

Module: Critical Analysis and Representations of Angkor

Course: Contested Histories of Colonial Indochina, Brown University Fall 2020 (Remote, Online)

Instructor: Dr. Cindy Nguyen, cindy_nguyen@brown.edu

Time Required: 20-30 minutes (for classroom size of 18 students)

Instructor Contextual Note:

This is a teaching module created for a 20th century colonial Indochina history course taught by Professor Cindy Nguyen at Brown University, Fall 2020. Given the limited time frame of 20 minutes, the students were not expected to have read any additional readings related to 13th century Angkor. Their background perspective prior to this module was grounded in 19th and 20th century colonial Cambodia—the colonial constructs of ‘Angkor’ as a lost civilization and the centering of Angkor within national and ethnic heritage. This module was taught on October 7, 2020, and by this point the students had read Chapter 1 and 3 of Penny Edwards’ Cambodia book.

Prior to the synchronous session, students read completed the following readings and writing activity:

Milton Osborne, Chapter 9 “Cambodia before the Storm (1863-1883),” *The French Presence in Cochinchina and Cambodia: Rule and Response (1859-1905)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969) p. 175-205.

Penny Edwards, Introduction, Chapter 1, “The Temple Complex: Angkor and the Archaeology of Colonial Fantasy, 1860-1906,” Chapter 3 “Les fidèles Cambodgiens and les Khmèrophiles: Scripting a Khmer Nation, 1870–1935,” in *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation 1860-1945*. (University of Hawaii Press, 2007), p. 1-39, 64-94.

Primary Source: Pierre Loti, *Un pèlerin d’Angkor* (Paris, 1912), *A Pilgrimage to Angkor*. Translated by W.P. Baines. Excerpts: Skim Introduction for background on Loti, Read Chapter VII November 28, 1901 p. 26-44

Primary Source: Zhou Daguan, *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People*. Translate by Peter Harris. Excerpts in E-Reserves

Thinkpiece: “Cambodia in Quarantine” and Economic

Vulnerability: <https://southeastasiaglobe.com/campaign/cambodia-in-quarantine/>

Compare and contrast the tourism/travel experience of Pierre Loti, Zhou Daguan, and Son Diep (Edwards Chapter 3)

Select one quote excerpt (or theme) from tourism experience from each of the three sources. Analyze the tone, emotions, subject matter in this excerpt. Then reflect on the following questions: How does this source reflect the author's position and possible audience? How can this source be used to understand historical perceptions as well as lived realities of the past?

You can write 1-3 bullet points or sentences in the Analysis and Reflection point in the chart below. This chart will prepare us for our discussion on Wednesday.

	Quote Excerpt or Theme	Analyze the tone, words, emotions, subject matter	Reflect: How does this source reflect the author's position and possible audience? How can this source be used to understand historical perceptions as well as lived realities of the past?
Zhou Daghan (1296 Angkor)			
Son Diep (1900 Paris)			
Pierre Loti (1901 Angkor)			

Module: Analyzing Representations of Angkor

Activity Goals:

1. *In this classroom activity, students will learn to critically analyze different multimedia representations of Angkor. They will learn how to identify important key visual aspects (clothing, colors, architecture, space, sounds, etc) and interpret their historical and cultural significance. They will compare their own experience of a simulated virtual reality simulation with three textual first-person historical travel narratives. After this session, students will develop a strong grasp of visual analysis of different media and apply this technique for their final research project.*
2. *Furthermore, they will compare the 12th and 13th century historical understandings of Angkor to 19th and 20th centuries French colonial project of monumentalizing Angkor as a 'lost city.' Students will reflect upon the processes of cultural heritage and building national narratives in the 19th and 20th centuries.*

PREPARATION

Recall the previously read and discussed texts:

- Penny Edwards, "The Temple Complex: Angkor and the Archaeology of Colonial Fantasy, 1860-1906," in *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation 1860-1945*. (University of Hawaii Press, 2007).
- Excerpts from *Travelogue A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People* by Zhou Daguan (1296-1297)
- *Travelogue A Pilgrimage to Angkor* by Pierre Loti (1921)

CLASS SESSION PART 1: GUIDED VR EXPERIENCE (MODIFIED TO 360 VIDEO FOR REMOTE CLASS) AND VISUAL THINKING EXERCISE

[15 minutes]

Instructor will play a 3-minute introduction video on the history of the Khmer Empire, 13th century Angkor Wat. <https://youtu.be/zpm2YdJE9-g>

Instructor will introduce the Virtual Angkor Project.

Virtual Angkor: (SensiLab, University of Texas, Monash University, Flinders University) is an immersive virtual reality and 3D simulation of 13th century Angkor metropolis. (ongoing) Tom Chandler, Adam Clulow, Bernard Keo, Mike Yeates and Martin Polkinghorne, "Virtual Angkor", 2019, virtualangkor.com.

Students will be divided into 4 breakout rooms and tasked to 'tour' Virtual Angkor Project.

Students will be divided into 4 breakout rooms and tasked to 'tour' Virtual Angkor Project and complete the following steps. During your discussion, take 3-5 bullet point notes of highlights from your discussion.

