CAST/HIST 318
AMERICAN ORIENTALISM

Oberlin College
Professor Shelley Lee

Fall 2012

Above: Steve Martin performs as King Tut on Saturday Night Live, 1978.
Right: New Republic cover from 1985 shows refigured Statue of Liberty as Asian woman

TR 3:00-4:20
King 121
4 SS CD WRi

Office hours and location
TR 11-12 and 1-2 (or by appt)
King 141-F
Email: shelee@oberlin.edu

DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Since the late eighteenth century, well before the arrival of large numbers of immigrants from Asia on North American shores, “Orientals” have influenced conceptions of American national identity and character. In this course, we will historicize and examine representations of Asia and persons of Asian ancestry in American thought and culture, beginning with Edward Said’s explanation of the origins of Orientalism in western thought and ending with the revival of Yellow Perilism in contemporary life. We will consider the social, political, and cultural contexts in which perceptions, images, and stereotypes emerged and how they have changed and/or endured over time. These explorations aim to clarify how representations of Asian people have functioned to shore up, and at times challenge, racially circumscribed notions of “Americanness” with respect to citizenship, morality, work, gender, and sexuality, among other areas.

The main methodological objective of the course is to provide students with an intensive historical research and writing experience, culminating in the production of an original research paper, 12-15 pages in length. While the class has a thematic focus and will include learning content, we will foreground in our discussions issues of historical method, such as gathering and analyzing sources, evaluating the validity of arguments, and properly contextualizing ideas and evidence. Discussions will also give us a chance to critique historical methods and talk about ways to supplement them with other disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches. Because this is a writing intensive course, each major assignment will require drafts and peer editing, the latter of which will take place over three writing workshops (see schedule).
REQUIREMENTS
There is just one book required for this class. It is available at Oberlin Bookstore and on reserve at Mudd Library. Other required readings will be available on Blackboard or distributed in class.


We will have one required film viewings of the movie The King and I. We will schedule this at a mutually convenient time.

Grading:

Final grades are calculated from a possible total of 200 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>193 - 200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>186 - 192</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>180 - 185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>174 - 179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>167 - 173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>160 - 166</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>153 - 159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>147 - 152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>140 - 146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>120 - 139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>119 &amp; below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades will consist of the following components:

Attendance and participation (25%) Your attendance is required and any absences, unless cleared by some documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) or a makeup assignment, will be considered unexcused and, thus, negatively impact your grade. If you miss a class be sure to speak with me to arrange a makeup assignment. However, excessive absences, whether made up or not, will be counted against your grade. This portion of your grade will also be calculated based on your contributions to discussion, demonstrated engagement, and respectfulness to your peers and instructor.

Discussion leading (5%). In most class sessions, we will discuss and dissect scholarly articles or book chapters as examples of historical research and analysis. One or two students will be assigned to lead these discussions. You are expected to offer your summary of the article’s argument, discuss its method of presentation, and provide original analysis, being sure to touch on how the piece sheds light on the challenges of doing historical research on the subject of American orientalism. You should speak for about ten minutes and get discussion started.

Blackboard posts (5%). You must post about assigned readings to Blackboard four times over the course of the semester, only for days that there are assigned readings. In these, you are to comment specifically on the readings’ sources, methods, and persuasiveness as an example of historical writing and analysis. You need not summarize their contents. Also you should discuss how the reading adds to your understanding of doing historical research and how in particular it helps you think through your own project. These should be posted by midnight before our meeting and I will draw on these for discussion. Presenters should feel free to use these as well.

Prospectus (15%). For this assignment you will present your topic and provide a preliminary bibliography. Your topic must relate to the history of American orientalism and the research must draw on primary sources. While you may use the assigned readings for ideas, your research cannot not duplicate them. The final prospectus should be 3-4 pages in length. You should consult with me before the draft is due. A draft is due September 25 and the final draft is due October 4.
**Historiography essay (20%).** The purpose of a historiographical essay is to identify and present important works, arguments, and debates on a particular topic in history. In this case, you will read and present the key works that relate to the subject of your research project. As your topic will be fairly focused and the paper will be relatively short, I do not expect you to discuss more than three book length sources. You must demonstrate their salience to your topic, clearly present their arguments, contributions and/or problems, and point out areas they collectively highlight for future research, in other words, where your paper will enter the conversation. The length should be 4-5 pages. Draft due **October 16** and final draft is due **October 30**.

