

**Japanese Imperialism**  
**Graduate Seminar: History 855**  
**Spring 2005**  
**Thursday 11-1**  
**5257 Humanities**

Instructor: Louise Young  
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Office hours W 2:30-3:30; Th. 1:15-2:30  
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**Course description**

Accounts of modern Japan's imperial experience have tended to focus on its exceptional quality: the peculiarities of a non-Western, late-developing imperial power. Whether they suggest that Japan was forced by the exigencies of the world system to "expand in self-defense" or that its expansionist impulses emerged from the contradictions of accelerated modernization, such narratives of exceptionalism echo the ideologies of empire produced from the late nineteenth century and fit into a larger discourse on Japan's "incomplete" modernity. By broadly comparing the Japanese case to other experiences of modern imperialism this course seeks to rethink and reframe the problem of Japanese imperialism, at the same time using the Japanese case to open up a larger discussion of methodology in studying empire.

The first half of the course is global and comparative, showcasing exemplary works on colonialism and imperialism to introduce a range of approaches and methodologies. The second half of the course focuses in on the Japanese case. Looking at the particularities of East Asian and Japanese national history, we assess the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and see how the focus on a single case study can illuminate the global dynamics of the "new imperialism" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Schedule**

20 January     introduction

**Part I: Methodology and Empire**

27 January     *theoretical overview/ introduction to the Japanese case*  
Wolfgang Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*  
Mark Peattie, introduction, *The Japanese Colonial Empire*

3 February     *commodities and social life*  
Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*

10 February    *states and social power*  
Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*

- 17 February *subaltern studies and colonial nationalism*  
Manu Goswami, *Producing India*
- 24 February *transnational, trans-human and the environment*  
Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*
- 3 March *anthropologies of the colonial encounter*  
John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*
- 10 March *cultural studies and ideology*  
Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*
- Part II: The Japanese Case
- 17 March *mimetic imperialism*  
Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*
- 31 March *Said goes to Japan*  
Stephan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient*
- 7 April *Japan's West*  
Brett Walker, *The Conquest of the Ainu*
- 14 April *subjectivity and literary production*  
Kimberly Kono, *Writing Imperial Relations: Romance and Marriage in Japanese Colonial Literature*
- 21 April *colonialism and the nation: Korea*  
Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*
- 28 April *technology of empire:*  
Daqing Yang, *The Technology of Japanese Imperialism: Telecommunications and Empire Building 1895-1945*
- 5 May *colonialism and the nation: Manchukuo*  
Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*

### Course requirements

- (1) attendance and active participation
- (2) prepare discussion questions for two class periods
- (3) written and verbal presentation of annotated bibliography on a topic of your choosing (e.g. treatment of empire within your discipline/area)
- (4) 20-25 pp essay that builds on the annotated bibliography: historiographical, methodological, and/or theoretical analysis of a body of work on empire. Your essay can be a critical analysis of debates within one or more national histories; it can be a critical analysis of one or more methodological approaches, such as cultural studies and Marxism.