

Course Syllabus

FRENCH 176
Harvard College/Graduate School of Arts and Sciences: 160718
Term: Fall 2018-2019
Course Instructor(s): Francoise Lionnet
Location: Boylston 403 (FAS)
Meeting Time: Tuesday 12:00 PM - 02:00 PM
Exam Group: FAS01_A
Course Description: This course provides an overview of major trends in Francophone and postcolonial studies that correlate with the field of world literature/littérature-monde.
Notes: This course is taught in French and English. Advanced reading knowledge of French is required. Theoretical readings are in English. Students specializing in French or needing French language credits must write all their papers in French; others may write papers in English.

French 176 Fall 2018^[1]_[SEP]

Tues 12-2 pm

World Literature, Postcolonial Studies, *Francophonie*, and Creolization:

Reading in Context

Littérature-monde, francophonie postcoloniale, et créolisation: textes et contextes

Location: Boylston Hall 403

Instructor(s): Prof. Françoise Lionnet

Office Hours: **Wed 11-12 in Boylston G31 or by appt.**

Contact: email flionnet@fas.harvard.edu

Course Description

This seminar provides an overview of major trends in Francophone and postcolonial studies that correlate with the field of world literature/littérature-monde. It is taught in French and English. Advanced reading knowledge of French is required as all literary material is in French; students concentrating in French write their papers in French; other may write the papers in English. Theoretical readings are in English.

Although the term “postcolonial” suggests a *temporal* break (“post”) with the colonial era, the criteria that define postcolonial literature (political engagement, resistance to oppressive power, nationalism, memory, denunciation of racism, return to so-called “authentic” pasts, ironic intertextuality, etc.) have a much longer and more varied history than is generally acknowledged by standard theories of postcolonialism. The mid-twentieth century era of decolonization was preceded, in the French empire, by two centuries of poetic practices that announce post- and de-colonial literary history as well as contemporary global problems linked to the occupation or non-ownership of *space* (e.g. migration and human rights, ethnic conflicts, and the creolization of identities). The field of Francophone Studies, grounded today in works by Aimé Césaire (*Discourse on Colonialism*) and Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks*), has helped shape postcolonial studies, but it remains a distinct discipline with roots beyond mere oppositional practices. It is marked by a complex engagement with universalism(s) and the question of rights.

We begin by focusing on a little known eighteenth-century event recounted by a twentieth-century novelist, Fabienne Kanor (Martinique and France), whose novel *Humus* raises crucial questions of ethics and esthetics. We proceed with a *bande dessinée* representing French colonial practices and the history of slavery in one of the *vieilles colonies* of the early Empire. We then read Sembène Ousmane (Senegal): his short story and film *La Noire de...*, and talk about modern slavery and trauma. We then proceed to twentieth and twenty-first century Francophone writers whose sensibilities are as large as the multipolar empires from which they emerge: Nathacha Appanah (Mauritius/France), Ananda Devi (Mauritius/France), Fatou Diome (Senegal and France), JMG Le Clézio (France/Mexico/Mauritius), Nassuf Djailani (Mayotte, in the Comoros), and filmmakers Jean-Marie Teno (Cameroon) and Moussa Touré (Senegal). We will end by discuss two poets whose works are important to our understanding of both early globalization and modernity and for their representation of gender: Evariste Parny (Reunion Island/France) and Charles Baudelaire (France). Both deserve to be read in light of contemporary theories of liberation, indigenization, and “worlding.” We will reflect on genre and representation, on word and image (poetry, short story, novel, photography, and film)

The thematic focus of the course is *love, loss, migration, and the search for community* for authors who engage with what it means to live in a world that has undergone sudden, radical, and sometimes violent transformations which produced in turn changes in the relationship between individuals and communities, the present and the past, the here and the there. Out of such transformations, authors *create*, with words and images, new worlds of meaning. How do we approach the deliberate aesthetic dimension of their texts while doing full justice to their socio-cultural and political contexts?

