The Exotic City: Shanghai in Chinese and Non-Chinese Cultural Imaginations

This course is about urban imagination, cross-cultural contact, imperialism, capitalism, and the history of a major Chinese metropolis that experienced a uniquely transnational existence. Divided, from the mid-nineteenth century into separate zones of Chinese, French and Anglo-American jurisdiction, the densely populated Chinese commercial city of Shanghai has fascinated Chinese, Western, and Japanese residents and writers. Chinese and non-Chinese commentators, embracing various and distinctive cultural and political agendas, viewed Shanghai as the exotic city--alluring, foreign, and dangerous.

The course is broadly interdisciplinary, focusing on the interpretation of primary sources. A variety of visual, literary and historical source materials serve as windows on late 19th and early 20th century Shanghai history, with particular focus on Chinese and non-Chinese urban imaginations, Orientalism, Occidentalism, projects of city-building, semi-colonialism and urban culture. Readings include both primary sources in English as well as Chinese and Japanese materials in translation. Short lectures and secondary literature in English will provide historical context.

Requirements: There are no prerequisites. You will need to take notes during the lecture portions of class. Students are required to attend class, read the assignments assiduously, and be active participants in thoughtful discussion. In order to read effectively for class discussion you should think about the reading questions posed in the syllabus, and you should bring written notes about them with you to class. There is a midterm. In addition, students are required to write two short papers (4-5) pages each, based on course readings. Grading is as follows: class attendance and participation (30%), midterm (20%), papers (50%). Graduate students (enrolled in History 510) will have additional readings and assignments (please see the final page of this syllabus).

Readings: The following required books are available for purchase at the bookstore:

- Mao Dun, *Midnight* (1930)
- Yokomitsu Riichi, *Shanghai* (1929)
- André Malraux, *Man’s Fate* (1933)
- Zhang Henshui, *Shanghai Express* (1935)
These books are also on reserve at Knight Library. The other required course readings are available on reserve in both hard copy and e-reserve.

Several films are also available on reserve for the class:

*Shanghai Express*
*Shanghai Gesture*
*Xin nüxing* (The new woman)
*Shennü* (The goddess)