This course offers a panorama of contemporary drama written by Francophone playwrights from the Caribbean and Africa, half of them living in Paris today. Readings include plays written from the 1960s to nowadays by playwrights from Martinique (Aimé Césaire), Guadeloupe (Simone Schwarz-Bart, Maryse Condé and Gerty Dambury), Ivory Coast (Koffi Kwahulé) and Benin (José Pliya). The course explores issues of colonialism and postcolonialism, reappropriation of history, exile and immigration, tensions between race, gender and social classes. It analyses how Western conventions are challenged and subverted by the adaptation and diversion of classic literary traditions, and how the integration of storytelling, folksongs, music and dance into theater contribute to the revalorization of an African ancestral legacy. The reading of plays will be complemented by the screening of staged performances (when available) and documentaries related to the topics analyzed in the plays. Since theater is a living art, we will constantly link theory and practice, and therefore combine the literary approach of dramaturgy with a more theatrical-performance perspective of scenography through videos, and staged performance by students themselves who will have the opportunity to give flesh and blood to the characters. By attending theater plays and dance shows, and meeting with African and Caribbean artists living in Paris (playwrights, actors, choreographers, dancers), students will enjoy the opportunity to explore Black Parisian culture from an insider’s point of view and find out what it means to be a Black artist today in France.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS
• Attendance and participation are mandatory
• Each student is allowed one unjustified absence for the entire length of the course, with the exception of religious holidays
• Medical absences must be justified by a medical certificate
• Each absence beyond the authorized threshold will lower the final grade by ½ point (i.e.: with two absences a 19 becomes an 18, etc.)
• In addition to attendance students should plan on being punctual. Please note that 3 lateness (10 minutes or more) are equivalent to 1 full absence
• All assignments handed in late without the authorization of the instructor will be penalized
In addition to punctuality and motivation, students should do their best to be engaged critics and scholars, by participating actively in class, producing original work, and having pleasure in reading, writing and thinking.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course pack containing other plays with unpublished English translation (*Like two brothers* by Maryse Condé, *Bintou* by Koffi Kwahulé, *We were sitting on the shores of the world…* by José Pliya), and articles.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Preparation and participation
This course is based on an active participation in and outside class, including mandatory attendance at all artistic and cultural events organized in theaters, cinemas. Students are expected to read texts and articles as well as prepare questions related to the topics of the day before coming to class. This will ensure readiness to take part in class discussions, where one's interpretations and observations will be confronted with those of other students.

Oral presentation of one play
With two or three partners, students will be in charge of presenting a play (from the corpus) to the other students of the course. In about 30 minutes they will:
- give a short biography the author
- situate the play in its historical, sociological, and political context
- summarize the plot
- analyze the various issues of the play
- stage one scene of the play
They are allowed to use powerpoint and/or any video or audio documents.

This presentation will serve as an introduction to the play which will then be analyzed by focusing on various thematic or aesthetic features.

Short essay: Written report/critic on a play or dance performance or meeting with an artist (3-5 pages)
Students will choose one among the cultural events that are planned, and write a 3-5pp analysis presenting the artist, the performance, its aesthetic features while offering personal interpretations as if one were a critic.
Final exam: paper (6-8 pages)
Students will write an extensive paper on a topic they personally choose and which is related to the topic of the course. It can be a play by an African or a Caribbean playwright we have not studied in class, it can be another work (novel, poetry, essay) by an author studied in class, it can also be a film. The choice will be made in the middle of the semester with my approval.

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<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
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Students’ participation grade will be based on attendance, lateness, in addition to active contribution to in-class discussions.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability should contact the Program Director directly. All discussions will remain confidential.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY FACULTY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars’ work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

- In practical terms, this means that, as students,
  - you must be responsible for the full citations of others’ ideas in all of your research papers and projects
  - you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations
  - you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent
  - In case of plagiarism, the student’s assignment will be directly sent to the Director of the program and an F will be attributed to that particular assignment.
COURSE SCHEDULE

- **WEEK 1: Caribbean Theater from Martinique and Guadeloupe**
  - Introduction to Francophone Caribbean and African Theaters
  - History of theater in Guadeloupe and Martinique (from colonial times until now)

Readings:

- Theater in Martinique: **Aimé Césaire, A Tempest (1969)**
  - Adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Tempest*: comparative analysis Césaire/Shakespeare
  - Oral presentation by students on the play and staged performance of one scene.

