



HUM4614 Postmodernism: Future Culture

Professor Jason Mohaghegh

Elective Abroad Information Session

Postmodernism: Future Culture

Faculty Instructor: Jason Mohaghegh

- Teaches courses in **comparative literature, Middle Eastern studies, philosophy, and cultural studies.**
- Teaching and research focus is tracking new currents of **experimental thought** across the Middle East and the West; with particular attention to exploring the concepts of **chaos, violence, illusion, silence, sectarianism, and apocalyptic writing.**
- Published six books to date, including:
 - *The Chaotic Imagination: New Literature and Philosophy of the Middle East* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010),
 - *Inflections: The Writing of Violence in the Middle East* (Continuum, 2012)
 - *The Radical Unspoken: Silence in Middle Eastern and Western Thought* (Routledge, 2013)
 - *Insurgent, Poet, Mystic, Sectarian: The Four Masks of an Eastern Postmodernism* (SUNY, 2015)



Postmodernism: Future Culture

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course explores postmodern culture as an intense and often bizarre obsession with the future. Thus we will use the captivating cityscape of Dubai—its unparalleled architecture, its accelerated movement and fragmented spatial organization, the provocative visual design behind its many tourist sites—in order to track crucial ideas of simulation, virtuality, and the spectacle in our postmodern era.

We will navigate contemporary works of **literature**, **philosophy**, **film**, and **architecture** while making several excursions into Dubai as a constructed cultural zone of the Middle East. Ultimately, this rare immersion in perhaps the most futuristic place on earth will provide us a dynamic outlook on **how postmodern culture blurs the boundaries of time, space, and reality itself**.



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MAJOR COURSE THEMES

- Humanism, Utopia, Time
- Power, Otherness, Empire
- Fragmentation, Hybridity, Formlessness
- Futurity, Forgetting, Technology
- Perfection, Beauty, Ideology
- The Virtual, The Imaginary, The Spectacle
- Migration, Speed, The Cityscape
- Alienation, Excess, Apocalypse
- Irony, Illusion, Play

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TEXTS, FILMS, ARTWORKS (course content)

- Lewis Carroll. *Alice in Wonderland*.
- Jean Baudrillard. *Simulations*.
- Clarice Lispector. *Obsessions*.
- Haruki Murakami. *After Dark*.
- Tommaso Marinetti. *The Futurist Manifesto*.
- Enrique Vilas-Matas. *Vampire in Love*.
- Zaha Hadid; Frank Gehry (architectural selections)
- *The Matrix*; *A Clockwork Orange*; *Blade Runner* (film selections)
- Yayoi Kusama; Anish Kapoor; Diana al-Hadid (art selections)

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EXCURSION Opportunities

- Burj Khalifa; Dubai Fountain; Gold and Spice Bazaar
- Dubai Museum; Bastakia Quarter
- New Architecture Sites; Burj al-Arab; Jumeirah Mosque
- Jumeirah Beach Residence; Palm Islands; Atlantis Hotel
- Dubai International Art Center; Art Dubai; Majlis Gallery
- Dubai Mall; Emirates Mall; Media City
- Dubai Creek; Dubai Marina; Sheikh Zayed Road
- Abu Dhabi; Mosque; Le Louvre
- Desert

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Grading Criteria

There are four major grading points in this course:

- Daily Commentaries submitted online before each course session abroad 30%
- Final Paper based on edited daily commentaries with introduction submitted at on-campus wrap-up session 30%
- On-site Presentations 20%
- Pre-departure, on-site, and wrap-up participation, attendance, and professionalism 20%

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DELIVERABLES-Attendance, Participation and Professionalism

Pre-Departure, On-Site, and Post-Travel:

- Students are expected to attend all pre-departure sessions, class gatherings/discussions and excursions while abroad as well as the post-travel session on campus.
- In each forum, the expectation is that students will remain intellectually engaged and ready for an extensive encounter with provocative ideas while also conducting themselves with a cultural awareness and professional behavior.
- This element of the course will be gauged along the following lines: Punctuality (being on time to class and not missing classes), Preparation (bringing the necessary materials with notes to class), Insight (consistent engagement and quality of comments made during class discussion), Respect (impact on others and the learning atmosphere).

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DELIVERABLES-Exploration of a 'Concept'

- Throughout this elective abroad, you will develop a far-reaching exploration of the many aspects of a single “concept”, as it plays out across each aspect of the Dubai experience. To this end, students will submit several written commentaries that engage a particular concept, as it manifests in the readings and excursions.
- Concepts Include: Time, Space, Power, Sensation, Excess, Madness, Sacrifice, Death, Movement, Abandonment, Animality, Laughter, Memory/Forgetting, Illusion, Desire, Destruction, Pain, Pleasure, Cruelty, Obscurity, Fragmentation, Transgression, Transformation, Fate, Language, Fear, Loss, Nature, Images, and Objects.

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DELIVERABLES-Presentations

- **Presentations On-Site:** Students will be asked to make frequent informal 3-5 minute presentations throughout the travel portion of the course, addressing conceptual explorations and sharing specific insights made through the readings and excursions. This will fuel a collective conversation around certain particularized points and draw on analysis of specific thematic territory in relation to the readings or excursions.
- **Final Paper:** Your final paper will consist of the entire collection of edited and reviewed daily concept commentaries along with an original introduction. This edited version of your work alongside the introduction will be handed in as one final paper during our on-campus wrap-up session.

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COURSE MEETING and TRAVEL DATES

- Pre-Departure Sessions (3):
 - Wednesday, October 16, 6:30 - 9:00 PM (introductory session)
 - Wednesday, October 30, 6:30 - 9:00 PM (class session and travel preparation)
 - Wednesday, November 13, 6:30-9:00 PM (class session and final travel briefing)
- Travel Dates: Friday, November 22nd - Sunday, December 1, 2019
- Wrap-Up Session:
 - December 4, 6:30 – 9:00 PM (final discussion, Babson campus)

A wide-angle, high-angle aerial photograph of Dubai at night. The Burj Khalifa stands prominently in the center-left, its spire reaching into the dark blue sky. The city is a dense collection of illuminated skyscrapers and buildings, with light trails from traffic visible on the roads. The overall scene is a vibrant display of modern urban architecture and infrastructure.

For more Dubai images, scroll to end of presentation

BABSON ELECTIVES ABROAD

Application Process

Important Dates &
Deadlines

Financial
Considerations

Q&A











FRAMES

Vinay Mohan's Photography































