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

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History

History 600/755: A Pro-Seminar

Mr. McCoy                 Fall 2021

I. REQUIREMENTS:-

Course Description: Starting with reflections on the meaning of “empire” in a time of fading U.S. global power, the course will explore the rise of European and U.S. 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 with its worldwide system of nation states and transnational governance. As the only region of the globe that experienced all of the major imperial powers—American, British, Dutch, French, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish—Southeast Asia is the ideal laboratory for the examination of “empire.”

In studying European empires in Southeast Asia, the seminar will focus on U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines from 1898 to 1946, an important but often overlooked chapter in American history. Indeed, over the span of two centuries, 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 their expansion, the culture of colonial dominion, their 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, which ranges 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—concentrating on the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Burma. Applying these lessons from the past, the course will close with reflections on the future of U.S. global hegemony.

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.

Credit Policy: The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings
of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

**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 in-person on Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m. to 12:55 p.m. in Room No. 5257, Mosse Humanities Building.

**Office Hours:** On Thursdays from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm, via telephone after making an appointment via e-mail to <awmccoy@wisc.edu>.

**Grading:** Students shall be marked on their weekly participation, writing assignments, and oral presentations, as follows:

*Weekly Discussion Summaries:* Prior to the first and last class meetings, students shall prepare a two-page summary of the assigned readings for the topic under discussion that week. By *9:00 am, Monday, September 13*, students shall submit (via email) a review of all the readings for Week One summarizing the authors’ views on the character of empire. By *9:00 am on Monday, December 13*, students shall submit a review of at least four readings from Week 14, analyzing the ongoing imperial transition and predicting the shape of global power circa 2030.

*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 during office hours and submit a draft outline in the week prior to their presentation. Each student will serve as discussant twice during the semester.

*Class Participation:* Students are responsible for reviewing all the “required” 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 9:00 am, on *Monday, November 8*, students shall submit an email attachment with a one-page outline of their proposed project, which will be returned within a week with comments. By 9:00 am, on *Monday, November 29*, students shall submit a 15-page paper (via hard copy to my mailbox & email attachment) on one of the topics or themes covered in the course, usually building upon one or both of their oral presentations.
**Grading:** Thus, the final grade shall be computed as follows:

- **presentations:** 20%
- **weekly papers:** 20%
- **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 on-line at <canvas.wisc.edu>. In preparation for each meeting, students should read all the “Required Readings,” and then use the “Recommended Readings” as supplemental sources.

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


Wolf, Eric, in *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

**Recommended Text (Amazon.com):**


**II. READINGS [Readings in Canvas are marked *]:**

*Part I: Origins of Empire*

{N.B. Short Paper Due, Email Submission, Monday, September 13, 9:00 am}

* WEEK 1 (September 14) – Theories of Empire

**Required (213 pp.)**


*Jiang Shigong, “Empire and World Order,” *Reading the China Dream* (April 2019),


**Recommended**


**WEEK 2 (September 21) – Pre-colonial States and Empires**

**Required – Southeast Asia (223 pp.)


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


**• WEEK 3 (September 28) – Dutch, Portuguese & Spanish Empires**

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


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


**WEEK 4 (October 5) – French & British High Imperialism**

**Required – Southeast Asia (301 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


• WEEK 5 (October 12) – The U.S. Empire

**Required – Southeast Asia (235 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 19) – Race, Gender, and Cultural Logics of Imperialism**

**Required – Southeast Asia (266 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


**WEEK 7 (October 26) – Colonial Economies, Plantations & Labor Systems**

**Required – Southeast Asia (264 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


Slocomb, Margaret, Colons and Coolies: The Development of Cambodia's Rubber Plantations (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2007), pp. 7-15, 45-68.


**WEEK 8 (November 2) – Imperial Environmental Management**

**Required – Southeast Asia (202 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


{N.B. Two-page Essay Outline due, Email Submission, 9:00 am, Monday, November 8}

• WEEK 9 (November 9) – Policing the Empire
Required – Southeast Asia (161 pp.)


Required – Global


Recommended


• WEEK 10 (November 16) – Public Health, Medical Science & Empire
Required – Southeast Asia (249 pp.)


Required – Global


Recommended


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**Part III: Anti-Imperialism and Resistance**

**• WEEK 11 (November 23) – Peasant Resistance**

**Required – Southeast Asia (257 pp.)**


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**Required – Global**


Recommended


{N.B. THANKSIVING BREAK, Thursday, November 25}

• WEEK 12 (November 30) – Revolution and Resistance

Required – Southeast Asia (259 pp.)


Required – Global


**Recommended**


{N.B. ESSAYS DUE—Hard-Copy & Email, Monday, November 29, 9:00 a.m.}

• WEEK 13 (December 7) – Dynamics of Imperial Decline: European Empires
**Required – Southeast Asia (282 pp.)**


**Required – Global**


**Recommended**


{N.B. Short Paper Due, Email Submission, 9:00 am, Monday, December 13}

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

**Required – Southeast Asia (111 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


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 U.S. global dominion during the 21st century. Be sure to document both your analysis of empires past and projections about future trends until circa 2050.

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 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.) an 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.) Toward 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 at least 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:


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

   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 essay, whether humanities or social science, 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 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 in most History essays usually analyzes *causality* (why events occurred) or *consequence* (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 for 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 a first sentence for the essay akin to the following formulation: “By applying A to B, the essay will explore/explain C.” For example, an essay on the Tet Offensive might
begin: “By exploring the media coverage of the Tet Offensive, it becomes apparent that a clear U.S. military victory became transformed, in the mind of the American public, into a major political defeat.” Please note: Not only has this sentence articulated an argument, but it also identified the key components or factors that will be used to structure the essay: i.e. media, military operations, and political defeat. 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. In this section, you can also reflect on your findings, considering issues that essay did not address sufficiently or reflecting on the limitations of your argument.

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 each 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 some of 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 lines in each.

d.) **Aspire to style:**
   1.) Ideally, there should a rhythm to your writing. Sensitize your mind’s ear to the rhythms of your prose, making 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.

V. **TERMS & CONDITIONS:**

**Students' Rules Rights, & Responsibilities:**
During the global COVID-10 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

**UW-Madison Face Covering Guidelines:**
While on campus all employees and students are required to wear appropriate and properly fitting face coverings while present in any campus building unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.
Face Coverings During In-person Instruction Statement (COVID-19):
Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be worn correctly (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.
Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

Quarantine or Isolation Due to COVID-19:
Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.
Students should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.