

POLI 405-3 Capstone Seminar: Empires

Spring 2022

Maybank Hall 307 TR 12:15-1:30
Professor Christopher Day
Office: 9 Liberty St. Room 210
Office Hours (virtual): Tuesday 8-11am
Email: dayc@cofc.edu

Course Syllabus

While the contemporary world is made up of sovereign states, many grew out of the expansion and dissolution of empires. For a time, these were the dominant forms of political, social, and economic organization for most of the world. On one hand, empires were vast cosmopolitan territories that incorporated a diverse array of societies. On the other, empires are associated with the dislocation and destruction of these societies. Either way, the complex formation, maintenance, and decline of empires brought forth massive transformations of how societies came to be organized. The comparative study of empires is key to understanding the institutional role they have played in establishing long-run causes for contemporary political phenomena, institutional change and continuity over time within contemporary states, and major differences between them. Using a range of case studies, this Capstone Seminar will examine the historical institutional trajectories of modern empires. While it will focus on the period of European imperial expansion and contraction from the 15th century onward, it will also examine non-Western cases such as the Soviet, Chinese, and the Ottoman Empires. The Capstone will consider different theoretical, empirical, and methodological approaches to studying empires and the actors that comprise and resist them. Students will conduct independent research on specific topics such as how empires expand and are maintained, the divergent roles of the colonizers vs. colonized, different forms of resistance to empire, and how empires can overstretch and eventually end. Students will also consider dimensions of empire that persist today.

The Capstone Seminar is designed to be a culminating experience for Political Science majors. That is, the experience is an opportunity to use the toolkit of skills students have spent several years developing in other courses within the major – skills in reading, writing, critical thinking and analysis, effective communication, and above all in independent research. Class assignments will allow students to engage with the prevailing academic theories that explain a range of different questions that sit within the broader scholarship on empires. Students will also spend the semester generating and answering their own original research question.

The seminar proceeds in six parts. Part I will bookend the course with an intensive development of a conceptual and analytical framework that students will apply to theories and cases over the course of the semester. Parts II-V will deeply examine different research agendas within the study of empires. Part II will look Western empires, and Part III non-Western empires. Part IV will examine imperial overstretch while Part V will study how empires end. In Part VI, the course will culminate in a set of workshops designed to help students with their research project.

Prerequisites

Permission of the chairperson required for enrollment. Students must have successfully completed POLI 205 before enrollment. Students will normally have completed at least 27 semester hours in political science at the time of enrollment.

Course Objectives and Methodology

Political Science student learning outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate mastery of the independent research process
- Students will display skills in critical analysis and effective communication

Course Requirements

Evaluation will be based on the following exercises:

“Why it Matters” Paper (5%) Students will write a 1,000-word essay on why the study of empires matters from scholarly, normative, and policy perspectives, **due January 20**

Response Papers (30%) During Parts II-V of this Seminar, students will write 1,000-word response papers that critically analyze and unify the central arguments of the book and companion pieces for that particular part of the course. I will provide a separate guideline for this exercise. Students will choose **any three of the four weeks** when Response Papers are due, which are on the following dates:

- **2/17:** Response Paper #1
- **3/3:** Response Paper #2
- **3/24:** Response Paper #3
- **4/7:** Response Paper #4

Independent Research Project (50%) The primary exercise of this Capstone is developing and writing a research paper. This paper will pose a research question and explain why it matters, will situate this question with a body of prevailing literature, will propose an original hypothesis, will generate data that either confirms or refutes this hypothesis, and will discuss its implications. The breakdown of the research paper’s components is as follows:

- **2/8:** Research Design
- **2/24:** Revised Research Design (10%)
- **4/11:** First Draft (10%)
- **4/12-4/21:** Workshop Participation (10%). *Note that students who participate in the Moore Conference will not be required to present for the Capstone Workshop*
- **4/28:** FINAL DRAFT (20%)

Class Participation (10%) In this Capstone Seminar class participation plays an outsized role in student evaluation.

Student Feedback on Workshops (5%) Students are expected to provide one page of written feedback per workshop, uploaded to an OAKS discussion board.

Course Policies

Communication. This is in-person course. In the event that we shift online, it will be a *synchronous course*, which can be crowded on a screen. Students are strongly encouraged to direct any substantive comments and questions about the course content to the discussion board in order to encourage the development of an online community.

