

MOLLOY UNIVERSITY
School of Education and Human Services
Department of Teacher Education

EDU 5900 xx The History of Merchants and Monarchs: Empires and Trade Networks
(3 credits)

Spring 2026

Instructor: Paul Zaratini

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Office hours: Monday - Friday 3:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Course Description:

Participants will investigate the rise and transformation of empires through the lens of commerce, exchange, and economic power. From the Silk Road and Indian Ocean trade systems to the Atlantic World and modern globalization, this course explores how imperial ambitions shaped global markets, cultural encounters, and political systems. Key topics include the Mongol Empire and Eurasian exchange, Iberian maritime expansion, the transatlantic slave trade, the role of the British and Dutch East India Companies, industrial capitalism, and contemporary neo-imperial trade structures. Participants will critically engage with primary sources, artifacts, and scholarly works to understand how empires fostered both integration and inequality across the globe.

Shared Vision

The Molloy University Teacher Education faculty has derived its vision for the exemplary teacher from the University's mission statement, the four pillars of the Dominican tradition, comments and input from the Professional Education Unit's Advisory Board and degree candidates as well as numerous faculty discussions rooted in the department's knowledge base which undergirds the initial and advanced programs' curriculum, pedagogy, and values

The teaching professionals who complete Molloy's teacher preparation programs are distinguished by their ability to exemplify and promote core values in their own teaching. These values include:

Belief that all children can learn

Learner-centered and value-centered curriculum and pedagogy

Ethics and spirituality

Intellectual curiosity

Independence and risk taking, while promoting collective identity and responsibility

Diversity, multiculturalism and pluralism, including divergent thinking

Passion for teaching

Commitment to students and their communities

Civic responsibility through the promotion of social justice and interdependence

Commitment to democracy

Course Objectives:

- Identify and describe major empires and their roles in global trade across different historical periods.
- Analyze the political, economic, and cultural structures that supported imperial expansion and commerce.
- Examine the impact of trade networks on cultural exchange, migration, and conflict.
- Explore how empire and commerce shaped systems of slavery, labor, and exploitation.
- Understand the causes and consequences of the rise and decline of imperial economies.
- Evaluate primary and secondary sources related to empire and trade.
- Integrate the history of empires and trade into K-12 curriculum development.
- Create a standards-aligned lesson plan or activity focused on empires and global trade

Course Format:

This course will be offered online through Canvas, Molloy's learning management system. The course will open on the start date and close on the last day of class. This section is offered during the spring semester of 2026. There will be daily activities and discussions that must be completed at the end of each day. All work will be due on the last day of class.

Required Readings, Videos, and Other Materials:

All materials will be provided throughout the course.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Discussion #1: Why Study Empires and Global Trade? (5 pts)

Module #1: Early Empires and Trade Networks – Rome, Han China, and the Silk Road (10 pts)

Module #2: The Mongol Empire and Eurasian Exchange (10 pts)

Module #3: The Indian Ocean World – Islamic Caliphates, Africa, and South Asia (10 pts)

Discussion #2: Comparing Trade Systems Across Empires (5 pts)

Module #4: The Iberian Maritime Empires – Spain and Portugal (10 pts)

Module #5: The Atlantic World – Slavery, Silver, and Sugar (10 pts)

Module #6: Corporate Empires – The Dutch and British East India Companies (10 pts)

Module #7: The Industrial Age – The British Empire and Global Capitalism (10 pts)

Module #8: Teaching Empires and Trade in the K-12 Classroom (10 pts)

Final Project: Create a Lesson Plan or Activity on Empires and Global Trade (20 pts)

Molloy University and School of Education and Human Services Policies and Supports:

Expectations of Academic Integrity for All Students

[Honor Pledge and Academic Honesty Policy](#)

Course Withdrawals

View [Withdrawal Policy](#) for potential financial implications

View [the Academic Calendar](#) and/or the course syllabus for the last day to withdraw dates

Incompletes

[Incompletes Policy](#)

Health and Wellness

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Counseling Center \(SCC\)](#)

Center for Access and Disability (Access)

[Center for Access and Disability](#)

Technical Support

[Student Account, Technology and Canvas](#)

Ally for Canvas

[Supportive Tools and Resources/ Ally](#)

Use of Proctorio for Exams/Quizzes (if applicable)

[Proctorio Resources for Students](#)

Email Accounts

Students are to utilize their Molloy e-mail account or via Canvas when communicating throughout the semester. Those who use a non-Molloy account may miss important messages. Students are responsible for responding to all methods of communication in a timely fashion relating to this course. Instructors will respond to emails from students within 24 hours. When/ if you email the instructor(s), please indicate what course you are in with the course number and section.

APA Manuscript Style

All manuscripts in the field of education are written in the style format of the American Psychological Association. Candidates in the Graduate Education Programs are required to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). (2010). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

All papers written in every course must adhere to the manuscript prescriptions defined in this manual.