

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

“BLACKNESS” IN FRENCH From Harlem to Paris and Beyond

Columbia in Paris, summer 2018

KAIAMA L. GLOVER

kglover@barnard.edu

Course description

What distinctions must be made between US-black American fantasies of Paris and realities for Blacks in Paris? What are the historical linkages between black Americans and Paris? Between black Americans and black French women and men? How is this relationship different from and contingent on the relationship between the “French” and their colonial “others?” How is “blackness” a category into which all non-white racial others are conscripted? (e.g. Arab and Roma communities)? Using an internationalist (specifically transatlantic) approach and covering the 20th and 21st centuries, this course explores these and other questions over the course of the semester through a close consideration of the literature, arts, culture, history and politics emanating from or dealing with Black France. The texts and artifacts examined in this course will consider “race” as both fact and fantasy in the unique, long-historical relationship between the United States, Paris, and the wider French empire.

Course Requirements

1. completion of all assigned readings and participation in class discussions;
2. preparation of one text for in-class discussion;
3. two 500 word book/film reviews;
4. one 2000 word paper (topic must be approved in advance).

Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to be present and prepared for all class meetings, having done the reading and completed the required writing assignment for that day. Students should come to class ready to examine the specifics of assigned reading(s). Please note that participation/preparation does not mean having all the right answers; it can also mean posing intelligent, well thought-out questions. If you miss a class, please notify me in advance via email. You will still be held responsible for the assigned work and should consult with a classmate to be updated on the day’s discussion.

Book/Film reviews

These 500-750 word writing assignments should focus on a single text, presenting the work’s significance vis-à-vis its historical and/or literary context, reception, or a particular thematic “angle.”

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Preparation of text for in-class discussion

This requirement entails generating, drafting, and pre-circulating substantive *pistes de réflexion* for the discussion one or more texts from the syllabus on a given class session.

Final Paper

This 2000-word essay should offer comparative reflections on a thematic element at play in multiple texts from the syllabus, relying on close reading and textual analysis of sources discussed during the semester. Students must have a paper topic approved no later than July 17 and final papers are due in class on July 26

Courseworks

As an enrolled student, you have access to the Courseworks site and will be expected to engage with this platform over the course of the semester. All course-related information can be found on this site.

Course Grading and Grading Scale

Attendance/Participation	15%	A+	96	A	93	A-	90
Text Presentation	15%	B+	86	B	83	B-	80
Paper 1	20%						
Paper 2	20%	C+	76	C	73	C-	70
Final Paper	30%	D+	66	D	63	D-	60
		F	below 60				

Class Attendance Policy

Students are expected to communicate promptly regarding absences from class, preferably in advance of any missed class. Students will be held responsible for all assigned work and should consult with a classmate to be updated on any missed class discussion.

Classroom Use of Technology

Laptops and tablets are permitted for in-class use (this policy is subject to alteration in instances of misuse of such devices). Cell phone use is strictly forbidden in class.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

I. CONTEXTUALIZING “BLACK FRANCE”

Tuesday, 5 June

- COURSE INTRODUCTIONS – logistics, requirements, expectations, overview
- Pascal Blanchard and Juan Gélas – *Noirs de France/Black France*, part. 1 “The Time of the Pioneers (1889-1940)” (film 52”)

Thursday, 7 June

- discussion: *Noirs de France/Black France*
- *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* “Introduction: Examining Frenchness and the African Diaspora” (pp. 3-18)
- William Safran – “The French and Their National Identity: The Quest for an Elusive Substance?” (pp. 56-67)

II. FRANCE AND ITS COLONIAL “OTHERS”

Tuesday, 12 June

- Charles de Gaulle – “Opening Speech at Brazzaville” (pp. 1-2)
- “Paris 1931 Colonial Exposition: History, Images, Interpretation — Ideas” (23pp)
- Jean-Paul Sartre – “Black Orpheus” (pp. 13-52)

