

Force, Conflict, and Change: Empires--Good Thing or Bad Thing? (MALS610-010)

- Wednesdays, 6pm-9pm
- Summer 2020--June 8-August 13
- Instructor: Ray Callahan
- Online, via Zoom (details to follow)

The image of empire has been largely shaped not by historians but by Hollywood: marching Roman legionnaires or pith helmeted Britons ordering Asians or Africans about. (The image of empire might well include the American "winning of the West" but, for some reason, seldom does.) But empire is a much more complex business than cinematic spectacle and worthy of very serious attention. After all, much more of human history has been shaped by empires than by nation states and parliamentary democracies--both quite recent arrivals on the scene and by no means guaranteed to dominate the future. Empires of various sorts are still with us--and also aspire to write that future. We will look comparatively at several long lived and influential empires and seek at least a tentative answer to the question posed by the course title.

The basic reading for the seminar will be Krishan Kumar's "Visions of Empire" (Princeton, 2017). A paper edition is available. Order this from your favorite bookseller—we have **not** ordered it through the UD Bookstore. Further readings will grow out of the discussions in the seminar and the paper topic chosen.

Every student will be expected to do a paper of roughly 15 pp on a topic developed out of the reading and seminar discussions. A one page proposal will be handed in at the end of the first month of the course. Once the proposal is approved, the full paper will be due before the last class meeting.

A few more details about the paper:

--The 15 pages includes any footnotes and bibliography.

--Set up footnotes as endnotes (much easier) and use any footnote form you are used to. All footnotes need to be clear, consistent and an indication to the reader of the sources for important (or contentious) statements.

--Prior to the final class meeting, you should prepare a brief (one page at most) synopsis of your paper for distribution to other members of the seminar. That will allow an informed general discussion at our last meeting.

Finally--and this is very important--active participation by members of a seminar in class discussion is the essence of the seminar experience. Active participation means relevant comment, grounded in reading and reflection, not airy generalities.