LT323 African Narratives of Migration: from Colonialism to Globalization
Fall 2019
Bard College Berlin

Instructor: Dr. Fatin Abbas
Course Times: Tuesdays, 2 pm – 5.15 pm
Location: TBA
Email: f.abbas@berlin.bard.edu
Office hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines African narratives of migration, exploring literary engagements beginning in the early/mid-20th century to the present day. The course will consider the ways in which African writers have inscribed the migrant experience in relation to the historical processes of colonialism and globalization. We will first examine the links between migration and colonialism in the early work of African writers such as Léopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon 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, Dinaw Mengestu and Shailja Patel, among others. Finally, we will engage with and critically explore key concepts—such as “Négritude,” “Pan-Africanism” and “Afropolitanism”—that are central to debates around contemporary African migration. 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.

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 writing assignments for the course: 3 short writing responses (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%
Writing response 1 (2-3 pages): 10% (17th September)
Writing response 2 (2-3 pages): 10% (18th October)
Writing response 3 (2-3 pages): 10% (26th November)
Final paper (12-15 pages): 35% (20th 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; Slave narratives**  
3rd September  
  - IN CLASS: Kara Walker, selected works

**Week 2: The African diaspora between Europe and America**  
10th September  

II—Narratives of Colonial Migration

**Week 3: Human zoos, exhibition and colonial migration**  
17th September  

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1 due 17th September**

**Week 4: Négritude, Pan-Africanism and migration**

24th September


**Week 5: The colonial journey into the “Heart of Darkness”**

1st October

• Shakespeare, William. 1604. *The Tragedy of Othello, Moor of Venice* (selections)


**Week 6: Re-writing the colonial journey into the “Heart of Darkness” (1)**

8th October


**Week 7: Re-writing the colonial journey into the “Heart of Darkness” (2)**

15th October

• Salih, Tayeb. 1969. *Season of Migration to the North* (cont’d)

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2 due 18th October**

**III—Globalization and Migration**

**Week 8: What is Afropolitanism?**

22nd October

• Dabiri, Emma. 21 Jan 2014. “Why I’m not an Afropolitan.” Africa is a Country (Online).

**Week 9: FALL BREAK—NO CLASS**
29th October

**Week 10: Migration under duress: refugeehood, crisis and economic struggle**
5th November

  o IN CLASS: Christoph Buchel’s “Barca Nostra”

**Week 11: Globalization, migration and the American Dream (1)**


**Week 12: Globalization, migration and the American Dream (2)**
19th November

• Mbue, Imbolo. Behold the Dreamers (cont’d)

**Week 13: Migration, belonging and mis-belonging in Germany**
26th November


**WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3 due 26th November**

**Week 14: African narratives of migration in Berlin**
3rd December
  ● Field trip, TBA

**Week 15: Migrating to another space-time: Afrofuturism on film**
10th December

**Week 16: Final discussion**
17th December

**FINAL PAPERS DUE 20th December**