

H-France Salon
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Global France

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This forum has provided with an opportunity to return to a course that I have now not taught for almost a decade, but which was formative for me pedagogically when I took up a position at Duke University that was a joint appointment between History (my primary discipline) and Romance Studies. Until then, I had primarily taught courses in Caribbean and Early American History, as well as a large lecture course (which fulfilled a university Humanities requirement) called “Europe and the World,” at Michigan State University. I hadn’t had the opportunity to teach in French before, and wanted to develop a course that would bridge different disciplines – particularly Anthropology, History and Literature – as well as being broad in chronological and geographical scope. I also wanted to offer the students a kind of conceptual framework for re-thinking what it means to study “France” and “French.”

I taught the course a few times on my own, and then in 2011 and 2012 co-taught the course with Achille Mbembe, who was then a Visiting Professor at Duke University. We had previously co-taught a seminar on French colonialism, and would later teach a graduate seminar on Caribbean and African Critical Theory. Global France offered us the opportunity to craft a course for a larger group of students. Because we wanted to both offer a course that could fulfill requirements for the French major and something that would draw a larger group of students, we created a bilingual course, in which readings and sections were held in both English and French. I later built on this model in developing a larger lecture course called Soccer Politics, which was offered with an English-language lecture but readings and sections in multiple languages – French, Spanish, and at various points Italian, Portuguese and German as well. The teaching of Soccer Politics, which became a very popular and well-enrolled course, ended up pulling me away from offering Global France. I did pull aspects of Global France into the Soccer Politics course, teaching Fatou Diome and focusing around the 1998 and 2006 World Cups with readings and lectures.

We also developed a bilingual blog called Global France, which the students contributed to during the semester. (Again, I used a similar model with the Soccer Politics class, whose blog was also multilingual). We used this as a forum for conversation, but also a site for the students to share some of their work, particularly in the Fall of 2012 when they created author pages on the site. A group of students who had taken Global France later did a senior thesis with me in which they produced a sonic timeline of the history of French hip-hop, also on the Global France site.

Why “Global France,” and what did we mean by the term? It was in some ways an attempt to navigate the never-ending problem of terminology in French Studies. Although Mbembe and I

later penned an article called “Nous sommes tous Francophones,” in which we argued that we should just identify a field called Francophone Studies in which everyone working on aspects of what we had earlier called Global France was included (whether they focused on the metropole or on other regions), in some ways the name for our course perhaps works better.¹ It represents an attempt to identify a certain historically-constituted configuration: the space produced, from the 15th to the present, by the particular history of French empire. We consider this space one of layered and multiple histories, tied together by the common presence of French language, but also very much a multi-lingual geographical configuration. We do not see Europe as the center of this configuration, just as one of its nodes, and instead seek to enable students to understand a multiplicity of ways of viewing and situating these worlds. And we seek to offer a set of historical and cultural perspectives that we hope can usefully flow into a better understanding of and engagement with the present.

Below are two syllabi taught in consecutive years, with somewhat different sets of readings and assignments. This course would likely look different today, in part because so much excellent scholarly work as well as new films and literature (not to mention many events!) would need to be incorporated, but the principles and spine have, I think, held up. I do also think that developing and offering these kinds of courses will be a crucial part of making the case for the importance of French and Francophone Studies as a field that can help students make sense of the worlds in which they live by providing them with both genealogies and imaginative possibilities.

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¹ Laurent Dubois and Achille Mbembe, “Nous sommes tous francophones,” *French Politics Culture, Society and History* 32:2 (Summer 2014).

Global France Fall 2011

Professors Laurent Dubois Achille Mbembe
Global France Blog: <http://blogs-dev.oit.duke.edu/globalfrance/>

Recent events in France, from the month-long riots that shook France in 2005 to the triumphs of a multi-racial French soccer team in the World Cup, have highlighted the ways in which the legacies of empire are shaping the present and future of the nation. In this course we will explore the 400-year history of French empire in the Americas, Africa, and Asia in order to understand the links between past and present. Our topics will include slavery and emancipation, colonial governance and anti-colonial history, citizenship and immigration, and the *banlieue* riots of 2005. Our readings will include novels and histories, essays and poems by figures ranging from Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire to Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. We will also watch recent films, explore the cultural politics surrounding soccer in France, and analyze contemporary hip-hop music by MC Solaar, Assassin, and other musicians. The course is offered in both English and French, with a joint weekly lecture in English on Tuesdays and sections on Thursdays in either English or French.