All inquiries to me should be made via email, and I will make every effort to respond to emails promptly. Students can expect replies within 24 hours for messages received between 9am and 5pm on Monday through Friday. I generally do not respond to emails on weekends. Students are also encouraged to arrange a Zoom appointment with me anytime they would like during the week to discuss anything they would like.

Community Standards. You are sharing the experience of working through important issues with other people – not just usernames on a discussion board. Please bear this in mind when engaging with each other and be thoughtful in your contributions and generous in your interpretations.

Netiquette. Please bear in mind that online communication precludes many of the non-verbal cues that normally facilitate face-to-face communication. This being the case, it is important to err on the side of generous interpretation and civility. What was written as a simple statement can easily come across as aggressive or argumentative. Vignette: “Texting Confusion” from Key & Peele (Content warning: some spicy language): <https://vimeo.com/121923151>

Grading Scale

A	93-100	A-	90-92	B+	88-89	B	83-87	B-	80-82
C+	78-79	C	73-77	C-	70-72	D+	68-69	D	63-67
D-	60-62	F:	Below 60						

Submission of Work. Students are expected to submit their work on the day it is due. In the event that students cannot submit work on time because of Life Circumstances, they must inform the professor at least 24 hours beforehand, and provide a concrete date for submission. After this date, work will not be accepted.

Honor Code and Academic Integrity. Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to misunderstanding and confusion will be handled by the instructor. The instructor designs an intervention or assigns a grade reduction to help prevent the student from repeating the error. The response is recorded on a form and signed both by the instructor and the student. It is forwarded to the Office of the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive an XXF in the course, indicating failure of the

course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at: <https://deanofstudents.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/student-handbook-2020-2021-8.27.20.pdf>

Accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student eligible for and needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with the professor during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services so that reasonable accommodations can be arranged.

OAKS. OAKS will be used for this course throughout the semester to provide the syllabus and class materials and grades for each assignment, which will be regularly posted.

Incident Weather, Pandemic or Substantial Interruption of Instruction. If in-person classes are suspended, faculty will announce to their students a detailed plan for a change in modality to ensure the continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and Internet access. Resources are available to provide students with these essential tools.

Center for Student Learning: The Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services provide assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. Services include tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information please visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu> or call (843) 953-5635.

Mental & Physical Wellbeing: At the college, we take every students' mental and physical wellbeing seriously. If you find yourself experiencing physical illnesses, please reach out to student health services (843.953.5520). And if you find yourself experiencing any mental health challenges (for example, anxiety, depression, stressful life events, sleep deprivation, and/or loneliness/homesickness) please consider contacting either the Counseling Center (professional counselors at <http://counseling.cofc.edu> or 843.953.5640 3rd Robert Scott Small Building) or the Students 4 Support (certified volunteers through texting "4support" to 839863, visit <http://counseling.cofc.edu/cct/index.php>, or meet with them in person 3rd Floor Stern Center). These services are there for you to help you cope with difficulties you may be experiencing and to maintain optimal physical and mental health.

Food & Housing Resources: Many CofC students report experiencing food and housing insecurity. If you are facing challenges in securing food (such as not being able to afford groceries or get sufficient food to eat every day) and housing (such as lacking a safe and stable place to live), please contact the Dean of Students for support (<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/about/salt.php>). Also, you can go to <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/student-food-housing-insecurity/index.php> to learn about food and

housing assistance that is available to you. In addition, there are several resources on and off campus to help. You can visit the Cougar Pantry in the Stern Center (2nd floor), a student-run food pantry that provides dry-goods and hygiene products at no charge to any student in need. Please also consider reaching out to Professor ABC if you are comfortable in doing so.

Inclusion: The College of Charleston offers many resources for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff along with their allies.

[Preferred Name and Pronoun Information](#)

[On Campus Gender Inclusive facilities](#)

[Campus Resources](#)

[College of Charleston Reporting Portals](#)

[National Resources for Faculty & Staff](#)

[GSEC Reports](#)

[Documenting LGBTQ Life in the Lowcountry](#) (CofC Addlestone Library Special Collections Project)

[College of Charleston Quality Enhancement Plan \(QEP\)](#)

[Articles about CofC and LGBTQ+ Issues](#)

Other Special Circumstances. I normally will do business with anyone who lets me know in advance of any special circumstances. But please note that the expression “it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission” was not invented by a College Professor.

