

American Expansion in the Pacific
Professor Eiichiro Azuma (University of Pennsylvania)

This course gives snapshots of U.S. “expansionism” and “imperialism” in the American West and the Pacific between the mid-19th century and the early 20th century. The first segment of the course focuses on the ideological and institutional mechanisms that worked behind the American “conquest” of the western “frontier” and the emergence of new types of race relations there that complicated conventional black-white binaries. We also investigate the nexus between national expansion and national formation (nation-making), where some “races” became “Americans” while others, notably Asians, were excluded from the national community. In addition to lectures, the instructor will frequently hold discussions, in which students may be asked to present a report on a reading.

In the second half, the class shifts attention to the emergence of what scholars now commonly refer to as “the American empire” in the Pacific in the end of the 19th century, that is, the politico-ideological developments leading to the U.S. colonization of Hawai‘i and the Philippines (and Guam) during the Spanish-American War. We also look into the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region, which provided a significant background for American expansionism, namely the U.S. interest in the China market and its rivalry with Great Britain and imperial Japan, among other powers.

Required Texts

Carlos Bulosan, *America Is In the Heart* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979).
Tom Coffman, *Nation Within* (Kaneohe, HI: Epicenter, 2003).
Course Pack Reader

Week 1: Introduction

PART 1: Western Expansion and U.S. Encounter with Asia

Weeks 2-3: Meaning of the “West” in American history and public consciousness

Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, (New York: MacMillan, 1982), pp. 1-11.

Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aaron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *American Historical Review* 104 (June 1999): 814-841.

David M. Wrobel, “Global West, American Frontier,” *Pacific Historical Review* 78 (February 2009), pp. 1-26.

Weeks 3-4: Manifest Destiny & Racial Formation in the Western “Frontier”

Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), pp. 66-111.

Reginald Horsman, “Race and Manifest Destiny,” in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, eds., *Critical White Studies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), pp. 139-44.

Race and Manifest Destiny (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 272-97.

Tomas Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1994), pp. 1-16.

Weeks 5-6: Asia: New U.S. Market and Source of Labor

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), pp. 13-97.

Weeks 6-8: Asian Labor: Immigration, Chinese Question, Racially Prescribed Boundaries of U.S. Citizenship

Erika Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21:3 (Spring 2002), pp. 36-62. Mae

M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens And the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 21-55.

Ian F. Haney Lopez, *White By Law* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 37-47, 79-109.

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), pp. 13-97; Erika Lee, "The Chinese Exclusion Example: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21:3 (Spring 2002), pp. 36-62; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens And the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 21-55; and Ian F. Haney Lopez, *White By Law* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 37-47, 79-109.

Based on the four course readings, please write an essay that explains the transformation of anti-Chinese politics from a localized agitation in California to a full-fledged national(ist), exclusionist agenda that extended to other Asian groups during the latter half of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. Please pay special attention to the role of race (i.e. the construction of "whiteness" and "Asian-ness" in the U.S. social and political thinking) in relation to America's shifting national identity and its racially-slanted immigration policies between 1850 and 1924. Discuss also how U.S. quest of commercial expansion influenced such domestic political developments and America's attitude toward Asian immigrants.

Week 8: Power Politics in the Pacific

Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations Throughout History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), pp. 32-98.

Weeks 9-10: U.S. Empire, Anglo Saxonism & American Exceptionalism

Gary Gerstle, "Theodore Roosevelt and the Divided Character of American Nationalism," *Journal of American History* 86:3 (December 1999): 1280-1307.

Paul A. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and American Empires, 1880-1910," *Journal of American History* 88:1 (March 2002): 1315-53.

Katherine Ellinghaus, "Indigenous Assimilation and the Absorption in the United States and Australia" *Pacific Historical Review* 75 (November 2006), pp. 563-585.

Film: Crucible of Empire (Act 1)

PART II: U.S. Empire Building in the Pacific

Weeks 11-12: Colonization of Philippines

Richard E. Welch, Jr., *Response to Imperialism: The United States and the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp. 3-57, 133-159.

Thomas McCormick, "Insular Imperialism and the Open Door: The China Market and the Spanish-American War," in Marilyn Blatt Young, ed., *American Expansionism* (Boston: Little Brown, 1973), pp. 71-83.

Eric Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 159-195.

"Aguinaldo's Case" & Jane Addams' essay (In-class Primary Source Analysis)

Lanny Thompson, "The Imperial Republic: A Comparison of the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898," *Pacific Historical Review* 71 (Nov. 2002), pp. 535-574.

Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979).

A semi-autobiographical account of a Filipino immigrant in the 1920s-30s, this book offers a glimpse into the complex experience of colonized Filipinos under the rule of American imperialism *from their vantage point*. Using the example of Bulosan's life in the U.S.-controlled Philippines and in the American West, please discuss the impact of U.S. expansionism on and its consequences for the colonized people. Make sure to include in your analysis the discussion of social and economic changes in postwar Philippines (relating to education, land tenure, generation gap, cultural shift, etc.), as well as the correlation between U.S. colonialism and Filipino labor migration. Further, I would also like you to provide your own historical interpretation and assessment as to the nature and meaning of US imperialism. Do you think the experiences of Bulosan and his fellow Filipinos bear out the notion of American "exceptionalism," which stresses a value-ridden distinction between European imperialism and U.S. imperialism? If so, how? If not, why? In your discussion, please include some reflections on the contrasting ideas (paradox) of "America" with which Bulosan constantly grappled. (In considering the "paradox of America," you may want to refer to the notions of civic and racial nationalisms in Gerstle's article.)

Weeks 13-15: Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom & Legacy of Colonialism

Tom Coffman, *Nation Within* (Kaneohe, HI: Epicenter, 2003), Introduction, pp. 1-6, 23-31, 53-323.

Haunani-Kay Trask, *From A Native Daughter* (Monroe, ME, 1993), pp. 51-77, 179-197.
