

EAST 515
Beyond Orientalism
M 4:05-6:55pm
SH 688 1151

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Office Hours: Tuesday 4:15-5:15pm
Thursday 4:15-5:15 pm
688 Sherbrooke Room 276 or by Zoom
Join URL: <https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/82135605476> (Waiting room enabled.)

Course Description

Using Edward Said's *Orientalism* as a springboard, this course explores what it means to study non-Western cultures at a Western institution like McGill. This course provides an introduction to critical theory via the lens of East Asian Studies. How can we use critical theory to be better scholars and students of East Asian Studies? What tools and resources does theory offer? We will explore different theoretical approaches including postcolonial and decolonial theory, media theory, and the study of nationalisms and borders. Gender will also be a consistent through-line in the course materials.

One question we will be working with is the relationship between theory and primary texts. We will use theoretically engaged modes of interpretation to practice close readings of a single primary text over the course of the semester: *Samurai Champloo*, directed by Watanabe Shinichirō, 2004-2005. *Samurai Champloo* combines transnational influences from East Asia, the West, Ryukyu, Ainu culture, and global Black cultures. It offers a compelling take on the issues described in these theoretical texts. What are the power dynamics when these disparate cultures meet in narrative form? How do Said and the other thinkers we cover help us to understand this anime better? Conversely, how does *Samurai Champloo* help us understand the theories anew?

Required Texts

Readings are all available on MyCourses.

Samurai Champloo is available for streaming on YouTube, Apple TV, and Google Play starting at \$35.99 for the entire run. The streaming version is dubbed into English. The original Japanese audio with English subs is available on Blu-ray for purchase. You may choose to use either version.

Email Policy

I do my best to respond to emails in a timely manner. Please allow some time before you receive a response, especially on weekends and holidays.

Please use emails for short questions and concerns. For anything requiring more substantive discussion (such as paper ideas or help with other assignments), please use office hours instead.

Course Format and Delivery

This course relies on discussion and learning through dialogue. It is a collaborative exercise in interpretation and scholarship. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all reading and viewing materials. There will be minimal or even no lecture from the instructor. This is an advanced 500-level course, and students are the number one resource for their own learning.

We will have a short 10-15-minute break every session, since the class meeting time is almost 3 hours.

As long as class is remote, we will meet synchronously on Zoom during class time. We will shorten the meeting as much as possible to avoid Zoom fatigue. I will try my best to let you go early.

The meetings will be recorded and posted for students who cannot attend live. It is possible that even in-person meetings will be recorded for the use of students who cannot attend. I realize it is uncomfortable that student participation is recorded, but please understand that the recording is private, and only your classmates and instructor have access. You may not share the recording.

Assignments

--All readings and viewings are to be completed before class time. The *Samurai Champloo* episodes will not be screened in class, though we may look at clips together. Rather, you are expected to watch the episodes on your own time.

--Discussion Post to MyCourses (9 times, 9x3%, 27%)

For your discussion post, write a one-to-two paragraph reflection about the reading and a question for discussion. Your response should briefly summarize one of the main points of a weekly reading, and your discussion question should offer critique, interpretation, or connections to the primary text, *Samurai Champloo*. The days of your presentations, you may be excused from writing a discussion post. Due Sunday at 9pm.

--Presentation (2 times, 2x10%, 20%): A sign-up sheet will be posted soon. For your presentation, choose one of the weekly readings. Your presentation should take the following format: a brief (5-10 minutes) summary of the writer's main argument; a close reading of a passage you found provocative, problematic, or interesting; and three questions for discussion. The discussion questions can take the form of critiques of the reading (what is the author missing? What are some blind spots? What would you do differently in your own writing?). Or, your questions can make connections to real-world issues outside the theoretical texts. Or, you are also encouraged to make connections between your reading and the primary text for the week, *Samurai Champloo*.

