

**\*limited view sample syllabus\***

**THE MILITARIZED PACIFIC:  
SOCIAL GEOGRAPHIES**

Instructor: Bridget Martin  
Time & Location: TBD  
Course Level: Upper division

**Course Description**

The Pacific has been a site of flux and social interconnection for millennia. In this course, we will study how the social geographies of the Pacific world shifted from the late nineteenth century onward in relation to militarization. We read the militarization of the Pacific not as an event or as a discrete encounter that happened in the past, but as an ongoing process. We study major transitions in imperial spatiality in East Asia and the Pacific, including Japanese strategies of colonial administration; the transition from Japanese to American hegemony in the Pacific; and shifting Cold War and post-Cold war imperial territorialities. We use a social geographical perspective to study how the continual re-making of empire's map intersects with small and large-scale processes of dispossession, place-making, commemoration, and un/sited forms of resistance to militarism. This course is transpacific in regional focus, exploring social geographies of militarism from the American West to Hawai'i, Guam, Japan/Okinawa, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. We also study linkages between sites. Students in this course will gain a broad overview of the history and geography of US militarism in Asia and the Pacific and be introduced to key themes and debates in Asian Studies, Pacific Studies, and American Studies.

**Required Texts**

Most materials will be available on the course site. Please independently obtain the following texts for use during the semester:

- Horne, Gerald (2007) *The White Pacific: US Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Gavin Daws (1974) *The Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Julian Aguon (2021) *The Properties of Perpetual Light*, Guam: University of Guam Press.
- Yên Lê Espiritu (2014) *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Simeon Man (2018) *Soldiering through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

**Assessment**

Please refer to the course site for full assessment details. Participation grades are based on attendance and on active participation in group discussions and in collective freewriting

activities. There are no exams or quizzes in this course, but there is a final project that should be based on research based on syllabus materials and, if necessary, outside sources. Keywords may be determined by students or drawn from a list of suggested keywords provided at the beginning of the semester.

20% Participation

10% Keywords Part I assignment (Due week 4)

10% Keywords Part II assignment (Due week 8)

10% Keywords Part III assignment (Due week 12)

10% Capstone prospectus and in-class presentation

40% Portfolio: Full capstone paper; one revised keyword triad entry; one revised free-write piece

### **Attendance**

In almost all cases, more than one absence will result in a loss of points regardless of reason. In case of extenuating circumstances such as a family or medical emergency, please communicate with the instructor as far in advance as possible in order to work out alternative arrangements to keep up with the course.

### **Academic Integrity**

Any written work you submit for this course is presumed to be your own original work. It should not be the work of others, nor should it be work submitted, in whole or in part, for another course. You must properly cite your written work, including both direct quotations and ideas and arguments taken from other sources. Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. Academic misconduct will result on a failing grade on the assignment and will be reported to the university. Review university policy first and then consult with the instructor if you have any questions regarding what constitutes academic misconduct.

### **Accessibility**

The instructor will work to ensure that full participation in this course is possible for every enrolled student. Please consult with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Please also schedule a consultation appointment with the university's disability services office if you have any concerns or questions related to course accessibility and need to submit a formal accommodation petition.

## I. A SHIFTING ORDER

The decades leading up to World War II saw an intensification of Japanese militarism and shifting modes of direct colonial rule by Japan in Korea, Taiwan, and several Pacific islands. Asian migrations perforated the American and Canadian West, with migrants laboring in agricultural fields, building the infrastructures of empire, and making entrepreneurial moves. At the same time, in the post-Civil War years, the American settler frontier extended beyond the Indigenous lands of California with violent force, from Hawai'i to China. New multiethnic, multilingual, and multinational identities emerged as new geographies of labor migration cut into and across Pacific space. World War II marked a profound shift in empire's Pacific geography. As the Japanese empire crumbled, the US military took direct control over many of Japan's former colonies and island territories. The first part of this course explores the transition from the pre-World War II Pacific world to the post-war world that saw a deepened entrenchment of US military land and sea power in the region.

### 1. Japan and East Asia

Ching, Leo T.S. (2001), "Colonizing Taiwan: Japanese Colonialism, Decolonization, and the Politics of Colonialism Studies," in *Becoming Japanese: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation*, Berkeley: University of California Press. (pp. 15 – 50)

Young, Louise (1998) "Manchukou and Japan," in *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism*, Berkeley: University of California Press. (pp. 3 – 20)

### 2. American Frontiers I

Horne, Gerald (2007) *The White Pacific: US Imperialism and Black Slavery in the South Seas after the Civil War*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. (Selections)

Kramer, Paul (2006) "Race Making and Colonial Violence in the US Empire: The Philippine-American War as a Race War," *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 4(6).