Step 1: See and Describe (without Interpretation)

1. Share initial impressions from the scenes in the introduction video. Discuss:
<https://youtu.be/zpm2YdJE9-g>
 - o What objects, sounds, people, sights, stuck out to you? (Be specific, note shapes, colors, textures, mood).
2. Tour 360 Videos of Virtual Angkor
 - o <https://www.virtualangkor.com/360>
 - o What is going on?
 - o What do you see that makes you say that? (Be specific, note shapes, colors, textures, mood. Note the position of people and objects in relationship to each other.)
 - o What more can you find?

Step 2: Reflection on Experience and Media

1. 360 Video Experience:
 - o What was your experience of 13th century Angkor through 360 Video?
2. Zhou Daguan's 13th century travelogue:
 - o Share your excerpt from your Canvas Travel Chart to your group from Zhou Daguan. Discuss what stood out to you from the travelogue text.
 - o How does reading Zhou Daguan's travelogue text differ in experience than 360 Video?

CLASS SESSION PART 2: CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO REPRESENTATION & ANALYSIS

[15 minutes]

After the 360 experience we will regroup to discuss the following Critical Analysis Questions.

1. Critical Thinking:

- a. What is absent in the virtual world of Angkor? What is not represented in the Zhou Daguan and Pierre Loti travelogues?
- b. How does Zhou Daguan and Virtual Angkor's representation of 13th century Angkor help us think differently from the "lost city" presented in Loti's travelogue and Edwards' analysis during the French colonial period?
- c. How does Son Diep's account of Paris differ from Zhou Daguan and Pierre Loti's travel accounts?
- d. How does *your own* first-person experience of (Virtual) Angkor compare with Pierre Loti's and Zhou Daguan's first person travelogue account of Angkor?

Supplemental Primary Sources:

- o Travelogue *A Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People* by Zhou Daguan (1296-1297)

- Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-Lu (Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644) <http://epress.nus.edu.sg/msl/>
- Photographs from *Angkor: An Introduction* by George Coedès (1931)

Supplemental Reading:

- Roland Fletcher, Damian Evans, Christophe Pottier and Chhay Rachna, 'Angkor Wat: An Introduction,' *Antiquity* 89, no. 348 (2015): 1388-1401.
- Tom Chandler and Martin Polkinghorne, 'Through the Visualisation Lens: Temple Models and Simulated Context in a Virtual Angkor,' in *Old Myths and New Approaches: Interpreting Religious Sites in Southeast Asia*, ed. Alexandra Haendel (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2012).
- Google Arts & Culture "Visualising Angkor: Part 1 – Envisioning a Living City" <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/DAKCaZFzDpVCKw>
- Google Arts & Culture "Visualising Angkor: Part 2 – A New Reconstruction of Angkor Wat" <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/UwKSRNSRibIZKg>

Google doc instructions for Remote session and annotation:

VIRTUAL ANGKOR MODULE

Instructor will play 2 minute introduction video on the history of the Khmer Empire, 13th century Angkor Wat. <https://youtu.be/SGgIp4HYOu8>

Instructor will introduce the Virtual Angkor Project.

- [Virtual Angkor](https://www.virtualangkor.com): <https://www.virtualangkor.com> Virtual Angkor project (SensiLab, University of Texas, Monash University, Flinders University) is an immersive virtual reality and 3D simulation of 13th century Angkor metropolis. (ongoing)

CLASS SESSION PART 1: 'TOUR' VIRTUAL ANGKOR PROJECT IN BREAKOUT ROOMS [15 minutes]

Students will be divided into 4 breakout rooms and tasked to 'tour' Virtual Angkor Project and complete the following steps. During your discussion, take 3-5 bullet point notes of highlights from your discussion (Note chart below)

Step 1: See and Describe (without Interpretation)

1. Share initial impressions from the scenes in the introduction video. Discuss: <https://youtu.be/SGgIp4HYOu8>
 - What objects, sounds, people, sights, stuck out to you? (Be specific, note shapes, colors, textures, mood).
2. Tour 360 Videos of Virtual Angkor
 - <https://www.virtualangkor.com/360>
 - What is going on?
 - What do you see that makes you say that? (Be specific, note shapes, colors, textures, mood. Note the position of people and objects in relationship to each other.)
 - What more can you find?

Step 2: Reflection on Experience and Media

1. 360 Video Experience:
 - a. What was your experience of 13th century Angkor through 360 Video?
2. Zhou Daguan's 13th century travelogue:
 - a. Share your excerpt from your Canvas Travel Chart to your group from Zhou Daguan. Discuss what stood out to you from the travelogue text.
 - b. How does reading Zhou Daguan's travelogue text differ in experience than 360 Video?

Group 1: (Names)
Group 2: (Names)
Group 3: (Names)
Group 4: (Names)

CLASS SESSION PART 2: CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO REPRESENTATION & ANALYSIS [15 minutes]

After the 360 experience we will regroup as a larger group to discuss the following Critical Analysis Questions.

3. Critical Thinking:

- a. What is absent in the virtual world of Angkor? What is not represented in the Zhou Dagan and Pierre Loti travelogues?
- b. How does your own first-person experience of Angkor compare with Pierre Loti's and Zhou Dagan's first person travelogue account of Angkor?
- c. How does Zhou Dagan and Virtual Angkor's representation of 13th century Angkor help us think differently from the "lost city" presented in Loti's travelogue and Edwards' analysis during the French colonial period?
- d. What does each source reveal about history of Angkor, colonial Cambodia, and colonialism?