

U.S. and the Pacific World
HIST 535-002/615-001
Spring Semester, 2019
Sam Lebovic

Class Details

Time: Wed 7:20-10:00 pm

Location: East Building 134

Office Hours: Wed 3-5, or by appt

Contact Details

Email: slebovic@gmu.edu

Office: Robinson Hall B 375c

How has the U.S. shaped the history of the Asia-Pacific world, and how has the Asia-Pacific world shaped the history of the U.S.? Drawing inspiration from the many ways that historians have interpreted the U.S. as part of an “Atlantic World,” scholars have recently turned their attention to the ocean off the other coast. In this seminar, we will read widely in their work, seeking to determine whether there was a “Pacific World,” and if so, how we might write its history. Paying attention to U.S. relations with both the states of the Pacific Ocean and the Pacific Rim – Australia, Hawaii, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines and others – we will explore how this terrain has been shaped by imperialism, war, and decolonization, as well as commerce, migration, and cultural exchange. The course will provide both an overview of the history of this fascinating portion of the world from the late eighteenth century to the present, and offer an introduction to the interdisciplinary methods scholars use to study this emerging field.

Course Requirements

1) Class Participation (15% of final grade)

Participation in class discussion is crucial to the success of this class, as well as your success in it. Faithful attendance and class preparation is expected – please read the required readings closely and carefully, and come to class prepared to discuss them. The better you read the class materials, the better the conversation, and the better the conversation, the better the class. Respectful, thoughtful discussion is good participation – neither your peers nor I will tolerate *ad hominem* attacks or soap-boxing. Questions are great, as are connections between current discussions and earlier topics, as are efforts to clarify points of confusion.

I will issue a mid-term grade in week 7 so you know how you stand. This grade will not count to your final grade – it is just a measure of how your participation has been in the class so far.

We will read a monograph a week. All books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore in the Johnson Center. Feel free to buy/borrow/read the cheapest versions you can find – e-books are fine – but please make sure to get the correct edition.

Some weeks, we have an article or chapter as well. You can access journal articles through the Mason library website. Pdfs of book chapters are available on the course blackboard site.

2) 10 (really 8) emailed sets of questions for discussion (Pass/fail)

Before each week's seminar, I would like you to email me 3 questions that you would like to discuss collectively. They are due by 1pm on the day of class.

These questions can be points of confusion about the reading, juxtapositions you notice between the readings, thoughts that the readings inspired for future research or analysis, challenges to the arguments of the readings, etc. The purpose of this exercise is threefold – first, it encourages you to think critically about the reading before class, helping you to process what you've read; second, it helps me to get a feel for the most productive places to begin and focus our discussion; third, it allows me to get a sense of your interests and engagement with the texts outside of your contributions in class.

Keep the questions short, and don't overly stress about how you write them. I'm grading these pass/fail – so as long as I receive them, you pass. If I think you could adjust the way you are approaching this task, I will contact you individually.

We have readings for 13 weeks, so you have 3 free passes. The two weeks you write reviews I will count these as your questions. If you would like to use a pass on any given week, please email me a short note to that effect before 1 pm on the day of class.

3) 5 page book review (20% of final grade) DUE on the day we read the book in class.

Each of you will write a 5 page analytic review of the book you introduce to the class. Book reviews should not simply summarize the text, but make an over-arching argument about the book's argument – what works, what doesn't, what is interesting, what could be further developed, what is missing etc. Successful reviews will develop an original and interesting line of argument that is sustained throughout the paper. Reviews should be emailed to me as a word doc by 1pm on the day of class (this review counts as your questions for the week).

4) Introduction of the book you reviewed to the class (pass/fail)

On the week your book review is due, each of you will be responsible for initiating discussion by posing the first question to the class. Questions should open up a broad topic through which we can explore the themes, methods and implications of the book – they should not be merely factual.

5) 5-6 page comparison paper (20% of final grade) DUE on the day we read the book in class

Each of you will write a 5-6 page paper comparing one of the books we read in class (not the book you reviewed) with an academic article of your choice. Papers should not summarize the two works, but analyze them comparatively. A large part of this assignment is choosing a good article for comparison – I will be happy to discuss selections with you in office hours or via email. But if you would like to discuss with me, we need to begin our conversation no later than my office hours two weeks before the paper is due. Reviews should be emailed to me as a word doc by 1pm on the day of class (this review counts as your questions for the week).

6) article presentation (5% of final grade)

In no more than 4-5 minutes, each of you will present to the class an overview of the argument, content, and method of the article you read independently for your book comparison. Presentations should not be a summary, but an explanation of how the article adds to our collective understanding of the topic.

To receive a high grade for this presentation you cannot read from a prepared text. Be prepared to speak off-the-cuff or from notes – we'll all be in this together, so think of it as an opportunity to practice presenting in this way.

7) 15 page final historiographical paper (40% of final grade). DUE May 8, by 5pm.

