This course explores the intersections of culture, race, and imperialism and will examine US representations of and engagements with the Middle East over the last 150 years. Participants will study American power at home and abroad and some of the racial and gendered assumptions crucial to it in the diverse realms of culture. We will explore the production of various “truths” about Middle Eastern peoples, places, religions, and societies manufactured in governing circles, literary spheres, Hollywood and television, and institutions of US higher education. As Native American populations continued to be dispossessed in the early 20th Century and as American power abroad began to intensify after WWI, the US began to establish its authority in the Middle East. This course will trace some of the lineages of racism and empire through an examination of a range of writers, including Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Edward Said, Melanie McAlister, Ella Habiba Shohat, Timothy Mitchell, Lila Abu Lughod, and others. All majors and levels are welcome!
**Required Texts:**
1) Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & US Interests in the Middle East since 1945*
2) Steve Caton, *Lawrence of Arabia: A Film’s Anthropology*
3) Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*
4) Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11*

In addition to the required texts above, there are other required readings on TRUNK denoted by [OL] on the syllabus.

**Films and Videos:**
This course deals substantially with visual culture. As such, students will view a number of wonderful films and documentaries this semester. These visuals are required, not optional, and you will be responsible for the material and themes covered by them. They have been streamed and I will be putting them up on TRUNK in the near future. They include:

2) “Reel Bad Arabs,” [http://tufts.kanopystreaming.com/node/41567](http://tufts.kanopystreaming.com/node/41567)
3) “Lawrence of Arabia,” (streamed on TRUNK)
4) “Under One Sky,” (streamed on TRUNK)
5) “Peace, Propaganda, & the Promised Land,” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAN5GjJKAac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAN5GjJKAac)

**Course Requirements:**
1) Four 2-page Response Papers  25%
2) Midterm Exam 6-8 pages (due Friday, March 13th 4pm)  25%
3) Attendance and Participation  10%
4) Final Exam or 20 page Final Paper (due Wed, May 6th 4pm)  40%
5) Map Quiz  EXTRA CREDIT!

**Response Papers:**
All students must write 4 2-page Response Papers over the course of the semester. You may choose any week to write response papers except the week the Midterm is due and the final week of class. All response papers are due by **4pm on the Monday night** before our Tuesday class by email (send to Thomas.abowd@tufts.edu). No exceptions. You may only write 1 response paper for any particular week. These assignments are meant to do two things: 1) In the first half or third of the response you need to summarize the readings/films you have chosen to write about, providing their major themes or arguments; and then 2) In the last segment of the paper provide your own opinions, impressions, critiques of the readings/films. You may write about the readings or the films for a particular week. If you get inspired you may write about both texts and films for the week but need not do so.

**Map Quiz:**
All students will be tested on the countries and cities of the Middle East during the third week of classes. Having a solid grasp of the social and political geography of the area will, I guarantee,
make an enormous difference in your capacity to grasp the themes of the course. I will make available the relevant maps on TRUNK during the first week of class.

**Writing Guidelines and Assistance:**
I am deeply committed to helping all students improve their writing and critical thinking skills. Toward that end I will make available resources and assistance throughout the term to help enable you to become more effective writers.

**Learning Objectives:**

**Intellectual objectives:** 1) to show students how culture is political and the product of power relations that often go unrecognized and unseen; 2) to explore US Imperialism historically and today; 3) to challenge students to see that which is familiar and taken-for-granted in new ways; 4) to enable students to engage theoretical concerns relating to literature, cinema, and visual culture more generally; and 5) to explore theoretical and historical concerns around colonialism, imperialism, racism and their impacts.

**Practical objectives:** 1) to assess data and evidence critically from texts and visual culture; 2) to be able to draw from a variety of literary and scholarly textual sources, including fiction, historical texts, films, journalism, new media, to name a few; 3) to be able to discuss literary and scholarly texts with a strong understanding of the contexts of their production, reception, and circulation; 4) To be able to write effectively in communicating original ideas and research findings.

**Basis for Participation Grade: Some Guidelines**
Your final participation grade will not simply reflect how many times you spoke in class. Rather, you will be assessed based on the *quality and thoughtfulness* of your remarks. Here are some standards for assessing student participation in this course.

