EMPIRE & REVOLUTION:
U.S. and European Colonialism in Southeast Asia

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History

History 600/755: A Seminar

Mr. McCoy

1. REQUIREMENTS:

Course Description: Starting with reflections on the meaning of "empire" in a time of unchallenged U.S. global dominion, the course will explore the rise of European empires during the "high colonialism" of the 19th and 20th centuries. More than any other historical process, imperialism is responsible for the formation of the modern world order—that is, a global system of nation states and transnational governance. As the only region of the globe that experienced all of the world's imperial powers—American, British, Dutch, French, Japanese, and Spanish—Southeast Asia is the ideal laboratory for the examination of "empire."

In studying European empires in Southeast Asia, the seminar will focus closely on U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines from 1898-1946, an important but forgotten chapter in American history. Indeed, in two centuries of the nation's history, the U.S. conquest and colonization of the Philippines is the only experience comparable to our recent involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq. By exploring this juxtaposition of past and present in the history of America's foreign adventures, the seminar will, in its opening and closing sessions, explore the way the past bears upon the present.

More broadly, the course will explore a series of issues central to the character of global empires—the causes of global expansion, the drive for military security, the psychology of colonial dominion, ecological and economic transformations, the rise of nationalist resistance, and the dynamics of imperial decline.

After reviewing the expansion of European colonialism into Southeast Asia, the course will also focus on the region's response—ranging from peasant revolt to national revolution. The seminar thus introduces students to readings on the dynamics of empire and the social processes of both resistance and revolution—focusing on the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Burma.

Instead of transferring a fund of facts about European empires and anti-colonial revolutions, the seminar seeks to examine the perspectives of Western and Asian scholars who have studied these complex processes. Hopefully, students will emerge from the course with a better understanding of the nature of empire and, more broadly, the dynamics of historical change.

Course Aims: As the final phase of the undergraduate History major or first step in a graduate career, the seminar allows students an opportunity to reflect upon lessons learned in past courses and to refine essential academic skills—critical reading, academic analysis, primary research, expository writing, and formal oral presentation.

Class Meetings: The seminar is scheduled to meet on Tuesdays, 4:00-5:55 p.m. in Room No. 5255 Humanities Building.

Office Hours: In Room 5131 Humanities, Thursdays, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., and other hours by appointment. Telephone: 263-1855 (direct line); 263-1800 (History Department, message). Messages may be left in Mailbox No. 5026 or sent via e-mail to <awmccoy@wisc.edu>
**Grading**: Students shall be marked on their weekly participation, writing assignments, and oral presentation.

*Weekly Discussion Summaries*: Prior to two of the class meetings, students shall prepare a two/three-page summary of the assigned readings for the topic under discussion that week. The papers are due in my Humanities mailbox at 10:00 am, as follows: (a.) on September 2 (all the week’s readings), and (b.) on December 8 (on four readings).

*Class Presentation*: At each class meeting, two students shall serve as the “discussant” by presenting a 15-minute summary of the readings, which will be followed by a general discussion. The discussants shall meet with the instructor to review the presentation during office hours in the week preceding their presentation. Each student will serve as discussant twice during the semester.

*Class Participation*: Students are responsible for reviewing all the readings assigned for each week, usually totaling about 200 pages, and will present a short oral summary of one or more readings at the start of each class. Attendance at all classes is required; each unexcused absence attracts a deduction of three percent from the final mark; and three unexcused absences mean failure.

*Final Paper*: By 10:00 am, on Monday, December 1, students shall submit a 15-page paper on one of the topics or themes covered in the course. Students shall place a one-page outline of their proposed project in my Humanities Building mailbox by 10:00 am, Monday, November 10, which will be returned within a week with comments.

**Grading**: Thus, the final grade shall be computed as follows:

- discussant: 20%
- weekly papers: 20%
- weekly participation: 20%
- major essay: 40%

**Readings**: To access the diverse readings for a course spanning six empires and five centuries, the course requires readings found in textbooks and e-Library. In preparation for each meeting, students should read all the “Required Readings,” and then use the “Recommended Readings” as supplemental sources.

