



EN(GENDER) THE CARIBBEAN: FRANCOPHONE WOMEN WRITERS

APA Program: French Antilles

Language of instruction: French

US semester credits: 4.0

Term: Summer (6 weeks)

Instructor: Dr. Dominique Aurélia | Université des Antilles

Course Description

French Caribbean Literature addresses the question of identity, alterity, loss and memory. The writers use multiple narrative strategies in telling how the mongrelized, illegitimate, rootless peoples of the Caribbean who emerged from slavery, indentureship and colonial rule, strived to find their own voice.

Caribbean women's fiction foregrounds women which sounds as a noteworthy feature if we consider the male dominated nature of Francophone literature in general, with female representation usually consisting of stereotypes or relegation to the periphery of the narrative. First, we shall explore women writers' concern with the issue of "mothering", womanhood, voicelessness, invisibility and society in the 20th century and then focus on the various strategies contemporary diasporic female writers set up in order to textualize *Herstory* vs. *History*.

For diasporic women writers who must deal with their ambivalent position of insiders/outsideers, retelling *Herstory* takes a much deeper meaning, which implies voicing resistance, re-imagining roots and routes, and challenging prevailing discourses of power. The emphasis will be placed on the exploration and analysis of excerpts of emblematic works and on the issue of language as the notion of *diglossia* is overall present within the texts as mirrors of their societies.

Course Objective

The purpose of this course is to explore how Francophone Caribbean women writers, through their works, have not only mastered the patriarchal imperial language but have asserted a remarkable presence on the international literary stage.

The course will initiate an introduction to methods of approach and analysis of texts (poems, short stories, novels). Students will be given the excerpts each week in order to study them. An oral and/or written analysis is expected each week. A detailed schedule for works, oral and written exams will be given on the first day of class.

Attendance is compulsory.

Schedule

Week 1 - A) The Negritude Movement as a literary foundation

- The invisible Negritude women
- The Nardal sisters' literary salon in Paris
- Suzanne Césaire

Works - Study of excerpts from:

- Cahier d'un retour au pays natal, Aimé Césaire, 1939
- Le grand camouflage, Suzanne Césaire, 1941-1945

B) How to voice "voicelessness"?

- Marie Vieux-Chauvet
- Yva Léro

Works - study of excerpts from:

- Amour, colère et folie, Vieux-Chauvet, 1968
- La plaie, Léro, 1957

Week 2 - The Antillean discourse

- Maryse Condé
- Simone Schwarz Bart

Works - study of excerpts from:

- Le discours antillais, Glissant, 1981
- La vie scélérate, Condé, 1987
- Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle, Schwarz-Bart, 1972

Week 3 - In praise of creoleness and otherness

- Gisèle Pineau
- Suzanne Dracius
- Nicole Cage

Works - study of excerpts from:

- Eloge de la créolité, Bernabé, Chamoiseau, Confiant; 1989
- L'espérance-macadam, Pineau, 1995
- Rue Monte au ciel, Dracius, 2003
- Et tu dis que tu m'aimes ! Cage, 2007

Week 4 - Post-creoleness

- Evelyne Trouillot
- Yannick Lahens
- Mérine Céco
- Kettly Mars

Works - study of excerpts from:

- La mémoire aux abois, Trouillot, 2010
- Bain de lune, Lahens, 2014
- Au revoir Man Tine, Céco, 2016
- Saisons sauvages, Mars, 2010

Week 5 - Daughters of the Diaspora

- Fabienne Kanor
- Gaël Octavia
- Edwidge Danticat

Works - study of excerpts from:

- Faire l'aventure, Kanor, 2014
- La fin de Mame Baby, Octavia, 2017
- Le cri de l'oiseau rouge, Danticat, 1994

Assessment

- **Written work: 50%**
 - Homework
 - Final exam
- **Oral presentation: 20%**
 - Develop a theme
 - Analysis of a text
- **Participation: 30%**
 - Class preparation (readings with questions, quizzes, etc.)
 - Class participation
 - Attendance and punctuality