

Research Seminar: Informal Empire

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Spring Semester 2022
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This seminar investigates a range of practices and practitioners of what is often called 'informal Empire'. Our approach examines a range of imperial practices and, in so doing, seeks to challenge the implicit hierarchy of modern European colonialism that makes France and Britain into emblematic cases from which other, allegedly less successful empires, diverged. It also seeks to look beyond the nation-state as a moniker for Empires, and looks instead at individuals: people from the realms of finance, business, and science, whose undertakings shaped Europe's global relations, albeit often unintentionally. At the same time, we also examine how local peoples engaged with these same practices and principles of empire in order to pursue their own particular ends.

We do not focus primarily on definitions of empires or of colonial rule, although we do discuss the character and legacies of both. Instead we emphasize the many varieties of colonialism and the many possible, sometimes even hidden, layers of imperial rule in different global contexts. In short, we aim to replace existing typologies of empire by exploring more diverse sites and practitioners of empire, and to enlarge our understanding of what constitutes an 'informal Empire'.

Seminar Sessions

Thursday January 20, 17:10-19:00 **What is an Empire?**

Readings: Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World. A Global History of the 19th Century*, 450-461.

K. Kumar, 'Colony and Empire, Colonialism and Imperialism: A Meaningful Distinction' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2021), 63 (2), 280-309

Document: J. R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (Cambridge, 1883), Course 1, lecture 3 'The Empire'

Friday January 28, 13:00-15.00 [note date!] **Informal Empire**

Readings: J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade,' *The Economic History Review* 6/1, 1953, 1-15

D. Todd, *A Velvet Empire. French informal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (2020), introduction

Walter Sauer, "Habsburg Colonial: Austria-Hungary's Role in European Overseas Expansion Reconsidered," *Austrian Studies* 20, 5-23.

Thursday February 3, 17:10-19:00 **Classic Informal Empire: Finance**

Readings: Stephen Press, *Blood and Diamonds. Germany's Colonial Ambitions in Africa* (2020), Chapter 4.

D. Todd, *A Velvet Empire. French informal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (2020), Chapter 4 "Conquest by Money"

Thursday February 10, 17:10-19:00 **Informal Empire: Debt and Fraud**

Readings: M. Flandreau, *Anthropologists in the Stock Exchange. A Financial History of Victorian Science* (2016), chapter 5

Kris Manjapra, *Colonialism in Global Perspective* (2020), chapter 7 "Debt"

Thursday February 17, 17:10-19:00 **Informal Empire: Globalization and the Environment**

Readings: Gregory Cushman, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World. A Global Ecological History* (2014), Chapter 4 "Where is Banaba?"

Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa. Booker T. Washington, the German Empire and the Globalization of the New South* (2010), Chapter 3 "Alabama in Africa and the Colonial Decivilizing Mission in Togo"

Friday February 25, 10:00-12:00 **'Explorers' and 'Exploration'**

Readings: Moritz von Brescius, *German Science in the Age of Empire*, page 61, Chapter 4 "Making Science in the Field: A Eurasian Expedition"

S. Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (1997), chapter 11 'Colonial Fantasies Revisited'

Friday February 25, 13:30-15:30 **'Informants' and 'Go-Betweens'**

Readings: Moritz von Brescius, *German Science in the Age of Empire* Chapter 5
"The Inner Life of a 'European' Expedition: Cultural Encounters and Multiple Hierarchies"

Arthur Asseraf, 'Mass media and the colonial informant: Messaoud Djebbari and the French Empire, 1880-1901,' *Past and Present*, Advance Articles, 6 December 2021

Friday February 25, 16.00 – 18.00 **Indigenous Perspectives**

Readings: David A. Chang, *The World and all Things upon It. Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minnesota, 2016), Introduction & chapter 4, "'The World and all Things upon It': Geography Education and Textbooks in Hawai'i, 1831-1878"

Saturday February 26, 9.30-11.00 **Multiple Empires**

Readings: Lucy Riall, 'Hidden spaces of Empire: Italian colonists in 19th-century Peru,' *Past and Present*, February 2022

Bernhard Schär, 'Switzerland, Borneo and the Dutch Indies: Towards a New Imperial History of Europe, c.1770-1850,' *Past and Present*, Advance article, 2022

Saturday February 26, 11.15-12.45 **Seeley and Japan**

Readings: Martin Dusenberre, 'J. R. Seeley and Japan's Pacific Expansion,' *The Historical Journal*, 64/1 (2021), pp.70-97

Saturday February 26, 13:30 **Seminar Lunch**, Trattoria Accadi, Borgo Pinti 56R