic Braille version if you’re a braille reader
- An audio version for listening to an MP3

Explore the [Accessibility website](#) to learn about ways we are working to improve accessibility at MSU.

**Online Accommodations:**
If you need a specific learning accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. This course incorporates Universal Design, but it is always a work in progress. Captions or a transcript will be provided for any audio source in the course. We will be working with visual sources (images, photographs, etc.) this semester and visual representations of primary sources in their original form, including reading materials in cursive script. Analyzing historical materials in their original form is a skill, and one this course is designed to cultivate. However, if you are encountering significant difficulties with the format of the material or if you have documented learning disabilities that require accommodation of visual sources, please let me know and we will identify the best means of making the material accessible.
Course Readings:
The following books have been ordered at the bookstore. These titles also have used copies available on various online bookstores.

David Chang, The World and All the Things Upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).
Julian Go, Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).*

You will also be reading materials posted on Blackboard. These will be available at least two weeks prior to our discussion on the readings.

A note on the readings: This course does assume basic, graduate-level knowledge of American history, but does not assume background knowledge specifically in the history of American empire and expansion.

Grading and Assignments
Your grade in the course will be calculated based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Aligned Course Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly discussions</td>
<td>8 @ 25 points = 200 points</td>
<td>I, III, IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>2 @ 45 points = 90 points</td>
<td>I, III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>3 @ 25 points + 25 points comments = 100</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper Prospectus</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>I, III, IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>I, III, IV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Grading Scale:
- 465-500 = A
- 450-464 = A-
- 435-449 = B+
- 415-434 = B
- 400-414 = B-
- 385-399 = C+
- 365-384 = C
- 350-364 = C-
- 335-349 = D+
- 300-334 = D
- 299 and below = F
**Note on due times:** Most assignments and discussions will be due at the close of Sunday night. You are welcome and encouraged to submit materials prior to the due date, but I know many of you are teachers or are working at jobs where having the weekend to complete an assignment is helpful. I will check my email at least once on Sunday afternoon, but will not be online all day. Please plan your work schedule to avoid having many last-minute questions to ensure I have time to address them.

**Discussion:** The online discussions are the heart of this course. In these discussions, you will address the major themes in the history American empire and analyze historians’ arguments regarding the subject. There will be 8 graded discussions over the course of the semester, each worth 25 points.

In general, you are expected to make a minimum of 4 substantive posts each discussion. The first post should be in response to one of the questions I pose to begin discussion. 3 additional posts must be made in response to your classmates’ posts. Your initial post should be at least 250 words; response posts should be at least 150 words. You may make more than the minimum number of posts, either in response to a question I ask or a comment made by a classmate. Discussion forums will become available Monday morning at 8:00am CST for that week. They will close at 11:59pm CST the following Sunday. Your first post should be submitted no later than 5:00 pm CST on Wednesday. You are encouraged to post as early as possible; this will improve the quality of the group’s discussion. Waiting until the last minute to post limits your group’s ability to build on each other’s comments and often results in duplication of comments. *The schedule of discussions may change slightly on specific weeks due to university holidays, etc. Please make sure to carefully read each week’s introduction for discussion directions.*

In grading posts, the quality of your response is more important than the quantity (although fewer than the minimum posts will result in grade reduction). Your goal is to further the discussion; *responses that simply repeat points already made by classmates will not receive credit.*

You are always expected to maintain courtesy and respect in your posts. Rigorous discussion is encouraged, and we will sometimes disagree. When this occurs, your critique should focus on ideas, not individuals. Discourteous posts will be removed and will not receive credit. Students will receive one warning; a second incident may result in being administratively dropped from the course.

**Book Reviews:** You’ll write two formal book reviews in the class. The first, due **October 4 at 11:59 pm** will be on one of the assigned core books (the choice of which book is up to you). The second, due **November 22 at 11:59 pm** should be a book you are planning to use for your final paper. Details on the book review assignment and a bibliography of suggested books are available under the “Assignments” tab.
**Blogs:** Each of you will have a blog on our Blackboard site. Over the course of the semester, you are required to make 3 entries in the blog, following the guidelines available in the blog assignment sheet (available under the “Assignments” tab on Blackboard). These blogs are designed to familiarize you with online resources regarding the history of American empire. You are expected to read your classmate’s blogs and comment/respond when appropriate. Deadlines for the blogs are listed in the course schedule, but you are encouraged to post your blogs at any time convenient for you prior to the due date. Comments on blogs are due no later than **Sunday, November 22 at 11:59 pm.**

**Final Paper:** For the final paper in the course, you will investigate one of the themes we’ve discussed this semester in more depth. You will need to read and analyze at least 5 monographs (3 scholarly articles=1 monograph) and write a historiographical essay that investigates what historians have said about the theme. The paper should be 13-15 pages, double-spaced. A prospectus of your paper and a working bibliography are due **October 18 at 11:59pm.** Additional details will be available under the “Assignments” tab on Blackboard.

