

American Imperialism since 1898

20th Century US History Selected Topics
T/TH 2-3:15 MHRA 3204

Instructor: Dr. Susan W. Thomas **Email:** swthoma3@uncg.edu
Office Hours: MHRA 2114, T/Th 8:30-9-15 and 12:30-1:45, or by appt.

Required Texts

Grandin, Greg. *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*. New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2006 and 2010.

Hunt, Michael H. and Steven I Levine. *Arc of Empire: America's Wars in Asia from the Philippines to Vietnam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Love, Eric T. *Race over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Additional readings (on Canvas) and a selection of films will supplement these texts.

Course Description

This course surveys the history of the American empire since 1890, beginning with some background discussion of the expansion of America westward through conquest of Native American lands. We will begin by examining the various interpretations of what empire looked like in the past and how it evidences itself in today's world. We will focus attention on the historical relationship between American culture and the rise of the United States as a superpower and examine the views of those on the receiving end of U.S. policy. Topics will include ideology and US foreign policy, imperialism in American political culture, U.S. social movements and international affairs, globalization, and the recent War on Terror and American unilateralism.

Course Goals

The purpose of this course is to sustain a thoughtful and informed discussion about how the United States has engaged in empire since the close of the nineteenth century. Our aim is to help each other acquire a base of historical knowledge in a collaborative learning environment in which we will explore political, cultural, social, and ethical problems relating to U.S. engagement with and control of foreign peoples. The intent is first to comprehend the interpretations and then to think, question, and even challenge them with intellectual honesty and integrity.

Another goal of this course is to make you a better historian by practicing the skills of the discipline--by having you analyze primary documents with reference to secondary documents. The goals for this course relate to students' ability to analyze and interpret historical documents and arguments.

Accordingly, we will stress development of the following skills:

- Analyze historical duration, succession, and changes in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of times and places. [Historical Comprehension.]
- Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view. [Historical Analysis]
- Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]

- Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]

Graded Course Components

You will receive detailed information via Canvas related to the major assignments for this course, including grading rubrics. We will go over these guidelines prior to your submitting your first assignments.

1. Research assignments (included in final essay grade)

All students will be required to complete a series of research exercises during the course of the semester. Each assignment must be completed by the assigned due date. Here is a summary list of these assignments:

1. Paper Proposal and preliminary Bibliography
2. Rough Draft and Annotated Bibliography

2. Book Reviews (30%)

Scholarly book reviews do more than just summarize the information from a book. They require critical analysis regarding the argument and the evidence historians employ in their work. You will each complete three book reviews based on the texts we cover during the course of the semester, each of which will be no less than **3 pages in length for undergraduates, 4 page minimum for Graduate Students.**

3. Class Discussion (20%)

All students will **lead class discussion twice** during the semester as part of a group. On days in which you lead discussion, you will submit a **1-2 page analysis** of the readings you are discussing and include a list of at least 3 good “discussable” questions you plan to use. This must be uploaded to Canvas prior to class.

4. Final Paper (includes Research Assignments) (40%)

Undergraduate Papers: 10-12 pages

Graduate Papers: 16-20 pages

Page counts DO NOT include bibliography, only the text of your essay.

Students will be paired for this assignment, with each partner conducting independent research while relying on each other for support, feedback, and commentary.

All students will produce a final paper based on original research in primary sources and contextualized with secondary sources by the end of this semester. Paper topics may vary by individual interest within the chronological time frame of the course. Please remember that the quality of your writing, particularly the clarity and persuasiveness of your argument, will factor into the final grading.

Grades for final papers will be broken down as follows:

Research exercises satisfactorily completed: 10%

Presentation: 10%

Written paper: 20%

5. Class Participation (10%)

The discussion and the exchange of ideas are very important in this seminar style class. Everyone will be expected to participate, and you should feel free to ask questions in every class.

Grade Distribution

3 Book Reviews (10 % ea)	30%
2 Discussion (10% ea)	20%
Final paper (10-12 pages under grads, 16-20 for grad students)	40%
Class participation (includes any additional course work)	10%

Student Responsibilities:

Attendance: Regular attendance is expected, not rewarded. I allow 2 unexcused absences, but more than this will negatively affect your grade (one letter grade from the Participation portion of your total grade). If you have obligations or difficulties that will cause you to miss class, please let me know. I am always willing to work with students, but I need to know about your situation as soon as possible.

