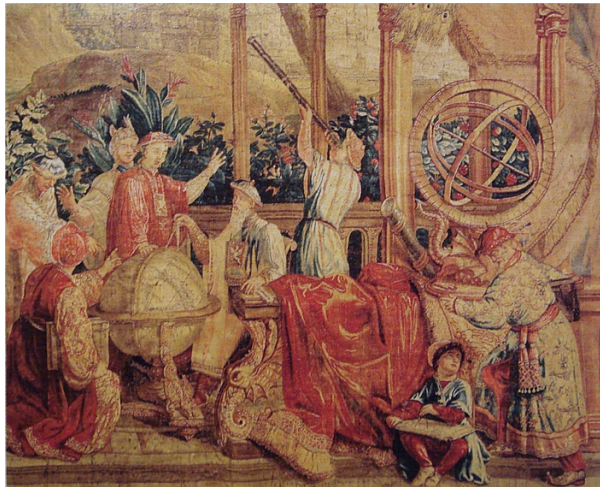


# French Orientalisms: Seventeenth- through Early Nineteenth Centuries

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## Course Description

French Orientalisms investigates the theory, literature, and art of Orientalism primarily from the age of French Classicism through the early Romantic period. We will center our work on the era of “Baroque Orientalism”: the encounter, exchanges, and conceptualization of oriental societies beginning at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and extending through *Ancien Régime* France. With the rise of international commerce and consumption, a significant shift in representations of the Orient begins mid-18<sup>th</sup> century following various Enlightenment ideological battles. Yet, the early modern perspective on “the Orient”—before the Age of (European) Empire—is decisively inquisitive in unique ways. Given the vast geopolitical and linguistic sphere of oriental societies, we will limit our work primarily to a French reflection on and representations of three primary cultures: the Middle East (Arab cultures and the Ottoman empire), China, and the Mughul empire of the Indian subcontinent.

Students will examine critical and historical approaches to Orientalism and Empire; the history of French exchanges with and scholarship on oriental cultures; and oriental representations in works of literature and art. Work will be based on students’ participation in seminar discussion, an essay on the critical literature of the field, and a final research project (minimum 15 pages).

### Selection of Primary Authors/Texts:

French Theatre: Excerpted acts from Corneille - *Le Cid*; Molière - *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*; Racine – *Bajazet*; Voltaire – *Zaïre* and *L’Orphelin de la Chine*  
Montsquier – *Lettres persanes*  
Herbelot on Middle East - *Bibliothèque Orientale* (selections)  
*Lettres édifiantes...des Jésuites de Chine*  
François Bernier on India - *Les Voyages* (selections)  
Diderot - *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*  
Anquetil Duperron on India – *Legislation Orientale* (selections)  
Victor Hugo poetry – *Les Orientales* (selections)  
Balzac (conte/récit de voyage imaginaire)–*Voyage de Paris à Java*

**Artistic Movements/Artists:** Chinoiserie; Turquerie;  
Orientalisme français. 18e: Boucher; Favray; Liotard; C.van Loo;  
19e: Cogniet; Gros; Delacroix; Gérôme.

**Critical Literature:** Edward Saïd, *Orientalism*; Srinivas Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism*; John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires*; Nicholas Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV’s France*; and recent articles.