**Readings Available at Campus Libraries**: E-Reserve at the College Library holds all the Required Readings (articles and excerpts from books) marked below with an asterisk (*). The procedure for accessing e-reserves for our course is as follows: (1.) Students log-on to “MyUW”; (2.) go to the “Academic” tab; and, (3.) next to the courses that students are registered for, go to “Library/Reserves’ link” and click on the link beside History 319.

**Texts for Purchase (University Bookstore)**:


Wolf, Eric, in *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
II. READINGS [Readings on e-Reserve are marked *].-

Part I: Origins of Empire

(N.B.: Two-Page Paper Due, Tuesday, September 2, 10:00 am)

• WEEK 1 (September 2) – Theories of Empire: World Systems Theory and Beyond

Required (213 pp.)


Recommended


• WEEK 2 (September 9) – Pre-colonial States and Empires: Southeast Asia before Europe

Required – Southeast Asia (223 pp.)


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


• **WEEK 3 (September 16) – Dutch, Portuguese, & Spanish Empires 16th-18th Centuries**

**Required – Southeast Asia (254 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


• WEEK 4 (September 23) – French & British High Imperialism, 18th to 20th Centuries

**Required – Southeast Asia (277 pp.)**


Required – Global


Recommended


* WEEK 5 (September 30) – The US Empire, from Disparate Islands to Global Hegemony

Required – Southeast Asia (250 pp.)


Required – Global


McCormick, Thomas, “From Old Empire to New,” in Colonial Crucible, pp. 63-79.


Recommended


Part II: The Imperial Project

• WEEK 6 (October 7) – Race, Gender, and Cultural Logics of Imperialism

Required – Southeast Asia (266 pp.)


Required – Global


Recommended


- **WEEK 7 (October 14) – Colonial Economics, Plantations & Labor Systems**

*Required – Southeast Asia (264 pp.)*


*Required – Global*


*Recommended*


• **WEEK 8 (October 21) – Environmental Management, From Fields to Forests**

**Required – Southeast Asia (193 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


• WEEK 9 (October 28) – Policing the Empire

**Required – Southeast Asia (199 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


• WEEK 10 (November 4) – Public Health, Medical Science & Empire

**Required – Southeast Asia (232 pp.)**


Required – Global


Recommended


Part III: Anti-Imperialism and Resistance

{N.B.: Essay Outline Due, Monday, November 10, 9:00 am}

• WEEK 11 (November 11) – Peasant Resistance: Moral Economy & Armed Uprisings

Required – Southeast Asia (257 pp.)


Required – Global


Recommended


• WEEK 12 (November 18) – Revolution and Resistance: Contested Nationalisms

Required – Southeast Asia (259 pp.)


Required – Global


Recommended


**WEEK 13 (November 25) – Dynamics of Imperial Decline: Eclipse of European Empires**

*Required – Southeast Asia (243 pp.)*


*Required – Global*


*Recommended*


(N.B.: Major Essay Due, Monday, December 1, 9:00 am)

• WEEK 14 (December 2) – Dynamics of Imperial Decline: Future of U.S. Global Power

Required – Southeast Asia (82 pp.)


Required – Global


Go, Julian, “Entangled Empires: The United States and European Imperial Formations in the Mid-Twentieth Century,” in Endless Empire, pp. 334-343.


Recommended


{N.B.: Two-Page Paper Due, Monday, December 8, 9:00 am}

* WEEK 15 (December 9) – Legacies of Empire

Required – Southeast Asia (233 pp.)


Required – Global


Recommended


III. ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1.) After reading the Stern-Wallerstein debate about agency and labor in the European World System, examine the Philippines or another Southeast Asian nation under colonial rule to determine if circumstances there affirm or challenge Wallerstein’s models for labor.

2.) Applying Victor Lieberman’s criteria for the “early modern state,” explore whether the Spanish Philippines or the Netherlands Indies are, despite alien rule, examples of this kind of state formation.

