

DAEDALUS:

Re-Placing the History of Science

The Management is...	Carla Nappi
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The Phone Number is...	Useless. I never answer it.
The Term is...	1, Winter 2009
The Time is...	Tuesdays, 9:00 - 11:30
The Place is...	Buchanan Tower 1207

And the Epigraph is...

Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes.¹

This seminar will explore myriad ways in which the idea of science and related discourses, objects, and practices have been formative in the building of and communication among empires. We will wrangle with classic and recent works that have attempted to understand the moving, translating, globalizing, localizing, embodying, relativizing, mapping, othering, consuming, making, and unmaking of science as part of the history of nations, empires, borderlands, and the associated parts thereof.

Two major methodological threads will lead us through these readings and generate a more coherent set of questions as we move through the semester: 1) Science and/as translation in the context of empire, and 2) The idea of the “local” and locality (in time, place, text, etc) in the context of science and empire: Where does, and has “science” happened and been created? Why does it matter? Some of the authors we’ll be reading also treat the (scientific) construction of the types of entities that live in and move among these places: biocitizens, modern subjects, national bodies. You’ll notice that there is a relatively large proportion of anthropological reading, given that this is a history course. This is deliberate. When it comes to the kinds of questions that we’re exploring in this seminar, history and anthropology are intimately related and ask very similar kinds of questions about locality, globality, language, and practice.

The idea of locality as embodied in the Dedalus figure in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* will provide an architectural foundation for the semester. This will be explained and clarified in the first seminar meeting.

¹ “And he sets his mind to arcane arts.” Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII, 188. The story of Daedalus and Icarus.

Self

I'm a historian of China and of science and medicine, with a heavy research focus on natural history in early modern China. I'm currently at work on a little book about translation bureaus in early modern China. I've also begun two new projects: the first (tentatively titled *Epistemologies of Exchange*) looks at the media of exchange of natural objects among the Chinese empire and its borderlands in the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries; the second (tentatively titled *Rihla*) focuses on Chinese-Islamic scientific and medical exchange in early modernity. When I have occasional free brain space, I'm also developing a more theoretically-informed project (tentatively titled *Pharmacy*) on the senses and the notion of a pharmacy in contemporary arts and sciences. Stop in and chat any time if you'd like to talk more about any of the above.

You'll learn quickly that I have a rather unorthodox approach to history. I like experiments, risks, and creativity, when grounded in a solid foundation of rigorously defensible evidence. I appreciate hard work (and evidence thereof). I like being challenged, and I change my mind often. I don't sleep much. I'm a Gen-Xer, I obsess, and I was raised on TV. I believe in the resuscitation of a less rigidly-specialist approach to historical practice. I download episodes of *Mad Men* and *Top Chef* on iTunes. I read constantly, and I lend out my books all the time (so feel free to ask if there's something you'd like to borrow). I don't like unnecessary adjectives. I'm living in St. John's and studying classical Arabic this term. I still believe in some idealized notion of a life of the mind. I like cheese.

Contact

I am an email person, not a phone person. The best way to contact me is **always, always** via email: carla.nappi@ubc.ca. Unless I'm traveling, you can expect a reply within twenty-four hours. You can try my office phone in an emergency, but email will be quicker (always, always). In lieu of regular office hours this term, you can email me any time to set up an appointment, or stop by and chat whenever my door is open. If my door is closed and you hear shuffling sounds in there and you knock but don't get an answer, there are two possibilities: 1) There's a banana slug in my office racing across my bookshelves that hears you but can't open the door because it lacks opposable thumbs, or 2) I'm in my office working with the sound on my iPod jacked all the way up. Either way, don't be offended if I don't answer. It's not you, it's me. Or the banana slug.

Voice

You each have one, and my job is to help you inform, refine, and project it this term. Over the course of the semester, you will be developing your own research agendas – thus, it is critical for you to start thinking (from Day One) about how to bring your **own work** into the discussion. Come see me any time to talk about ways to develop your research in directions inspired by our class discussions.

Course Requirements

1. **Reading and Thinking.** All students are responsible for reading the assigned texts thoughtfully and critically before each session of the seminar. Come to class ready to talk about the work. I expect to see you all, each week. More than one absence over the term will start to impact your grade.