**Course Policies:**

**COVID-19 and Pandemic Plan:**
This course is taught in an entirely online format and will not be affected if the local health situation precludes in person meetings. In the event that you contract COVID-19, are caring for someone with COVID-19, or are caring for children due to school/daycare disruptions, please contact me as soon as reasonably possible to request accommodations to the late work policy. Please do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it.

**Mask and Face Covering Policy:**
In accord with the [MSU Mask and Face Covering policy](https://www.msu.edu/about/policies/covid-19/index.php#face-coverings), [Greene County Health Department](https://health.greenehealth.com/) and the [Springfield City Ordinance](https://www.springfieldmo.gov/departments/health/safety/ordinances), masks or face coverings must be worn at all times in public spaces within academic buildings and other campus instructional areas, including hallways, elevators, stairwells, classrooms, restrooms, study areas, and other common areas when you are on campus. This measure is being implemented to reduce COVID-19 related health risks for everyone engaged in the educational process. Masks or face coverings must be worn over the nose and mouth, in accordance with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov). Face shields are not considered masks or face coverings for purposes of this requirement. Students who cannot wear a mask or face covering due to a disability must contact the [Disability Resource Center (DRC)](https://www.greenehealth.com/placement-services/disability-resource-center/) to initiate the interactive accommodation process. In the absence of an approved accommodation, a student’s refusal to wear a mask or face covering will be considered a classroom disruption, consistent with [Op3.04-11 Class Disruption](https://www.greenehealth.com/placement-services/disability-resource-center/), and may result in the student being administratively dropped from the class section.
Late Work Policy:
If you find yourself struggling to meet course deadlines, please contact me as soon as possible. My late work policy is below, but if you are in a bind, I will work with you.

All work is due on or before the deadlines posted on the syllabus. Late assignments (blogs, book reviews, final paper) will be reduced by 10% if submitted after the deadline. A late first post in the discussion will reduce your overall discussion grade (see rubric). Once the discussion closes, subsequent posts will not receive credit. Extensions and/or alterations to this policy may be granted in cases of illness, family emergency, natural disaster, religious holiday, or other university recognized situation. Please notify me as soon as reasonably possible if one of these issues applies and be prepared to provide relevant documentation if needed.

In addition to the above policy, an extension on one assignment other than discussion will be granted in the case of general life overload (I have four children, I understand that these happen). In this case, you do not need to provide details or documentation as to why you need the extension. Just ask. However, the request must be communicated to me before the deadline. Requests for life overload extensions after the deadline will not be granted, and each student will be granted no more than one life overload extension (it does not benefit you to be habitually behind).

Academic Integrity Policy:
As stated in the Provost’s Course Syllabi/Policy Statements:
“Missouri State University is a community of scholars committed to developing educated persons who accept the responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing and following the university’s student honor code, Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures (https://www.missouristate.edu/assets/policy/Op3_01_Academic-Integrity-Policies-and-Procedures-07-28-2014.pdf) and also available at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in this policy.”

Plagiarism or any other form of cheating will result in a zero for the assignment and may result in a grade of F or XF for the course. All cases of plagiarism or other cheating will be referred to the appropriate academic authorities.

Common Department Policies:
This course adheres to the departmental and university common policies (https://www.missouristate.edu/provost/syllabi.htm), including the following. The Emergency Response Policy and cell phone policy are not reprinted here as this course does not have scheduled, face-to-face meetings:
Non-Discrimination Policy:
Missouri State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and maintains a grievance procedure available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries or concerns about possible discrimination to the Office for Equity and Diversity, Park Central Office Building, 117 Park Central Square, Suite 111, (417) 836-4252. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic nature) should be discussed directly with your instructor and can also be brought to the attention of your instructor’s Department Head. Please visit the OED website (https://www.missouristate.edu/equity/).

Chosen Name Policy:
A student may choose a name other than their legal name to identify themselves at Missouri State University. A chosen name is different than the student’s legal name. Refer to the Chosen Name policy for more information. Students can provide their chosen first and middle names in the Profile tab of My Missouri State. If you have a preferred name that is not yet in the system, please use your preferred name in course introductions. During introductions, I will also invite students to identify the gender pronouns you use.

