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Frank Ninkovich. *The United States and Imperialism.* Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2001. ix + 299 pp. $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57718-056-2.

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A New Look At American Imperialism

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This book is a welcome addition to a reading list for a survey course in U.S. History. Frank Ninkovich of St. John's University has written a brief overview that describes how the United States "acquired, administered and took leave" of a series of overseas possessions. His book is easily read; it is far-reaching and well thought out in its approach to a topic that receives little attention in the typical survey text. What Ninkovich has done is taken imperialism and placed it in the mainstream of American history by treating it as a recurring theme.

The United States and Imperialism in its six chapters traces American imperialism and sees its rise in a series of concepts that he describes as "civilization, identity, the civilizing mission and great power cooperation." Ninkovitch sees these concepts as a more realistic explanation for imperialism than the traditional approach of great power, pursuit of overseas trade, racism and Social Darwinism. These explanations, according to Ninkovich, are out of touch with the optimistic and liberal tone of American foreign relations. I agree wholeheartedly with him.

Ninkovich's goal is to show how imperialism, anti-imperialism, and geopolitics are "closely related elements within a common matrix of global civilization." He defines imperialism in a rather broad manner, seeing it exist "when an important aspect of a nation's life is under the effective control of an outside power." This control can range from complete control, as in colonialism, to a lesser form of control, as that of protectorate status. This control can be formal as well as informal. Under this definition then, American imperialism included not only the colonies usually treated in survey texts, but also U.S. activities in China and in today's world.

The United States and Imperialism is organized into six chapters. The reader sees how imperialism began in what Ninkovich describes as an identity crisis in the 1980s. The next three chapters describe the three different versions of American imperialism: the "pure imperialism" practiced in the Philippines; the political, cultural, economic, anti-European form seen in the Caribbean; and the more limited form the U.S. experienced in China. He goes on to describe the growth of anti-imperialism as a major force in American foreign policy after World War II. In his penultimate chapter Ninkovich writes about the U.S. response to imperialism by other major powers during the twentieth century. His final chapter deals with globalization as a form of imperialism.

Ninkovich places American imperialism in the context of a "surge in colonialism that washed over the world in the late nineteenth century." He notes that American imperialism was similar to European colonialism, but also that it was more limited in scope and that it ended more quickly. He places its origins in an "identity crisis" caused by the Depression of 1893, the populist uprising, and the development of progressive reform movements. He sees imperialism "as an element of the geopolitics of modernity." He traces American imperial activities in the Philippines, the Caribbean, and China and relates them to the general sweep of American foreign policy. Ninkovich concludes by examining how imperialism has changed into globalization, a successor trend that is deeper, more complex and more intensive than its predecessor.

This book will be a valuable addition to the reading list for the post Civil War survey course in U.S. History.

Starting with a standard theme for most textbooks, Ninkovich goes on to relate this theme to the broader themes of U.S. History. *The United States and Imperialism* will expose the survey student to the sweep of a theme over the course of several decades, something that the event-driven survey texts usually cannot do.

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