2. **Weekly Thinkpieces.** Post, by Monday at 9 AM, one fantastic thing stemming from your reading that you're prepared to talk about in class, if pressed. This can take any number of forms: a question, a paragraph, a sentence, one very very very carefully chosen word. As the term progresses, I will refine this weekly assignment as necessary. The point of these is for me to see something of what each of you is thinking about the readings each week, before we come together as a group to talk about it.
3. **Jump-Starting Seminar for One Week.** You will take turns leading a session of the seminar by presenting an overview of the reading, including a discussion of major themes and critiques of the work, and presenting questions for discussion. In preparation for leading seminar, you will be asked to write a 3-5 page (typed, double-spaced) response essay and provide a brief bibliography of any supplementary sources you have consulted for that week's reading. (This might include book reviews during weeks when we're reading a book or book chapters.) Please also come to seminar armed with basic biographical information on the author or authors of the week: Who are they? Where do they currently work? Where (and with whom, and in what field) did they get their PhD? Where do they typically like to go out for a nice dinner? Your 3-5 page response essay should: 1. Provide a brief overview of the major themes in the week's book or other reading. 2. Critique some aspect of the book based on your own reading and whatever supplementary material (reviews, etc) you consulted. You can also use your critique to place the reading in historiographical perspective. See me if you're not sure where to look for major reviews. 3. Present questions for discussion that reflect your careful reading of the book. We will be posting response essays and most other course material (including weekly readings) on our WebCT site for the course. Please post your response essay no later than **Monday at 9 AM of each week** so that we all have 24 hours to read and carefully consider your deep thoughts.
4. **Read the Week's Response Essay.** Everyone should read the weekly response essays carefully **before** the seminar meeting Tuesday morning. During the seminar the week's leader will (briefly and for no more than 10 minutes!!!) open the discussion, and will be expected to occasionally jump in and lead us all down The Path of Right Thinking when we go astray.
5. **Final Essay.**

The Importance of Checking Email

IT IS VITAL that you check your email regularly, as email is the primary medium I will use to contact you about the course.

The Course Website on WebCT

The course WebCT site is our virtual classroom for the semester. Log in with your CWL. Click on Tab for "HIST 586D - 101 - Topics in Intellectual History – 2009W." The "Course Menu" on the left side of the page lists all of the course components, including the discussion board, course readings, and other handouts.

Posting on the WebCT Board

1. Click "Discussions"

2. Click on the topic for the week (“Week 2,” etc.)
 3. To post a new thread, e.g. to post your response paper for weeks in which you’re leading discussion, Click the bar for “Create Message” and follow the directions. You can also post attachments.
- And so on, and so on. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Numbers

The final grades for this seminar will be assessed as follows:

1. Regular and vocal participation in seminar, including your 3-5 pp response essay and participation as seminar guru: 50%
2. Weekly responses: 15% (these will not be individually graded but I will read all of them each week)
3. Final 15-20 pp critical essay relating the themes of the course to some aspect of your work: 35% (Quality, not quantity, is primary here. More on this later in the term.) ****Due date TBA. Late essays will not be accepted****

Text

The course material will include short essays, book chapters, images, and other files posted to the course WebCT site. In addition, the books available for purchase include:

1. Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason*
2. Margaret Lock, *Twice Dead*
3. Angela Leung, *Leprosy in China*
4. Sigrid Schmalzer, *The People’s Peking Man*
5. Paul Rabinow, *French DNA*
6. Joao Biehl, *Vita*

Read each book or article actively with the following questions in mind: What is the author’s main argument? What kinds of evidence or examples are summoned to support the main argument? What kinds of historical sources does the author use? How does the main argument of the reading fit into the broader literature on the subject or within the field? Finally, and critically: how does this particular reading engage with a particular notion of “local” or locality in the history of science or medicine? Reading to answer these questions is more important than obsessing over the details within a given study. Engage the broader Joycean themes to the extent that you find them useful or inspiring...or not at all. Or bring in your own materials that you find to be good to think with.

The mind of The Management is a bizarre and Cornellian space, and while the semester has been carefully and methodically planned, the logic of the weeks’ movements might not be immediately obvious to you. With that in mind, I will do my best to post **a guide to the material and themes of each week** on WebCT.

