

Course Syllabus
FREN 775 V /ILA 790 / CPLT 752

The Plantation Americas

Professor: Valérie Loichot
Office: Callaway 412
Office hours: Th 2:00-5:00
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Days and time: T 1:00-4:00
Location: Callaway C 202

Course Content:

This course will explore how the Plantation machine produced repeating patterns in different parts of the Americas. We will look particularly at textual and cultural productions of the Caribbean and the Plantation South of the United States. Among the topics we will consider: family structures, including perversions of fatherhood, inversions of naming process, and the increasing importance of women; challenged authorship of texts; boundless proliferating narratives; creolized language; predominance of the oral collective voice; exploded notions of space; hybrid forms of temporality. Fictional and theoretical readings from Antonio Benítez-Rojo, E.K. Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, Françoise Vergès, Michael Dash, William Faulkner, Edouard Glissant, Toni Morrison, Saint-John Perse, among others.

In the first part of the class, we will mostly discuss essays theorizing the subject of the plantation and of the construction of a Caribbean or American identity in this transnational, translinguistic socio-cultural area.

The last month of class will culminate in the discussion of four novels by Glissant, Morrison, Faulkner, and Carpentier in light of the theory previously examined. Since you cannot read these substantial novels in one week, it is important to start reading -or rereading- them now.

Readings

You will find the following texts at the Emory Village bookstore:

Required:

Alejo Carpentier. Explosion in a Cathedral (El Siglo de las Luces).

Faulkner. Light in August.

Toni Morrison. Song of Solomon.

Edouard Glissant. Poetics of Relation (Poétique de la Relation)

--- The Fourth Century (Le Quatrième siècle)

Benítez-Rojo. The Repeating Island (Isla que se repite)

Optional:

the following books are optional yet strongly recommended if you can afford to buy them. If you can't, you will find the chapters discussed in class on electronic reserve:

Vergès, Françoise. Monsters and Revolutionaries.

Fanon, Frantz. Black Skin, White Masks (Peau noire, masques blancs)

Other readings will be available on Electronic Reserve unless otherwise specified.

If you know French or Spanish, you are encouraged to read the material in the original language. Consult with me to check on the availability of originals.

Methods This class meets once a week. Its format is interactive and students are expected to read the texts before class and contribute to seminar discussions.

Grading:

Participation in seminar discussions: 20 %

Oral presentation: 30 %

A 15 minute presentation on a topic to be discussed with me beforehand. The presentation should be a theoretical analysis of a particular aspect of a literary text or other cultural production (such as music or painting) from the Plantation Americas. For instance, if your subject is “Hybrid Time in Carpentier’s Explosion in a Cathedral,” you would use theories by Glissant and Brathwaite, and Deleuze and Guattari’s trope of the rhizome to build your analysis.

The cultural productions include but are not limited to the texts included in syllabus. The presenter should share a list of references as well as a brief outline of the presentation with seminar members.

Research paper: 50%

A 10 page analysis of a cultural production from the Plantation using a solid critical apparatus. You may, but are not required to, work on the same topic as your oral presentation. If you choose to do so, the research paper should be a more in-depth analysis.

The paper should be typed, double-spaced, Times 12, and should be accompanied by a bibliography. Please follow the MLA Style (cf. Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers).

Attendance policy.

Since the class meets only once a week, and since it is widely based on discussion, it is essential that students are present in class. You are entitled to ONE unexcused absence. More than one unexcused absence will be penalized in the assignment of final grade.

SCHEDULE

(subject to slight changes)

September 4th. The Plantation Americas: Introductory Concepts
Brathwaite. "Caribbean Man in Space and Time"

September 11th. "Caribbean Man in Space and Time." (cont.)
Glissant. Poétique de la Relation. Poetics of Relation:
"Barque ouverte" / "The Open Boat"
"Etendue et filiation" / "Expanse and Filiation"
"Lieu clos, parole ouverte" / "Closed Place, Open Word"
"Relié, relayé relaté" / Relinked, (Relayed), Related."

September 18th. Glissant. Caribbean Discourse.
"From tracks left yesterday" (9)
"Dispossession" ("The Chronological Illusion") 13
"The Quarrel with History" (61-67)
"History and Literature" (69-95)
"Cross-Cultural Poetics" (120-157)

September 25th.
Benítez-Rojo. The Repeating island. Introduction: "From the Plantation to the
Plantation."
Deleuze and Guattari. Mille plateaux. (Introduction: "Le Rhizome")

October 2nd.
Mintz. "The Caribbean as Socio-Cultural Area." Dash. The Other America. "Poetics of
Liminality" (134-158)

October 9th. Walcott. "The Antilles." The Star-Apple Kingdom. (Selection of poems)
Brathwaite. Islands. "Trade-Winds" (9-10) / "Caliban" (34-38) / "Pebbles" (39) /
"Islands"(47-48)

October 16th. Fall break.

October 23rd. Perse. Eloges. (Selections) Glissant: "Une errance enracinée" / "A Rooted
Errantry" (Poetics of Relation)

October 30th. Code noir (Extraits) / Fanon. "Le Nègre et la psychopathologie" (115-135)
/ "Negro and Psychopathology" (141-167)

November 6th.
Vergès, Monsters and Revolutionaries. Introduction (1-21) / "Contested Family
Romances." (22-71)

November 13th. Edouard Glissant. The Fourth Century. (Le Quatrième siècle)

November 20th. William Faulkner. Light in August. Glissant: Faulkner, Mississippi (11-31)

November 27th. Toni Morrison. Song of Solomon.

December 4th. Alejo Carpentier. Explosion in a Cathedral (El Siglo de las Luces)
Benítez-Rojo "Naming the Father, Naming the Mother." (265-275)

December 11th. Conclusion.