Participation: I combine Attendance and Participation in your grading, thus simply attending class is not sufficient to get full credit. I expect students to join in discussion of the assigned reading materials and to respond to and ask questions during class.

Classroom Decorum: This class will rely on student discussion of the events we will cover, and there may be some differences of opinion. We will treat one another with respect and keep our discussions civil. I expect students to pay attention and refrain from engaging in conversation with each other during class.

Electronic Devices: Silence and put away all cell phones and iPods when class begins. Laptops and tablets are permitted, but **students who abuse this privilege by 'wandering' risk being marked absent for the day.**

Internet:

Because you must use Canvas to complete the assignments for this course and access occasional readings, you need access to reliable high speed internet service. Inability to get online will not be an acceptable excuse for failing to submit work on time unless it is due to a widespread (such as campus-wide) event.

Accessibility and Accommodations:

If you have documented needs that require accommodation in order to succeed in this class, it is your responsibility to provide this information in writing as soon after the semester begins as possible. Need more information? Check out [OARS](#).

Academic Integrity:

In all assignments, students are required to submit their own work. Cite all materials referenced in the proper citation format. Questions? Check out UNCG's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Course Mechanics

This course requires that you **consult both the syllabus and Canvas** to determine what you need to do/read in preparation for each class. The syllabus will be posted there for reference.

- The syllabus contains the course calendar indicating the specific chapters you are required to read for each class. It also specifies the due dates for all assignments.
- Canvas contains all additional readings or video clips that might be assigned for any given class. Check Canvas when you are ready to prepare for class so that you will be able to access any additional readings for the class.
- Coursework is organized in Modules in Canvas, so that you can see at a glance what you need to do and when assignments are due.
- *All assigned work is to be submitted via Canvas. No hard copies or emailed submissions will be accepted.*

Schedule of Major Assignments

Sept 15: Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography
Sept 17: Book Review One (Love)
Oct 20: Book Review Two (Grandin)
Nov 3: Rough Draft and Annotated Bibliography
Nov 12: Book Review 3 (Hunt)
Nov 24: Final Draft

Schedule of Class Meetings

Week 1: Background

Aug 18: Introduction to Course
Aug 20: Defining Imperialism

Week 2: *Race over Empire*

Aug 25: Love, Ch. 1-2
Aug 27: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 1 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 3: *Race over Empire*

Sept 1: Love, Ch. 3-4
Film: *Savage Acts*
Sept 3: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 2 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 4: *Race over Empire*

Sept 8: **Library Research Tutorial: Meet in Superlab**
Sept 10: Love, Ch. 5 and Epilogue

Week 5: *Empire's Workshop*

Sept 15: Grandin, Intro/Ch. 1-2

*Research Proposal and preliminary Bibliography due to Canvas by class time Sept 15

Sept 17: **Canvas**

*Book Review 1 Due to Canvas by class time Sept 17

*Discussion Group 3 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 6: *Empire's Workshop*

Sept 22: *Grandin, Ch. 3-4*

Sept 24: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 4 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 7: *Empire's Workshop*

Sept 29: *Grandin, Ch. 5-6/Conclusion and Afterword*

Oct 1: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 5 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 8: *Arc of Empire*

Oct 6: *Hunt, Intro and Ch. 1*

Oct 8: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 6 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 9: Fall Break

Oct 13-Oct 15: NO CLASSES

Week 10: *Arc of Empire*

Oct 20: *Hunt, Ch. 2*

*Book Review 2 Due to Canvas by class time Oct 20

Oct 22: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 7 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 11: *Arc of Empire*

Oct 27: *Hunt, Ch. 3*

Oct 29: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 8 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Week 12: *Arc of Empire*

Nov 3: *Hunt, Ch. 4 and Conclusion*

Hearts and Minds

*Rough Draft and Annotated Bibliography due to Canvas by class time Nov 3

Nov 5: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 9 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

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Week 13:

Nov 10: **Canvas**

*Discussion Group 10 (Group members submit one-two page analysis, discussion questions to Canvas prior to class)

Nov 12: Presentations

*Book Review 3 due to Canvas by class time Nov 12

Week 14:

Nov 17: Presentations

Nov 19: Presentations

Week 15:

Nov 24: No Class

*Final Paper due to Canvas by 11:59 pm Nov 24