--Theory Diary (5 entries, 5x4%, 20%): Inspired by practitioners of autotheory (<https://en.everybodywiki.com/Autotheory>), who combine critical theory with autobiographical reflection, we will produce a Theory Diary. The purpose of this assignment is to advocate for critical theory's relevance to the real world. You will write one one-page entry per topic/unit on the syllabus (beginning with What is Orientalism? and moving on from there). Each entry will describe a connection between the theoretical texts we read and your everyday life. You may wish to incorporate examples from popular culture and the media, your other classes, current events, or personal experiences. (You do not have to share personal experiences if you do not wish to.) You may incorporate images in your diary as well (for example, a still of a video or advertisement that the readings in the unit remind you of). Due Tuesday each time we finish a unit as marked on the weekly schedule.

Another option is a video theory diary. You may make a short 3-5-minute video rather than a one-page entry. You might wish to look at video diarists online, the Japanese poet Yoshimasu Gōzō's gozoCiné project, or works by film directors like Trinh T. Minh-ha, Jonas Mekas, or Chris Marker.

The Theory Diary is optional. If you skip the Theory Diary, you may extend your final paper in length. Your final paper will then be worth 53%. This option is recommended if you're using your term paper as a stepping-stone to your thesis, a conference paper, or a publication opportunity.

--Final project (33%): Prompts will be available later in the semester. There will be options for both graduates and undergraduates. Length will be 7-12 pages for undergraduates and 15-20 pages for graduate students, double-spaced with size 12 font. There may be options besides a traditional argumentative essay for those who are interested.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

Community

Building community and relationships with your fellow students is one of the most important parts of the college experience. I encourage you to be creative and reach out to your classmates, especially during these lonely days of remote instruction. Please do consider creating a Facebook group, for example, starting an email list, or meeting on other platforms such as Animal Crossing or Minecraft, for those who are interested.

As long as class is remote, I will leave the meeting at the end of class and randomly select a student to serve as host on Zoom. You are then free to stay and chat if you wish. It is optional to stay after class, and you are of course free to go as soon as class gets out.

Schedule

What is Orientalism?

Mon. Jan. 10
--Introductions

Mon. Jan. 17
—Edward Said, "Preface," "Introduction," and "Redrawn Frontiers, Redefined Issues, Secularized Religion," from *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003/1978).
--Edward Said, "Orientalism and After: An Interview with Edward Said," *Radical Philosophy* 63 (Spring 1993), 22-32.
--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 1-2

Mon. Jan. 24

—Chow, Rey. "Foucault, Race, and Racism." Chapter. In *After Foucault: Culture, Theory, and Criticism in the 21st Century*, edited by Lisa Downing, 107–21. After Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. doi:10.1017/9781316492864.009.
--Foucault, Michel. "Right of Death and Power Over Life." In *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1. United States: Penguin, 1978.

--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 3-4

Mon. Jan. 31

--Edward Said, "Preface" and "Chapter 1," in *Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999).
"Introduction" and "The Issue of Representation," in *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), ix-xix, 37-45.
"Timeliness and Lateness," in *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005).
--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 5-6

Recommended:

--Theodor Adorno, "Late Style in Beethoven," in *Essays on Music*, edited by Richard Leppert, translated by Susan H Gillespie (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 564-569.

--Frederic Jameson, "Chapter 1," in *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), excerpts.

Mon. Feb. 7

--Frantz Fanon, "Preface" and "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" in *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

--Homi Bhabha, "Introduction" and "Of Mimicry and Man," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1-18 and 85-92.

-- *Samurai Champloo*, Episode 7-8

Diary Entry Due Tues. Feb. 1

Postcolonial and Border Feminisms

Mon. Feb. 14

--Leela Gandhi, "After Colonialism" and "Postcolonialism and Feminism," from *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Columbia University Press, 1998), 1-22; 81-101.

--Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," in *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 179-200.

-----"Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), 24-28.

--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 9-10

Mon. Feb. 21

--Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), 1-46.

--Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 1-69.

--bell hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 21-39.

--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 11-13 (skip 12)

recommended:

--Gloria Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers," in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 26-36.

