

Syllabus Global Histories of Empire

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The aim of this course is to familiarize with current historical writings and reflections on empire. The ultimate thrust of the discussion is to scrutinize the epistemic revolution whereby the narrative of modern history previously written through the prism of national history has been recast to accommodate the fact of persistence of “imperial formations,” both in the sphere of international and global politics and in the area of management of diversity. The scope of the course mainly lies in the Modern history period, the geographic coverage is not universal, the main idea is to look at methodological debates and approaches. Global history has recently been constituted as a distinctive field of its own. Yet, in its thrust of overcoming the limitations of national history canon the global history has many resemblances with the field of imperial history. After all, empires were historic regimes that fostered connections and transfers in their often violent histories. At the same time, empires were habitually thought of by historians as autarkic and self-sufficient phenomena that allowed little space for cross-influence and entanglement. Following the optics of global history this course will be an attempt to explore the historic differences, comparisons and entanglements of empires in modern history.

Prerequisites: familiarity with current methodologies of historical research and 20th century historiographic debates.

Assessment:

Class attendance, students are required to read the required texts and be prepared to summarize the main arguments and conclusions as well as explicate the methodology and sources of the author. Class participation will constitute 40% of the final grade.

Exam: written assignment, review of a monograph that should include the analysis of the historiographic context, the historiographic tradition (for instance, intellectual history, social history, post-colonial studies) in which the text is written, the main arguments and sources of the book. The choice of a monograph is to be discussed with the instructor. Ideally, the monograph should be from the list of historiographic works worked upon for the MA dissertation. The neat overlap will hardly be possible for all project. Family resemblance logic may be used instead. The written assignment should be 15-20 pages long and will constitute 60% of the final grade.

Thematic structure of the course.

Part 1. Theoretical consideration on Global history and histories of empire and nation.

1. Introduction. Requirements and the structure of the course. Brief introduction about positionality of the concept of empire in modern historical research. Empire as reified historic phenomenon and as a category of analysis. Grand narrative of modernity: empires or nations?

2. Current debates and disputed genealogies of global history. Is global history an academic fashion or a research innovation? Must Global history be comprehensive and universalist in terms of chronology and geographic coverage? Is global history only about connections and comparisons? Situating Global history in the modern historiography: comparative history, transnational history, World-System analysis, post-colonial critique, multiple modernities. Global history and national history. Epistemologies of Global history: universalism or nativism? Normative issues of Global history: Eurocentrism debated. A dialogue between the global history and imperial history.

Required reading:

Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016): 37-114, 162-204.

Additionally: Alexander Semyonov, “‘GLOBAL HISTORY IS MORE THAN THE HISTORY OF GLOBALIZATION’: INTERVIEW WITH SEBASTIAN CONRAD.” *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (January 2017): 23–44.

2. Critical theories of nationalism. Modernist and constructivist theories of nationalism. Typologies of nationalism. Nationalism as a normative discourse.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983, introduction, Chs. 1-7.

Rogers Burbaker, “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism,” John Hall, ed., *The State of the Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Pp. 272-306

3. Empire as a distinct ideal type of social and political organization. From Empire to Nation?: imperial archaism and modern empires. The question of persistence of empires. Imperial visions and nationalism. The reinvention of empires in the modern history. The constructivist approach to understanding empires.

Jane Burbank, and Frederick Cooper. *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010). Pp. 1-22.

Krishan Kumar, *Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). Pp. 1-36.

Ilya Gerasimov, Sergei Glebov, Jan Kusber, Marina Mogilner, Alexander Semynov, "New Imperial History and the Challenges of Empires," in: Ilya Gerasimov, Jan Kusber, and Alexander Semyonov, eds., *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3-32.

4. The Roman and the Chinese empires. The steppe empires and the Pax Mongolica. The construction of power in the ancient empires. Accommodation of difference in the ancient empires. Eurocentrism and diversity of empires. The question of historic legacies of empire. Thinking about the ideal type of empire with references to different types of empires.

Jane Burbank, and Frederick Cooper. *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010). Pp. 23-59, 93-115.

“Interview with Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper ‘The Challenge and Serendipity: Writing World History through the Prism of Empire’.” *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (April 2010): 22–45.

5. Legacies of the Roman empire in Europe. Imperial traditions in Europe. Westphalian system. Peripheral empires in the system of modern international relations.

Dominic Lieven. *Empire, History, and the Contemporary Global Order* (2005 Elie Kedourie Memorial Lecture)

Part 2. The Russian Empire in Its Global Entanglements. Comparative perspectives on imperial transformations and changing imperial imaginaries. Nationalism and empire.

Part 3. The Breakup of Empires and Imperial Transformations of the early 20th century. The legacies of empire in the 20th century.