The readings for the course consist of required books and readings available online and via Blackboard. **NOTE:** We may add or change readings as the semester develops in relation to particular events or class visits. There are three types of readings for the course. There are shared readings which all students, in both the English and French sections, will read, marked in **this color**. Then there are specific readings for either the **English section** of the **French section**.

Required books (French section)

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).
Lyonel Trouillot, *Bicentenaire* (Paris: Hatier, 2008) ISBN: 9782218931864
Fatou Diome, *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* (Paris : Le Livre de Poche, 2005) ISBN : 225310907X
Ousmane Sembene, *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* (Paris: Pocket, 2002) ISBN: 2266131087
Albert Camus, *L'étranger* (Paris : Gallimard, 1971) ISBN : 978-2070360024
Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

Required books (English section)

Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).
Lyonel Trouillot, *Children of Heroes* (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2008): ISBN 080329459X
Fatou Diome, *The Belly of the Atlantic* (New York: Serpent's Tail, 2008) ISBN: 9781852429034
Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (New York: Random House, 1989). ISBN: 978-0-679-72020-1
Ousmane Sembene, *Gods Bits of Wood* (London: Heinemann, 1996) ISBN: 0435909592
Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

Grading and Assignments

Participation in Class and on the “Global France” Blog: 50%

Each week our Thursday sessions will be devoted exclusively to discussion. We expect you to come to class each week prepared to actively participate. This means having available, when you are called on: 1) one or more passages from the readings that you found particularly interesting and would like to discuss and 2) one or more critiques of the reading or questions you would like to explore with us and the other students.

Attendance is, of course, the baseline for participation, and unexcused absences will count against your participation grade.

As part of your class participation, you will sometimes be asked to prepare short texts, questions, or other materials to bring into the discussion. There will also sometimes be in-class activities which will be handed in to us.

In addition, you will also be expected to participate in an ongoing online discussion hosted on our blog, “Global France,” at <http://blogs-dev.oit.duke.edu/globalfrance>. This blog will be bilingual, with students from the English section participating in English and students from the French section participating, as much as possible, in French. (Of course, if you are responding to an English-language post, you may choose to respond in English even if you are in the French section).

You may post in any format: written text, uploaded audio or video, images, links and embedded pictures and videos, etc. The goal is to take advantage of the full range of what is possible for blog posts, and to explore multi-media expression as much as possible. Participation in this blog can take various forms. You can post thoughts on readings and/or on news or information you come across relating to current events or debates in France. Or you can respond to and comment on blog posts by other students. There is no set way to participate here, but the blog will allow us to supplement and pursue our discussions in class. Note that this blog will be public and visible, and will perhaps attract readers from outside the class, the university, and even the country, or so I hope!

Your participation grade will be based on the combined level of participation in both spheres, so if you are having trouble participating in our discussions be sure to participate actively online.

Papers: 50%

Over the course of the semester, you will write five short papers in which you will draw on the lectures and readings from the course. These will take the form of short essays (3-5 pages) responding to questions we will hand out in class. These will be interspersed throughout the semester, and you will have about 1 week to complete them in each case. We will develop the topics for these papers in relation to our discussions. In each case you will have a choice between 2-3 questions to respond to.

The papers will be different in the two sections. Students in the English section will write their papers in English, while students in the French section will write theirs in French.

Syllabus

August 30/ September 1: Introductions. What is “Global France”?

Discussion of MC Solaar « Les Colonies » and « La Belle et le Bad Boy, » and contemporary events in France

September 6/8: Foundations of Human Rights

All: Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 220-223

(Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen).

French: Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen

<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/dudh/1789.asp>

September 13/15: The Haitian Revolution and Human Rights

All: Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights*, Chapters 3 and 4

French: Déclaration d’Indépendance d’Haïti

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/haiti.asp>

English: Haitian Declaration of Independence

<http://today.duke.edu/showcase/haitideclaration/declarationstext.html>

September 20/22: Haiti, Then and Now: Making the Link

French: Trouillot, *Bicentenaire*

English: Trouillot, *Children of Heroes*

September 27/29: Africa, Then and Now: Making the Link

French: Fatou Diome, *Le Ventre de l’Atlantique*

English: Fatou Diome, *The Belly of the Atlantic*

(Class Visit by Philippe Bernard)

