Methods of Area Studies
Hist/FL/Geog 5024 Fall 2003

Course instructors:
S. Farquhar  Monday, Wednesday 2:30-4:00 // 305 Major Williams farquhar@vt.edu
T. Ewing  Wednesday 11:00-12:00, Thursday 12:30-1:30 // 439 Major Williams etewing@vt.edu

Objectives
This course will introduce students to recent theoretical and methodological issues of interest in the three major fields of history, literary studies and geography with the aim of exploring the potential for interdisciplinary research in the Area Studies M.A. program and the humanities. By exploring issues of writing/discourse in historiography, literature and mapping we hope to provide students with conceptual and comparative models for their own research agendas. Through readings and discussions we will examine research strategies used by historians, geographers and literary scholars with special emphasis on critical issues that have helped define their respective fields and facilitated exchanges between them.

Course Structure
The course consists of a series of curricular “units,” each defined by:
* geographical region
* time period
* a primary text, and
* methodological approach
Students will read a selection of monographs, articles and literary texts on a wide range of loosely related topics. Furthermore our inquiry will focus on a set of practical questions involving the uses of discourse: as a mode of representation (institutions, race, gender or the ‘other’); as a form of interpretation marking differences; and as a site of exchange of knowledge, values, ideologies. These concerns will provide a common ground for our discussions, bringing together various disciplinary strands and orienting us toward practices of research.

To highlight the practical aspects of research in history, literary studies and geography, invited faculty from the three participating departments will teach several of these units during the term, choosing a topic in their area of expertise or interest. The course instructors (profs. Farquhar and Ewing) have designed the remainder of the curricular units with an eye to enhancing the thematic and methodological coherence of the course.

Course Requirements
Everyone will complete the assigned readings and participate in discussion. Given the fairly large amount of reading required, your regular contribution to class meetings will be a significant factor in determining your final grade. Students will submit a short response “paper” (250-500 words) and suggest themes for discussion to the class via email by 9:00 am the day before class meets.

Evaluation
Completion of assigned readings, response papers, discussion themes, and class participation (20%)
Four papers (5 pages) due September 16, October 14, November 18, and December 12 (80%)

Course Materials
Reading selections marked with an asterisk have been ordered and are available for purchase at the bookstore. Items marked with two asterisks are available through the J-Stor data base (accessed from the Virginia Tech library) http://www.jstor.org/. Other readings are available online from the course website: http://www.majbill.vt.edu/history/ewing/Area_Studies/Syllabus2002.htm.
Class Schedule:

August 28: **What is Area Studies?**  
Session co-ordinators: profs. T. Ewing and S. Farquhar


THEORETICAL CONTEXTS

September 4: **Cultural anthropology**  
Session co-ordinators: profs. T. Ewing and S. Farquhar

Robert Darnton, “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the rue Saint-Séverin,” The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History (Vintage, 1984), pp. 75-104  
Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” The Interpretation of Cultures (Vintage, 1973), pp. 3-30  

September 11: **Cultural history**  
Session co-ordinators: profs. T. Ewing and S. Farquhar


September 16: **Paper #1 due**

September 18: **The Barbarians Speak**  
Session co-ordinators: prof. A. Becker

UNDERSTANDING ACROSS TIME AND SPACE

September 25: Orientalism
Session co-ordinators: profs. T. Ewing and S. Farquhar


October 2: Cultural Cannibalism
Session co-ordinator: prof. S. Farquhar

Frank Lestringant, Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne (University of California Press, 1997), pp. 1-12.

October 9: Imagining Russia through Geography and Literature
Session co-ordinator: prof. T. Ewing

Fedor Tyutchev, “Russian Geography” (poem)
A. S. Pushkin, “To a Kalmyk Woman” (poem)
Leo Tolstoy, “A Prisoner in the Caucasus” (short story)

October 14: Paper #2 due

October 16: Caribbean Environmental Discourses and Policies
Session co-ordinator: prof. L. Grossman


GENDER, POLITICS, AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN LITERATURE AND HISTORY

October 23: Ideology in Literature
Session co-ordinator: prof. F. Teulon

Jean-Baptiste Say, “Of Immaterial Products, or Values Consumed at the Moment of Production,” in A Treatise on Political Economy (Grigg & Elliot, 1844), pp. 119-127.

October 30: Gender and Stalinism
Session co-ordinator: prof. T. Ewing

*Lydia Chukovskaya, Sofia Petrovna (Northwestern University Press, 1994).

November 6: Women in the French Resistance
Session co-ordinator: prof. S. Farquhar

November 13: **Everyday Life in Nazi Germany**  
Session co-ordinator: prof. R. Stephens

*Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (3 volumes)  

**November 18: Paper #3 due**

November 20: **Mexican Theatre and the Postmodernization of History**  
Session co-ordinator: prof. J. Bixler


December 4: **Gender theory and contemporary Spanish fiction**  
Session co-ordinator: prof. J. Folkart

Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (University of Minnesota Press, 1988) pp. xxxiii-xxxv  

**December 12: Paper #4 due**