Orientalism. Visual Culture

This seminar centers on the relationship between the politics of knowledge and visual culture. Starting with Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978) as the founding work of postcolonial theory, the course primarily is concerned with cross-cultural encounters in the modern period. It asks how historical, anthropological, and scientific knowledge is processed, codified, labeled, and displayed in order to create a credible discourse on identity and (Western) power. We will analyze Orientalism as a representational affect, therefore, a priori concerned with art historical questions, for it poses representation as the primary structure of knowledge… of knowing the self and the other. Orientalism is, therefore, adopted as a methodological and critical tool to begin to understand the complexities of a (post)colonial world, the tropes of which dominate our perceptions of and engagements with ‘the rest of the world’.

The discourse on the Orient cannot be separated from the post-Enlightenment European anxiety over knowledge. Nor is Orientalism a purely non-western preoccupation. In effect, it has very little to do with the Orient per se. It is, above all, the unpacking of Europe and now the United States. It is the study of how ideological and sociopolitical attitudes shape the formation of knowledge in general and knowledge about the other in particular. Topics such as the invention of pornography, displaying the Orient in museums and exhibitions, the evolution of allure, the masculine myth of modernity, the politics of race and desire, the logic of objectivity, the sociology of order and hygiene – all addressed in the course – owe their development to (post)colonial histories. This seminar is designed to help students of non-western as well as western art to approach and raise art-historical questions in a discursive, critical, and socio-politically aware fashion. Once you go postcolonial, you cannot go white.

While the course will draw its historical examples primarily from Europe, North Africa, and West Asia, students are encouraged to research on any aspect and/or geography of the (post)colonial world (Latin America, Africa, South/East/Central Asia, Greater Russia, native/rural/post-9/11 America) utilizing the theoretical foundation of the course. Reading of historical-theoretical works such as Gobineau, Gellner, Foucault, Said, Heidegger, Fanon, Bhabha, Zizek, Anderson, Hobsbawm, Baudrillard, Sontag, Rushdie, and Bernal as well as art historical studies such as Nochlin, Mitchell, Celik, Bohrer, and Hentsch will constitute an essential part of the discussions. A focus on specific architectural, urban, artistic, cinematic, literary, and scholarly cases will provide the necessary historical context to grasp the significance of the theoretical sources within their Orientalist and (post)colonial frameworks. Short films will accompany the discussions.
REQUIREMENTS

Participation  
Students will be responsible for the week’s readings and participation in class discussions. For each class, a student will be required to prepare a presentation (30 min) and lead that day’s discussion. The presentation will be graded based on the clarity of the delivery, use of relevant visual material, as well as the ability to generate and lead a fruitful and engaging group discussion.

Readings  
Readings assigned in the syllabus must be done prior to or immediately after the class. For each session, prepare one or two paragraphs of thoughts regarding your take on the readings. This will be read in class as we discuss the readings. Articles outside textbooks are posted on LATTE. All handouts, instructions, and assignments are also found on LATTE. Lectures and readings from required books will NOT be posted on LATTE. You must attend class to hear the lectures and you have to secure the required books.

Books  
Michel Foucault. The Order of Things (Routledge; 1 edition, 2001)  
Michel Foucault. The Archeology of Knowledge (Pantheon, 1982)  
Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt (University of California Press, 1991)  
S. Hassan & I. Dadi, eds. Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading (Rotterdam 2001)  
Thierry Hentsch. Imagining the Middle East (Black Rose, 1996)

Paper  
20-page research paper on a topic of student’s choosing related to the course. Students will present their work during the final weeks of the course.

Grading  
Grading scale follows standard Brandeis scale. All grades will be posted on LATTE. I cannot pass out grades nor discuss your grades in public. Please come to my office hours.  
25% Participation & Discussion  
25% Presentation  
50% Paper

My Availability  
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:00-1:30, in my office Mandel 207. Make sure you let me know that you are coming before passing by [tgrigor@brandies.edu]. I will be available to answer your questions. We can also arrange an appointment. I encourage you to speak to me right before and after lectures in class for short answer questions. If you think that your question might interest other students, ask it during class.