Option 1: I will provide an essay prompt, asking you to synthesize the readings for the course, and construct an analytic argument based on close readings of the books we read over the semester.

Option 2: Your choice of topic

Based on 4-5 scholarly monographs of your choice, of which at least 3 must be read exclusively for this assignment, please write an analytic historiographical essay. The aim here is to closely analyze a small sub-field of literature of interest to you. Good essays will develop an overarching argument that makes sense of what works and doesn't work in the books in question, explain why, and sketch future directions for analysis and research.

8) If you are choosing Option 2 for the final, I will need a list of books for the final paper DUE March 22 by 5 pm.

Please email me a short outline of the research problem you want to explore, a list of the books you have chosen to review, and a short explanation (2-3 sentences) as to why you have selected each book (earlier than this due date is completely fine, and encouraged). I will write back to ok the selection. I'm happy to discuss potential books over email or in person throughout the semester. The most important thing is that you choose a set of books that hang together in some way and that are interesting and exciting to you.

If I have not approved a final list of books by April 3, you will complete option 1 for the final.

Requirements for all papers

All papers are due in Word format, 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced with page numbers, and 1 inch margins.

Please email all of your papers to slebovic@gmu.edu.

I will only grant extensions in advance, and on a case-by-case basis – all other late papers will be docked a half letter grade for each day they are tardy.

On Academic Integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity (<http://oai.gmu.edu/>) for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. If you have any questions, concerns or confusion about this policy during the semester, please bring them directly to me – I'll be happy to help, and it is better to be safe than sorry.

Communications

Students in this class need to check their GMU email accounts regularly throughout the semester – I will rely on the mailtool in blackboard to communicate all announcements, such changes to the syllabus or to class meetings.

I will endeavor to respond to all emails within one working-day of receiving them. I am regularly away from my mail in the evenings and on the weekends, so while I *will* respond to your mail, I may not do so instantaneously. I will check and respond to email more regularly in the immediate lead-up to assignments in order to handle more urgent questions.

Please feel free to stop by my office hours if you want to discuss anything related to the course or your studies. If your schedule is tight, you are welcome to email me so that we can arrange an appointment at a particular time. Throughout the semester, I am also more than happy to meet by appointment if you cannot make my office hours – just send me an email or speak to me after class.

Special Accommodations

If any of these course policies pose a particular hardship for you, please come and speak to me directly.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Course Schedule**Week 1 Jan 23**

Introductions – assigning reviews

Week 2 Jan 30

David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (Oxford 2013) 978-0190498757

Paul A. Kramer, “A Complex of Seas: Passages Between Pacific Histories,” excerpted from an *Amerasia* roundtable, available as a pdf at paulkrameronline.com. [On Blackboard]

Week 3 Feb 6

Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Harvard, 2007) 978-0674026124

Week 4 Feb 13

Gregory T. Cushman, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World: A Global Ecological History* (Cambridge, 2014), 978-1107655966

Week 5 Feb 20

Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (UNC Press, 2006) 978-0807856536

Week 6 Feb 27

Adria Imada, *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire* (Duke, 2012) 978-0822352075

Mae Ngai, “From Colonial Subject to Undesirable Alien: Filipino Migration in the Indivisible Empire,” ch.3 of *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, 2004) [On Blackboard].

Week 7 Mar 6

Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men’s Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, 2008) 978-0521707527

Week 8 NO CLASS – Spring Break

Week 9 Mar 20

Anne L. Foster, *Projections of Power: The United States and Europe in Colonial Southeast Asia, 1919-1941* (Duke, 2010) 978-0822348009

Fri, March 22 For Final Paper Option 2, you need to submit a bibliography by 5pm.

Week 10 Mar 27

Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans During World War II* (University of California, 2013) 978-0520280212

Week 11 Apr 3

Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (University of California Press, 2003) 978-0520232303

John Dower, "Occupied Japan and the Cold War in Asia," in Michael James Lacey, ed., *The Truman Presidency*, 1989. [On Blackboard].

Assignment – Option 2 bibliographies need to be approved by this week.

Week 12 Apr 10

Bradley Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960-1968* (Stanford, 2010), 978-0804771825

Week 13 Apr 17

Simeon Man, *Soldiering through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (University of California Press, 2018) 978-0520283367

Week 14 Apr 24

Andrew McKeivitt, *Consuming Japan: Popular Culture and the Globalizing of 1980s America* (UNC Press, 2017) 978-1469634470

Nicole Starosielski, "Critical Nodes, Cultural Networks: Re-mapping Guam's Cable Infrastructure," *Amerasia* 37, no. 3 (2012): 18-27

Sasha Davis, "The US Military Base Network and Contemporary Vplonialism: Ppower Projection, resistance and the quest for operational unilateralism," *Political Geography* 30 (2011), 215-224

Week 15 May 1

Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples and Cultures* (Cambridge, 2012),
978-0521715669

Week 16 May 8

Final Papers due by 5pm.