Migration, Displacement and Diaspora in the French and North African Context

MENA W4100 / Summer 2017

Contact & Office Hours
Professor Madeleine Dobie
mld2027@columbia.edu
Office hours TBD

Course Description
In this course we explore the social and political history of migration between France and Africa with particular emphasis on its representation in the arts, especially literature and film. We examine the political, economic and social forces that have underpinned migration in the nations of the Mediterranean rim since the 1950s and observe major transitions in policy and legal frameworks. Though migration is often approached in mainstream media as an object of policy and legislation, it is better understood as a ‘total social fact’ in which political, social, economic and cultural dimensions are interwoven. With this in mind, we look at the different media, genres and narrative forms through which migration has been portrayed. Throughout the course we grapple with questions concerning the relationship between aesthetics and politics and between life experience and representation.

The sources examined in the course include novels, feature and documentary films and political and legal discourses as well as analyses grounded in anthropological, sociological, and philosophical methodologies. Combining empirical with theoretical approaches, we consider both the specific political, legal, social and economic contexts in which migration has occurred and broader conceptual questions about the status of ‘immigrants,’ ‘migrants’ and ‘refugees’ as social and cultural figures. Taking the view that local dynamics have to be situated in broader regional/global frameworks and vice versa, we examine both national framings of migration in countries including France, Morocco and Algeria and transnational and cross-regional dynamics.

Class Visits and Field Trips
Making use of our location in Paris, we visit museums, exhibitions and other sites related to migration, including the Centre national de l’histoire de l’immigration and the new Paris refugee welcome center. At the start of the semester students will be presented with opportunities to do volunteer work with migrants which they can pursue if they are interested. If there is enough interest there will also be an optional field trip to Calais to visit the site of the dismantled migrant camp “the Jungle” and to speak with local humanitarian professionals and activists.

There will be several class visits by scholars and artists, including those already listed on the syllabus.
Objectives
The course offers an overview of the history of 20th and 21st century migrations in the Mediterranean context, focusing on France and its former colonies in Africa. It also introduces major debates on topics such as the distinction between migrant and refugee, the politics of humanitarianism, the classification and marketing of ‘beur’ or ‘banlieue’ literature and film, and the reverberation of EU policies across the Mediterranean as a result of the outsourcing of border policing and corresponding criminalization of undocumented emigration. Students develop their conceptual vocabulary by engaging with the theoretical texts and refine their skills in close reading, academic writing and oral presentation.

Languages
The course will be conducted in French or English depending on the linguistic competency and preference of the members. French majors and other students seeking to improve their French should read in French. Students with Arabic language competency may read Arabic texts/translations where available if they prefer. Final papers may be written in French or English.

Almost all of the readings are available in French and English and wherever possible they will be posted in both languages. Many of the films that we’ll be viewing contain dialogue in several languages, e.g. French, Maghrebi Arabic dialects (darija) and formal Arabic (fusha). Almost all have subtitling in English.

Credits
This seminar carries 3 credits and can be presented to fulfil the Columbia global core requirement.

Evaluation and Course Policies
Participation in class discussions 30%
Oral presentation 20%
2 short (5-7 pages) papers 50%
Topics for final papers should be determined in conversation with me. Submitting a preliminary draft version is required.

Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to complete all reading assignments and to view films screened or assigned outside class hours. If you have to miss a class for an urgent reason, kindly give advance notice. Missing more than one class will result in the deduction of 2 percentage points from your final grade for each class missed. All work must be conducted in conformity with the official honor codes of your school. Eating in class is not permitted but you may bring a drink. Please only leave the room during class only in case of an emergency.

Materials
Readings will be posted on Courseworks or are available as ebooks via the Columbia library, with the exception of the novels listed below. Please bring copies of the readings
to class to facilitate discussion. You may bring print copies or read from your laptop, but laptop use in class must be limited to accessing the readings and taking notes.