**Research paper final draft (30%).** Your final draft should have a clear thesis and introduction that includes a discussion of sources and methods, literature review, and outline of the rest of the paper. Strong papers will sustain the thesis throughout, properly contextualize all evidence, provide complete citations, and be presented in a clear and well-organized manner. A full rough draft is due on December 6 and the final draft is due December 21 by 9:00 PM.

**Ungraded assignments.** There are other requirements in addition to the above that are not graded. The first is to share a primary source from your research to discuss with a partner (or partners). This is due **November 6**. You will also turn in a draft section of your paper (4-5) pages on **November 13**. This can be a draft of your introduction or a portion of the body. Failure to turn in any of these will result in not passing the class.

*Grades for the coursework will be based on displayed intellectual content, originality of thought, mastery of course materials, and quality of expression. Generally, I do not grant extensions or give makeup exams, and late assignments will be graded down 1/3 of a grade for each day late. I may make an exception if you speak with me well before a due date.*

**HONOR SYSTEM**
By enrolling in this class, you are agreeing to abide by Oberlin's Honor System. This means that you will refrain from plagiarizing and cheating, and that on all assignments you will write and sign the honor pledge (“I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in the assignment”). For papers, you must cite all written sources that you consulted, whether you quote directly or paraphrase. This is true whether you are using electronic or printed materials. Incomplete or improper citations are a form of plagiarism. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation formats, or have questions please consult me, a reference librarian, a writing tutor and/or a style manual. Failure to adhere to the Honor Code will result in a grade penalty, withholding of a grade, and/or reporting to the Student Honor Committee. Oberlin’s honor policy can be viewed at http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/2011-2012/11-Policies-Honor.pdf.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**
We will conduct class in a spirit of mutual respect and intellectual inquiry. We may have differing opinions on the topics of discussion, and I encourage you to question and debate with one another and me. However, disruptive or disrespectful conduct that includes interrupting others, badgering, and making ad hominem attacks will not be tolerated. It is also distracting and rude to engage in personal conversation or other diversions unrelated to class activity. Students who persist in such behavior may be asked to leave the class and penalized.

Leaving the room during class is distracting to the instructor and your classmates so please take care of your needs before class to avoid this disruption. I understand that compelling personal needs may force you to leave the room, so if this is the case, do inform me of any concerns, being as discreet as possible. Otherwise, habitually leaving the room without explanation will be counted as absences.

The use of cell phones or other mobile devices is disruptive, and therefore prohibited during class, except in emergencies. Turn off your devices or place them on silent mode while in class. Students are permitted to use computers for note-taking purposes only. If the use of computers for non-class purposes becomes a distraction, all laptops will be banned.
**ACADEMIC INCOMPLETES**
Incompletes at the end of the semester must receive approval from me at least 48 hours before the deadline.