Miscellaneous  
I expect my students to abide by the academic honor code. I count on their integrity, honesty, and hard work to create a productive and an intellectually stimulating environment. Students with special needs, see me at the beginning of the semester. This syllabus, the schedule of courses, and requirements for the class will be followed; in the case of unforeseen exceptions, these are subject to change at my discretion.
Aug 29

‘Post-’ of Orientalism: Introduction
Film: Excerpt from Film: Excerpt from 300 (Zack Snyder, 2007, 117 min)
  Stevens, Dan. ‘A movie only a Spartan could love,’ Slate (8 Mar 2007)
  Said, Edward. ‘The politics of knowledge,’ Raritan (Summer 1991) 17-31

Sep 4

Visual Logic of Imperialism: The Panopticon
Film: Excerpt from Edward Said on Orientalism (Sut Jhally, 1998, 40 min)
  Foucault, Michel. ‘Preface,’ The Order of Things (1973) xv-xxiv
  Said, Edward. ‘Introduction’ Orientalism (1979) 1-23

Recommended Film
  1984 (Michael Radford, 1984)
  Apocalypse Now (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979)

Further Readings
  Foucault, Michel. ‘Introduction,’ The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972) 3-17
  Bentham, Jeremy. Panopticon (in Bozovic, 1995) 29-95
  Said, E. Culture and Imperialism (1994) 3-28
  Lewis, B. What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response (2002)
  Irwin, R. For Last of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies (2006)

Sep 11

Orient as Exhibit: London 1851, Paris 1889
  Mitchell, Timothy. ‘Egypt at the exhibition,’ Colonising Egypt (1988) 1-33
  Kenney, Leila & Zeynep Çelik. ‘Ethnography and exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles,’ Assemblage (Dec 1990) 35-58

Further Readings
  Heidegger, Martin. ‘The age of the world picture,’ The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays (1977) 115-54
Sep 18  | Narratives of Objectivity: Islamic art in the West
    Oleg Grabar. ‘On the universality of the history of art,’ *Art Journal* 42/4 (Winter 1982) 281-83

Further Readings
Çelik, Z. ‘La Belle Fatma, c’est moi . . .,’ *Assemblage* 41 (Apr 2000) 17
Çelik, Z. ‘Colonialism, orientalism, and the canon,’ *Art Bulletin* 78/2 (Jun 1996) 202-05
Fleming, K.E. ‘Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan historiography,’ *The American Historical Review* 105/4 (Oct 2000) 1218-33

Tu Sep 23  | Individual student conferences, no class meeting
Please make a 20-30 minute appointment during this week to come in to discuss your ideas about a research paper. Come prepared to discuss specific topic, bring all research that you have done, including images, proposal for thesis, proposal for model projects if that is along your interests.

Sep 25  | University holiday

Oct 2  | Paper Abstract, Bibliography, and Image must be uploaded on LATTE by Oct 2, 2:00 pm
Replacement of field trip, no class

Oct 9  | University holiday

Mon Oct 13  | Bodies in Orient: Orientalist paintings

Further Readings
Thornton, L. *Women as Portrayed in Orientalist Painting* (1985)
Peltre, Ch. *Orientalism in Art* (1998)
Oct 16  Brandeis day, no class

Sun TBA  Boston & Cambridge Field Trip
Meet me in front of the metro entrance at Harvard Square

Oct 23  Traditions Imagined: Despot’s Palace
Grigor, Talinn. ‘Preserving the modern antique: Persepolis ’71,’ Future Anterior 2/1 (Summer 2005) 22-29

Further Readings
Bhabha, Homi. ‘Narrating the nation,’ Nationalism, a Reader (1994) 306-12
Gellner, Ernest. ‘Nationalism and modernization,’ & ‘Nationalism and high cultures,’ Nationalism, a Reader (1994) 55-70
Scott, J. Seeing Like a State (1998)
Ergut, E. & B. Ozkaya, eds. The Docomomo Journal 35, special issue: Modern Architecture in the Middle East (Sept 2006)
Prakash, V. Chandigarh’s Le Corbusier: The Struggle for Modernity in Postcolonial India (2002)
McLaren, B. L. Architecture and Tourism in Italian Colonial Libya (2006)

