Course Description

This seminar will explore the co-evolution of artistic modernity and the colonial metropolis in the 19th century through a focus on Ottoman Cairo and its connections with the traditional center of art historical study of art, empire, and modernity: Paris.

Beginning with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 and ending with the country’s occupation by the British in 1882, this course will trace Cairo’s cultural transformations through close attention to a range of objects and sites—paintings, political cartoons, urban monuments, museums, world’s fairs, architecture, and scientific illustration—all emerging at the nexus of Ottoman and French interimperial rivalry and cooperation.

This course will challenge the conventional binaries of East vs. West, traditional vs. modern, and local vs. global by exploring art and architecture’s active role in shaping urban life across these two cities, paying special attention to the emergence of national, racial, and sexual identities.

Required Textbooks

None required.

Assessments

Short weekly response papers, presentations of weekly readings, and final research paper/project.