

Cultures and Contexts: Empires and Political Imagination
MAP-UA 552
Spring 2013

Professors Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper
Tuesdays, Thursdays, 9:30-10:45
Silver Room 520

Course Description

Throughout history, few people lived for very long in a polity that consisted entirely or even mainly of people with whom they shared a language and culture. Any examination of the variety of human cultures must take account of the political structures within which people tried to make their way, sometimes seeking higher degrees of autonomy, sometimes accommodating to rulers' authority, sometimes trying to extend their own power over others. Empires—polities which maintained and enhanced social and cultural distinction even as they incorporated different people—have been one of the most common and durable forms of political association. This course will focus on the comparative study of empires from ancient Rome and China to the present, and upon the variety of ways in which empires have inspired and constrained their subjects' ideas of rights, belonging, and power. The study of empire expands our ideas of citizenship and challenges the notion that the nation-state is natural and necessary. Students in this course will explore historians' approaches to studying empires. We will investigate how empires were held together—and where they were weak—from perspectives that focus on political, cultural, and economic connections over long distances and long time periods. Readings will include historical scholarship on the Roman, Chinese, Mongol, Ottoman, Habsburg, Russian, French, British, and American empires, as well as primary sources produced by people living in these and other imperial polities.

Lectures, recitations, readings and documents:

Attendance at lectures and active participation in the recitations are integral parts of the course. The **lectures** are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9:30 to 10:45. The **recitations** (on Wednesdays) have two elements. The first is **discussion of the reading** up to that point in the class, but focusing on the most recent topics. The second is an analysis of a short **document**, usually an original source from the place and time that is listed under the date of the recitation. Students will be asked to analyze in class the meanings and significance of the document and how it can be used to further understanding of the historical questions being examined.

Exams and papers:

There will be a **midterm examination** held in class on **March 14** and a **final examination** on **Thursday, May 16 from 8:00 to 9:50 am**. Students must be present to take these examinations at the scheduled times. There will be no alternative dates or make-up exams.

Students will write three short papers. The first paper, **due on February 13 in recitation, is a 2-page document analysis** of one of the two documents listed under the

recitation reading for February 6. Focus your paper on what the document tells us about the Roman or Chinese empire. These documents will have been discussed in recitations; papers can build upon the approaches and ideas expressed in the course thus far. The second paper is 3-page document analysis, **due March 6**, on the excerpt from Bartolomé de las Casas, *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, assigned for discussion in recitations on that day. The third paper, due on **April 29 (Monday) at 4:00 pm**, is a 4-5 page review of a novel, film, or museum exhibit with a strong focus on questions of empire. We will distribute a list of appropriate topics. Students may choose a film or novel from outside this list, provided that this selection is approved by their preceptors by April 10.

For each of these writing assignments, use double-spacing and standard fonts. Consult with your preceptor well in advance of the due date if you have questions about the assignment or how to submit it.

Evaluation Policy:

Students are expected to participate actively in discussions and to hand in papers on the due date. Exams must be taken at the scheduled time. Incompletes are not allowed.

Recitations:	25%
Document Analyses (both papers)	15%
Mid-term examination:	15%
Essay on a creative work:	20%
Final Exam:	25%

Readings: Course Books and Blackboard

The readings are of three types: 1) the book by Professors Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*; 2) short articles and book chapters relevant to particular lectures in the course; and 3) a set of original documents, usually from the period being studied in a particular week.

Required course books, available for purchase at the NYU bookstore:

1. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, paperback 2011.
2. David Morgan, *The Mongols*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007.
3. Alexander Pushkin, *The Captain's Daughter*. The Planet Books, 2011. The assigned novella, "The Captain's Daughter," may be read in other editions of Pushkin's works. Read it in Russian if you can.

These books are also on reserve at Bobst Library.

Readings and documents on NYU CLASSES: All readings, other than the required books above, are posted on NYU Classes under the "resources" section of the course site. Materials listed as "documents" are also in this "resources" section. Look under the day for which the item is assigned.