October 4/6: The Struggle for Decolonization in West Africa

All: Frederick Cooper, ““Our Strike””: Equality, Anticolonial Politics, and the 1947-48 Railroad Strike in French West Africa,” *Journal of African History* 37:1 (1996): 81-118. (Blackboard)

English: Sembene, *Gods Bits of Wood* **French:** Sembene, *Les bouts de bois de dieu*

(Fall Break: No Lecture October 11)

October 13: Negritude

All: Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (Blackboard)

Special Event: Bassekou Kouyaté listening session (Thursday evening at the Pinhook in Durham) and concert (Friday evening, Reynolds auditorium)

October 18/20: Algeria

All: Julia Clancy Smith, “Exoticism, Erasures and Absence: The Peopling of Algiers, 1830-1900 in *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City Through Text and Image* (Blackboard)

English: Camus, *The Stranger*

French: Camus, *L'étranger*

October 25/27: Legacies of Anti-Colonial Resistance

English: Blackboard: Sartre, *Introduction to The Wretched of the Earth* and Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled”

French: Blackboard : Sartre, « Introduction » aux « Damnés de la Terre » and Fanon, « L’Algérie se dévoile »

November 1/3: Is France Post-Colonial?

French: Achille Mbembe, “La République et sa Bête” and “La France peut-elle réinventer son identité?”

English: Achille Mbembe, “The Republic and Its Beast” and “Figures of Multiplicity,” from *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* (2010). (Blackboard)

November 8/10: Visit of Dominique Rabaté

French : Selections from Marie Ndiaye, *Trois Femmes Puissantes*

English : Selections from Marie Ndiaye, *Rosie Carpe*

November 15/17: Islam, Gender and Human Rights

All: John Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*

French : Blackboard, sélections from Gaspar and Khosrokar, *Le Foulard et la République*

November 22: Banlieue Blues: Selections from Documentary and Feature Films on Contemporary France

(Thanksgiving Break)

November 29/December 1: Soccer, Race and Politics

Reading: Dubois, *Soccer Empire*

December 6/8 : Conclusions: Past, Present, and Future

Discussion of Pedagogical Materials from Thuram Foundation: What Histories need to be told?

Global France Fall 2012

Professors Laurent Dubois and Achille Mbembe

This course brings together past and present in order to understand the complex history and legacies of French empire. Our topics will include slavery and emancipation, colonial governance and anti-colonial history, citizenship and immigration, the *banlieue* riots, and the controversies surrounding the veil. We'll read works by writers from the Caribbean, North and West Africa, and the Caribbean, including Aimé Césaire, Fatou Diome, Alain Mabanckou, Lionel Trouillot, and Assia Djébar. We will also watch recent films, explore the cultural politics surrounding soccer in France, and analyze contemporary hip-hop music by MC Solaar, Assassin, and other musicians. Writers, journalists, and musicians will visit the class throughout the semester. The course is offered in both English and French, with a joint weekly lecture in English on Tuesdays and sections in either English or French on Thursdays. Students contribute to the "Global France Blog" (sites.duke.edu/globalfrance), prepare collaborative class presentations, and write short papers.

The readings for the course consist of required books and readings available online and via Sakai. **NOTE:** We may add or change readings as the semester develops in relation to particular events or class visits.

There are three types of readings for the course. There are shared readings which all students, in both the English and French sections, will read, marked in **this color**. Then there are specific readings for either the **English section** of the **French section**.

The books are available for purchase at the Duke University Bookstore in the Bryan Center.

Required books (French section)

Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) ISBN: 9780520269781
Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco* (Paris : Gallimard, 1994) ISBN : 2070389529
Lyonel Trouillot, *Bicentenaire* (Paris: Hatier, 2008) ISBN: 9782218931864
Fatou Diome, *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* (Paris : Le Livre de Poche, 2005) ISBN : 225310907X
Alain Mabanckou, *Black Bazaar* (Paris : Seuil, 2009) : ISBN : 9782020973373
Assia Djébar, *L'Amour, la fantasia* (Paris: Le livre de Poche, 2001) : ISBN 2253151270
John Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) ISBN: 9780691138398

Required books (English section)

Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). ISBN: 9780520269781
Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco* (New York: Vintage, 1998). ISBN 0679751750
Lyonel Trouillot, *Children of Heroes* (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2008) ISBN 080329459X
Alain Mabanckou, *Broken Glass* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2010) ISBN: 1593762739
Fatou Diome, *The Belly of the Atlantic* (New York: Serpent's Tail, 2008) ISBN: 9781852429034

