HIS 300.31 Multiple Husbands, Multiple Wives: A Global History of Polygamy
[SBS+]
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Monogamy is a recent and tenuous phenomenon. Polygamy has existed for centuries all around the world, from India, Nepal, China, the Middle East, Africa, Indonesia, Australia, Germany, Ireland, Antarctica, to the contemporary United States. In this class, we will ask questions about who practiced/practices polygamy and why; the role of religion and “modernity” in validating and/or invalidating polygamous marriages; and the way polyandrous intimate relations were often sites of colonial contact and tension. Polygamy existed in ancient societies including Greece, Egypt and Rome; and while this class will mention those eras in a long global history of polygamy, we will focus mostly on the early modern and modern eras—the 18th century to present. This three-week course will consist of twice-weekly discussion boards, one primary source analysis paper, and your choice of a final paper or recorded podcast.