**Excellent participation includes:** Sustained, active involvement in class discussions; significant contributions to discussions; contributions that are relevant and insightful; meaningful questions and responses to the comments of professor and others; using concrete examples from course materials to support assertions; creative analysis of materials that opens up substantial intellectual engagement; completing assignments on time; and respect for others, especially in disagreement. Abiding by the class rules stipulated below.

**Above average participation includes:** Active involvement in class discussions; considerable and consistent contribution to discussions; grasping the meaning and significance of assigned materials; a willingness to question and respond to the comments of others in a meaningful way; completing assignments on time; and respect for others, especially in disagreement. Abiding by the class rules.

**Average participation includes:** fair preparation; basic comprehension of assigned materials; attempts to analyze and interpret assigned readings in a meaningful way; a willingness to
contribute to discussion when called on; completing assignments on time; and respect for others, especially in disagreement. Abiding by the class rules.

**Below average participation includes:** inadequate preparation; infrequent involvement in and listening to discussion; sporadic attempts to contribute to discussion when called on; rare attempts to intervene in the activities of the class; repeating points made by others; incomplete and late assignments; repeatedly arriving to class late.

**Ground Rules for the Course. Please Read Carefully. You are Responsible for Knowing and Abiding by these Rules:**

1) **Email Correspondence:** Because of the sheer volume of emails that I receive daily, I am unable to return email messages right away. Further, I am unable to communicate by email about subjects that require longer conversations. It is really best to come and talk to me directly about such issues during office hours. For example, I cannot give pointers for papers or tests over email. I cannot relate what happened in classes that students missed over email. I cannot have discussions about changing grades over email. If you have questions that require more involved conversations, I’m ready to address your issues, concerns, and questions during office hours.

2) **A Necessary Request:** Please give me the ten minutes before lecture begins. Questions or concerns that you may have cannot adequately be dealt with right before class starts. In the few moments before lecture, I (like every other professor I know) need time to collect my thoughts, set up audio-visual equipment, etc. As mentioned, I’m more than happy to meet you during office hours to discuss any concerns with the course you might be having.

3) **Attendance and Assignment Deadlines:** Attendance is required and expected. I will have students sign in for every class period. An excellent or poor attendance record can significantly help or hurt your grade. There is no need to email or contact me to inform me that you will not be in class. However, I do require medical documentation from a health care provider for any exam or paper that you miss/turn in late because of illness. **This must be also documented by the Dean’s office if an extension for illness or another matter is to be granted.** Assignments that are turned in late will be marked down one letter grade (two letter grades if more than 24 hours late, three letter grades if more than 48 hours late). No exceptions.

4) **Those unable to make class on a particular day are responsible for acquiring notes, handouts, and instructions from fellow classmates. If you miss class, you must take responsibility for getting what you missed from a classmate.**

5) **Please come to class prepared to discuss the material. Keeping up with the readings on a weekly basis will be absolutely essential if you are to do well.**

6) **If you have a disability and require accommodations,** please contact the instructor in the first two weeks of class so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. If you require more time for tests, I must see the necessary documentation from the appropriate Tufts office at least one week before the test.
7) Students must be on time for class. Late arrivals disrupt the learning environment and students who are late make negative impressions. Anyone arriving to class more than 10 minutes late will be marked absent for that day.

8) Eating is not permitted in class. Students are welcome to bring drinks but not food. Students are required to pick up their mess and garbage after they are finished.

9) Cheating is forbidden. Serious cases of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the class, with the potential of further disciplinary action. Please come and talk to me if you are confused about what constitutes plagiarism. Students should also consult the university policy with regard to academic dishonesty. As part of this course, I will utilize Turnitin to help determine the originality of your work.

