In the period from roughly 1750 to 1950, travel between the Middle East and Europe was a primary site of cultural encounter. People traveled for reasons of business, both official and private, health, curiosity, knowledge, pilgrimage, or simply pleasure, and they observed, fantasized about, reported on, and otherwise interacted with people and places that they regarded as different. This course studies two-way travel literature, European writing on travel to the Middle East and Middle Eastern writing on travel to Europe, with an eye to placing this series of encounters in historical context, a context of a shifting balance of economic power, the development of imperial ambitions and agendas, and the emergence of new kinds of nationalist aspirations. We read a number of travel narratives as journeys that both reflected and shaped relations between the two regions at a personal, political, and cultural level.

In keeping with the approach of the discipline of the course, we are interested primarily in these texts as history. How did the ways in which travelers discussed “foreign” people and places reflect developments – political, cultural, economic – in their own societies at the time? What historical features shaped their experience of the other, their ability to comprehend what they saw and, indeed, the very act of seeing? How was the great variety of purposes and motives present in this literature manifested in different approaches to the narratives? Who read these accounts and what did readers make of them? The backdrop to our study is the history of the modern Middle East and its often troubled relationship to a Europe that gradually came to dominate the region.

This course is a Doyle Seminar, part of the Doyle Engaging Difference Program, a new campus-wide curricular initiative, and gives faculty the opportunity to enhance the student research component of upper-level seminars that address questions of national, social, cultural, religious, moral, and other forms of difference. The Doyle seminars are intended to deepen student learning about diversity and difference through enhanced research opportunities, interaction with thought leaders, and dialogue with the Georgetown community and beyond.
Course requirements are the following:

1) This course is a colloquium structured around group discussion of the readings. All readings are available on the course Bb site. Attendance at all class meetings and adequate preparation of the assigned readings are essential. (25%)

2) Three short essays of 4 double-spaced typed pages each. You may choose the readings of any three weeks you wish with the exception of the weeks of September 13th and 20th. Do not summarize the readings, rather discuss what the readings contribute to the topic under discussion that week and illustrate with quotes from and reference to the readings. The papers should be submitted to the course Bb site before the beginning of class on the day we discuss those readings. (25%)

3) One long paper of 25 pages based on a travel account or accounts of your choice (and one that we have not read as assigned reading). The paper is a research paper that situates this account in historical context and studies it with an eye to exploring one or more of the themes we have covered in class. The title of the account or accounts you have chosen, along with a one-paragraph identification of the author and the subject matter of the account(s), should be submitted on October 18th. You should plan to meet with Professor Tucker during office hours between October 18th and October 29th to discuss the plans for your paper. Beginning on November 1, you will be asked each week in class to give a brief update on the research you have accomplished that week. A full first draft of the paper is due on December 2nd for instructor and peer comments. You will give an oral presentation on the topic of your paper in one of the last two class sessions, and the final draft is due on December 16th. (50%)

Important information

Attendance policies: You have one excused absence per semester; your first absence from class will be automatically excused. After the first absence, there are no excused absences except in case of serious illness or family emergency, as documented through your dean’s office. You will lose two points off the final grade for each absence after the first one.

Laptop policies: Please do not use your laptop or phone in class. The only exception to this rule is the occasional need to refer to the exact wording of the readings in the context of class discussion. Otherwise, please make sure that all screens are stowed away for the duration of the class.

The Georgetown student pledge:

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system:

To be honest in every academic endeavor, and
To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together.

Class schedule and readings

September 6: Introduction

September 13: Approaches to Travel Literature

Required reading:
Roxanne L. Euben, Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge, ch. 2, 20-45.
Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, chs. 1, 1-11.

September 20: Precedents

Required reading:
Euben, Journeys, ch. 3, 46-89.
Herodotus, The Histories, 74-103.

September 27: Traditions of Travel

Required reading:
Mary Wortley Montagu, Turkish Embassy Letters, 106-142.
October 4: Traveling on Business

Required reading:
Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes, ch. 2, 15-37.
Ilyas Hanna al-Mawsuli, “Europe and South America,” in Matar, In the Lands of the Christians, 43-111.

[October 11: no class]

October 18: Travel as Exploration and Discovery

Required reading:
Charles Montague Doughty, Travels in Arabia Deserta, chapter 8, 256-283.

October 25: Traveling for Pilgrimage

Required reading:
Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad, 264-281, 292-310.
Ahmad bin Tuwayr al-Janna, The Pilgrimage of Ahmad, vii, 36-55.

November 1: Traveling as Romance

Required reading:
Muhammad as-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters: Travels of a Moroccan Scholar in France in 1845-1846*, 75-87, 123-161, 172-212.

November 8: **Traveling as Gendered Experience**

Required reading:

November 15: **Traveling with Colonialism**

Required reading:
Nazik Saba Yared, *Arab Travellers and Western Civilization*, 137-162.
Taha Husain, *A Passage to France*, 93-162.

November 22: **Traveling in the Age of Nation**

Required reading:

November 29: **Travel and the Global Imaginary**

Required reading:

December 6 and one session to be scheduled: **Student presentations**