

Cynthia Laura Vialle-Giancotti
Introduction to Francophone Literature

Introduction to Francophone Literature

Instructor: Cynthia Laura Vialle-Giancotti

Pronouns: She, her, hers

Room:

Day and Time:

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description:

In this class we will explore a century of Francophone literature, from different authors of different geographical and cultural origins. Next to fictional writings such as poems, short stories and novels, we will also explore comic books and read classical, non-fictional texts that have marked the field of post-colonial studies. We will learn to consider and try to answer to the following questions: What is Francophone literature and who are its main representatives? How does the experience of colonialism inform their writing? How does the language choice of their writing (French) affect their writing? What kind of identity-negotiation do they have to go through to tell stories of their own culture, in a foreign, dominant and dominating language?

Topics discussed in class will include national and cultural identity, race and class, orality and textuality, gender and sexuality, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, colonialism and post-colonialism, history and memory, and the politics of language. (Taught in French)

Calendar

WEEK 1 Francophonie, Colonialisme et Post-Colonialisme

A) Introduction to the main concepts, ideas and movements of the *Francophonie*.

Christiane Ndiaye, *Introduction aux littératures francophones : Afrique, Caraïbe, Maghreb* (2004)

This book will accompany our class-readings.

B) Achille Mbembe (1957-), *De la Postcolonie, essai sur l'imagination politique dans l'Afrique Contemporaine* (2000)

WEEK 2 From the Periphery (Franco-Uruguayan Poets)

A) Le Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870), *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1869) (Selections)

B) Jules Supervielle (1884-1960), *L'enfant de la Haute Mer* (1931)

WEEK 3 To the Center (An Outsider that made it into the French Canon)

A) Albert Camus (1913-1960), *L'étranger* (1942) Première Partie (Ch. 1-5)

B) Albert Camus (1913-1960), *L'étranger* (1942) Deuxième Partie (Ch. 1-5)

WEEK 4 La Négritude in fiction and discourse

Cynthia Laura Vialle-Giancotti
Introduction to Francophone Literature

A) **Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906-2001)**, *Éthiopiennes* (1947-56), to explore the concept of *négritude*, Senghor's interesting use of the language, the poetic genre, the experience of the colonised.

B) **Aimé Césaire (1913-2008)**, "Discours sur le colonialisme" (1955) (Selections),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhE7X55QqPk>

WEEK 5 The Colonized and Wretched of the Earth

A) **Albert Memmi (1920-2020)**, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (1957) with Sartre's preface, (Selections)

B) **Franz Fanon (1925-1961)**, *Les damnés de la terre* (1961) (Selections)

WEEK 6 From la Négritude to la Créolité

A) **Édouard Glissant (1928-2011)**, *Le Discours Antillais* (1981), (Selections)

B) **Patrick Chamoiseau (1953-)**, *Texaco* (1992), (Selections)

WEEK 7 An experience of utter otherness

A) **Maryse Condé (1937-)**, *Moi, Titouba Sorcière... Noire de Salem* (1988) Partie I

B) **Maryse Condé (1937-)**, *Moi, Titouba Sorcière... Noire de Salem* (1988) Partie II

WEEK 8 Francophone Voices from Africa

A) **Fatou Diomé (1968-)**, *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* (2001), (Selections)

B) **Léonora Miano (1973-)**, *L'intérieur de la nuit* (2005), (Selections)

WEEK 9 Francophonie And Comics

A) **Copi (1939-1987)**, *La Femme Assise* (1964-74) (Selections)

B) **Marjane Satrapi**, *Perspolis* (2000-2003) (Selections)

WEEK 10 What's Next

A) **Felwine Sarr (1972)**, *Afrotopia* (Selections)

B) **Poster Presentations and Discussion.**

Additional Readings will be made available on canvas.

Other suggested readings & videos:

Films and Documentaries

Gillo Pontecorvo, *La bataille d'Alger*, 1966

Ousmane Sembene, *Faat Kiné*, 2000

Karin Albou, *Le chant des mariées*, 2008

Zola Maseko, *Les manuscrits de Tombouctou*, 2009

Marie Ka, *L'autre femme in African Metropolis: Six Stories from Six African Cities*, 2013

Readings, Fiction and Critic

Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Soundjata ou l'épopée mandingue*. Présence africaine: Paris, 1960.

Aimé Césaire, *Une tempête*, Editions du Seuil: Paris, 1969.

Driss Chraïbi, *La civilisation, ma mère!* Gallimard: Paris, 1972.

Mariama Bâ, *Une si longue lettre*, Nouvelles Editions Africaines: Abidjan, 1979.

Patrick Chamoiseau, *Une enfance créole, tome II : Chemin-d'école*, Gallimard: Paris, 1994.

Fatou Diome, *Le ventre de l'atlantique*, Editions Anne Carrière: Paris, 2003.

