

SHELDON LAWRENCE - Edward Said's Orientalism as a Tool for Students' Philosophical Identity Development

In his 1978 ground-breaking book, *Orientalism*, Columbia University philosopher Edward Said argued that colonialist biases have shaped the epistemology of modern, Western social sciences and humanities. In this seminar, we will examine how Said's ideas are very much an extension of Kant's Categorical Imperative with a particular focus on access/the universal. Since most of our philosophy students are racialised individuals, it's important for them to study philosophy side-by-side with post-colonialism and critical race theory. It's important for students to realise that any effort to battle privilege can find an ally in Said's epistemological structure. Parallels can be made in social philosophy to LGBTQ rights, Aboriginal philosophy, etc. Orientalism allows students an opportunity to self-reflect and develop their own identity in relation to society. There are many opportunities for students to add to the learning of the class which dispels the idea that the teacher is the authority on what is philosophy. Further, there are many opportunities for contemporary news topics and for pop culture references to be made to connect with the journey of the student in philosophy - philosophy as a way of helping one discover oneself.

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