3.) Compare and contrast the processes of social and economic change in the great, lowland deltas of Southeast Asia—the Rio Grande de Pampanga with either the Irrawaddy or the Mekong—explaining why these economic transformations produced peasant revolts.

4.) Using the theories of Scott and Wolff, analyze the rise of radical peasant movements in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam and Central Luzon, Philippines in the decades surrounding World War II.

5.) Using Anderson’s writing in “Imagined Communities,” compare the rise of nationalism in Indonesia and the Philippines.

6.) After reading James Scott’s “Seeing Like a State,” analyze the US colonial state in the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies as instances of “high modernist” states.

7.) Drawing from most of James Scott’s readings on the syllabus, compare the dynamics of peasant politics in the Philippines and another Southeast Asian nation—focusing on the conditions of rice tenancy, patron-client relations, everyday resistance, and open revolt.

8.) While flying to Manila for a state visit, President George W. Bush cited the Philippines as example for and justification of the US occupation of Iraq. Compare American colonial rule over the Philippines (1898-1946) with the post 9/11 US occupation of either Iraq or Afghanistan.

9.) Using one or more European empires as the basis for comparison, analyze the character of American colonialism in the Philippines, defining its key attributes and exploring what was distinctive about US rule.

10.) Using one of two pre-World War II European empires for comparison, analyze the character of US global dominion since 1945.

11.) Using the decline for one or two European maritime empires during the 19th and 20th centuries as point of comparison, speculate about the future of US global dominion during the 21st century. Be sure to document both your analysis of empires past and projections about future trends.
IV. HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH ESSAY—A THREE-STEP METHOD:

1.) STEP ONE—Reading & Research:
   a.) Sources/Research:
      1.) All good essays begin with the three “Rs”—reading, research, and reflection.
      2.) Like most essays, a History term paper is a distillation of its author’s reading and reflections upon the subject at hand. The quality of an essay’s expression and analysis usually reflects the depth of its author’s reading.

   b.) How to Read for an Essay:
      1.) Using the course syllabus, begin with a general text to get an overview of the problem.
      2.) Using the syllabus or textbooks, select more specific sources.
      3.) As you read, begin forming ideas in your mind about:
         a.) your overall hypothesis, and;
         b.) the evidence you need to support your argument.
      4.) As you read, take notes, either on paper, or in the margin of a photocopy of the source. As you take notes, make sure you have all the bibliographic information for your source: author, title, place of publication, publisher, and relevant pages.
      5.) Towards the end of your reading, draw up an outline of the essay. If you are missing sources for the argument you would like to present, then do additional reading.

   c.) Citing Your Sources:
      1.) Assuming three paragraphs per page, you should have one source or note per paragraph.
      2.) Every idea that is not your own and every major body of data you use in your essay should be sourced. In particular, quotations must be sourced.
      3.) Use endnotes or footnotes in the following format:


      4.) For a second, non-sequential citation of the same work a short citation:

         27. McCoy, Southeast Asia Since 1800, pp. 77–78.

      5.) If you are citing the same source in sequence, use Ibid for second citation.

         27. McCoy, Southeast Asia Since 1800, pp. 77–78.
         28. Ibid., pp. 79–80.
         29. Ibid., pp. 80–81.


2.) STEP TWO—Framing the Argument:
   a.) Outline: With your reading done, you are ready to outline your argument. Begin by articulating the single, central question you will ask and answer in the course of this paper. Next, write a one- or two-page outline of your essay with the basic components discussed below.
b. Overall structure: Every report, whether in the natural or social sciences, has three basic elements—the problem/hypothesis, the evidence/argument, and the conclusion. To summarize very broadly, the introduction asks a question and poses a hypothesis, the argument arrays evidence to explore that hypothesis, and the conclusion reflects upon the original hypothesis in light of the evidence presented.