**DISABILITY SERVICES**
The college will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services located in Peters G-27/G-28 and their instructor of any disability related needs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>THEORIES OF ORIENTALISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td>Course introduction and expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sept. 6 | Orientalism in Western thought  
Reading: Said, “The Scope of Orientalism” sections I and II (Blackboard)  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 2</th>
<th>HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND AMERICAN ORIENTALISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sept. 11 | Sources, methods, and frameworks  
Reading: Said, “Scope of Orientalism” sections III and IV (Blackboard); Klein, Cold War Orientalism, Chapters 1-3  |
| Sept. 13 | The study of American Orientalism  
Reading: Klein, Cold War Orientalism, Chapters 4-5  
FILM VIEWING (to be scheduled)  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 3</th>
<th>“COOLIES” AND AMERICAN FREEDOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sept. 18 | The meanings of freedom in the age of emancipation  
Reading: Tchen, “Porcelain, Tea, and Revolution” and “What Does China Want?”  |
| Sept. 20 | The “heathen Chinee” and American labor  
Reading: Jung, “Outlawing Coolies” (Blackboard)  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 4</th>
<th>SAVAGERY AND CIVILIZATION IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sept. 25 | Benevolent assimilation: The Spanish-American War and the Philippines  
Reading: Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” and Jacobson, “Children of Barbarism” (Blackboard)  
PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE  |
| Sept. 27 | WRITING WORKSHOP #1  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 5</th>
<th>QUEER AND CONTAINED SPACES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Oct. 2 | Library session with Eboni Johnson  
Reading: Lui, “Terra Incognita” (Blackboard)  
*For this session, we will meet in Mudd Library. Do come with preliminary thoughts on a research topic.*  |
| Oct. 4 | Fear of a mixed planet  
Reading: Lui, “Beyond Chinatown” and “Policing Urban Girls’ Mobility and Desires” (Blackboard)  
FINAL PROSPECTUS DUE  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 6</th>
<th>THE MYSTIQUE OF THE ORIENT: RELIGION AND POLITICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Oct. 9 | Eastern religions  
Reading: Iwamura, “Hyperreal Samadhi” (Blackboard)  |
| Oct. 11 | The “China Mystique” and gendering Orientalism  
Reading: Leong, “Pearl Sydenstricker Buck” (Blackboard)  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 7</th>
<th>WARTIME ENEMIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Oct. 16 | World War II and Japan  
Reading: Dower, “Know Your Enemy” and “Primitives, Children, and Madmen” (Blackboard)  
HISTORIOGRAPHY DRAFT DUE  |
| Oct. 18 | WRITING WORKSHOP #2  |

| WEEK 8 | *****FALL RECESS****** |
WEEK 9  ASIAN AMERICAN VOICES AND REPRESENTATION
Oct. 30  Early twentieth century Asian American sociologists
  Reading: Yu, “Wanted: Interpreters and Informants” (Blackboard)
HISTORIOGRAPHY FINAL DRAFT DUE
Nov. 1  The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority
  Reading: Klein, Cold War Orientalism, Chapter 6

WEEK 10  RADICAL ORIENTALISM IN THE 1960s AND 1970s
Nov. 6  Political inspiration and Third World unity
  Reading: Kelley and Esch, “Black Like Mao” (Blackboard)
  TURN IN PRIMARY SOURCE
Nov. 8  Working with primary sources

WEEK 11  AFRO-ASIAN CULTURAL CONNECTIONS
Nov. 13  Black-Asian connections in historical perspective
  Reading: Ho, “Kickin’ the White Man’s Ass” (Blackboard)
PAPER SECTION (4-5 PAGES) DUE
Nov. 15  WRITING WORKSHOP #3

WEEK 12  CRAFTING AND WRITING AN HISTORICAL ESSAY
Nov. 20  Session on scholarly writing in history
  Reading: Limerick, “Dancing with Professors”; Kammen, “Historians on Writing” (Blackboard)
Nov. 22  *** THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY ***

WEEK 13  SLAYING THE DRAGON
Nov. 27  Asian American feminist critiques of popular culture
  Reading: TBA
Nov. 29  New criticism
  Reading: TBA

WEEK 14  THE U.S. IN THE MIDDLE EAST: ORIENTALISM FULL CIRCLE
Dec. 4  Consuming the Middle East: Oil and holy places
  Reading: McAlister, “King Tut, Commodity Nationalism, and the Politics of Oil” (Blackboard)
Dec. 6  New terrorists and mad men
  Reading: McAlister, “Iran, Islam, and the Terrorist Threat” (Blackboard)
ROUGH DRAFT DUE

WEEK 15  ORIENTALISM POST 9-11
Dec. 11  The East and West in the 21st century
  Reading: TBA
Dec. 13  WRITING WORKSHOP #4

Final paper is due Friday, December 21 by 9:00 PM

**The contents of this syllabus are subject to change. I will notify you in class and via discussion group of any updates.**