Assia Djebar, *Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade* (New York: Heinemann, 1993). ISBN 0435086219

John Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) ISBN: 9780691138398

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You may post in any format: written text, uploaded audio or video, images, links and embedded pictures and videos, etc. The goal is to take advantage of the full range of what is possible for blog posts, and to explore multi-media expression as much as possible. Participation in this blog can take various forms. You can post thoughts on readings and/or on news or information you come across relating to current events or debates in France. Or you can respond to and comment on blog posts by other students. There is no set way to participate here, but the blog will allow us to supplement and pursue our discussions in class. Note that this blog will be public and visible, and will perhaps attract readers from outside the class, the university, and even the country, or so I hope!

Your participation grade will be based on the combined level of participation in both spheres, so if you are having trouble participating in our discussions be sure to participate actively online.

Author Page on “Global France” Blog: 30%

Each student in the class will work in a group to develop a page devoted to one of the following authors whose work we are reading in the course: Patrick Chamoiseau, Lyonel Trouillot, Fatou Diome, Alain Mabanckou, Aimé Césaire, or Assia Djébar.

The goal of these pages will be to provide videos, images, reviews, and other resources that can help understand the work of the author. In addition, the pages will offer analysis written by each group of the particular works we are reading in the class. The idea should be to create a holistic picture of the author, something that will allow other students and readers to better understand their work. These pages will be public resources, openly available to readers once they are completed at the end of the term.

The preparation of these pages will involve two steps. First, each group will find an initial set of materials to put on the page in advance of the discussion of the particular author, and help lead discussion in the sections. This will then form the basis of the longer page, which will be due the last week of class, when you will present them to the group.

Short Papers: 20%

There will be two short papers due during the semester, each of them a 3-5 page essay written in response to a question we will give you the week before. You will have the choice between several questions, and will need to pull together materials from the lectures and various readings in answering the questions. We will need you to turn in hard copies of these papers in class on the due dates (October 9th and November 13th).

Syllabus

August 28/ August 30: What is “Global France”?

French: Achille Mbembe, “La République et sa Bête” (<http://multitudes.samizdat.net/La-republique-et-sa-bete>) and “La France peut-elle réinventer son identité?” (http://icicemac.com/node/2136?quicktabs_1=0)

English: Achille Mbembe, “The Republic and Its Beast” and “Figures of Multiplicity,” from *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* (2010). (Sakai)

September 4/6: Soccer Empire

Dubois, *Soccer Empire*

September 11/13: Dreams of Departure and Layers of Exile

French: Fatou Diome, *Le Ventre de l’Atlantique*

English: Fatou Diome, *The Belly of the Atlantic*

September 18/20: From Slavery to Freedom

Begin Chamoiseau, *Texaco*

September 25/27: Seeking FreedomContinue Chamoiseau, *Texaco*October 2/4: Haiti, Then and Now: Making the Link**French:** Trouillot, *Bicentenaire***English:** Trouillot, *Children of Heroes*October 9/11: Atlantic Ghosts**All:** Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (Sakai)**Paper #1 Due October 9**

(Fall Break: No Lecture October 16)

October 18: Algeria**All:** Julia Clancy Smith, “Exoticism, Erasures and Absence: The Peopling of Algiers, 1830-1900 in *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City Through Text and Image* (Sakai)**English:** Djebbar, *Fantasia***French:** Djebbar, *Fantasia*October 23/25: Legacies of Anti-Colonial Resistance**English:** Continue Djebbar, *Fantasia*Sakai: Sartre, *Introduction to The Wretched of the Earth* and Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled”;**French:** Continue Djebbar, *Fantasia*

Sakai : Sartre, « Introduction » aux « Damnés de la Terre » and Fanon, « L’Algérie se dévoile »

October 30/ November 1: Islam, Gender and Human Rights**All:** John Bowen, *Why the French Don’t Like Headscarves***French :** Sakai, sélections from Gaspar and Khosrokar, *Le Foulard et la République*November 6/8: Pilgrimages

Screening and discussion of “Le Grand Voyage”

November 13/15: Migrant Lives, Migrant Dreams**English:** Mabanckou, *Broken Glass***French :** Mabanckou, *Black Bazaar***Paper #2 Due November 13**November 20: Banlieue Blues: Selections from Documentary and Feature Films on Contemporary FranceNovember 27/29: Group Meetings in Class on Author PagesDecember 4/6: In-Class Presentations of Final Projects