COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines African narratives of migration, focusing on literary and filmic engagements produced between the early/mid-20th century and the present day. The course will consider the ways in which African and African diasporic writers have inscribed the migrant experience in relation to the historical processes of colonialism and globalization. We will begin by contextualizing the African diasporic experience within the history of slavery and the Middle Passage, and from there, will continue on to explore the links between migration and colonialism in the work of writers such as Frantz Fanon, Andrea
Levy and Tayeb Salih. We will then go on to consider new migrant literatures within the context of globalization, tracing how the theme of migration is revised and re-constituted under new global conditions (which nonetheless hark back to colonialism) in the texts of contemporary African writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Teju Cole and Dinaw Mengestu, among others. The course will pay special attention to the ways in which gender, class, ethnicity and race inform representations of the African migrant experience in the works under consideration. By the end of the semester, students will have a deeper grasp of the constitution and evolution of this theme in the African literary canon, as well as related historical processes.

**COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

To protect everyone’s health in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, precautionary measures will be strictly adhered to in our in-class meetings (masks must be worn during in-class sessions and distance requirements adhered to). Furthermore, some meetings may be held online or scheduled asynchronously. More information will be given at the start of class. Those who are unable to join class at the start because of COVID-19-related travel issues, or who may have to be absent for a period of time during the semester due to quarantine requirements or other COVID-19 issues, will be given instructions for alternative arrangements to complete readings and assignments asynchronously. Should we be required to move meetings entirely online at any point in the semester due to a deterioration in the public health situation, we will move all of our meetings to the Zoom app. Should you have any issues with access to computers or internet, please let me know at the beginning of the semester.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

*Attendance and Participation*

You are required to attend all scheduled sessions for the course. This not only means being physically present, but also actively engaging in the discussion around the assigned readings and materials. Before arriving in class, make sure you have thoroughly read and thought through materials and noted down questions and comments to bring to class. Your attendance and participation add up to 35% of your final grade; more than one missed session will significantly (as in adversely) affect your final grade.

*Readings*

Please be sure to purchase a course reader from the library, which will include most of the readings we will cover in the seminar. In addition, you will need to buy the novel *Season of Migration to the North* (1969) and Imbolo Mbue’s *Behold the Dreamers* (2016). Again, make sure to read actively before coming to class: take notes, write down questions or confusions the readings might raise for you, highlight the texts and write down initial thoughts and responses.

Required texts to be purchased:

- LT 323 Course Reader (purchase from the library)


Limited copies of required texts will also be on reserve in the library.

**Assignments**

You will have four assignments for the course: 3 assignments (10% each, adding up to 30% of your final grade), and a final paper (35%). You will receive hand-out instructions for each assignment once the course commences.

**Grade Breakdown and Final Deadlines**

Class participation: 35%
Assignment 1 (instructions will be handed out in class): 10% (29th Sept)
Assignment 2 (instructions will be handed out in class): 10% (27th Oct)
Assignment 3 (instructions will be handed out in class): 10% (24th Nov)
Final paper (10-12 pages): 35% (18th December)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Late submission of your assignments will result in a lower grade. An assignment that is submitted one day (24 hours) late will be downgraded by one full grade. There will be a drop by one full grade for each further 24 hour delay. If you foresee that you will not be able to hand in an assignment on time for a valid reason, it is crucial that you contact me, in advance, to discuss.

**Academic Integrity and policy on plagiarism**

Students are expected to adhere to “the highest standards of [academic] integrity,” as outlined in The Bard College Berlin Student Handbook. Acts of academic misconduct and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**I—Background:**

**Slavery, the Middle Passage and Forced Migration**

**Week 1: Introduction to the course**
1st September

**Week 2: Slave narratives**

8th September

  - IN CLASS: Kara Walker, selected works

**Week 3: The African diaspora between Europe and America**

15th September


**Week 4: Ghosts of slavery: Horror and diaspora**

22nd September


**II—Narratives of Colonial Migration**

**Week 5: Human zoos, exhibition and colonial migration**

29th September


**ASSIGNMENT 1 due 29th September**

**Week 6: FIELD TRIP: Decolonial walking tour of Berlin**

6th October
Week 7: The colonial journey into the “Heart of Darkness”
13th October
- Shakespeare, William. 1604. *The Tragedy of Othello, Moor of Venice* (selections)

Week 8: FALL BREAK—NO CLASS
20th October

Week 9: Re-writing the colonial journey into the “Heart of Darkness”
27th October

Assignment 2 due 27th October

III—Globalization and Migration

Week 10: What is Afropolitanism?
3rd November
- Dabiri, Emma. 21 Jan 2014. “Why I’m not an Afropolitan.” *Africa is a Country* (Online).

Week 11: Migration under duress: refugeehood, crisis and economic struggle
10th November
  - IN CLASS: Christoph Buchel’s “Barca Nostra”
**Week 12: Globalization & stories of migration in Berlin**
17th November
- Asynchronous assignment: TBD

**Week 13: Globalization, migration and the American Dream**
24th November
- **ASSIGNMENT 3 due 24th November**

**Week 14: Migration, belonging and mis-belonging in Germany**
1st December

**Week 15: Migrating to another space-time: Afrofuturism on film**
8th December
- Work on final paper.

**Week 16: TBD**
15th December

**FINAL PAPERS DUE 18th December**

*This syllabus may be subject to revision*