**Novels to purchase or borrow**

**Schedule of Classes**

**Introduction**

**Week 1**

**June 7**

**June 9**
We continue our discussion of fundamental terms and concepts including ‘hospitality,’ ‘Mediterranean,’ ‘Maghreb,’ ‘North Africa,’ ‘Schengen Area,’ ‘beur,’ ‘banlieue.’

**Part 1: Migration in the Colonial System**
In the first few weeks of the course we consider the establishment of a regime of labor migration between France and its African colonies during the period stretching from WWI to 1974, when France closed its borders to non-EU migrants. We consider the role of migration both in the colonial system and in the dynamics of decolonization. Sources include works produced during the period as well as retrospective representations.

**Colonial Hospitality**

**Week 2**

**June 12**
-- Albert Camus, “L’hôte” (1957) [“The Guest” (1957)]

**June 14 (Film screening)**
-- Film: David Oelhoffen, *Loin des hommes* [Far from Men](2015)

**June 16**
Colonialism and Migration

Week 3
June 19
--Mouloud Feraoun, Le fils du pauvre (1950; 1954) [The Poor Man’s Son, trans. Lucy McNair (2005)]

June 21 (Fieldtrip)
--Class fieldtrip to CNHI (Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration)

Migration and Decolonization

June 23
--Claire Etcherelli, Elise ou la vraie vie (1967) [Elise, or the Real Life, trans. J.P. Wlison (1970)]

Week 4
June 26

June 28 (Film screening)

June 30
Todd Shepard, The Invention of Decolonization (2005) (excerpt)

Paper #1 Draft due

Part 2: Integration and Illegalization

In the second part of the course we examine the new dispensation that followed the closing of the borders by both France and Algeria. Starting in 1974, French authorities pursued a dual policy of excluding and deporting undocumented migrants while, at least officially, ‘integrating’ residents ‘of immigrant origin.’ We explore the emergence of discourses about minorities in France and the concomitant rise of two social movements, that of the beurs in the early 1980s and that of the sans-papiers in the mid 1990s.

Looking beyond France to the EU we examine the effects of common border control policies on the dynamics of migration. We focus on issues such as the outsourcing of border policing to the nations of the Maghreb, the emergence of the harraga as the new figure of the Mediterranean migrant, the illegalization of em/immigration on both shores of the Mediterranean and the practice of ‘humanitarian’ detention.

Migration, Memory and Identity
**Week 5**

**July 3 (Film Screening)**

**July 5**

**July 7 (Screening + Reading)**
--Film, Malek Chibane, *Hexagone* (1994)

**Paper #1 due**

- *Migration as Social Movement*

**Week 6**

**July 10 (Readings + Video)**

- *Detention Policies and Human Rights Narratives*

**Session July 12 (Reading + Guest Lecture)**
--Guest lecture by Nicolas Fischer (Centre de recherches sociologiques sur le droit et les institutions pénales)

**Session 3 (Fieldtrip)**
--Visit to the Paris Refugee Welcome Center

- *Mediterranean Crossings in the Age of the Harraga*

**Week 7**

**July 17 (Film Screening + Reading)**
--Film, Merzak Allouache, Harragas (2012) (Film screening)

July 19

July 21 (Film Screening + Conversation with Film Makers)
--Documentary Film, Helen Crouzillat & Laetitia Tura, Les Messagers (2016)

Paper #2 draft due

- Trans-Saharan and Trans-Mediterranean Migration

Week 8
July 24 (Film Screening + reading)
--Film, Tarek Teguia, Gabbla (2010)

- Contemporary Policies and the Poetics of Resistance

July 26 (Screenings + Reading)

July 28 (Screening + Reading)
--Film, Sylvain George, Qu’ils reposent en révolte (des figures de guerres) (2010) and conversation with Jacques Rancière: https://www.ecosociosystemes.fr/savoir_intolerable.pdf

Paper #2 due 3 days after final class meeting