My research, for the last several decades, has focused on questions of transnationalism, hybridity, *mestizaje/métissage*, mixed identities, worlding, cosmopolitanism, and creolization. I am especially interested in re-thinking cosmopolitanism and world literature from the perspective of the mixed “subaltern” cultures often neglected by theories of elite cosmopolitanism. I will therefore be asking you to think about what it means to be “global”: is it to acquire what is *perceived* to be an excess of cultural capital (elite cosmopolitanism) or to suffer from a *deficit* of identity (hybridity, creolization), especially in relation to the category of the national? How do we define the global citizen, the cosmopolitan traveller, the Creole subject, the (post)colonial national? And how do we compare them to the sovereign national firmly rooted in uncontested geographies? What happens when spatial/territorial belonging is unsettled by colonial practices that introduce European languages and educational practices, religious intolerance, civil conflict, war, and the more recent and massive arrival of refugees by land and by sea? How are familial and other intimate relationships disrupted by new encounters? How do writers use language to conceive, create, or re-make the(ir) world in the face of such challenges?

Les études postcoloniales sont maintenant bien intégrées dans les programmes universitaires du monde anglophone. Les francophones Aimé Césaire et Frantz Fanon ont eu une influence considérable sur le développement de la pensée postcoloniale. Toutefois les études francophones demeurent une discipline distincte du champ postcolonial anglophone. Ceci tient à une différence fondamentale entre les deux : la théorie postcoloniale est ancrée dès ses débuts dans une approche idéologique d'opposition et de résistance à la domination tandis que les écrivains francophones, tout en s'opposant avec éloquence à l'hégémonie coloniale, gardent un rapport complexe aux questions d'universalisme et de droits humains qu'ils héritent des Lumières.

Si le terme “post/colonial” souligne une rupture temporelle (“post”) par rapport à l'ère coloniale, les critères qui définissent aujourd'hui la littérature postcoloniale -- engagement politique et social, résistance à l'oppression, dénonciation du racisme et du sexisme, mémoire vs. histoire, nationalisme et retour aux origines, intertextualité et ironie -- ont une bien plus longue histoire que celle qui sert de base à la théorie postcoloniale. L'ère de la décolonisation (1950 et après) est précédée dans l'empire français par deux siècles de pratiques esthétiques qui annoncent déjà les approches dé-coloniales ou ‘post’-coloniales. De plus, les grandes questions contemporaines liées à la redéfinition d'espaces géographiques et culturels et au rapport de populations marginalisées au sol et à l'histoire (diaspora et migration, conflits génocidaires, repli identitaire vs. créolisation et cosmopolitanisme) sont la conséquence d'une histoire coloniale mal comprise qui n'en finit pas de s'inviter dans les discours culturels, politiques et sociaux.

Notre propos dans ce cours sera de nous familiariser avec les débuts et l'évolution des littératures francophones dans le monde, de réfléchir au bien-fondé de nouvelles expressions critiques (littérature-monde, littérature insulaires, écocritique etc.), et de penser le rapport de cette littérature à la bande dessinée, l'image photographique et le cinéma. Les auteurs et artistes étudiés nous poussent à réfléchir à ce que signifie vivre,

écrire (et filmer) dans un monde ayant subi de profondes et violentes transformations qui changent le rapport aux autres, à l'ici et à l'ailleurs, au présent et au futur.

Materials and Access^{[L] [SEP]}

Short texts provided (xeroxes and/or digital documents on the class website):

Charles Baudelaire, *Poèmes mascarins/Indian Ocean poems*

Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme/Discourse on colonialism*

_____, *Selected Poetry.*

Ananda Devi, *La cathédrale/The Cathedral* (short story and film)

Nassuf Djailani, “La traversée de l’espoir” from *Une saison aux Comores*

Assia Djebar, “La Tunique de Nessus” from *L’amour la fantasia*

Manifeste pour une littérature-monde (en français) / Manifesto for World Literature in French

Carpanin Marimoutou and Françoise Vergès, from *Moorings: Indo-Oceanic Creolizations*

Simone Weil, from “Writings on Colonialism”

