

London Study Abroad Spring 2022
Roehampton University

Asian Studies 491- Z Topics in Asian Studies/English 494 Study Abroad in England (WI)

Through Colonial Eyes: Representations of Asia in Literature and Film

The field of Cultural Studies that focuses on the links with Colonialism is an exciting and dynamic one. It explores the interaction between colonialism and culture in ways that have opened up new areas of research and utilized new sources. Topics such as gender, sexuality, identity, religion, resistance, and visions of a new nation all reveal the transformative aspects of empire—both on the colony as well as the metropole. In other words—colonialism isn't just all about markets, geographic expansion, and political rule. This course looks at the interpretative possibilities available for understanding power relations that invariably inhere in colonized societies and express themselves through more cultural forms.

Literature and Film are two important ways to imagine and represent social realities. This course explores the *social context* of the act of writing—as opposed to stylistic, textual analyses—by considering the imagery and constructions of the Asian exotic "Other" produced by British authors within the context of colonial conquest. It studies the projection of stereotypes that have shaped cultural perceptions through a consideration of different texts and films. It also considers how such productions have themselves been influenced by shifts in political, economic, and individual orientations. What does it mean, for example, to say that a dominant group often produces knowledge about a subordinate other? What is the relation between knowledge and power? These issues are discussed through a consideration of several novels and films that emerged from colonial Britain and elsewhere that reveal its vision of empire and the peoples that it has conquered. The interpretative possibilities available for the understanding of the power relations that invariably inhere in colonized societies is a primary concern as are the replications of those very same constructions in today's Britain.

The main course objectives are twofold: 1) the study of how colonialism influenced representations of Asia in British and European society and culture and 2) to learn how to be critical readers in understanding the multiple ways colonial power relations and stereotypes infuse these creative endeavors.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Specifically for Study Abroad:

Demonstrate **awareness of your own cultural values and biases** and how these impact your ability to interact with others

Demonstrate **knowledge of diversity** with a focus on the population and/or topic of interest in your Study Abroad Program

Demonstrate an increased **capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.**

Be able to communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse individuals and groups

Specifically for this Course:

An understanding of the ways that literature reflects social realities and enhances our knowledge.

Demonstrate an understanding of key creative texts that reflect specific issues relating to the formation of class, race, gender, and religious identities in Britain.

Demonstrate an integration of this knowledge with the study location

An encouragement of questions that challenge our previous assumptions and cultural values that lead to new insights and an appreciation of multiple viewpoints

Texts:

Kim, Rudyard Kipling

Passage to India, E.M. Forster

Burmese Days, George Orwell

The Sea Wall, Marguerite Duras

The Quiet American, Graham Greene

Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad

Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe (166)

Films: TBA [will relate to the texts]

Criteria for Student Evaluation:*

▪ attendance and participation in the class discussions (**10%**). After **three** absences, each one will result in a **5%** lowering of your grade. Both the instructor and the students are also expected to be on time. Three late entries are *considered an absence*, as is anything over 15 minutes after the start of class.

▪ two presentations on topics engaging issues that arise from the class and reading materials (**10%**). These will show an appreciation of how different issues (e.g., class, race, gender, generation) intersect and overlap with one another.

▪ reading journal: weekly entries on the class materials and discussions (**30%**). These will assess your thoughtful and analytical reactions and how they may relate to your actual experiences in London as well as reflect your ability to interact and communicate effectively with others in a foreign setting; they will be collected and graded periodically.

▪ two 2-3 page “letters” to characters in the books read or to others (**10%**). To assess how well you comprehend and empathize with the key issues and dilemmas that the characters may face.

▪ two critical essays of 1250 words each (c. 5 pages) that takes up several of the major themes addressed in the readings (40%).

**All percentages given are to be understood as general guides.*

Grading Guidelines:

A work: outstanding work that demonstrates significant mastery of subject materials; i.e., shows analytical reading and critical engagement with conceptual issues.

Responds to questions (all parts)

Shows original thinking in presentation of own ideas

Excellent presentation; i.e., develops a focused and clear argument and articulates a sustained train of logical thought.

Pays attention to spelling and grammar.

B work: shows clear evidence of engagement with the materials as well as critical insight

Responds to questions (all parts)

Develops a focused and clear argument that proceeds logically (i.e., has a beginning, middle, and conclusion)

Very good standard of presentation

C work: shows some understanding of the key factual and/or theoretical issues and addresses them

Responds to question (all parts)

Reveals, in places, examples of a clear train of thought or argument

Concludes properly

Good standard of presentation

D work: * shows some awareness and understanding of the materials or theoretical issues, but with little development

Questions or parts are omitted

Misunderstandings are evident

Shows some evidence of planning, although irrelevant/unrelated material included

Fails to develop a clear or coherent response, but shows occasional knowledge or insight

F work: *fails to address materials or develop an argument; irrelevant response

Fails to address question

Fails to demonstrate knowledge of the key issues or arguments

Contains clear conceptual or factual errors or misunderstandings

Poorly organized/or poorly written

* I will make a special effort with any student who has borderline work and desires to improve upon it.

All percentages given are to be understood as general guides.

PLAGIARISM: This is a most serious academic offense and will be treated accordingly. It is defined as “to steal and use” the ideas or writings of another and pass it off as one’s own. Whether done *consciously or unconsciously*, appropriating others’ writings or language—without acknowledging the sources—is a legal offense (some universities may expel students who plagiarize). The act is not excused because of oversight, ignorance, or sloppiness.

Plagiarism is considered a form of theft (of the work of others) as well as fraud (i.e., misrepresentation of others’ work as yours).

With the easy accessibility of the web, there is the real danger of being seduced by a “cut and paste” mentality. Learn from others—that’s fine; but be sure the final presentation and interpretation of ideas are your own. Anything you locate I can locate as well!!

Further information is available at the back of the University Catalogue. Don’t hesitate to talk to me if you are unsure about citing others’ work. Direct quotations must be indicated, paraphrasing must be acknowledged, and ideas taken from others must be attributed to their sources.