

G8625: Imperialism and Political Theory

**Department of Political Science
Columbia University
Fall 2015**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2 - 4 pm or by appointment.

This is a reading course for graduate students, surveying the literature from an interesting new area of study in political theory. By reading and discussing a number of recent works and a couple of classics, we will attempt to identify the common characteristics of the various entities that have been described as “empires” from ancient Greece to the present day, and to evaluate the ideas that have been offered as justifications for and critiques of imperial projects. Issues for consideration will include: What is an empire? How has imperialism informed the arguments of canonical works of political philosophy? Do commerce and capitalism stimulate or suppress imperialism? Can imperialism persist after de-colonization? What strategies are appropriate for combatting imperialism? Are international institutions imperialist? Has the United States ever been an empire? Is it one now? And is any sort of imperialism acceptable?

Assignments

Students taking the course for credit will be asked to begin one or two seminar meetings with brief presentations introducing readings and posing questions for discussion, and to write an essay (15-20 pages). The essay may take one of two forms: (1) an intervention, which proposes a thesis related to the course’s themes and defends it using primary or secondary sources as appropriate, or (2) a literature review, which describes the current state of research on one or more issues raised by the course (e.g. ‘defining empire’, ‘liberal justifications of imperialism’, ‘varieties of anti-imperialism’, ‘neo-imperialism’, or ‘the American Empire’), analyzes the main approaches and schools of thought, noting their strengths and weaknesses, and suggests what further questions remain to be asked and how one might go about answering them.

Readings

Except where otherwise noted below, the readings assigned for each week will be placed on reserve in the library.

Class Schedule:

Tue 9/8: Introduction to the Course

- No readings assigned.

Tue 9/15: Ancient Ideologies and the Concept of Empire

- Michael Doyle, *Empires* (Cornell University Press, 1986), 19-103.
- Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France, c. 1500-1800* (Yale University Press, 1995), 11-62.

Tue 9/22: Locke's Second Treatise and the Colonization of North America

- Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America: The Defence of English Colonialism* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 1-20, 88-200.

Tue 9/29: The Rise of Liberal Imperialism in England

- Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 1-162

Tue 10/6: The Crisis of Liberal Imperialism

- Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton University Press, 2010), entire.

Tue 10/13: Noble Savages and Anti-Imperialism in France

- Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton University Press, 2003), 1-121.

Tue 10/20: Empire and the Idea of Progress

- Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), entire.

Tue 10/27: Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism in the United States

- Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 1-235.

Tue 11/3: No Class – Columbia University Holiday

Tue 11/10: Imperialism, Capitalism, and Totalitarianism

- Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Harcourt, 1968), 123-302.

Tue 11/17: Anti-Imperialism, Nationalism, and Violence

- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Constance Farrington, trans. (Penguin Classics, 2001), entire.

Tue 11/24: Imperialism and Internationalism

- Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-12, 115-272.

Tue 12/1: Humanitarian Imperialism Defended

- Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation Building in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan* (Vintage, 2003) entire.

Tue 12/8: Contemporary Anti-Imperialism

- James Tully, *Public Philosophy in a New Key, Volume II: Imperialism and Civic Freedom* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 125-310.

Final Essays due by email to jds2266@columbia.edu on Wed 12/23 at 5pm.