Extra Credit. Periodic extra credit opportunities may be available during the semester. Please note that these opportunities are EXTRA credit, not SUBSTITUTION credit for missed assignments. Also, keep in mind extra credit also does not mean extra work for your professor.

Attendance Policy. Attendance is required. Tardiness is not acceptable.

Required Readings

Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press 1986)

David Kang, *East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York: Columbia University Press 2012)

Atul Kohli, *Imperialism and the Developing World: How Britain and the United States Shaped the Global Periphery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2020)

Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press 1993)

Hendrik Spruyt, *Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press 2005)

All other readings will be available on OAKS.

NOTE: Additional readings may be assigned and the course outline may be adjusted to serve the needs of the class.

“Like” the Department of Political Science on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/CofCPoliticalScienceClub?ref=hl>

“Like” the African Studies Program on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/CollegeOfCharlestonAfricanStudiesProgram>

Course Outline and Readings

1. January 11-13: Introduction

Kohli Introduction pp. 1-20

Bruce Gilley, “The Case for Colonialism,” https://www.nas.org/academic-questions/31/2/the_case_for_colonialism

Part I: Setting the Scene

2. January 18-20: Concepts

Kohli Part I pp. 21-208

“Why It Matters” paper due Tuesday, January 18

3. January 25-27: Actors and Agendas

Kohli Part II pp. 209-389

4. February 1-3: Data and Methods

Kohli Conclusion pp. 390-426

Mahoney, J. 2000. “Path Dependence in Historical Sociology,” *Theory and Society* 29, 4: 507-548

Pierson, P. 2004. “Timing and Sequence” and “Long-Term Processes” in *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pages 54-102.

Capoccia, G. and Keleman, D. 2007. “The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism,” *World Politics* 59, 3: 341-369.

Part II: Western Empire

5. February 8-10

Doyle, pages 11-138

Sharman, J. C. 2019. “Power and Profit at Sea: The Rise of the West in the Making of the International System,” *International Security* 43, 4: 163-196.

Research Design First Draft due Tuesday, February 8

6. February 15-17

Doyle, pages 141-372

Sharman, J.C. 2018. "Myths of military revolution: European expansion and Eurocentrism," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, 3: 491-513.

Response Paper #1 due Thursday, February 17

Part III: Non-Western Empire

7. February 22

No class Thursday, February 24th for the Model African Union

Kang pages 1-81

MacKay, J. 2015. "Rethinking the IR theory of empire in late imperial China," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 15, 1: 53-79.

Revised Research Design Due Thursday, February 24th

8. March 1-3

Kang pages 82-171

Phillips, A. 2018. "Contesting the Confucian peace: Civilization, barbarism and international hierarchy in East Asia," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, 4: 740-764.

Response Paper #2 due Thursday, March 3

Week 9 March 8-10: Spring Break

Part IV: Imperial Overstretch

10. March 15-17

Snyder pages 1-152

Savage, J.D. 2011. "The stability and breakdown of empire: European informal empire in China, the Ottoman Empire and Egypt," *European Journal of International Relations* 17, 2: 161 – 185

11. March 22-24

Snyder pages 153-322

MacDonald, P. K. 2009. "Is Imperial Rule Obsolete? Assessing the Barriers to Overseas Adventurism," *Security Studies* 18, 1: 79-114.

Response Paper #3 due Thursday, March 24

Part V: Imperial Retreat

12. March 29-31

Spruyt pages 1-145

Lawrence, A. 2010. "Triggering nationalist violence: Competition and conflict in uprisings against colonial rule," *International Security* 35, 2: 88-122.

13. April 5-7

Spruyt pages 146-274

MacDonald, P. K. 2013. "'Retribution Must Succeed Rebellion': The Colonial Origins of Counterinsurgency Failure," *International Organization* 67, 2: 253-286.

Response Paper #4 due Thursday, March 31

Part VI: Capstone Research Paper Workshops

14. April 12-14: Workshops:

- Workshop Panel I 4/12
- Workshop Panel II 4/14

First Draft Research Design Due Monday, April 11 @ midnight

15. April 19-21: Workshops

- Workshop Panel III 4/19
- Workshop Panel IV 4/21

Final Research Paper due Thursday, April 28 @3pm uploaded to OAKS