

Fall 2009
EC 410/510
T/Th12-1:50
Portland State University

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241-N Cramer Hall, 725-3940
Office Hours: T/TH 2-3:30
And by Appointment

EC 410/510: The Economics of War and Empire

The economics of war and empire is both an old and very broad topic, encompassing questions including

- a) the costs and benefits to different groups in the ancient empires of the Greeks, Romans, Aztecs, Incas and Chinese;
- b) the economic underpinnings of the European empires – Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, Dutch and others—during the “age of empire;”
- c) consideration of the economics of informal empire and neo-colonialism;
- d) the impact of war in the less developed countries;
- e) very topical understandings of current U.S. interests and policies, including the costs and benefits of militarism and whether or not the U.S. constitutes an imperial power;
- f) the economics of conversion from a “military-industrial” state; and
- g) the strategic calculations of any abstractly conceived contenders, captured in game theory.

This is obviously far more than we can consider in one class! We will touch lightly on some topics while focusing most attention on the role of war and empire in the evolution of industrial, market-based economies historically and the situation of the United States today. Students are encouraged to extend our investigations with further reading; undergraduates may earn extra credit as described below and graduate students may choose a term paper topic from the broad range of related questions.

Despite the size of this class, I hope to conduct it as much along the lines of a seminar as possible. Each student will be expected to read the assigned material, participate in classroom discussions and to complete the assignments described below. Students’ insights and analyses will constitute an important part of the course; ideally, we’ll work together to assess different constructions of the economic roles of empire and war. In this area, as in all of social science, there aren’t “correct answers,” only well and poorly supported arguments. This class will work best if differing viewpoints are strongly articulated.

Grades for undergraduates will be based

- * 25% on short, written, analytical responses to the reading assignments for the week, due each Thursday in class,
- * 60% on four 3-5 page essays that discuss and connect the readings,
- * 5% on co-facilitating the opening discussion of one day’s readings, and
- * 10% on class participation.
- * extra credit, equal to one essay will be available for reading a substantive additional reading (approved by the instructor) and (1) writing a 3-5 page essay discussing the reading and connecting it to course material as well as (2) making a brief oral presentation to the class.

Grades for graduate students will be based

- * 15% on short, written, analytical responses to the reading assignments for the week, due each Thursday in class,
- * 40% on four 3-5 page essays that discuss and connect the readings,
- * 30% on a 15 page term paper on a related topic approved by the instructor;
- * 5% on an oral presentation of your term paper to the class, and
- * 10% on class participation.

Additionally, I will expect graduate students to demonstrate some leadership in the classroom as well as to produce written work that reflects a more in-depth engagement with the topic and more developed academic skills.

Regular attendance is vital for understanding the material and for the success of the course; therefore attendance will be noted and considered while grading class participation. If you need to bring your child (or children) along with you to attend class, by all means do so. We can all manage to deal with a little child noise. All assignments are due on the dates announced and late work will be marked down. However you are always better off to turn an assignment in late than to skip it.

I will be available by appointment as well as during regularly scheduled office hours to consult on coursework, as well as to discuss course material in greater depth than may be possible in class. I am happy to talk with you via e-mail, but will not accept your assignments by e-mail, except in an emergency.

This year the university is gearing for a possible flu pandemic. Please stay home if you are ill!

University policy calls for severe sanctions for plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty. While I encourage you to discuss your assignments with other people, the final product must be your own, containing full citations to any work upon which you draw, including course material.

Students with disabilities will be accommodated. If you require assistance obtaining particular resources for your education, please see me.

Required Reading:

Most required reading is on reserve at the PSU library, on two hour reserve. In addition, three books are available for purchase at the PSU Bookstore and a reading packet, is available at Smart Copy, at 1915 S.W. 6th.

Harry Magdoff. 2003. *Imperialism Without Colonies*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes. 2008. *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Frances Stewart, Valpy FitzGerald and Associates. 2001. *War and Underdevelopment. Volume 1: The Economic and Social Consequences of Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Course Outline

Please be prepared to discuss these readings on the dates noted.

Overview, Introduction, A Case for Empire

- 9/29 Introduction to topic, course, each other
- 10/1 William Kristol and Robert Kagan. "National Interest and Global Responsibility"
William Kristol. "Postscript—June '04"
Margaret Thatcher. "New Threats for Old"
in Irwin Steltzer. 2004. *The Neocon Reader* New York: Grove Press.
find in book on reserve or in reader

Historical Empire

- 10/6 Herbert Heaton. 1948. *Economic History of Europe*. New York: Harper & Brothers. Chapter 3: The Roman World, pp. 38-59.
find in reader

Theories of Empire

- 10/8 J.A. Hobson. *Imperialism: A Study*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
pp. 3-40
available on Google, due to the age of the copyright!
- 10/13 Hobson, pp. 41-63
- 10/15 Hobson, pp. 64-109
- 10/20 **Essay #1 Due**
Joseph A. Schumpeter. 1951 "Imperialism and Capitalism" in *Imperialism and Social Classes*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Inc. first published in German in 1919, Chapter 5 pp. 83-130
find in book on reserve, or in reader
- 10/22 Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy. 1966. *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*. New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks. Chapters 3 & 7
find in book on reserve or in reader

- 10/27 Harry Magdoff. 2003. *Imperialism Without Colonies*. New York: Monthly Review Press. Chapter 2: “The New Imperialism.”
find in book on reserve or in bookstore
- 10/29 Magdoff, Chapter 3: “The American Empire and the U.S. Economy.”
- 11/3 Magdoff, Chapter 4: “Imperialism without Colonies” & Chapter 5: “Militarism and Imperialism”

Costs of War in the U.S.

- 11/5 **Essay #2 Due**
Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes. 2008. *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
Preface, Chapters 1 & 2
find in book on reserve or in bookstore
- 11/10 Stiglitz and Bilmes, Chapters 3, 4 & 5
- 11/12 Stiglitz and Bilmes, Chapters 6, 7 & 8

War in the Developing World

- 11/17 **Essay #3 Due**
Frances Stewart, Valpy FitzGerald and Associates. 2001. *War and Underdevelopment: Volume 1: The Economic and Social Consequences of Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 and 2.
find in book on reserve or in bookstore
- 11/19 Frances Stewart, Valpy FitzGerald and Associates, Chapter 4.
- 11/24 Frances Stewart, Valpy FitzGerald and Associates, Chapter 5.
- 11/26 **Holiday – Thanksgiving Day**
- 12/1 Frances Stewart, Valpy FitzGerald and Associates, Chapters 8 and 9.
- 12/3 Sum Up!
- 12/10 Essay #4 Due in my Mailbox in 241 Cramer Hall, 10:15 am**