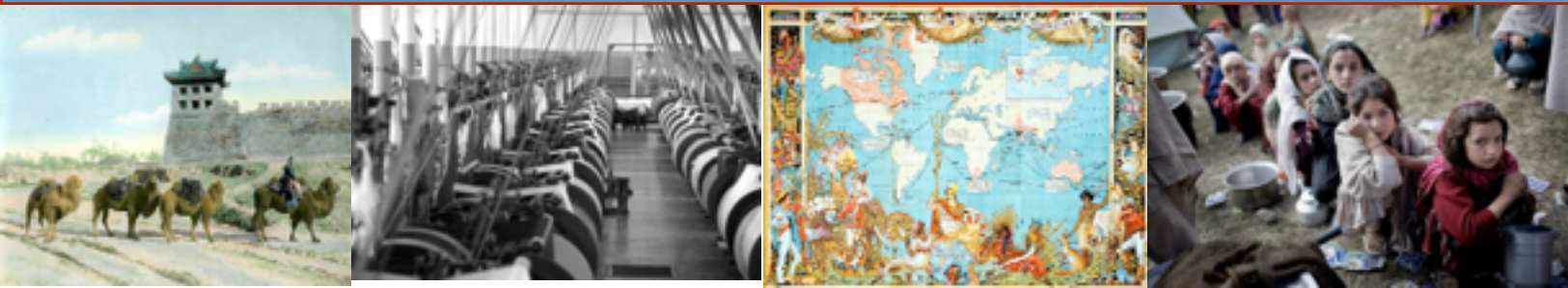


# Historical Crossings: Empires and Modernity



"Historical crossings" is a rough translation of *histoire croisée*, referring to global configurations of events and a shared history, rather than to a traditional comparative history. Designed to be the cornerstone of the M.A. program, this course will not serve as a traditional historical methods or theory course, but instead focus on training students to read and think on various scales of historical analysis—from cross-cultural and trans-geographic to the granularity of social and cultural specificity, requiring students to think both globally and locally and introducing them to an advanced level of historical inquiry, debate, and exploration.

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With the theme, "empires and modernity," this seminar will focus on the creation of our "modern" world. That is, we seek to better understand a world indelibly shaped by western imperialism and capitalism. In addition to exploring patterns of geographic, political, social, and economic dominance, we will interrogate the ideological systems used to rationalize, organize, and regulate large societies, as well as individual bodies. At the same time, we will try to apprehend more fully how our lives are shaped by modernity and imperialism by considering times and locales with worldviews startlingly different from our own.

As a course for M.A. students with future careers in teaching, the academy, or public humanities, it will also focus on pedagogy and work on making history accessible—interesting and relevant—to the general public and to students at the secondary and college levels.

**REQUIRED BOOKS** Buy on-line; nearly all available as e-books. Also will also be on reserve at the Rock; many also available as e-books through Josiah.

Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, *The One-State Condition: Occupation and Democracy in Israel/Palestine* (Stanford, 2012)

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1995)

Peter Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All* (California, 2009)

Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik, *The World That Trade Created: Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400 to the Present*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (M.E.Sharpe, 2012)

Giorgio Riello, *Cotton* (Cambridge, 2013)

Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Harvard, 2009)

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

Pekka Hämmäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (Yale, 2008)

Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (Verso, 2002)

Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself* (Yale, 2014)

Benedict Anderson, *The Age Of Globalization: Anarchists And The Anticolonial Imagination* (2005 reprint, Verso, 2013)

## REQUIRED SOFTWARE

[Dropbox](#) (free) to share documents

[Scapple](#) (\$14.99) to visualize ideas

EVALUATION

Class participation	50%
Final project/research paper	50%

CLASS PARTICIPATION (50%)

The class participation grade will be calculated in the following way:

25% Attendance & engagement:

A (0-1 unexcused absence); B (2 absences); C (3 absences); D (4 absences); F (5+ absences). The seminar preparation (see below) should facilitate your engagement. As the course proceeds, I will let you know privately through email if I believe you should speak up more often, or if I'd like you to give others more of a chance to speak. No email means you're getting an A or A- for engagement.

25% Seminar preparation

Submit an email by 10 pm on Tuesday with the following three parts:

- 1) A very brief summary of the main reading's argument or thesis.
- 2) One discussion question--this should not be a factual question, but one that can sustain a conversation.
- 3) An idea about a way to bring analysis to a wider audience.

FINAL PROJECT (50%)

The final project can be a traditional 20 pp. research paper based on primary and secondary sources. I hope, however, that most students will partake in an experiment to create a digital sourcebook through [MediaKron](#). MediaKron is an interactive on-line program that can accommodate a variety of textual, visual, and audio sources. It comes with mapping, chronology, and tagging tools that enable a range of ways to access historical sources and interpretations. We will have the help of Instructional Technology Group (ITG) specialist Hong Chau to guide us through the process of learning this program throughout the semester. More on this in the first and second class meetings. The expectation, of course, is that all projects whatever the form (digital or traditional) will have the same level of rigor, clarity, and sophistication.

COURSE SCHEDULE

\*Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) will be available on Canvas.

- 1. Sept 5 Intro
- 2. Sept 12 "It's not even past"  
Azoulay and Ophir, *The One-State Condition: Occupation and Democracy in Israel/Palestine*  
+presentation by Hong Chau on MediaKron

- 3. Sept 19 The politics of history  
Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*  
\*Howard Zinn, "Objections to Objectivity" in Zinn, *Failure to Quit: Reflections of an Optimistic Historian*  
\*"Introduction" in Celia Chazelle, Simon Doubleday, Felice Lifshitz, and Amy G. Remensnyder, eds., *Why the Middle Ages Matter: Medieval Light on Modern Injustice* (Routledge, 2011)

*The past is never dead. It's not even past.*  
— William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*  
  
*People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.* — James Baldwin, *Notes from a Native Son*

4. Sept 26 Usable past?

Linebaugh, *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All*

5. Oct 3 Trade & globalization

Pomeranz and Topik, *The World That Trade Created: Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400 to the Present*

6. Oct 10 Commodities

Riello, *Cotton*

7. Oct 17 Human Commodities and Labor

Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*

+final project check-in with Hong Chau

8. Oct 24 Beyond the Atlantic World

Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures*

9. Oct 31 Rethinking Empire

Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*

10. Nov 7 Modernity and Hunger

Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*

11. Nov 14 Mass Media & Knowledge Production

Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News: How the World Came to Know About Itself*

12. Nov 21 Alternative Visions

Benedict Anderson, *The Age Of Globalization: Anarchists And The Anticolonial Imagination*

13. Nov 28 Thanksgiving holiday

14. Dec 5 Presentations of final projects

+Hong Chau will be present for advisement

Final projects due Dec 14