### 3. American Frontiers II

Cumings, Bruce (2009) "Archipelago of Empire: An American Grid for the Global Garden" in *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*. (pp. 388 – 423)

Chang, Kornel (2012), *Pacific Connections: The Making of the US-Canadian Borderlands*, Berkeley: University of California Press. (Chapters 2 – 4, pp. 54 – 146)

[Watch] *Democracy Now!* “How to Hide an Empire: Daniel Immerwahr on the History of the Greater United States”, March 5, 2019. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvIUGYvLg0s>) (30 minutes)

#### **4. Empire’s Pacific Map I: Race and the Post-World War II Hegemonic Transition**

Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II*, Berkeley: University of California Press. (Introduction, pp. 1 – 34)

Louis, William Roger (1977) *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. (TBD, approx. 20 pages)

Chang, Kornel (2020) “Independence without Liberation: Democratization as Decolonization Management in US-Occupied Korea, 1945 – 1948,” *The Journal of American History* 107(1), pp. 77 – 106.

## **II. OCCUPIED/INDIGENOUS LANDSCAPES**

Imperial space is not produced through a single encounter, but through a series of acts that violate Indigenous conceptions of space, undermine local livelihoods, and create regimes of consent to imperial logic. In much of Asia and the Pacific, the imperial encounter has been reproduced daily and extended into the twenty-first century. The second part of this course explores occupied spaces, focusing on extant and emerging forms of social place-making occurring through imperial encounters and/or in resistance to them. Led by figures such as an activist-scholar from Guam; Vietnamese refugees who are the subjects of their own history; and the self-consciously globalized citizens of Okinawa and South Korea, we examine the repeated, overlapping, and spatially and temporally extended social geographies of the militarized Pacific.

#### **5. Deep Time / Hawai‘i**

Gavin Daws (1974) *The Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands*, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press.

#### **6. Geopoetics / Guam**

Julian Aguon (2021) *The Properties of Perpetual Light*, Guam: University of Guam Press.

## 7. Collective Histories / Vietnam

Yên Lê Espiritu (2014) *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

## 8. Globalizing the Local / Korea & Okinawa

Inoue, Masamichi (2007) *Okinawa and the US Military: Identity Making in the Age of Globalization*, New York: Columbia University Press. (Chapters 4 – 7, pp. 98 – 207)

Martin, Bridget (2018) “From Camp Town to International City: US Military Base Expansion and Local Development in Pyeongtaek, South Korea,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 42(6), 967-985.

### III. LABOR AND MIGRATION

War and industrialization are historically interlinked: Just as Japanese firms profited from the Korean War, South Korean firms profited from the Vietnam War. High-tech industries that boomed in the American West after World War II were also the result of a state-supported war industry. In this part of the course, we explore racialized labor circuits that grew out of the twin processes of war and industrialization in the post-World War II era of decolonization, and we ask what new political possibilities emerged out of the Pacific’s shifting social geographies. We situate post-colonial industrialization and the drive toward military modernization in the context of a transpacific ruling class alliance and the birth of the American-led military industrial complex. First, we read Simeon Man’s work on emergent labor circuits in the Pacific. Laborers from the Philippines, South Korea, and other countries were drawn into the spatially extended military-industrial complex just as struggles for decolonization across the Pacific were taking off. Next, we study the relationship between militarism and sex work, focusing on the case of South Korea. Female, trans, and queer survival have long depended on the ability to participate in the sex industry, especially in times of war and economic crisis. At the same time, Asian claims to militarized sexual harm have been uniquely legible to liberal white, anti-sex work critics of US imperialism, to the extent that sex work is often equated with imperial violence itself. We draw on Sealing Cheng’s and Todd Henry’s historical and ethnographic accounts of sex work as survival in militarized environments and ask what pro- and anti-sex work feminist critiques of militarism offer.

## 9. Soldiering

Simeon Man (2018), *Soldiering through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific*, Berkeley, University of California Press. (Chapters 1 – 4 and Conclusion, pp. 17 – 134 and 185 - 192)

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