- Négritude in Paris: To be a Black student in Paris: Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Léon-Gontran Damas, the three fathers of Négritude
  - Documentary: Euzhan Palcy, *Aimé Césaire A voice for the 21st century*

  Reading:

- **WEEK 2: Caribbean Women Theater from Guadeloupe I**
  - **Simone Schwarz-Bart, Your Handsome Captain (1987)**
  - Oral presentation by students on the play and staged performance of one scene.

  Analysis of the play with focus on illegal Haitian immigration in Guadeloupe, economical exploitation, modern slavery, hospitality/rejection, voodoo and traditional dance, body as a way of self expression.

  How to stage the absence?
  - analysis of the staged performance by Noël Jovignot with Ruddy Sylaire (Haitian actor)
  - meeting with the Guadeloupean actress Mariann Matheus who played the woman part in the first production of *Your Handsome Captain* by Syto Cavé.

Comparison with Edwige Danticat’s *Children by the sea* (Haiti): writing exile as a drama or a short story
Reading:

- **WEEK 3: Caribbean Women Theater from Guadeloupe II**
  
  Maryse Condé: *Like two brothers* (2007)
  
  Oral presentation by students on the play and staged performance of one scene.
  
  Analysis of the play with focus on social violence, imprisonment, brotherhood, childhood, memory, communication, gender relationships
  
  Analysis of the staged performance by José Exélys with Gilbert Laumord and Ruddy Sylaire.
  
  Documentary: *Maryse Condé, A voice of her own* by Jérôme Sesquin and Françoise Verges and (2011)

Reading:

- **Week 4: Caribbean Women Theater from Guadeloupe III**
  
  
  Oral presentation by students on the play and staged performance of one scene.
  
  Analysis of the intertwining of theater and oral tradition, link between Africa and the Caribbean, history of slavery, gender and racial relationships, drugs addiction of young people.
  
  Meeting with the author Gerty Dambury, playwright, director, poet, novelist from Guadeloupe living in Paris, who has written also an essay on William Alexander Brown, who opened the first theater directed by a Black man in NY in 1821 (during slavery times).

**Black Paris Walking Tour: Women in Paris: Feminists, Trendsetters & Rebels Montparnasse/ Latin Quarter/St Germain-des-Prés.**

A walking tour of Paris focusing on the women of African origins who spent time in Paris, and whose desires to break out of established roles and expectations was nurtured in Paris. In the City of Light they found exceptional educational and social opportunities. Out of their talents flourished new levels of achievement, both personal and to the benefit of the larger community.
First Essay to hand in

- **WEEK 5: Francophone African Theater**
  Introduction to Francophone African theaters in comparison with Francophone Caribbean theaters.

**Readings:**

**Ivory Coast**

**Koffi Kwahulé, Bintou** (1997)

Oral presentation by students on the play and staged performance of one scene.

Analysis of the staged performance by Laëtitia Guesdon (video).

Meeting with the author Koffi Kwahulé.

**Reading:**

- **WEEK 6: African Theater - Benin**

**José Pliya, We were sitting on the shores of the world…** (2004)

Oral presentation by students on the play and staged performance of one scene.

Analysis of the staged performance (in video) by Denis Marleau, Montreal, Canada.

**Readings:**

- Francophone African and Caribbean theaters on North-American stages

**Readings:**

**WEEK 7: Hip Hop & Contemporary Dance in Paris**

**Bintou Dembele**, director of the dance company Ruralité, is of Senegalese origin and born in the suburbs of Paris. She developed her choreographic vocabulary linking the different hip hop techniques with African-inspired dance and other urban dance forms. She specializes in break-dance, toprock, House Dance and New style. Bintou is a well-known and committed representative of the hip hop culture, reaching out to many communities and institutions. She enthusiastically teaches hip hop workshops in youth centers, the CCNs, neighborhood groups, while also training and mentoring up and coming hip hop dancers and teachers.

_video: Z.H. (Zoo Humains)_

Attendance of a dance performance in a theater and hip hop on the streets of Paris.

Meeting with the choreographer Bintou Dembele.

**Final Essay to hand in**