` Diary Entry Due Tues. Feb. 21

Decolonial Theory

Mon. Feb. 28

NO CLASS

Watch *Samurai Champloo* Episode 14 over the break. Got to keep up!

Mon. Mar. 7

--Ramón Grosfoguel, "The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political Economy Paradigms," *Cultural Studies* 21, number 2-3 (2007): 211-223.

--Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, number 1 (2012): 1-40.

--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 14-16

Recommended:

-- Katsuya Hirano, "Settler Colonialism In the Making of Japan's Hokkaidō," *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, eds. Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (London: Routledge, 2016), 327-338.

Diary Entry Due Tues. Mar. 8.

Nationalisms, Borders, and Sovereignty

Mon. Mar. 14

— E. J. Hobsbawm, "Introduction," "The Apogee of Nationalism," and "Nationalism in the Late Twentieth Century," from *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

— Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1983), pp. 1-82.

Recommended:

--Eiichiro Azuma, "Introduction," in *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 1-29.

Samurai Champloo, Episode 17-18

Mon. Mar. 21

—Tomonori Sugimoto, "Urban Settler Colonialism: Policing and Displacing Indigeneity in Taipei, Taiwan," *City & Society*, 31:2 (2019), 227-250.

--Parreñas, Rhacel Salazar, Maria Cecilia Hwang, and Heather Ruth Lee. "What Is Human Trafficking? A Review Essay." *Signs* 37, no. 4 (2012): 1015–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/664472>.

--Annmaria Shimabuku, "Transpacific Colonialism: An Intimate View of Transnational Activism in Okinawa," *The New Centennial Review* 12, Number 1 (Spring 2012): 131-158.

--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 19-20

-- recommended: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/exit-denied-women-losing-the-right-to-leave-in-the-philippines/>

The big professional conference in my field, Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, is this weekend. Please understand that I may not respond to emails until later in the week. Response times may be slower in the time leading up to and following the conference, too.

Diary Entry Due Tues. Mar. 22

Media and Gazes

Mon. Mar. 28

—Ani Maitra and Rey Chow, “What’s ‘in’? Disaggregating Asia through New Media Actants,” in *Routledge Handbook of New Media in Asia*, eds. Larrisa Hjorth and Olivia Khoo (London: Routledge 2015), 17-27.

—Thomas Lamarre, “Platformivity: Media Studies, Area Studies,” in *Regional Platforms*, ed. Jinying Li and Marc Steinberg, special issue of *Digital Asiascapes* 4.3 (2017): 285-305.

--Henry Jenkins, "Pop Cosmopolitanism," in *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*, edited by M. M. Suárez-Orozco and D.B. Qin-Hilliard (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 114-140.

--*Samurai Champloo*, Episode 21-22

Mon. Apr. 4

--Koichi Iwabuchi, "Globalization, Digitalization, and Renationalization: Some Reflections from Japanese Cases," *Situations* 12:1 (2019): 1-22.

--Tony Mitchell, "Self-Orientalism, reverse Orientalism and pan-Asian pop culture flows in Dick Lee's Transit Lounge," in *Rogue Flows*, 95-118.

Samurai Champloo, Episode 23-24

Diary Entry Due Tues. Apr. 5

Mon. Apr. 11

Wrap-up and overview

Samurai Champloo, Episode 25-26

recommended: Jiwon Ahn, "Samurai Champloo: Transnational Viewing," in *How to Watch Television*, edited by Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 364-372.

For Fun and Inspiration

The internet is a great place to go to make sense of critical theory and start applying it to your everyday life. Here are some pages you might wish to visit for inspiration for your Theory Diary, or just to help process the readings.

<https://www.instagram.com/theoryismypraxis/>

<https://www.instagram.com/decolonialatlas/>
<https://twitter.com/againstjapanism>
<https://www.facebook.com/MemingPhD>

...and many many more! Reddit and Tumblr are also great places to look for approachable takes on critical theory, though I am less familiar with them. If you see a good page somewhere, please let me know!