

Pacific Empires

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This seminar explores recent research on the history of imperialism, settlement, migration, resource extraction and trade in the Pacific Ocean from the late eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. The focus is on trans-regional and inter-cultural perspectives and on the evolution and impact of two empires: the United States and Japan. Nineteenth-century topics to be examined will include how European exploration transformed indigenous island societies and natural environments, as well as how European and American desire for products such as whale oil and sea-bird droppings (guano), along with Chinese desire for products such as otter pelts and sandalwood, further altered the relationship between humans and the ocean. The California gold rush will be considered from the perspective of Hong Kong and Southern China. We will also examine Japanese migrations into and across the Pacific, the impact of Japanese imperialism on indigenous societies, and the impact of a growing Japanese diaspora on US-Japan relations. Decades before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, there was talk of war between these two powers—not over Japan’s invasion of China but over the expansionist ambitions of both countries in the Pacific. In the years following World War II, the United States brought former Japanese territories under its control consolidated a new form of empire in the Pacific. Although the readings range widely, we will visit and revisit a few key sites in the history of these two Pacific empires: Okinawa and Hawaii, Taiwan and the Philippines, metropolitan Japan and the west coast of North America.

Through the course of this seminar, I hope our discussions will allow us to think through a few conceptual questions:

- Can we reimagine imperial space as a network of conduits and nodes of power rather than as a unilateral projection of state power?
- What do we gain from understanding empire through the cultural encounters it engenders? Can the reading of empire as a space of cultural encounter be extended beyond the boundaries of individual formal empires?
- Through the encounters of empires and peoples, can we understand the Pacific as a social and political space? If it coheres somehow as one, what are its historical characteristics?

CLASS MEETINGS

Week 1: Introduction

Themes: Theories of empire, historiography of US and Japanese empires.

Readings:

- George **Steinmetz**, "Return to Empire: The New U.S. Imperialism in Comparative Historical Context"
- Ryuta **Itagaki**, Satoshi **Mizutani** and Hideaki **Tobe**, "Japanese Empire"
- Paul **Kramer**, "Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World"

Week 2: New Regional Histories of the Pacific

Readings

- Nicholas **Thomas**, "The Age of Empire in the Pacific"
- Ryan Tucker **Jones**, "The Environment"
- Kaoru **Sugihara**, "The Economy Since 1800"
- Robert **Hellyer**, "The West, the East, and the Insular Middle: Trading Systems, Demand, and Labour in the Integration of the Pacific, 1750-1875"

Week 3: Exploration, Extraction and Trade

Themes: commodity histories—sea otter pelts, guano, whales, salmon

Readings:

- Gregory **Cushman**, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World*
- James **Gibson**, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships and China Goods*, 1-21, 137-203, 268-296.
- Ryan Tucker **Jones**, "Running into Whales: the History of the North Pacific from Below the Waves"

Optional: David **Arnold**, *Fishermen's Frontier*

Week 4: Conquest and Settlement

Themes: early modern modes of imperial rule; imperial perceptions of "natives"; racism and conquest.

Readings:

- Stuart **Banner**, *Possessing the Pacific*, 1-12, 128-194, 260-286. (Introduction, Chs. 4, 5, 8; ebook through Lauinger)
- Jun **Uchida**, "From Island Nation to Oceanic Empire"
- **Kawamura** Minato, "Adventures of Dankichi" (ebook through Lauinger, in dropbox)

Optional: Gregory **Smits**, *Visions of Ryukyu* (Abhi reports)
Brett **Walker**, *Conquest of Ainu Lands* (Chelsea reports)

Week 5: Conquest and Settlement 2: Indigenous Perspectives

Themes: Is an indigenous history of modern imperialism possible? Dilemmas of the indigenous intellectual.

