

Draft Syllabus – Subject to Change
HR4003: From Colonialism to Tourism: Early Photography in Asia
Semester 1 AY2025-26

Course Code: HR4003

Course Title: From Colonialism to Tourism: Early Photography in Asia

Pre-requisites: Nil / DD1004 Introduction to the Histories of Art II or HR2001 Introduction to the Histories of Southeast Asian Art, or permission of instructor

No. of AUs: 4

Contact Hours: 52

Course Coordinator: Sushma Griffin, PhD

Email: sushma.griffin@ntu.edu.sg

Office Location: HSS (SHHK) 03-30

Office Hours: Appointments in-person and on Zoom by email

TA: Zhang YiFei, MA candidate in Art History

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Course Aims

This course introduces you to the relationship between nineteenth-century photography, colonialism and tourism in Asia. Maintaining focus on visual travel narratives, we will examine how early photography was mobilised as an essential apparatus for naturalising and legitimising colonial relations and imperial power. We will interrogate a diverse range of images produced by western and local photographers that document and interpret Asia. Analysing the work of key Asian photographers between the 1880s and the 1940s, we will explore how their images differ from the English picturesque landscape tradition. Turning to the present, we will consider how tropicalising tropes and stereotypes, deconstructed in the works of contemporary Asian artists, return in postcolonial governments' concerted efforts to attract mass tourism. Through museum and archival visits and conversations with photographers and curators, you will develop and refine skills in fieldwork research in preparation for your final-year project.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the visual and diverse socio-historical contexts of early Asian photographic artworks.
2. Apply visual, contextual, and theoretical analysis skills to investigate early Asian photographic imagery in academic writing and in presentations.
3. Develop and sustain arguments as a result of original research in academic writing and in presentations.
4. Present your research findings, claims, and conclusions about early photography in Asia in a coherent and concise manner in academic writing and in presentations.
5. Participate actively and knowledgeably in reading workshops, peer review sessions, and fieldwork on early Asian photographic imagery.

Course Content

This research-oriented course examines the relationships between nineteenth-century photography, colonialism, and tourism in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. Structured as a series of case studies, you will examine how photographic images participated as discursive objects in various colonial contexts for different purposes and mediums such as albums, photographic prints, posters, postcards, *cartes-des-visite* and stereoscopic cards. You will also study a diverse range of images produced by western photographers and local photographers about the peoples and places in Asia. Through museum visits to study objects in person (if possible) and discussions with experts, you will be introduced to various archives in Singapore and develop fieldwork research proficiency in preparation for your final-year project. Framed as seminar-style discussion sessions, this course emphasizes visual examination, acquisition of knowledge through reading and fieldwork, expressing thoughts and conclusions through writing, and demonstrating informed reflection about the multiple nineteenth-century and some twentieth-century images of Asia.

Course Requirements and Expectations

- Students are expected to attend the weekly seminars and make efforts to participate fully in class discussion and other activities.
- Students are expected to read the assigned prescribed readings prior to class in preparation for the weekly topic.
- The use of generative AI writing software such as ChatGPT, Writesonic, Copy.AI, Microsoft Copilot and any AI-powered writing assistants will be penalised and may result in failure in the course, including the use of automated writing tools such as “Grammarly”.
- Plagiarism of any material will be penalised and will result in failure in the course. Plagiarism includes self-plagiarism. Assignments plagiarising other assignments that you may have written or prepared as class presentations for other courses are not acceptable and will be penalised and may result in failure in the course.
- Please email me to arrange a consultation. I welcome consultations in-person and over Zoom.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to take all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for any seminar sessions that you may have missed.

(2) Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual for all classes. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be deemed as absent and will not be able to sign on the attendance register.

(3) Absenteeism

Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU’s approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies.

If you miss a lecture, you must inform the course instructor via email prior to the start of the class.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	ILOs Tested	Graduate Attributes	Weighting	Team/ Individual
Continuous Assessment: 2 x Response Papers: 20% (10% each)	1, 2, 3	Cognitive Ability, Competence	20%	Individual
Continuous Assessment: Presentations: 20%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Cognitive Ability, Competence	20%	Individual
Final Project: Research Project: 40% – Research 20% – Writing 20%	1, 2, 3, 4	Cognitive Ability, Character, Competence	40%	Individual
Continuous Assessment: Participation	1, 5	Cognitive Ability, Character, Competence	20%	Individual
Total			100%	

See Appendix 1 for Course Assessment Criteria

Approach	How does this approach support you in achieving the learning outcomes?
Lecture	Short lectures will introduce you to a topic and various case studies each week.
Response Papers	You will learn to critically analyze readings by writing two response papers.
Presentations	You will collaborate with your peers to create a presentation on a case study and a related assigned reading for one week.

Research Project	Your final submission can take the form of a research paper (2500-3500 words). You will learn to critically analyze various artworks at local or international museums and texts, which will enable you to discover and sustain arguments and apply visual, contextual, and theoretical analysis skills.
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Reading and References:

Allana, Rahaab and Davy Depelchin, *Unveiling India: The Early Lensmen 1850–1910*. Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing and The Alkazi Collection of Photography, 2013.

Batchen, Geoffrey, *Burning With Desire: The Conception of Photography*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997.

Bourne, Samuel, and Hugh Ashley Rayner, *Photographic Journeys in the Himalayas: Comprising the Complete Texts of His Letters to the British Journal of Photography, Originally Published between 1863 and 1870; Together with a Catalogue of His Indian Photographs and the Texts of Two Other Earlier Lectures on Photography*. 3rd ed. Bath: Pagoda Tree Press, 2009.

Chaudhary, Zahid R, *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Cody, Jeffrey W. and Frances Terpak, eds. *Brush and Shutter Early Photography in China*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2011. TR101.B78 2011

Dehejia, Vidya. *India Through the Lens Photography 1840-1911*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2000. TR103.I53 2000

Dewan, Deepali and Debra Hutton. *Raja Deen Dayal: Artist-Photographer in 19th-Century India*. 2013. Ahmedabad: Alkazi Collection of Photography in association with Mapin Publishers. TR103.D515

Falconer, John. *India: Pioneering Photographers. 1850-1900*. London: The British Library, 2001. TR103. F35 2001

Falconer, John. *A Vision of the Past: A History of Early Photography in Singapore and Malaya. The Photographs of G. R. Lambert & Co., 1880-1910*. Singapore: Times Editions, 1987. TR113. S53F182

Hight, Eleanor M. and Gary D. Sampson, eds. *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, London: Routledge, 2002. TR652.C719

Lacoste, Anne, *Felice Beato: A Photographer on the Eastern Road*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010.

Lau, Grace. *Picturing the Chinese: Early Western Photographs and postcards of China*. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H. K.) Co. Ltd., 2008. DS709.L366

Luther, Narendra. *Raja Deen Dayal: Prince of Photographers*. Creative Point, 2003. TR103.L973

Pelizzari, Maria Antonella. *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900*. Montreal and New Haven: Canadian Center for Architecture and Yale Center for British Art, 2003. TR103.T759

Rousmaniere, Nicole Coolidge and Mikiko Hirayama, eds. *Reflecting Truth: Japanese Photography in the Nineteenth Century*. Amsterdam: Hotei, 2004. TR105.R44 2004

Toh, Jason, *Singapore Through 19th-century Photographs*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2009. DS610.5

Vergara, Benito M. Jr. *Displaying Filipinos: Photography and Colonialism in early 20th century Philippines*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1995. DS685.V494

Worswick, Clark. *Princely India: Photographs by Raja Deen Dayal 1884-1910*. New York: Knopf, 1980. DS479.1.k57. D38 1980

Planned Weekly Schedule

*Subject to adjustment by the instructor according to the teaching situation, students' progress, holidays and unforeseeable circumstances. A revised schedule will be issued to students when changes are made.

Required weekly readings will be posted to the course BlackBoard site approximately one week before each class meeting

Week 1 | 14 August 2025 | Course Introduction

- Introductory Lecture to the Course Contents
- Going over the Planned Weekly Schedule
- Announcement of all Assignments:

Short Response Papers (250-400 words, due in Weeks 4, 7); Presentations (Group: 5 min per member, Week 8; Individual Group: 10-15 minutes in total, Weeks 12 and 13), and Research Project (2500 Words, Week 14)

- Q&A on aspects of the course

Week 2 | 21 August 2025 | Photography's Invention

Introduction to the Early History of Photography –Guest Lecture by photographer and educator Dr Joachim Froese (tbc)

In-class mini-lecture and group activities

Prescribed Readings: (tbc)

**Week 3 | 28 August 2025 | Field Visit to the National Library of Singapore
(transportation provided)**

No readings

Week 4 | 4 September 2025 | The Photographic Picturesque

Prescribed Reading:

James S. Ackerman, "The Photographic Picturesque." *Artibus et Historiae* 24, no. 48 (2003): 3-94.

First short response papers due.

Week 5 | 11 September 2025 | Photographers on the Eastern Road: Photography as Transnational Medium

Case Studies: Felice Beato, Samuel Bourne, G.R. Lambert, John Thomson and Baron Raimund von Stillfried

Prescribed Readings:

Fred Ritchin, "Felice Beato and the Photography of War", in *Felice Beato: A Photographer on the Eastern Road*, edited by Anne Lacoste. Los Angeles: The J Paul Getty Museum. 2010.

Gary D. Sampson, "The Success of Samuel Bourne in India", *History of Photography* 16, no. 4 (1992): 336-347.

Week 6 | 18 September 2025 | A Countervailing Photo-Aesthetics: Tracing Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Philosophies of Vision in Colonial Photography

Case Studies: Lala Deen Dayal, Sawai Ram Singh II, Sun Qua, Yuk Lee

Prescribed Readings:

Deepali Dewan and Deborah Hutton, *Raja Deen Dayal: Artist Photographer in 19th-Century India* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing and Alkazi Collection of Photography, 2013).

Gael Newton, "South-East Asia 19th Century Photography: Malaya, Singapore, and Philippines", 'National Surveys: Southeast Asia' in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, Editor John Hannavy, Routledge 2008.

Week 7 | 25 September 2025 | Studio Photography

Online Guest Lecture and Q&A session with Curator and Academic Dr Matt Cox (Art Gallery of New South Wales) on Javanese photography (tbc)

Prescribed Readings: (tbc)

Short Responses on Postcards and Stereoscopic Cards due.

****RECESS WEEK****

Week 8 | 9 October 2025 | Field Trip to NUS Museum—early 20th C photography from the Straits Chinese Collection OR the National Gallery Singapore—mid- to late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century photographic collections from Southeast Asia (tbc, transportation provided).

Week 9 | 16 October 2025 | Photography and the Anthropological Gaze

Christopher Pinney, “What’s Photography got to do with it?” in *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*, eds. Luke Gartlan and Ali Behdad (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2013).

Week 10 | Week 7 | 23 October 2025 | Photographing Flora and Fauna

Reading:

Fukuoka, Maki. “Toward a Synthesized History of Photography: A Conceptual Genealogy of Shashin.” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 18, no. 3 (2010): 571-597.
muse.jhu.edu/article/412777.

Optional Additional Reading:

Mueggler, Erik. “The Lapponicum Sea: Matter, Sense, and Affect in the Botanical Exploration of Southwest China and Tibet.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no. 3 (2005): 442–79. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3879387>.

Garascia, Ann. “‘Impressions of Plants Themselves’: Materializing Eco-Archival Practices with Anna Atkins’s Photographs of British Algae.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 47, no. 2 (2019): 267–303.

Week 11 | 30 October 2025 | The Persistence of the Photographic Picturesque in Contemporary Art and Tourism Media Campaigns

Krista Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Week 12 | 6 November 2025 | Course Wrap-up & Consultations on Final Projects

Week 13 | 13 November 2025 | STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (15-20 min)

Week 14 | 20 November | Final Projects (research paper of 2500-3000 words) due 23:59 Via TurnItIn

Appendix 1: Assessment Criteria

	<p>Research: ILO1 <i>Discuss the visual and diverse socio-historical contexts of early Asian photographic artworks.</i></p> <p>Identification, collection, analysis, synthesis, and organization of research materials.</p> <p>Able to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources.</p>	<p>Apply: ILO2 <i>Apply visual, contextual, and theoretical analysis skills to investigate early Asian photographic imagery in academic writing and in presentations.</i></p> <p>Application of art history research methodologies in writing, presentations, and in final research project.</p> <p>Able to interpret and apply high quality sources.</p>	<p>Develop: ILO3 <i>Develop and sustain arguments as a result of original research in academic writing and presentations .</i></p> <p>Development of an argument based on a group of objects and texts.</p> <p>Able to organize and apply new knowledge and skills to sustain an argument.</p>	<p>Present: ILO4 <i>Present your research findings, claims, and conclusions about early photography in Asia in a coherent and concise manner in academic writing and presentations.</i></p> <p>Confident and clear communication to instructor and peers of research findings and arguments.</p> <p>Fluent with language and reasonings.</p>	<p>Participate: ILO5 <i>Participate actively and knowledgeably in reading workshops, discussions, peer review sessions, and field work on early Asian photographic imagery.</i></p> <p>Insightful contribution to discussions in class.</p> <p>Active participation in peer review sessions.</p> <p>Active and positive contribution to teamwork sessions.</p> <p>Active participation in field work.</p>
A+ 85-100	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
A 80-84	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
A- 75-79	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
B+ 70-74	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
B 65-69	Competent	Competent	Competent	Competent	Competent

B- 60-64	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
C+ 55-59	Mediocre	Mediocre	Mediocre	Mediocre	Mediocre
C 50-54	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal
D+ 45-49	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient
D 40-44	Deficient	Deficient	Deficient	Deficient	Deficient
F 0-39	No evidence	No evidence	No evidence	No evidence	No presentation

Provisional