Study Questions for introduction to Edward Said’s *Orientalism*:

1. What is the distinction (which Said calls “ontological and epistemological”) underpinning Orientalism, and what are the effects of analyzing something based on this distinction?

2. Explain why Said says the Orient “is not an inert fact of nature” (4).

3. Drawing from the course lecture and Said’s introduction, consider what he means by “discourse.”

4. How does Said ascribe *power* to Orientalism?

5. Said addresses the “political questions raised by Orientalism” via a series of statements on humanistic inquiry (15). For Said, is it possible to read culture outside of a political context? How does he approach the relationship between politics and knowledge and culture?

6. In devising the parameters of his study, Said cuts out “India, Japan, China, and other sections of the Far East” (17). Aside from whatever problems that decision raises, what does that tell you about methodology in the humanities? What can you learn from that decision in relation to your own academic writing?

7. Said emphasizes that orientalists are exterior to the “Orient”? What are the effects of this exterior position? How does exteriority affect the meanings of the Orient?

8. Despite his emphasis on “discourse,” Said says individual writers and their texts are important. How does this affect his approach to the material?

9. Said describes several audiences for his book. Why might this study appeal far beyond an academic setting? Why is it relevant more than 35 years after it was published?