Films:

Harrikrishna ANENDEN, *La cathédrale*

Ousmane SEMBENE, *La Noire de...*

[La noire de - Ousmane Sembène - \(1966\) \[Legendado em português\]](#)[Links to an](#)



[external site.](#)

GADJIGO and SILVERMAN, *Sembene!*

Jean-Jacques ANNAUD, *La Victoire en chantant/Noirs et blancs en couleur:*

Jean-Marie TENO, *Afrique je te plumerai*

Moussa TOURE, *La Pirogue*

Books available for purchase at Schoenhof Books:

[http://www.schoenhofs.com/French-176-with-Professor-Lionnet c 7137.html](http://www.schoenhofs.com/French-176-with-Professor-Lionnet_c_7137.html)Links to an external site.

Nathacha APPANAH, *Blue Bay Palace*

Fatou DIOME, *Le ventre de l'Atlantique*

Fabienne KANOR, *Humus*

JMG LE CLEZIO, *Tempête*

Shenaz PATEL, *Histoire de Maurice* Tome I & II

Evariste PARNY, *Selected Poetry and Prose*

Ousmane SEMBENE, *Voltaire*

Theoretical Readings will be provided as needed on the relevant topics of world literature, francophone studies, postcolonial studies, human rights, and creolization. These include brief texts by Gilles Deleuze, Gaurav Desai, Frantz Fanon, Édouard Glissant, Françoise Lionnet, Jean-Luc Nancy, Edward Said, C. Marimoutou & Françoise Vergès, Simone Weil, and Robert Young.

Assignments and Grading Procedures^[L SEP]

This course is open to undergraduate and graduate students. Grading is based on active and regular participation in each week's class, and on oral and written assignments. Students specializing in French are required to write their papers in French.

25 % Participation in class discussion demonstrating familiarity with the day's readings, and active engagement with the ideas and issues raised in those texts.

25% Weekly response papers (300 words +) that will allow greater participation in discussions

20% Oral presentation (20 minutes). **Presentation** must be accompanied by a typed **handout distributed to the class, which will include a summary of the major points covered in the presentation as well as two or three questions for class discussion**. Bear in mind that a concise, well organized presentation takes careful preparation.

30% A final paper of 10-12 pages for undergraduates, 15-20 pages for graduates. **NOTE:** All students will have a choice between a 3-hour exam and the final paper, and incompletes are strongly discouraged.

Préparation, présentations orales et devoirs écrits

Ce cours est un séminaire qui requiert **la participation active** et assidue de tous les étudiants. Nous allons parler de périodes historiques et aires géographiques très diverses et je vous fournirai beaucoup de détails importants. Mais je ne fais pas de cours « magistral ». Je préfère le dialogue ouvert, basé sur une bonne connaissance des textes au programme de chaque séance. Je vous demande donc de lire et surtout de **re-lire** chaque texte, de prendre des notes de lecture, et de bien réfléchir aux démarches discursives de chacun (approches rhétoriques, narratives, théoriques...). Je suis ouverte à vos suggestions pour que le cours soit interactif et qu'il nous pousse tous à remettre en question certaines « vérités ».

Quelles sont les interrogations que chaque texte soulève pour vous ? Comment est-ce que ces textes nous aident à (re)penser l'universalisme, la résistance, l'identité, le voyage, le mélange, le cosmopolitisme, la créolisation, l'ironie et la littérature... ? Prière de venir en classe avec vos questions pour les auteurs lus, pour moi, et pour vos collègues dans le cours. Notre thème comprend des sujets sensibles sur la culture, les droits humains, la langue, le genre, la race, la sexualité, la religion, etc. Je vous encourage donc à dialoguer de façon franche et respectueuse, de défendre votre point de vue avec exemples concrets à l'appui, mais aussi de garder l'esprit ouvert : nous sommes tous là pour apprendre du nouveau -- y compris moi, car j'aime découvrir avec les étudiants des aspects insoupçonnés des textes.

