

Hist. 216-301
Spring 2004
Wed., 2-5
Bennett Hall 222

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American Empire in the Pacific

Americans rarely think of themselves as masters of empire, let alone in the Pacific. But since the arrival of the New York sailing ship, *Empress of China*, in Canton waters in 1784, Americans have shown great interest in Asia and the Pacific. The U.S. catapulted to the ranks of imperial powers by acquiring the Philippines in 1898 and remains, to this day, the most formidable player in Asia/Pacific politics. This general honors seminar will highlight the American experience in the Asia/Pacific region from the eighteenth century to the present. Topics include the nature of American imperialism/colonialism in Asia/the Pacific, changing American perceptions of China, Japan, Hawaii, the Philippines, Korea and Vietnam, and the impact of the Asia/Pacific experience on the US. Does American expansion in the Pacific bear lessons for recent developments in the Middle East?

Objectives

The course is divided into two parts, each of which is designed to expose you to a critical facet of historical inquiry. Readings in Part one will introduce you to the basic history and historiography of the American empire in the Pacific. In this section, we will survey the major events in the history of American empire-building in the Pacific and discuss the different ways in which commentators have treated those events.

Part two will highlight the primary source material used by historians to assess America's Pacific empire: the letters, memoirs and oral histories of participants in the events. These materials cover the full range of the empire, from the arrival of the first Americans in the 18th century through the Vietnam War. They are designed to give you a sense of how contemporaries viewed their world and to develop the critical skills needed to interpret primary sources.

Texts

The following books should be purchased at the Pennsylvania Book Center, 130 S. 34th Street (215-222-7600):

Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (1999)

William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959)

Kemp Tolley, *Yangtze Patrol* (1971)

Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave : Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan* (2003)

Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image* (1989)

Glenn Davis, *Occupation Without Troops* (1996)

James A. Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific* (1946)

John F. Sullivan, *Of Spies and Lies* (2002)

Part two of the course will rely, in large part, upon excerpts from published material, available on the course website. Those who would like a hard copy of these readings may obtain them in a course backpack from Wharton Reprographics. Please let me know if you would like to order the backpack.

Requirements

There are three components of your grade, which break down as follows.

	<u>Points</u>	<u>% grade</u>
1) Class attendance and participation (5 each session)	60 pts	35
2) One class discussion (20), 1 on-line comment (10)	30 pts	20
3) Choice of:	75 pts	45
a) Three 6-8-page thought papers on assigned topics (25 each)		
b) One 6-8-page thought paper (25), one 15-page research paper (50)		

Course itinerary

Week I

1/14 Intro

Part I: History and Historiography

Week II

1/21 Popular visions of America's global role
Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation*

Week III

1/28 Overview of American empire-building
Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*

Week IV

2/4 US in Chinese treaty ports (18th-early 20th centuries)
Tolley, *Yangtze Patrol*, pp.1-80

Week V

2/11 Inspired by Japan (19th century) **[Research paper title, blurb, bibliography]**
Benfey, *The Great Wave*

Week VI

2/18 Empire in the Philippines (early 20th century)
Karnow, *In Our Image*

Week VII

2/25 US as protector of China (to 1945)
Tolley, *Yangtze Patrol*, pp. 81-290

2/26 **[Paper 1 due (entire class)]**

Week VIII

3/3 New American presence in Asia (Cold War)
Glenn Davis, *Occupation Without Troops*

Week IX

3/10 **Spring break**

Part II: American Voices

Week X

3/17 Americans in the China trade [**Research paper title, blurb, annotated bibliography due**]

Philip C. Smith, *The Empress of China*, excerpts

TV: Star Trek: The Original Series, vol. 39, episode 77, “The Savage Curtain” (1969)

Week XI

3/24 Romancing Asia (19th century)

Percival Lowell, Lafcadio Hearn, etc.

TV: Rocky Jones, Space Ranger, “Crash of the Moons” (1954)

Week XII

3/31 Protesting empire

Mark Twain, “John Chinaman in New York”

“The Dervish and the Offensive Stranger”

“A Defence of General Funston,” etc.

TV: The Adventures of Fu Manchu, “The Master Plan” (1956)

4/1 [**Paper 2/Research pap draft due (optional)**]

Week XIII

4/7 Adjusting to America’s new post-1945 global role

William F. Nemo, ed., *The Occupation of Japan: The Grass Roots*, excerpts

Donald Knox, *Korean War: Pusan to Chosin-an Oral History*, excerpts

TV: MASH, “The Moose” (1972)

Week XIV

4/14 Celebrating empire after 1945 (even in Vietnam)

Sullivan, *Of Spies and Lies*

TV: Kung Fu, “Sun and Cloud Shadow” (1973)

Week XV

4/21 Celebrating America’s post-1945 global role and the new ethnic face of America

Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific*

Film: John Woo, “Windtalkers” (2002)

Week XIV

4/28 **Paper 3/Research paper due**