NYU CLASSES site:

The syllabus is posted on the site. Under resources, you will find folders containing maps, lists of rulers, a list of suggestions connected with your final essay, and images related to the course. Brief lecture outlines are posted under "course information," as is information about recitations. Any adjustments to the course will be announced on the NYU classes site. Be sure to consult the site regularly.

Instructors' Office Hours and Contact Information

Professor Burbank: Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00 or by appointment, King Juan Carlos Center 603
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Professor Cooper: Thursdays, 11:00-12:00, or by appointment, King Juan Carlos Center 708
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Preceptors:

Nadim Bawalsa Tuesdays, 2:00 - 3:00, King Juan Carlos Center 527
Email: nb1180@nyu.edu

Gabriel Rocha Thursdays, 11:00 - 1:00, King Juan Carlos Center 527
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Karen Weber: Wednesdays, 11:00-12:00 in King Juan Carlos Center 527
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Lecture Schedule and Readings

Jan. 29 Introduction: Why Empires Matter
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 1

Jan. 30 Recitation
Document: George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," in *An Age Like This, 1920-1940*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 235-242.

Jan. 31 Toward Empire: Rome and Its Antecedents
Reading:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 2, 23-42
Greg Woolf, "An Imperial People," in Woolf, ed., *Cambridge Illustrated History of Rome*, 68-89.

- Feb. 5 Rome: How It Worked
Readings:
Greg Woolf, "The Creation of Gallo-Roman Cities," in *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Civilization in Gaul*, 112-26.
- Feb. 6 Recitation
Documents:
1. "Further Schemes of Dumnorix" from *Caesar's War Commentaries*, ed. and trans. John Warrington, 8-11.
2. "Shih chi: The Account of Ta-yuan" [mission of Chang Ch'ien to the steppe peoples], *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, trans. from the *Shih chi* of Ssu-ma Ch'ien by Burton Watson, vol. 2: 264-274.
- Feb. 7 Toward Empire: Early China
Reading:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 2, 42-59
Mark Edward Lewis, "Imperial Cities," from *The Early Chinese Empires Qin and Han*, 75-101.
- Feb. 12 Empire Space: The Mediterranean and Beyond
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 3
Hugh Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the World*, 51-84.
- Feb. 13 Recitation
Document: Corpus Iuris Civilis, 6th century civil law code, prologue and section of marriage, from "Medieval Source Book."
First document analysis due: A 2-page essay on one of the two documents listed under the recitation reading for February 6.
- Feb. 14 Empire Space: Eurasia
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 4
Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols, Social and Ecological Perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46, no.1 (June 1986): 11-51.
- Feb. 19 The Mongols' Empires
Readings:
David Morgan, *The Mongols*, chapters 2-4 and 6 (pp. 30-98, 120-151, in 2nd ed.)
- Feb. 20 Recitation
Document: Excerpts from Khwandamir's *Habibu's-Siyar*, on Mongol rule

- Feb. 21 Putting Empire Together: The Ottomans
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 5, 117-119, 128-143
- Feb. 26 Ottoman Empire: How it Worked
Reading:
Leslie P. Peirce, "An Imperial Caste: Inverted Racialization in the Architecture of Ottoman Sovereignty," in Margaret Greer et al, eds., *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Racial and Religious Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 27-47.
- Feb. 27 Recitation
Documents: Ottoman documents in Bernard Lewis, *Islam: From the Prophet Mohammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, Vol. 1, 135-48.
- Feb. 28 Putting Empire Together: Spain
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, chapter 5, 120-128, 143-148
J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* 137 (1992): 48-71.
- March 5 Empire Space: The Atlantic and the Americas
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 6
- March 6 Recitation
Document: Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 9-13, 31-36.
Second document analysis due at beginning of class: 3-page essay on the excerpt from Bartolomé de las Casas, *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, assigned for discussion
- March 7 Empire Space: The High Seas and Merchant Empire
Readings:
Geoffrey Parker, "Europe and the Wider World, 1500-1700: The Military Balance," in James Tracy, *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*, 161-95.
- March 12 Empire, Slavery, and Indigenous Peoples
Reading:
C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 6-61.
- March 13 Review session