Chaque étudiant devra préparer **une présentation orale de 20 minutes**. Si le nombre d'étudiants inscrits le permet, je vous demanderai aussi de faire un travail de groupe.

Je vous demande **de préparer pour chaque classe un travail écrit d'une/deux page(s) environ** (300 mots) sur les lectures du jour, et de me l'envoyer **la veille avant 22 heures**. Ceci me permettra de vous lire régulièrement et de corriger votre français (si nécessaire !). Ce travail écrit servira à la discussion dans chaque séance de notre cours, et il vous permettra de réfléchir aux questions que vous voulez traiter dans **votre devoir final de 12-15 pages**.

Academic Integrity: Policies Regarding Citation, Academic Honesty and Plagiarism University policies regarding academic honesty are to be found in the **student handbook**.

Please consult: http://static.fas.harvard.edu/registrar/ugrad_handbook/current/chapter2/academic_dishonesty.html

Accommodations or students with disabilities (mandatory on all

syllabi)^[SEP] Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the [Accessible Education Office](#) (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

Weekly schedule (subject to change):

Tues 4 SEPTEMBER Introductions: Francophone Postcolonial Studies, cosmopolitanism, universalism, and world literature. Overview of African, Indian Ocean, and Caribbean *francophonies*. Colonialism and the French language. Assia Djebar, "La Tunique de Nessus," from *L'amour, la fantasia*. Ethics and aesthetics. *Manifeste pour une littérature-monde*.

Tues 11 Robert Young, « World Literature and Postcolonialism »; Fabienne Kanor, *Humus* (read to p 75)

Tues 18 Colonial history, travel, gender, and islands; *bande dessinée et histoire* ; Shenaz Patel, *Histoire de Maurice (1598-1767)* ; Fabienne Kanor, *Humus* (all) + « Entretien »

Tues 25 Colonial discourse vs. "authentic" voices: Kanor (cont'd); Patel, Interview.

Tues 2 OCTOBER Dakar and the lure of Europe; from short story to film: translating words into images; modern slavery; Afromodernism: Ousmane Sembene, « La noire de... », short story and film;

[La noire de - Ousmane Sembène - \(1966\) \[Legendado em português\]](#)[Links to an](#)



[external site.](#)

Césaire, « Discours » (excerpts); Weil, « Fragment »

Tues 9 Sembène cont'd "Lettres de France" & "Voltaïque." Documentary film on his life. Moussa Touré, *La Pirogue*.

Tues 16 Migration crises (I); discussion de Moussa Touré, *La pirogue*; sport and the lure of Europe: Fatou Diome, *Le ventre de l'Atlantique* (first half)

Tues 23 Migration crises (II); Fatou Diome, *Le ventre de l'Atlantique* (all)

Tues 30 *Francophonies mauriciennes*: migration and poetry: *Ceux du large* by Ananda Devi + gender and class in the globalized postcolony of Mauritius: in Nathacha Appanah, *Blue Bay Palace*: class, violence and photography

Tues 6 NOVEMBER Afrasian sensibilities: Le Clézio, "Une tempête"; for graduate students specifically: critical essays by Gaurav Desai, "Oceans Connect," Lionnet, "World Literature, Postcolonial Studies..."

Tues 13 Intertextualités, ironie et modernité. Indian ocean creolizations: Baudelaire, « Le serpent qui danse », « La belle Dorothée » etc.; Ananda Devi, « La cathédrale »: short story and film. F. Lionnet, « Littérature-monde, francophonie et ironie ... »

Tues 20 Lionnet on Baudelaire PMLA; Language, universalisms, and creolization: Rivarol, "Discours sur l'universalité de la langue française" (1782); Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (excerpt). F. Lionnet, "E pluribus Unum" (not required); supplemental articles by Senghor and Serres on language for those interested.

Tues 27 Eighteenth-century postcolonialism and modern poetry: Evariste Parry, *Selected poetry and prose*: his love poems+ his 5 Letters; concluding remarks.

Tues 4 DECEMBER Presentation of written projects

FINAL PAPER due DEC 12