Content

This course focuses on the U.S. island territories that resulted from the Spanish-American War of 1898, particularly Hawai`i, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. Some of the questions that we will ask include: Where and when do Hawai`i, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico enter into the U.S. cultural and political imagination? How have writers and critics portrayed the U.S. colonies? In what ways have U.S. colonial subjects explored the social, political, and cultural meanings of their relationship with the U.S. nation?

To investigate issues of historical memory, unclear sovereignty, and questions of agency, we will discuss such twentieth century novels as Noel Alumit’s Letters to Montgomery Clift, René Marqués’s La Carreta/The Oxcart, and Lois Ann Yamanaka’s Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre, critical essays in American Studies and postcolonial studies by scholars that include Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Vicente Rafael, and William Appleman Williams; the Hollywood musical film Blue Hawaii as well as the documentaries Act of War and Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs, and Empire, 1898-1904. In the concluding weeks, we will consider narratives that examine U.S. cultural and political influence in sites that are not formal U.S. colonies.

Books

Lawrence Chua, Gold by the Inch (1999)
Lois Ann Yamanaka, Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre (1993)

Books are available for purchase at the University of Oregon Bookstore or on 2-hour loan from Knight Library Course Reserves. Articles and three novellas (marked ‘B’ on Schedule) are in the Course Documents folder on the Blackboard course page.

Assignments and Evaluation

• 1 page typed, single spaced, response for each class, due April 20 and June 1 (30%)
• 500 word abstract due May 11 and 8-10 page comparative essay due May 23 (40%)
• Group Presentation and 1 page handout (10%)
• Participation (20%)

• Attendance Policy: After 2 unexcused absences (absences without a doctor’s note or acceptable documentation), you will no longer eligible for a grade in the course.

• Assignment deadlines are firm. No late assignments will be accepted without prior permission. All assignments must be completed by June 1.
If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make an appointment to meet with me soon.

SCHEDULE

I. AT HOME AND ABROAD
Week 1  Perspectives on 1898
W 3/30  Introduction

Week 2  The Invisibility of U.S. Empire
W 4/6


Film: Act of War: Overthrow of the Hawaiian Nation (1993; dir. Joan Lander, 58 min.)

Week 3  Colonial Domesticity
W 4/13


Lois Ann Yamanaka, Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre

II. IMPERIAL ROMANCE

Week 4  Romancing the Empire
W 4/20

Film: Blue Hawaii (dir. Norman Taurog, 1961; 101 min.)
Week 5  Foreign Nationals/Limited Sovereignty
W 4/27

René Marqués, La Carreta/The Oxcart. Translated by Charles Pilditch. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1954. B

Week 6  Colonialism and Domesticity
W 5/4


Week 7  Race, Desire, and Sexuality
W 5/11
Noel Alumit, Letters to Montgomery Clift

III.  GLOBALIZATION
Week 8  Family Ties
W 5/18
Lisa Lowe, “Globalization.” Keywords for American Cultural Studies. 120-122. B

Mona Simpson, My Hollywood

Week 9  Global/Local
W 5/25
Laurence Chua, Gold by the Inch

From Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth

Week 10  Wrapping Up
W 6/1  Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse

Film: White Christmas (dir. Michael Magnaye, 1993; 25 min.)

Film: The Couple in the Cage (dir. Coco Fusco and Paula Heredia, 1993; 30 min)