The purpose of this course is to prepare students for writing their BA theses and guide them through the process. Students will read and discuss a body of literary, critical, historical, and theoretical texts related to the concept of Orientalism in order to learn how an exemplary research topic can be developed, how scholars of literature and culture pose research questions, and how they attempt to answer them by using supporting evidence. Based on this preliminary reading, students will formulate their own research projects related to the topic of Orientalism. They will be encouraged to explore literary and/or cultural materials of their own choosing.

Put very simply, Orientalism is an exoticist mode of thinking about and representing Asia and Asians by people in Europe and the US over the centuries; it is also a set of practices based on Orientalist assumptions. As Edward Said and Gary Okihiro have persuasively argued, because Westerners have tended to look at Asians through the lens of Orientalist iconic images and discourses, they have vacillated between fear (of "The Yellow Peril") and fascination (with a seductive, exotic, and feminized Asia). Fearing "The Yellow Peril," between 1882 and 1956 white Americans passed laws to prevent Asian immigration and racial intermarriage. Yet Americans were also convinced of the passivity and "feminine nature" of Asians, and thus became entangled in long wars in Asia. Fascinated by the exotic Orient, white Americans traveled east, collected Asian art, imitated Japanese haiku, and brought home Asian wives.

We will start with Orientalist representations in US popular culture to see how Asian Americans have responded to them by using complex strategies of accommodation and resistance. As analytical tools we will use theories of Orientalism inspired by Edward Said's study Orientalism (1978). Our reading material will make it apparent that American Orientalism, an offshoot of European Orientalism, has undergone many revisions over the past century. Also, the Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Middle-Eastern brands of Orientalism differed in many subtle ways. Thus we should really speak of many Orientalisms rather than one monolithic discourse. Yet they all share the basic assumptions: that the East is essentially different from the West, and that the exotic, ancient, mysterious, irrational, passive, and feminine East is the polar opposite of the modern, rational, active, and masculine West.

The syllabus opens with an erotic tale about Japan, Pierre Loti's Madame Chysanthème (1887), which was translated from the French and attracted a large readership in the US the 1890s. Henry James was one of Loti's more vocal admirers. This tale was revised by John Luther Long and published in 1898 as Madame Butterfly. We shall compare these two texts with several rewrites, including a vengeful sequel by Onoto Watanna (1899), a parody by Yone Noguchi (1901), and a satirical play about East/West relations by David Henry Hwang, M. Butterfly (1986). At the end of this sequence we will view David Cronenberg's film adaptation of this play.

The second set of texts were chosen to illustrate Frank Chin's observation that in the US, Orientalist hate coexisted symbiotically with Orientalist love. Taking our cue from Chin, we will look at two oppositionally constructed Chinese stereotypes: Sax Rohmer's The Insidious Fu Manchu (1913) and a film version of Earl Derr Biggers's Charlie Chan and the Chinese Cat (1941). We will watch a documentary film about Frank Chin's unresolved quarrel with Maxine Hong Kingston over Orientalism. We will also consider several versions of the Chinese legend of the woman warrior Fa Mulan, including Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior (1976) and the Disney cartoon Mulan (1998).

Fiction that challenges Orientalist discourses constitutes another section on the syllabus. Among others, we will read Russell Leong's "No Bruce Lee" (2000) and Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Interpreter of Maladies" (1999). The insidiousness of Orientalism will become apparent when we consider expressly anti-Orientalist texts that reinforce the very stereotypes they seek to displace. Literature by Asian Americans is also frequently co-opted by mainstream culture and commodified (e.g. Flower Drum Song, M. Butterfly). We will, therefore, ask: What social role do Orientalist texts perform at various historical moments? Are texts by and about Asians inevitably entangled in Orientalist discourse? What strategies do the authors of effective anti-Orientalist text use?

Students' research projects might trace Orientalist influences in popular fiction (e.g. James Clavell, Amy Tan) and film (e.g. Blade Runner, the Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan detective series, Disney's Mulan). Dystopian fictions about Asians invading the US (e.g. Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle) might be an interesting body of literature to study. Projects might explore the anti-Orientalist impulse behind contemporary Asian American literature (Maxine Hong Kingston, David Henry Hwang, Gish Jen, Jhumpa Lahiri). Yet another possibility is to study Asian American fiction...
that exoticizes and Orientalizes its characters and settings (Onoto Watanna, Chitra Divakaruni, Amy Tan).

**Primary sources**
Chin, Frank, "Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake" (1991)
Hwang, David Henry, *M. Butterfly* (1986)
Lahiri, Jhumpa, "The Interpreter of Maladies" (1999)
Long, John Luther, *Madame Butterfly* (1898)
Loti, Pierre, *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887)
Leong, Russell, "No Bruce Lee" (2000)
Noguchi, Yone, "The American Diary of a Japanese Girl" (1901)
Rohmer, Sax, *The Insidious Fu Manchu* (1917)
Watanna, Onoto, "A Half Caste" (1899)

**Secondary sources: Orientalism in literary criticism, history, and theory**
Cheung, King-Kok, "The Woman Warrior versus the Chinaman Pacific: Must a Chinese American Critic Choose Between Feminism and Heroism?" (1990)
Chin, Frank, "Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake" (1991)
Huggan, Graham, "Consuming India" (2001)
Lee, Rachel, "Journalistic Representations of Asian Americans and Literary Responses" (1999)
Liu, David Palumbo, "The Minority Self as Other: Problematics of Representation in Asian American Literature."
Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (2001)

**Textbooks: cultural studies and literary analysis**

**Films**
*Blade Runner*
*Charlie Chan*
*Charlie Chan is Missing*
*Fu Manchu*
*M. Butterfly*
*What's Wrong with Frank Chin*