Thursday, 14 June

- Aimé Césaire – *Discourse on Colonialism* (pp. 1-25)
- Franz Fanon – “Concerning Violence” (pp. 34-106)

II. FROM “ELSEWHERE” TO PARIS

Tuesday, 19 June [PAPER 1 DUE]

- Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting – “Introduction,” *Black Venus* (pp. 1-15)
- Abdellatif Kechiche – *Black Venus* (film 159”)

Thursday, 21 June

- discussion: *Black Venus*
- Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting, “Writing Sex, Writing Difference: Creating the Master Text of the Hottentot Venus” & “Cinematic Venus in the Africanist Orient” (pp. 16-31, 105-18)
- Edmond T. Greville – *Princesse Tam-Tam* (film 77”)

Tuesday, 26 June

- discussion: *Princesse Tam-Tam*
- Eileen Julien – “Now You See It, Now You Don’t: Josephine Baker’s Films of the 1930s and the Problem of Color,” in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (pp. 48-62)
- Terri Francis – “The Audacious Josephine Baker: Stardom, Cinema, Paris,” in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (pp. 238-59)

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Thursday, 28 June

- Michel Fabre – *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France 1840-1980* (pp. 1-9, 63-75, 129-45)
- Brent Hayes Edwards – *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (pp. 1-15)
- Ta-Nehisi Coates – “Dispatches from Paris,” *The Atlantic* (15pp)

III. MUSLIMS AND ARABS IN FRANCE – THE OTHER “OTHERS”

Tuesday, 3 July [PAPER 2 DUE] [guest lecturer – Professor Laurent Dubois (Duke University)]

- Trica Keaton – “Introduction,” *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics, and Social Exclusion* (pp. 1-31)
- David Beriss – “Scarves, Schools, and Segregation: The Foulard Affair” (pp. 1-13)
- Pierre Tévanian – “A Conservative Revolution within Secularism: The Ideological Premises and Social Effects of the March 15, 2004, ‘Anti-Headscarf’ Law,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* (pp. 187-204)
- Laurent Dubois & Shireen Ahmed, “A Look at the Cultural Significance of the Hijab and France’s Jessica Houra” (pp.1-3)

Thursday, 5 July [guest lecturer – Professor/Activist Maboula Soumahoro (Sciences Po)]

- Mame Fatou Niang – *Mariannes noires* (film 77”) [SCREENING & DISCUSSION]
- Maboula Soumahoro – “On the Test of the French Republic as Taken (and Failed)”
- Charles Tshimanga – “Let the Music Play: The African Diaspora, Popular Culture, and National Identity in Contemporary France,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora*

*** BREAK ***

NO CLASS TUESDAY, 10 JULY & THURSDAY, 12 JULY

IV. WHAT TO DO ABOUT *LA BANLIEUE*?

Tuesday, 17 July

- Trica D. Keaton – “Black (American) Paris” and the French Outer-Cities: The Race Question and Questioning Solidarity,” in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (pp. 95-118)
- Ahmed Boubeker – “Outsiders in the French Melting Pot: The Public Construction of Invisibility for Visible Minorities,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* (pp. 70-88)
- Fred Constant – “Talking Race in Color-Blind France: Equality Denied, ‘Blackness’ Reclaimed” in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (pp.146-60)
- Tyler Stovall – “No Green Pastures: The African-Americanization of France,” in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (pp. 180-95)

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Thursday, 19 July

- Didier Lapeyronnie – “Primitive Rebellion in the French Banlieues: On the Fall 2005 Riots,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* (pp. 21-46)
- Achille Mbembe – “The Republic and Its Beast: On the Riots in the French Banlieues” & “Figures of Multiplicity: Can France Reinvent Its Identity?,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora* (pp. 47-54, 55-69)

Tuesday, 24 July

- Mathieu Kassovitz – *La Haine* (film 95”) [SCREENING & DISCUSSION]
- Blog exchange between Mathieu Kassovitz and Nicolas Sarkozy (pp. 1-7)

Thursday, 26 July

- FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS