Course #: CORE-UA 400

Fall 2016

Texts and Ideas:
Cultures of Travel and Mobility

Lectures
Instructor:
Prof. Hala Halim, Department of Comparative Literature (hh47@nyu.edu)

Recitations
Graduate Student Teaching Assistants:

Office hours
Instructor: office hours by appointment

Description
When, how and why have we come to associate travel with leisure and transnationalism, both involving a degree of privilege? What does such an association preclude our own times? Where, for example, would we factor in exiles and migrant laborers? What are the complicities between tourism and neo-colonialism? If we take the long view, what might we uncover about the relationship between travel and imperialism, and about the role in that relationship of ethnography, the guidebook, the museum? If mass tourism is a product of the modern era, what were earlier travelers, particularly from what we now think of as the non-Western world, after? What were their motives? What were the concepts through which they perceived a world that pre-dates the nation-state and how did they travel in that world? In what way are their texts different from modern texts we associate with travel (ethnography, the travelogue, the guidebook), who are their addressees and what writing conventions are at stake?

In this course, we will address these questions through literary, theoretical, and critical texts. The literary texts will take us from the fourteenth to the late twentieth century. The course aims to introduce concepts associated with travel as they change over time and space, and to develop interpretive and writing skills.

We begin with key theoretical texts that address the early modern period and acquaint us with signal concepts (Orientalism), and institutions (the museum) and genres (the guidebook) now associated with travel. From there, we step back historically to contemplate travel in the pre-modern Islamic world, its routes and motives, and the concepts (rihla, umma, ‘Adja’ib, etc.) associated with it, before addressing an exemplary text from the fourteenth century (Ibn Battuta). We then move to the nineteenth century with a canonical text of Orientalist ethnographic scholarship (Edward Lane) and two widely different critical positions on it. Reversing our vantage point, we then accompany an Egyptian intellectual (Rifa‘a Rafi‘ Al-Tahtawi) to France in the early nineteenth century through his landmark account that we will frame in relation to the notions of “transculturation” and “autoethnography” (Pratt). From there we take stock of anthropological reflections on travel in the twentieth century (Clifford) and a text (Ghosh) that pairs ethnography and history in a narrative that compares medieval with modern travel. We then take stock of enforced travel, as in exile (Said), and a narrative of Exile and return (Bargouthi). The course then considers the relationship between tourism and neocolonialism (Kincaid and
Black) before revisiting “the travel essay” (Morris) with the critical attention acquired along the way.

**Requirements & grade breakdown**
1-Three response papers, each of 6-7 pages (total 30%) 2-attendance of lectures and recitations (10%) 3-presentation in recitation (10%) 4-midterm exam (20%) 5-Final exam (30%)

**Deadlines:** Late papers will be penalized. If you have an emergency, please contact your TA before the due date.

**Academic honesty:** NYU considers plagiarism to be a very serious offense. Plagiarism consists in presenting ideas and words without acknowledging their source and is an offense against academic integrity. Any of the following acts constitutes a crime of plagiarism:

- Using a phrase, sentence, or passage from another person’s work without quotation marks and attribution of the source.
- Paraphrasing words or ideas from another’s work without attribution.
- Reporting as your own research or knowledge any data or facts gathered or reported by another person.
- Submitting in your own name papers or reports completed by another.
- Submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors.

Plagiarism can be avoided by taking careful notes while reading—whether printed text or online—and scrupulously citing the sources used in developing your paper. If you have any questions about citing sources, please ask your TA.

**Weekly schedule**

**Week 1**
Sept. 6-9

1-Introduction to course theme and requirements

**Week 2**
Sept. 12-16
2-Edward Said, *Orientalism* (pp. 1-72)
3-Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem* (pp. 85-130, and endnotes)
[**NB:** students to visit the Galleries of Egyptian Art in The Metropolitan Museum to write a response paper in dialogue with Grewal’s *Home and Harem*]

**Week 3**
Sept. 19-23
4-Arab medieval travel: George Fadlo Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times* (pp. 51-86); articles from *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* on “Dar al-Islam,” “Rihla,” “Umma,” and “Adja’ib”
[**NB:** response paper 1 due in first recitation of the week]
5-Arab medieval travel: Ross Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta* (pages to be inserted)

Week 4
Sept. 26-30
6-Arab medieval travel: Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa* (pp. 41-105)
7-Arab medieval travel: Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa* (pp. 106-166)

Week 5
Oct. 3-7
8-Arab medieval travel: Ibn Battuta, cont. (pp. 167-240, and endnotes)
9-Orientalism and ethnography: Jason Thompson, editor’s “Introduction” (pages to be inserted), in Edward Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*  
[**NB**: response paper 2 on Ibn Battuta due in class]

Week 6
Oct. 10-15
10-Oct. 10: Fall Break
11-Orientalism and ethnography Edward Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (pages to be inserted)  
[**NB**: guest lecturer to present in session of Oct. 12]

Week 7
Oct. 17-21
12-Orientalism and ethnography Lane cont. (pages to be inserted)
13-Extracts on Lane’s *Manners and Customs* from Said’s *Orientalism* and Leila Ahmed’s *Edward W. Lane*

Week 8
Oct. 24-28
14-*midterm exam in class*

Week 9
Oct. 31-Nov. 4
16-Transculturation, autoethnography, and the 19th-century Arab journey west: Tahtawi cont. (pp. 95-189)
17-Transculturation, autoethnography, and the 19th-century Arab journey west: Tahtawi cont. (pp. 213-245, 254-276)

Week 10
Nov. 7-11
18-Anthropology and travel in the 20th century: James Clifford, *Routes* (pages to be inserted)
19-Medieval vs. modern travel: Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (pp. 11-105)
[NB: 1-guest lecturer to present this session 2-response paper 3, comparing al-Tahtawi and Lane, due in class]

Week 11
Nov. 14-18
20- Medieval vs. modern travel: Ghosh cont. (pp. 107-289)
21- Ghosh wrap-up (pp. 289-355) and Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile” (173-186)

Week 12
Nov. 21-25
22-Exile and return: “Foreword by Edward Said (pp. vii-xi) and Mourid Barghouti, I Saw Ramallah (pp. 1-70)
23-THANKSGIVING RECESS (Nov. 23-27)

Week 13
Nov. 28-Dec. 2
24-Exile and return: Barghouti cont. (pp. 71-184)
25-Tourism and neocolonialism: Jamaica Kincaid, A Small Place (pp. 3-37)

Week 14
Dec. 5-10
25-Tourism and neocolonialism: Kincaid cont. (39-81)
26-Tourism and neocolonialism: In class screening and discussion of clips from Stephanie Black (dir.), Life and Debt

Week 15
Dec. 12-16
27-The travel essay: Jan Morris, Among the Cities (essays on Alexandria, Beirut and New York; pp. 14-21, 52-58, and 259-281)
28-Course wrap-up

**Final exam: date and venue TBA**