Plagiarism

Don’t plagiarize. Here’s how UBC defines it: <http://www.library.ubc.ca/clc/airc.html>

So say we all.

A PORTRAIT OF THE SEMESTER

Stephen Dedalus

Week One (Sept. 08) Introductions

In which we discuss the course and the plan for the seminar. Students will ideally have come to the first meeting having read James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Think about your use of language as a historian.

Class of Elements

Week Two (Sept. 15) Science and/in Translation

In which we will discuss a recent article from *Isis* by Marwa Elshakry, selections from Scott Montgomery's *Science in Translation: Movements of Knowledge Through Cultures and Time*, etc.

Clongowes Wood College

Week Three (Sept. 22) Science and the Idea of Culture

In which we will discuss "The Needham Question" in the context of readings by Joseph Needham, Roger Hart, Sivin, Sivin & Lloyd (Intro), with possibly some supplemental Geertz material.

Sallins

Week Four (Sept. 29) Science and the Idea of the Local

In which we will discuss selections from Alix Cooper, *Inventing the Indigenous*, as well as some supplementary material.

County Kildare

Week Five (Oct. 06) Science from Center to Periphery: The Idea of Colonial Science

In which we will discuss selections from Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire* and *Colonial Botany*, recent articles from *Isis* and *Osiris* 15 (*Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise*), and possibly supplementary material, esp. from the work of Laura Hostetler.

Week Six (Oct. 13) Science from Periphery to Center: Re-claiming the Colonial for the Colonized

In which we will discuss selections from Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, And Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World*, with possible supplementary readings on colonialism & post-colonialism.

Ireland

Week Seven (Oct. 20) Nationalism and Science I: Science for and of the People?

In which we discuss recent attempts to build on the Marxist historiography that infused the Needham Question by locating science in the masses, below the level of nations. We will ponder the role of science in labor history with Sigrid Schmalzer's *The People's Peking Man* and possible supplementary materials if time allows.

Week Eight (Oct. 27) Nationalism and Science II: Nations and National Styles in Science?

In which we discuss the idea of national styles in the history of science, largely through the lens of Paul Rabinow's *French DNA*. Additional supplementary readings may include selections from Prasenjit Duara's *Rescuing History from the Nation* (for an alternate perspective) and Ian Hacking on the idea of style of reasoning.

Week Nine (Nov. 03) Nationalism and Science III: Science, Power, Modernity

In which we discuss the relationship between science, power, and "modernity" in the context of locality. We will focus our discussion on Gyan Prakash's *Another Reason*, with short supplementary materials from the work of Michel Foucault.

Europe

Week Ten (Nov. 10) Global and Local Bodies I: Embodying Science and Medicine

In which we begin a discussion of the embodiment of science and medicine, and the human body as a kind of locality in history and anthropology. We will focus our discussion on Margaret Lock's *Twice Dead*, with possible additional materials selected from Lock & Farquhar's recent edited volume, *Beyond the Body Proper*.

Week Eleven (Nov. 17) Global and Local Bodies II: How to Do the Global History of a Disease

In which we continue our discussion of global and local bodies by discussing recent work that attempts to historicize disease, a particular kind of historical object. We will focus our discussion on the idea of disease history and circulation in Angela Leung's *Leprosy in China*, with possible supplementary material drawn from the work of Bruno Latour, Ruth Rogaski,

and Larissa Heinrich's *The Afterlife of Images* (on visual sources and the idea of "the sick man of Asia").

The World

Week Twelve (Nov. 24) Science in Circulation

In which we discuss the practices of globalization and localization in the history of science. Our discussion will center on selections from Hal Cook's *Matters of Exchange* and Kapil Raj's *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900*.

The Universe

Week Thirteen (Dec. 01) Conclusion: Alternative Localities

In which we conclude our semester's wanderings with fresh take on the idea of locality in science and medicine with Joao Biehl's *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment*. We will discuss alternative ways of construing locality, bodies, language, translation, and citizenship. If there's time, we may consult additional supplementary material from Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed* (on identity, globalization, locality, and bio-citizenship) and Deleuze & Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*.