

HIST 1001, Required Seminar
Patrick Manning, Fall 2007
Wednesday, 1:00 – 3:30 pm, CL2321
Syllabus, Version 3 (25 September 2007)

Topic: Empire in World History

This section of the History Required Seminar is to give students experience in history at a large scale. Large-scale studies (“world history” or “global history”) have gained growing attention from historians, especially because they explore the interactions across the boundaries of societies rather than treat each in isolation. Empires are large-scale governmental structures that have existed, in various forms, for at least four thousand years—from the Akkadian Empire of Mesopotamia to the empires of today. Modern nation-states, in contrast, have existed for just over two hundred years and have been analyzed in far more detail than empires.

The central assignment is a major paper on an aspect of empires in world history. Each paper is to address at least two empires plus areas outside the empires. The paper is to be of about 25 pages plus notes and bibliography.

The seminar will begin with several weeks of introductory reading, to help students select their topics. These readings will introduce research in world history, examples of empires, and the interpretation of empires. Students will select empires to study from a list of possibilities, and will select books and articles as resources with support from the instructor. Once topics have been selected, weekly discussion will address issues in interpreting empires and problems in researching and writing the papers. (One result of this discussion might be a broad interpretation of empires in world history.) At the end of the term, each student will read and present comments on two papers by fellow students.

Courseweb

Following the distribution of this syllabus on paper, all course announcements and course materials will be distributed through Courseweb. Please check your Courseweb account regularly – announcements will be posted on the site whenever new materials are placed online.

Required Books (these books to be read in Weeks 1 through 5):

- Charles S. Maier , Among Empires: American Ascendancy and its Predecessors
(Harvard UP, 2006)
Colin Wells, The Roman Empire, 2nd ed. (Harvard UP, 1995)
John H. Elliott, Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830 (Yale UP, 2004)
Bernard Porter, Empire and Superempire: Britain, America and the World (Yale UP, 2006)

Additional Readings

From Weeks 6 to 12, students will read an article a week, selected from the course bibliography. Each week's article will be selected a week in advance to fit with the direction of class discussion.

Bibliography

Students will receive an extensive bibliography of roughly 100 works, organized topically. The bibliography will assist students in identifying research topics, and will provide context on the full range of issues contained within the topic of Empires in World History.

Course Organization:

For the first four weeks, students will read and discuss four major works on empires in history, and will explore a selection of works from the course Bibliography. At the end of these four weeks, students should submit a topic for a major paper, of about 25 pages (or 6000-7000 words).

For the next four weeks, students will organize the structure and research for papers, submitting a bibliography and a set of theses defining the topic and the argument of the paper. During these weeks, students will also read articles on aspects of imperial history selected as a result of class discussion.

During the remaining six weeks, students will develop aspects of their paper. Class discussion will focus on (1) shared discussion of the problems and achievements of writing these papers, (2) articles selected for common discussion on aspects of the Empires in world history, and (3) broad patterns of continuity and change for empires.

Papers will be submitted two weeks before the end of the semester, and in the last weeks students will write and present commentaries on two of the other papers. At the conclusion of the course, students will have the opportunity to do one more revision of their paper.

Course Activities and Grades

Small Written Assignments (30%):

- Commentary on Wells (Meeting 2)
- Reports on findings in course Bibliography (Meeting 3)
- Topic (Meeting 4)
- Bibliography (Meeting 6)
- Theses (Meeting 8)
- Diaspora-wide context of paper (Meeting 10)
- Commentary on two papers (Meeting 14)

Class Discussion (30%)

- Discussion of assigned reading and optional reading; discussion of major paper in preparation; responses to commentary from other students.

Major Written Assignment (40%)

- Revised paper (Meeting 13) – 25 pages or 6000-7000 words
- Optional second revision of paper (Meeting 15)

CLASS MEETINGS

Meeting 1. Aug. 29.

Introduction

Meeting 2. Sept. 5.

Read Wells

Short paper due : commentary on Wells

Meeting 3. Sept. 12.

Read Maier, pages 1-77 (see PDF file posted on Courseweb)

Reports due on findings in course Bibliography

Meeting 4. Sept. 19.

Read Porter

Topic due

Meeting 5. Sept. 26.

Discussion of paper topics and questions on empire

Meeting 6. Oct. 3.

Read Elliott (first half)

Bibliography due

Meeting 7. Oct. 10 [ASWAD]

Small group meetings to discuss topics: submit e-mail reports

Meeting 8. Oct. 17

Read Elliott (second half)

Theses due

Meeting 9. Oct. 24

Read Maier, 78-295

Reading to be selected

Meeting 10. Oct. 31

Reading to be selected

Short paper due: context of your topic

Meeting 11. Nov. 7

Reading to be selected

Draft paper due

Meeting 12. Nov. 14

Reading to be selected

Thanksgiving Holiday, Nov. 21.

Meeting 13. Nov. 28.

Revised papers due

Meeting 14. Dec. 5.

Reading: Read papers of two other students in class.

Oral commentaries due.

Meeting 15. Dec. 12 [final exam week]

Optional: revised papers due.

Dec. 19. Grades submitted.