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Seminar in Asian History: History of Travel and Cross-Cultural Encounter in the Middle East and the Islamic World

How have ideas about what “the Middle East” is been shaped through travel and cross cultural encounters? How does travel by middle easterners to other parts of the world shape their self-definitions and perceptions of their region? What can studying the history of travel and tourism tell us about the history of pre-modern empires, colonialism and contemporary processes of globalization? This class is designed to help you to explore and formulate answers to these questions by looking at how the region which we commonly refer to as “the Middle East” came to be constructed historically through circuits of travel and cross cultural encounters. Throughout we will look at tensions inherent in the history of travel itself: between travel as pleasure, leisure, and a means for self-fulfillment vs. travel as a means of conquest, a strategy for economic and political survival and an experience of alienation as well as the tension between travel as a means of identification with another culture but also as a re-affirmation of cultural difference.

Required Texts:

Roxanne Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore*

Ross Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*

Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Akram Khater: *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920*

Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land*

Additional Readings indicated on the syllabus with an * I will distribute these to you in class the week before they are to be discussed.

Course Requirements

Research paper: 40%

The major writing assignment for this course will be a research paper, around 20 pages in length and based on primary and secondary sources. The entire second half of the semester will be devoted to researching and writing the paper, but start thinking about what you want to write your paper on early. You will hand in a draft of your paper on Nov. 27th. I will distribute it to the other class members and we will discuss it as a class on Dec. 4.

Participation: 40% (attendance, preparation and presentation of the readings)

A seminar is not a spectator sport. Ideally, a seminar is a student driven discussion where the instructor sets the framework and moderates but otherwise leaves students to exchange and debate ideas with each other. That can't happen unless each student takes responsibility for the success of the seminar by coming to each class meeting well prepared for discussion. That means the following:

1. You will come to class having done the required readings and you will bring the readings with you.
2. Each class you will bring at least one substantive discussion question based on the readings to help facilitate the conversation.
3. Each student will pick one week in which they are responsible for presenting the readings and leading discussion.
4. You commit to coming to every class except in the case of unavoidable critical circumstances, such as a death or illness in your family or your own serious injury.

Article review: 20%

The week that you present the readings, you are also responsible for finding a scholarly article on the same topic we will be discussing. You will write a 2-3 page critical review of that article. I will give you a hand-out giving details of the assignment.

Course Schedule

Aug. 21: Introduction

Aug. 28: Approaches to Travel

Euben : Chapter 1 & 2

*Mary Louise Pratt: "Criticism in the Contact Zone"

*John Urry: "The Tourist Gaze"

Sept. 4: Travel in the 14th century Islamic World

Ibn Battuta: 1-41, 81-137, 159-266, 290-325

Euben: Chapter 3 [you can skim the section on Herodotus]

Sept. 11: Pilgrimage

*Bill Young: "The Kaba, Gender and the Rites of Pilgrimage"

*Carol Delaney: "The 'hajj': Sacred and Secular"

* Paulo G. Pinto: "Pilgrimage, Commodities, and Religious Objectification: The Making of Transnational Shiism between Iran and Syria"

Sept. 18: Empire, Colonialism and the Traveler's Gaze

Edward Said: *Orientalism*

Sept. 25: The World as Exhibition

Euben, Chapter 4

*"An Imam in Paris: Al-Tahtawi's Visit to France" [selections]

*Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition"

Oct. 2: Gendering Orientalism

Euben, Chapter 5

*Billie Melman, *Women's Other Orients* [selections]

*Mary Eliza Rogers, *Domestic Life in Palestine* [selections]

Oct. 9: Fall Recess

Oct. 16: Tourism I: Being Tourists

*Orvar Lofgren: "On Holiday" [selections]

* Donald Reid: From Explorer to Cooks Tourist"

* Baedekers "Egypt" 1898 [selections]

Oct. 23: Tourism II: Seeing Sites: Museums and Heritage preservation

*Timothy Mitchell: "Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt"

* Mark Levine: "The 'New Old Jaffa': Tourism, Gentrification and the Battle for Tel Aviv's Arab Neighborhood"

*Geoff Porter: "The Preservation of Fez's Heritage"

Oct. 30: Emigration and Diaspora

Akram Khater: *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920*

Nov. 6: Cosmopolitanisms Past and Present

Ghosh: *In an Antique Land*

Euben: Chapter 6

**Nov. 13: Individual meetings with me
Preliminary Bibliography due**

Nov. 20: No Meeting

Nov. 27: Draft papers due

Dec. 4: Meet as a class to workshop paper drafts

Dec. 11: Final paper due