

UIUC COURSES ABROAD
LAS 199:
Paris: A Multicultural Perspective
Evelyne Accad

Dec. 28, 2008 – Jan. 12, 2009

This course will introduce students to the impact of globalization through the study of the immigrant experience in Paris, its multi-cultural identities with the negotiation of cultural beliefs and practices. They will be made aware of cultural diversity with an appreciation for others; their interest as well as their understanding of other cultures will be aroused through the celebration/appreciation of diversity, broadening their disciplinary and cultural perspective. They will improve their critical and analytical thinking through comparisons with French education versus their US experience thanks to the visit they will have in French schools and talking to French students as well as their visits to immigrant associations.

The students come to appreciate African, Asian and Arab cultures that they encounter during their stay in Paris through sampling a day-in-the-life of the protagonists from the novels. Due to the fact that these characters “come alive” through these visits, the students are likely to be more accepting and understanding of cultural differences due to the human element that has been introduced by the readings.

By the end of the course conducted in Paris, the student will have read and discussed works by prominent authors of Sub-Saharan Africa, Vietnamese and the Maghreb/Mashrek such as Aba, Accad, Adnan, Agha-Malak, Beyala, Chedid, Chraïbi, Djébar, Khoury-Ghata, Kuoh-Moukoury, Labaky, Sebbar, Van Kang, Thaï and others. The students will be able to identify both literature-specific and universal themes, and will be made aware of issues that deal with women of the developing world and the Arab and African immigrant experience in particular.

The student will debate and explore issues such as feminism, racism, colonialism, independence, post-independence, polygamy, the veil, religious tolerance, the Algerian revolution, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Lebanese war, Islamism, today's Algerian situation, the Palestinian question, and other aspects of a multi-cultural society.

Students will supplement the reading of novels and articles with interviews with the authors themselves, and various other visits to artistic and cultural centers. Students will also visit French secondary schools and *classes préparatoires* to discuss first hand the views of France's youth on multiculturalism and other pertinent issues during a round table format designed specifically for that purpose.

Course texts

Beyala, Calixthe. *Loukoum: The Little Prince of Belleville*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1995. (out-of-print, included in course packet)
Kuoh-Moukoury, Thérèse. *Essential Encounters*. Trans. And Introductory critique C. Toman. New York: MLA Texts and Translations Series, 2002.

“A Lebanese Anguishes from Paris” by Evelyne Accad followed by a word from Ezza Egha Malak.

Paris When It's Naked (excerpts) by Etel Adnan, 1993 (in course packet)

Accad, Evelyne. ***Poppy of the Massacre***. (bilingual edition, Trans. and Introductory critique C. Hahn) Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006.

Aba, Nouredine. ***It Was Yesterday Sabra and Shatila*** and ***Montjoie Palestine!*** (bilingual editions) Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002.

Slander (excerpts) by Linda Lê, 1996 (in course packet)

Articles and Essays,

(in course packet)

“Polygamy, Disrupted Reproduction, and the State: Muslim Migrants in Paris, France” by Carolyn Sargent and Dennis Cordell (2002)

“African Women Eliminating Borders” by Cheryl Toman (2004)

“Beirut, The City that Moves Me” by Evelyne Accad (2002)

“To Write in a Foreign Language” by Etel Adnan (1996)

“The Body and the City—Evelyne Accad and Etel Adnan’s Beirut” by Zohreh Sullivan (2006)

“The Muslims in France and the French Model of Integration” by Dominique Maillard (2005)

“The Muslims of France” by Milton Viorst (1996)

Orientation

There will be several meetings prior to departure, work sessions for the students with the director and with the assistant. These sessions are meant to prepare them to their experience and class in Paris: practical information, logistics, introduction to what they can expect, questions and answers. There will be pre-orientation meetings to show the link between globalization and the immigration experience in Paris.

Grading

- 25% Journal
- 25% Interviews with authors/scholars
- 10% Self-guided ethnic neighborhood report (oral and written)
- 20% Participation, attendance, prepared activities, orientation.
- 20% Final exam

Journals

Students will be responsible for writing their reflections in essays of two pages minimum per day. Journals will include both guided and free writing exercises based on the course activities. Within these journal assignments, you will also write on our visit with English classes and their instructors at three very diverse schools in Paris. During the visits at these *lycées*, students should have various questions in mind to ask their French counterparts. Questions should be related to the themes of the course, and the various responses will be recorded in the journal assignments for that particular day. It is also to be expected that American students will respond frankly and thoughtfully to any questions the French students may have for them as well. The purpose of the exchange is to promote understanding and to identify cultural parallels.

Lycée visits

During the visits at the lycées, students should have various questions in mind to ask their French counterparts. Questions should be related to the themes of the course, and the various responses will be recorded in the journal assignments for that particular day. It is also expected that American students will respond frankly and thoughtfully to any questions the French students may have for them as well. The purpose of the exchange is to promote understanding and to identify cultural parallels.

Interviews with authors

Students are expected to formulate three questions to be asked during the session with the authors: Accad, a prominent Arab novelist / scholar writing on Arab women, Kuoh-Moukoury, the first woman novelist of Sub-Saharan Africa, and Aba, the widow of highly acclaimed Algerian writer. Questions should be thought provoking and perhaps question a certain interpretation of the reading. Questions and answers are to then be summarized in a report form.

Self-guided ethnic neighborhood report

Self-guided ethnic neighborhood report (oral and written): The course allows us to cover in depth only the largest immigrant communities in Paris. Therefore, one day of the course will be set aside for students to discover in groups of three or four certain other ethnic communities in Paris by visiting locations frequented by members of the Turkish, Kurdish, Indian, Egyptian, Armenian, Iranian, Congolese, and Tibetan communities among others. Each discovery will include three or four addresses provided by the instructors. Students are responsible the following day to report on their research to the class. A written report is also to be included in the final paper.

Participation

Students must attend every class. Each absence will result in a significant reduction and missed assignments. Students are also expected to participate rigorously in any discussions and activities. Students who miss more than two class sessions automatically receive a grade of "F".

Final exam

An essay-style exam based on the material covered in the course, and interpretation and analysis of the readings. Course material may be consulted to complete the exam.