Readings:

- Marshall **Sahlins**, "Cosmologies of Capitalism"
- Epeli **Hau'ofa**, "Pasts to Remember"
- Lilikalā **Kame'Eleihiwa**, *Native Land, Foreign Desires*, 51-64, 201-225, 287-318
- **Tomiyama** Ichirō, "The Critical Limits of the National Community: The Ryukyuan Subject"
- David **Howell**, "Making 'Useful Citizens' of Ainu Subjects in Early Twentieth-Century Japan"

Week 6: Migration 1: Chinese Diaspora

Themes: Migration and the invention of national borders. Migration and the invention of "roots." Repatriation of the dead. What is a "coolie"?

Readings:

- Philip **Kuhn**, *Chinese Among Others* chapters 3 and 5 (dropbox)
- Eric **Han**, *Rise of a Japanese Chinatown*, Ch.1 (dropbox)
- Adam **McKeown**, *Melancholy Order*, Introduction, Chs.6, 10
- Elizabeth **Sinn**, *Pacific Crossing*, Ch.7 (ebook through Lauinger)
- David **Chang**, "Borderlands in a World at Sea: Concow Indians, Native Hawaiians, and South Chinese in Global and National Spaces" (dropbox)

Week 7: Migration 2: Japanese Diaspora

Themes: Migrants as imperial subjects; migrants as geopolitical pawns or independent actors; the distant wanderings of Japanese prostitutes (*karayuki-san*).

Readings:

- Eiichiro **Azuma**, *Between Two Empires*, Chs.1-2
- **Masuda** Hajimu, "Rumors of War: Immigration Disputes and the Social Construction of American-Japanese Relations, 1905–1913"
- James **Warren**, "Karayuki-san of Singapore, 1877-1941," in *Pirates, Prostitutes and Pullers: Explorations in the Ethno- and Social History of Southeast Asia*, 249-283.

- Bill **Mihapoulos**, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930*, Introduction and Ch.2 (ebook through Lauinger)

Week 8: Civilizing Missions 1: Taiwan under Japanese Rule

Themes: "civilization" as a portable set of tools for conquest; the importance of spectacle; anthropology and imperialism.

Readings:

- Robert **Eskildsen**, "Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan"
- Paul **Barclay**, "'They Have for the Coast Dwellers a Traditional Hatred': Governing Igorots in Northern Luzon and Central Taiwan, 1895-1915."
- Kirsten **Ziomek**, "The 1903 Human Pavilion: Colonial Realities and Subaltern Subjectivities in Twentieth-Century Japan"
- Jordan **Sand**, "Imperial Tokyo as a Contact Zone"
- Timothy **Mitchell**, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order"

Week 9: Civilizing Missions 2: the Philippines under U.S. Rule

Themes: the racialization of imperial rule; policing; civilization, the body and leisure.

Readings:

- Paul **Kramer**, *The Blood of Government*, Ch.4
- Alfred **McCoy** et al, *Colonial Crucible*, introduction
- **McCoy**, "Policing the Imperial Periphery: Philippine Pacification and the Rise of the U.S. National Security State" (in *Colonial Crucible*)
- Warwick **Anderson**, "Pacific Crossings: Imperial Logics in United States Public Health Programs" (in *Colonial Crucible*)
- Sayuri **Shimizu-Guthrie**, *Transpacific Field of Dreams: How Baseball Linked the United States and Japan in Peace and War*, 40-74.

Week 10: Empire-Building During the War in the Pacific

Theme: the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere

Readings:

- Jeremy **Yellen**, "The Two Pacific Wars: Visions of Order and Independence in Japan, Burma, and the Philippines, 1940-1945" (doctoral dissertation), introduction, Part II, Conclusion
- **Terada** Takefumi, "The Religious Propaganda Program for Christian Churches"

Week 11: Cold War and US Military Empire

Themes: U.S. bases, tourism, consumer culture

Readings:

- Mire **Koikari**, *Cold War Encounters in U.S.-Occupied Okinawa*, chapters 1, 2, 4, epilogue.
- Bruce **Cumings**, “Archipelago of Empire,” chapter 15 in *Dominion from Sea to Sea*
- **Imamura** Shōhei, dir. “Pigs and Battleships” (film, 1961).