Department of History  
Dalhousie University  
Winter, 2009

HIST 4550  
Orientalism and Occidentalism

Course Syllabus

Location: McCain 1198  
Time: Thursdays, 2:35-5:25  
Instructor: Prof. C. Mitchell

Office: #2169, McCain Arts and Social Sciences Building  
Office Phone Number: 494-2788  
Email: c.mitchell@dal.ca  
Office Hours: Fridays, 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
Drop-off Box Number: 90

I. DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE

This class is dedicated to exploring the varying ways and means with which the ‘West’ has framed and presented the Orient, namely the Middle East and South Asia. The cultural discourse of ‘othering’, however, is a two-way process, and this class is also focused on understanding the ‘gaze in reverse’ and how Occidentalism emerged against the backdrop of 19th and 20th century imperialism and colonialism. This class begins
with debates about the theoretical paradigm of Orientalism – popularized and systemized by Edward Said in the 1970s – and the extent to which it can be readily applied to periods of antiquity, medieval, and early modern history. The second half of the class contextualizes various debates about Occidentalism and how they inform intellectual and scholarly debates taking place in the Middle East and South Asia with respect to emerging patterns of nationalism, postcolonialism and Islamism.

II. EVALUATION

a) Book Review (value: 15%)

Students provide a succinct summary of the assigned book, and analyze the effectiveness and success of the authors’ methodology and overall argument. Sample book reviews will be distributed at the beginning of class.

The assigned book for this semester is Robert Irwin, For Lust of Knowing. Overlook Press, 2006.

Length: 1,500 words (ca. 6 pages).
Due Date: Jan. 29, 2009 (Late penalty in effect!)

b) Cluster Presentations (10% @ presentation, total value: 20-30%)

Preparation
1. Students will be organized into clusters of three, and depending on enrolment, a cluster will be responsible for a group presentation at least twice in the semester.
2. Seminar cluster assignments will be arranged in the first week of class.
3. In every group presentation, there will be a cluster leader – this will rotate within the group for each presentation.
4. There are three articles assigned per class, and each student in that cluster will – in 5-10 minutes – summarize one article as an individual presenter. This is not necessarily meant as a critical analysis, but more of a précis, or summary.
5. In the week before their presentation, the cluster will meet at least once outside of class, and discuss, compare and contrast the three assigned articles, and in doing so, coordinate their group presentation.
6. The cluster will officially rank these articles on the basis of readability, impact, innovation, development of argument, and general effectiveness.

Execution
1. Each student in the cluster will present his/her assigned article.
2. Total time for a group presentation should be no longer than 30 minutes.
3. The cluster leader for that particular week will lead a classroom discussion – with support from his/her team – which will discuss and debate the accuracy of the rankings, and the general effectiveness of the readings.
4. The cluster leader will be responsible for compiling the summaries of the assigned articles and preparing a 3–4 page document which paraphrases the general consensus of the class discussion.

Each student will be evaluated on the basis of their individual presentation for 10% of their overall grade. Depending on the number of presentations, this will total 20–30% of the final grade.

c) Cluster Leading and Presentation Summary (10%)

The cluster leader on any given week will also be evaluated on their ability to lead the seminar discussion as well as their prepared summary/analysis of the articles and their criticism by the seminar.

d) Research Paper/Document Study (value: 25%)

Length: 3,500–4,000 words
Due date: April 2, 2009 (Late penalty in effect!)

Research topics will be distributed in the first month of classes. One student per topic – suggestions are encouraged.

e) Seminar Participation (value: 20%)

Students will be expected to attend and participate fully in seminar discussions. Part of this grade will be based on your defense of your ranking of the articles, and your willingness to engage the opinions and viewpoints of others in the classroom. Absenteeism or lack of preparation will certainly jeopardize this portion of the grade.

***Note***: Students must fulfill every portion of this course (presentation, paper, cluster report) to receive a grade. Non-completion of any major assignment for this course will result in an "incomplete", or INC.

Note on submissions and plagiarism:

Written assignments must be submitted on time. A late penalty of 3% a day and 5% per weekend will be levied for late papers. Medical documentation – if appropriate – may be considered. If students are having difficulty with an assignment, they are encouraged to approach the instructor as soon as possible. Students are expected to keep all research notes for their essays, and to retain a photocopy of their essay. Assignments and essays will be marked for clarity of writing, grammar, organization – in addition to content and analysis.

Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree.
If there is any confusion regarding what constitutes plagiarism, consult p. 25 of the Dalhousie University Undergraduate Calendar, or visit the following website for the Department of History:

http://www.dal.ca/~histwww/style_guide.htm

The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer readable format, and to submit any paper to an Internet check. **You must therefore keep an electronic copy** of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand.

**Note on disabilities:**
Students with disabilities should register as quickly as possible at Student Accessibility Services if they want to receive academic accommodations. To do so please phone 494-2836, e-mail <disabilities@dal.ca>, or drop in at the Killam, G28.

**III. TEXTS**
*Available at Outside the Lines Bookstore*
6297 Quinpool Road
422-3544
*Web address: www.outsidethelinesbooks.com*

**Required:**

1. Course reader - available in Dept. of History.


**Suggested:**


**IV. SEMINAR SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 (Jan. 8) - Introduction & Orientation**
- Organization of cluster groups.

**Week 2 (Jan. 15) – Defining Orientalism**
Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 182-201

Articles:

**Week 3 (Jan. 22) – Locating Orientalism in Antiquity**

Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 8-22

Articles:

**Week 4 (Jan. 29) – Literature and Orientalism in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras**

Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 22-37

Articles:

**Graduate Student Presentation**

**Week 5 (Feb. 5) – Enlightenment Orientalism**

Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 38-78

Articles:

GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 6 (Feb. 12) – Anglo-Indian Orientalism
Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 78-98

Articles:

Week 7 (Feb. 19) – Orientalism and the Age of Empire
Text Readings:

Articles:

Week 8 (March 5) Defining Occidentalism (Guest Seminar Leader: Dr. Amal Ghazal)

Articles:

Week 9 (March 12) - Extending Orientalism beyond the Orient
Articles:

GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 10 (March 19) – Early Occidentalism – “The Gaze in Reverse”
Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 99-129


GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 11 (March 26) – Occidentosis and the Iranian Revolution
Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 129-171

Articles:
a) Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "The Other-ing of the West," in Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism (Syracuse University Press, 1996), 52-76, 156-59. (READER)
c) Haggay Ram, “Mythology of Rage: Representations of the "Self" and the "Other" in Revolutionary Iran,” History & Memory, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 67-87, spring 1996. (BLS)

GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATION

Week 12 (April 2) – Post-Colonialism and Occidentalism
Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 201-214

Articles:
b) Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories in the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," Comparative Studies in Society and History 32:2 (April 1990), 383-408. (BLS)
c) Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for
Graduate Student Presentation

Week 13 (April 9) – Occidentalism and the Islamist Paradigm

Text Readings: Lockman, pp. 172-77; 215-267

Articles: