



# **S P R I N G 2 0 0 7**

## **DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE**

### **4.681 PARIS/CAIRO: THE EAST-WEST TALE OF THE MODERN METROPOLIS**

**INSTRUCTORS: Erika Naginski & Nasser Rabbat**

**PREREQUISITE: Permission of Instructors**

**Wednesdays from 2 to 5 in room 5-216**

This seminar will address the rise of the modern metropolis in the 19th century from the perspective of the encounter between Orient and Occident. Paris, Baudelaire's glistening capital of culture, has been central to debates on the emergence of the modern city. Missing from these debates are the transcontinental currents that not only challenge the standard Eurocentric vision of modern urban life, but, more importantly, set the fraught relationship of modernism with modernity in an entirely new perspective. One of the strongest test cases for addressing this interpretive lacuna is the profound connection between Paris and Cairo throughout the long 19th century. From the Napoleonic invasion of 1798 to the construction of Baron Empain's city of Heliopolis in 1908-10, the intensity of cross-cultural activity left its indelible stamp on the image of the two cities. This history forces us to reexamine Paris (the urban archetype of modernity) and Cairo (the urban archetype of colonialism), and explore the dialectical relationship between them. The course includes weekly reading and writing assignments and requires participation in discussions. Students' research will be presented in class and will be the basis of the longer paper to be submitted at the end of the term.