Oct 30  Significant(ly) Other(s): Oriental revivals
Film: Excerpt from Cleopatra (Charles Gaskill, 1912/Gordon Edwards, 1917/Cecil DeMille, 1934)

Hentsch, Thierry. ‘The mythical frontier,’ Imagining the Middle East (1996) 1-22
Grigor, Talinn. ‘What art does: Methodological privileging of agency and art history’s global dispute in 1901,’ in In the Wake of the Global Turn (2013) 126-42

Recommended Films
Lawrence of Arabia (David Lean, 1962)
The Battle of Algiers (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966)
Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask (Isaac Julien, 1996, 50 min)

Further Readings
Cartledge, Paul. ‘Significant others: us vs. them,’ The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others (2002) 8-17
Bernal, Martin. ‘Race, class, and gender in the formation of the Aryan model of Greek origins,’ *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading* (2001) 26-41


Memmi, A. *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965)

Fanon, F. *Wretched of the Earth* (1965)


Shariati, A. ‘Where shall we begin?’ (ca. 1969)

Bhabha, Homi. ‘Of mimicry and man,’ *The Location of Culture* (1994) 85-92


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**Nov 6**  
**Abu Ghraib Effect:** *Photographic violence*

Film: Excerpt from *24* (Surnow & Cochran, 2001-), torture scenes

Film: Excerpt from *Casino Royal* (Martin Campbell, 2006, 144 min, scene Bond is being tortured)

Interview with Abu Ghraib interrogator: [http://youtube.com/watch?v=HIQ-uiNfzsI](http://youtube.com/watch?v=HIQ-uiNfzsI)

Goldfinger/Bond torture scene: [http://youtube.com/watch?v=U1TmeBd938](http://youtube.com/watch?v=U1TmeBd938)


The New Yorker on torture in 24: [http://youtube.com/watch?v=JTwNtfnPQ](http://youtube.com/watch?v=JTwNtfnPQ)

BSG (sex and torture): [http://youtube.com/watch?v=3-YCJZ3k-Xc](http://youtube.com/watch?v=3-YCJZ3k-Xc)

24 Video game ([http://youtube.com/watch?v=Wz9rmFjm](http://youtube.com/watch?v=Wz9rmFjm))

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Sontag, Susan. ‘What have we done?’ *The Guardian* (May 2004)

Eisenman, Stephan. ‘Stage of cruelty,’ ‘Orientalism,’ ‘What is Western art?’ 


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**Recommended Film**

*Fahrenheit 9/11* (Michael Moore, 2004)

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**Further Readings**


Miller, J-A. ‘Jeremy Bentham’s Panoptic Device,’ *October* 41 (Summer 1987) 3-29


Bradbury, R. *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)


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**Nov 13**  
**Student Presentations**

**Nov 20**  
**Student Presentations**

Each student will present her/his project in class with PowerPoint presentation (20-30 min, conference format) and will get feedback for the final paper. The presentations should be in their final stage and presented as if in a conference. Discussion, questions, and answers of 15-20 minutes will follow each presentation.

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**Nov 27**  
University holiday
Dec 4  

Papers must be uploaded on LATTE on Dec 4 by 11:00 pm

A World Gone Post(al): Las Vegas, the New Orient

Film: Excerpt from Brazil (Original title 1984 ½, final director’s cut, Terry Gilliam, 1985, 142 min)

- Taylor, Mark. ‘Letter from the Desert,’ ANY 6 (May/Jun 1994) 52-55

Recommend Film

Aladdin (Ron Clements & John Musker, 1992)
The Battle of Brazil
American 132-minute version of Brazil

Further Reading

- Saïd, Edward. ‘Orientalism reconsidered,’ Race & Class 27/2 (Autumn 1985) 1-15
- Prakash, G. ‘Orientalism now,’ History and Theory 34/3 (Oct 1995) 199-212