Of these three elements, the opening formulation of a hypothesis is, by far, the most difficult. In your opening paragraph, try to stand back from the mass of material you have read and articulate a thesis, which usually explains causality (why events occurred) or analyzes significance (the particular import of an event or a pattern of events). Then identify the factors, topics, or elements that you will explore to test your thesis. Ideally, these factors should serve as an agenda of the topics that you will explore in the next section of your essay, the evidence/argument.

By the time you start writing, you should be able to summarize your argument in the essay’s first sentence with something akin to the following formulation: “By applying A to B, the essay will explore C.” To illustrate, an essay on imperial economic impact might begin: “By analyzing European economic transformation of the Mekong and Irrawaddy deltas, we can see how technological change {A} produced a social transformation {B} that encouraged peasant insurgency {C}.”

Here are some further reflections on each of these sections:

1.) The Problem: In your introduction, state the problem clearly.
   a.) If necessary, you should give your definition of any key terms that require a specific usage (e.g., “revolution”).
   b.) In stating your problem, refer to the literature in the syllabus.
   c.) A standard and often effective device is to identify two differing schools of thought about a single problem and offer resolution.
   d.) Make sure you are examining the main point, not a secondary or side issue.

2.) The Evidence: In the middle part of your essay, you must present evidence—through an analytical intertwining of events and factors—to deal with the problem posed at the beginning of your essay. Be specific. Give the reader a brief narrative of an event grounded in some statistical or anecdotal evidence.

3.) The Conclusion: In the final page or two of your essay, reflect on the problem as stated in the introduction in light of the evidence you presented in the middle part of the essay. Stretch the data you present for clarity, but do not exaggerate or overextend the usefulness of your data.

c.) Level of Argument: Some students produce papers that fill all the demands of the format but do not produce an argument that fully engages the problem.
   1.) Drawing upon reading and lectures, try to frame an argument that seems to address the question in the most direct and significant manner possible, drawing the most convincing possible evidence to support the case you are making.
   2.) By reading several sources with diverse viewpoints and reflecting on the authors’ approaches, you can define an appropriate question and level of analysis.

d.) Nature of History Questions: In courses such as this one, History involves the study of change in large-scale human communities, societies and nations, over time. In general, History essays ask you to understand or explain two aspects of change—
events and their causes or, simply, what happened and why it happened. Thus, most History questions ask you to explain elements of the following:

1.) In a limited period of time, explain the factors underlying a given event. Why did that event happen?
2.) Explain the impact that an event, such as a war or revolution, had upon a human community within a period succeeding the actual event.
3.) Over a longer period of time, explain how and why complex communities changed in a given way.

3.) **STEP THREE—Writing the Essay:**
   a.) Procedure:
   1.) Write an outline, in bullet-point format, of about 2 pages for a 10 to 15 page essay. Each projected paragraph in the essay should be a line in your outline.
   2.) Following your outline, write a first draft taking care to introduce transitional clauses or sentences that allow the reader to follow your argument paragraph by paragraph.
   3.) Reading aloud to yourself, if necessary, edit the prose and produce a second draft.

   b.) Sentences:
   1.) Each sentence should be a complete sentence with subject, verb, and direct object.
   2.) Vary your sentences to include short periodic sentences, simple compound sentences, compound sentences with clauses in apposition, and longer sentences communicating detail.

   c.) Paragraphs:
   1.) Start your paragraph with a “topic sentence”—that is, a periodic or compound sentence stating the basic message of this particular paragraph.
   2.) Varying your sentence structure, elaborate and expand this theme into a fully developed paragraph.
   3.) Within the paragraph, try to link your sentences with words such as “similarly,” “moreover,” and “however” so that they flow from one sentence to another.
   4.) Paragraphs should not be too long. If you need a rough guide, have 3 paragraphs to a page with 8 to 10 typed lines in each.

   d.) Aspire to style:
   1.) There is a music—with melody and rhythm—to your writing. Sensitize your mind’s ear to the rhythms of your prose. Try to make your writing an expression of your inner voice.
   2.) As in all forms of discourse, there is an appropriate style for an academic essay somewhere between the chatty colloquial and the overly formal.