Statement on Accommodations:
If you are a student with a disability and anticipate barriers related to this course, it is important to request accommodations and establish an accommodation plan with the University. Please contact the Disability Resource Center (https://www.missouristate.edu/disability/), Meyer Library, Suite 111, 417-836-4192, to initiate the process to establish your accommodation plan. The DRC will work with you to establish your accommodation plan, or it may refer you to other appropriate resources based on the nature of your disability. In order to prepare an accommodation plan, the University usually requires that students provide documentation relating to their disability. Please be prepared to provide such documentation if requested. Once a University accommodation plan is established, you may notify the class instructor of approved accommodations. If you wish to utilize your accommodation plan, it is suggested that you do so in a timely manner, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Early notification to the instructor allows for full benefit of the accommodations identified in the plan. Instructors will not receive the accommodation plan until you provide that plan, and they are not required to apply accommodations retroactively.

If you have a documented disability and need accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible.

Disclaimer & Fair Use Statement: This course may contain copyrighted material, the use of which may not have been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. This material is available in an effort to explain issues relevant to the history of American empire or to illustrate the use and benefits of an educational tool. The material contained in this course is distributed without profit for research and educational purposes. Only small portions of the original work are being used and those could not be used easily to duplicate the original work. This should
constitute a ‘fair use’ of any such copyrighted material (referenced and provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law).

If you wish to use any copyrighted material from this course for purposes of your own that go beyond ‘fair use’, you must obtain expressed permission from the copyright owner.

**Semester Schedule:**
All assignment and discussion due times are given in Central Standard Time.
Readings with the notation (bb) are available on the course Blackboard site.

Please note: Life is unpredictable, and I reserve the right to modify readings and course assignments if warranted. I will make every effort to provide ample advance notice if any modifications are made.

**Week 1 (August 17):** Introductions and Defining “Empire”
*Assignments: Ungraded Discussion*

**Week 2 (August 24):** The Ideology and Origins of American Empire
*Readings:*
- Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny* (entire)
- Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire* (introduction and ch. 1)
- Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire* (introduction)

*Assignments: Discussion #1*

**Week 3 (August 31):** A Nascent Empire Among Empires I
*Readings:*

*Assignments: Blog #1 due no later than 11:59pm on September 8.*

**Week 4 (September 7):** A Nascent Empire Among Empires II
*Readings:*
- Amy Greenberg, *A Wicked War* (entire)

*Assignments: Discussion #2*

**Week 5 (September 14):** Territorial Expansion and Domestic Politics I
*Readings:*
Assignments: Discussion #3 (weeks 5 and 6)

Week 7 (September 28): Shifting Perspective and Negotiating Empire
Readings: David Chang, *The World and All the Things Upon It* (entire)
Assignments: Book Review #1 due no later than 11:59pm on Sunday, October 4

Week 8 (October 5): Shifting Perspective and Negotiating Empire II
*October 8 & 9: Fall Holiday*
Readings: Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire* (ch. 2)
Assignments: Discussion # 4 (weeks 7 and 8)

Week 9 (October 12) Framing the 20th Century Empire I
Readings: Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire* (Part I)
Assignments: Final Paper Prospectus due no later than 11:59pm on October 18

Week 10 (October 19): Framing the 20th Century Empire II
Readings: Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire* (Part 2)
Assignments: Discussion # 5 (weeks 9 and 10)

Week 11 (October 26): Race, Citizenship, and Intimacy in the Empire
Readings: Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire* (entire)
Assignments: Blog #3 due no later than 11:59pm on Sunday, November 1

Week 12 (November 2): Race, Citizenship, and Intimacy in the Empire II

Assignments: Discussion # 6 (weeks 11 and 12)

Week 13 (November 9) The Emergence of a Superpower
Readings:
- Peter Smith, Talons of the Eagle, excerpts (bb)
- Go, Patterns of Empire (chs 3 and 4)

Assignments: Discussion # 7

Week 14 (November 16): Formal Empire in the American Century
Readings:
- Go, Patterns of Empire (chs 5-7)

Assignments: Book Review #2 due no later than 11:59pm on November 22
Blog Responses due no later than 11:59pm on November 22

Week 15 (November 23): Thanksgiving Week, work on final paper (conferencing available)

Week 16 (November 30): Informal Empire in the American Century
Readings:

**Assignments:** Discussion # 8 (weeks 14 and 16)

Final Paper, due at 11:59pm December 8, 2020