Cynthia Laura Vialle-Giancotti
Introduction to Francophone Literature
Course Objectives and Learning Goals

By successful completion of this course you will:

Language

- Strengthen your ability to express yourself orally in French;
- Gain some familiarity with academic reading and writing in French;
- Become familiar with discussions in an academic setting in French (formulating and defending one's opinion, hypothesizing, use of the passive and the subjunctive);

Literary and cultural analysis

- Demonstrate critical thinking and writing skills, mastery of conceptual tools learnt in class;
- Learn to research a social and historical phenomenon, using a variety of resources from different fields;
- Use the vocabulary of literary analysis and develop your interpretations both of fiction and social change, both orally and in writing;
- Identify the different periods that have marked the history of francophone literature;
- Show a sense of cultural awareness by demonstrating an understanding of the use of historical, theoretical, and critical scholarship to study issues of difference in the francophone world.

Evaluations

3 Units

- **Class Participation (20% of the Grade)**
- **Short Oral Presentation (20% of the Grade)**, on assigned topic to kick off discussion.
- **One Page Paper (40% of the Grade)**, four in total, in French.
- **Poster Presentation (20% of the Grade)**, in groups of 2, 3 or 4.

4 Units

- **Class Participation (10% of the Grade)**
- **Short Oral Presentation (20% of the Grade)**, on assigned topic to kick off discussion.
- **One Page Paper (20% of the Grade)**, four in total, in French.
- **Poster Presentation (20% of the Grade)**, in groups of 2, 3 or 4.
- **Final Paper or Final Quiz (30% of the Grade)**, 5-6 pages in French, it can be a more in-depth research on a subject explored in the one-page papers. // 5 essay questions to be prepared over a week.

5 Units

- **Class Participation (10% of the Grade)**
- **Short Oral Presentation (20% of the Grade)**, on assigned topic to kick off discussion.
- **One Page Paper (20% of the Grade)**, four in total, in French.
- **Poster Presentation (20% of the Grade)**, in groups of 2, 3 or 4.
- **Final Paper or Final Quiz (30% of the Grade)**, 8-9 pages in French, it can be a more in-depth research on a subject explored in the one-page papers. // 6 essay questions to be prepared over a week.

Cynthia Laura Vialle-Giancotti
Introduction to Francophone Literature
Details on the Evaluation Format

- 1. Class Participation:** reading the assigned materials, participating actively in the class discussions;
- 2. Short Oral Presentation:** 15min max presentation on an assigned topic, decided together with the instructor, to kick off class discussion. Presentation Suggestions:
 - 1) Paraphrase the text (summarize it and describe its logical sequence/narrative structure). Or present an overview of the issue at hand, when the presentation is about background information.
 - 2) Present the two or three passages you find most relevant, and analyze them. If you are not presenting about readings on the syllabus, bring mini-excerpts from relevant written material.
 - 3) Suggest insightful questions for our class discussion.

Make your presentation a lively one, with or without props such as Powerpoint, handouts, etc.

3. One Page Paper: written in French, (3-500 word count), due for section 2 of the week. It will be the starting point for Section 2's class discussion. The content should be pertinent to the week's readings: you can expand on a theme presented in a text, contest an author's/critic's perspective and/or representation, compare different texts, etc. You will have to submit four throughout the quarter, it is up to you when you'll do so.
Advanced possibility: find a critical text in French on the week's assigned reading and comment it in your paper. (+5% bonus grade each time).

4. Poster Presentation: Students get together in groups of 2, 3 or 4 and present one theme or object priorly agreed with the instructor. Prepare a poster presentation (Paper format // digital format) and be ready to walk your classmates and instructors through your poster. The poster should explain the object and how it relates to one of the themes discussed in class. You may choose to have a filmic, photographic, musical or textual approach. If one particular cultural expression interests you, anything related to it that you find enriching for the rest of the class is welcome. Feel free to be as creative as you want, just let me know in advance about it!

5. Final Research Paper: Length of the paper will depend on the number of Units. You will expand on a theme or a work explored in class, analyse it critically by using the appropriate concepts and vocabulary learnt in class. The topic is to be discussed in advance with the instructor. Quote at least one French source.

OR Final Quiz: You will pick 5/6 essay questions out of the 10 proposed and answer with 4-600 words to each one of them. The questions will be announced on the last day of class and you will have one week of time to submit them. Spelling accuracy, good grammar, good structure and syntax are fundamental, considering the allotted time.

Affordability, Sensibility and Inclusion

Since I believe in the importance of free education, I am committed to making this class financially accessible to all students, therefore: **all of the material for the class will be available on Canvas, you are not expected to buy anything.** You are, on the other hand, expected to read all the material **in French** and for this you will be able to find the readings in the respective week-folders on Canvas.

The works we are reading are literary fictions. In taking this class, please be aware that these fictions represent subject matter that can be difficult intellectually and emotionally. I will not warn students about particular topics, because sensitivity to different topics varies from person to person, and because topics may arise

Cynthia Laura Vialle-Giancotti
Introduction to Francophone Literature

unexpectedly in class discussion. If you anticipate or experience acute distress as a result of encountering a particular topic, please talk to me so I can arrange an alternate assignment.

Given the sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. We will work on fostering an environment in which everyone feels safe to speak and is open to listening to what the other has to say.

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.