***Course Schedule***

**Thursday, January 15th—Introduction to the course**

**Tuesday, January 20th—Introductory Theoretical Concerns: Knowledge/Power**

**Readings:**


**Screen:** “Orientalism: Edward Said”

**Thursday, January 22nd—Introductory Theoretical Concerns: Knowledge/Power II**

**Readings:**
Mahmoud Mamdani, from *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, pp. 3-62 [OL]

**Tuesday, January 27th—Early Travels to the Middle East in the Era of High Colonialism**

**Readings:**
1) Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp. 1-42

2) Mark Twain, from *Innocents Abroad*, Chapters L-LII [OL]

3) H. Obenzinger, from *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania*, pp. 3-13 [OL]


Thursday, January 29th—Early Travels in the Era of High Colonialism II

Readings:
1) H. Obenzinger, from *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and Holy Land Mania*, pp. 39-60 [OL]
2) Mark Twain, from *Innocents Abroad*, Chapters LIII-LIV [OL]

Map Quiz

Tuesday, February 3rd—Hollywood and the Invention of the “Savage”

Readings:
2) Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs*, pp. 1-37 [OL]

Screen: “Reel Bad Arabs”

Thursday, February 5th—Rethinking and Expanding the Critique of Orientalism

Readings:
1) Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp. 43-83

Tuesday, February 10th—Lawrence of Arabia

Readings:
Steve Caton, *Lawrence of Arabia*, pp. 1-62

Screen: “Lawrence of Arabia”

Thursday, February 12th—“Lawrence of Arabia” and the Politics of Representation

Readings:
Steve Caton, *Lawrence of Arabia*, pp. 63-99

Tuesday, February 17th—Masculinity and Empire in “Lawrence of Arabia”

Readings:
Steve Caton, *Lawrence of Arabia*, pp. 100-141
Thursday, February 19th—NO CLASS UNIVERSITY POLICY

Tuesday, February 24th—Whose Arabia? Whose Homeland?

Readings:
Steve Caton, Lawrence of Arabia, pp. 172-258

Thursday, February 26th—The Politics of “Saving” in Human Rights Discourse

Readings:
1) Lila Abu Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving?, pp. 1-53

Tuesday, March 3rd—Gendered Orientalism

Readings:
1) Lila Abu Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving?, pp. 54-112
2) Amira Jarmakani, Imagining Arab Womanhood, pp. 1-26 [OL]

Screen: “Under One Sky”

Thursday, March 5th—Gender and the Representation of Violence in “The Orient”

Readings:
Lila Abu Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving?, pp. 113-142

Tuesday, March 10th—The Gendered Racialization of the Middle East

Readings:
Lila Abu Lughod, Do Muslim Women Need Saving?, pp. 143-172; 201-227

Thursday, March 12th—No Class

Midterms Due Friday, March 13th 4pm

***SPRING BREAK***
Tuesday, March 24th—(Re)Inventing the Holy Land

Readings:
1) “Palestine/Israel Primer” [OL]
2) H. Obenzinger, from American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and Holy Land Mania, pp. 61-83 [OL]
3) Herman Melville, from Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage to the Holy Land (1879) [OL]

Thursday, March 26th—The US, Israel, and American Power in the Middle East

Readings:
Noam Chomsky, from Hegemony and Survival, pp. 11-50 [OL]

Screen: “Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land”

Tuesday, March 31st—The US, Israel, and the Palestinians after 1967

Readings:
1) Noam Chomsky, from Hegemony and Survival, pp. 157-216 [OL]
2) Melanie McAlister, Epic Encounters, pp. 155-197

Thursday, April 2nd—News Production and the American Imperial Imagination

Readings:
Amahl Bishara, from Back Stories, pp. 1-33; 202-228 [OL]

Tuesday, April 7th—The Terrorist Stereotype

Readings:
Evelyn Alsultany, Arabs and Muslims in the Media, pp. 1-46

Thursday, April 9th—Gender, Race, and Representation after 9/11/01

Readings:
Evelyn Alsultany, Arabs and Muslims in the Media, pp. 71-99
**Tuesday, April 14th—The War as Image**

**Readings:**
1) Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media*, pp. 100-131

**Thursday, April 16th—The US Empire and the Middle East Today**

**Readings:**
Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media*, pp. 163-178

**Tuesday, April 21st—Contemporary Orientalisms**

**Readings:**
Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp. 266-307

**Thursday, April 23rd—Last Day of Class: Summation**

No Reading

***FINAL EXAM/FINAL PAPERS DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 4th 1pm***