- March 14** **Midterm (in class)**
- Mar. 18-24 Spring recess
Suggestion: Read Pushkin's novella, "The Captain's Daughter," assigned for the following week
- March 26 Empire Space: Russia between Europe and Asia
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 7, 185-199
Alexander Pushkin, "The Captain's Daughter," 1-144 in *The Captain's Daughter and Other Stories*.
- March 27 Recitation
Document:
Catherine the Great's Charter on the Rights and Benefits for the Towns of the Russian Empire, from *Catherine II's Charters of 1785 to the Nobility and the Towns*, ed. Daniel Kaiser, 22-26.
- March 28 Continental Empires: Autocracy, Enlightenment and Difference
Reading:
Mark Bassin, "Inventing Siberia: Visions of the Russian East in the Early Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 96, no. 3 (June 1991): 763-794.
- April 2 China: Imperial Transformations
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 7, 199-218
Morgan, *The Mongols*, chapter 5, pp. 99-119
- April 3 Recitation
Document: The Qing Emperor's Message of 1731, from Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: the Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, 571-574.
- April 4 China: Manchus and Empire
Reading:
Marc Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 1-15, 89-132.
- April 9 Empire in a Revolutionary Age: The "French" Revolution, Haiti, and Napoleon
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 8
James, *Black Jacobins*, 85-117.

- April 10 Recitation
 Documents:
 1. Declaration of Independence (US, 1776)
 2. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (France, 1789)
 3. Two Constitutions of Haiti, 1801 and 1805
Consult with preceptor about topic for essay (if your topic is not on list of suggested films, novels, and works of art)
- April 11 From Continental Empire to Nation-State? The Case of the United States
 Readings:
 Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 9
 Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A History of the American West*, 85-118.
- April 16 Colonial Empires: Europe in Asia and Beyond
 Readings:
 Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 10
 Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, 57-106.
- April 17 Recitation
 Document: Thomas Babington Macauley, "On Empire and Education," from Modern History Sourcebook
- April 18 Colonial empires: Europe in Africa
 Readings:
 John Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa," and Fanny Colonna, "Educating Conformity in French Colonial Algeria," in *Tensions of Empire*, 163-97, 346-70.
- April 23 Continental Empires: Dilemmas of Power and Reform
 Readings:
 Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 11
 Jane Burbank, "An Imperial Rights Regime: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 7, 3 (Summer 2006): 397-431.
- April 24 Recitation
 Documents:
 1. Russian Emancipation Manifesto 1861
 2. Amendments to the US Constitution
 3. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation
 Recitation will include discussion of students' essay topics and findings

April 25 Clash of Empires: World War I
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 12
Philipp Ther, "Imperial instead of National History: Positioning Modern German History on the Map of European Empires," in Alexei Miller and Alfred Rieber, eds., *Imperial Rule*, 47-66.

April 29 (Monday) Essay due at 4:00 pm in preceptor's mailbox

April 30 The USSR's Alternative to Empire
Readings:
Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 414-452.

May 1 Recitation
Document: USSR Constitutions: excerpts (document)

May 2 Empires Again at War: World War II
Readings:
Burbank and Cooper, Chapter 13
Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, 576-604.

May 7 Decolonization
Bose and Jalal, *Modern History of South Asia*, 165-200.

May 8 Recitation
Document: Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 13-25 (document)

May 9 Imperial Formations after Empire
Reading:
Burbank and Cooper, chapter 14
Julian Go, "Imperial Power and its Limits: America's Colonial Empire in the Early 20th Century," in Calhoun, Cooper, and Moore, *Lessons of Empire*, 201-14.

Final Exam: Thursday, May 16, 8:50 to 9:50 am