
THEORY AND WRITING: BLACK THOUGHT in Spring 2021 (CL2085)

Course Code	CL2085	Professor(s)	Sneharika Roy
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-117
Class Schedule	F: 15:20-16:40 in G-L21 T: 10:35-11:55 in G-L21	Office Hours	Fri 10:35 – 11:55 and on appointment
Credits	4	Email	sroy@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

This course focuses on theoretical formulations of Black resistance, a stance that critiques the historical processes of slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism, but also clears an alternative space for the emergence of marginalised voices and hybrid identities. We will look at foundational Black works in English and French that underscore the role of culture in the process of personal emancipation by reimagining Black identity as “double consciousness” (WEB Dubois), “négritude” (Senghor), a diasporic “Black Atlantic” (Gilroy) forging “new ethnicities” (Hall) and a poetics of Relation (Glissant).

We will anchor our reflections in the young adult fantasy novel by Tomi Adeyemi, *Children of Bone and Blood*, which combines the genres of mythic and social realism. Adeyemi’s deliberate decision not to write an academic monograph but a Young Adult fiction novel as a way to directly intervene in contemporary debates around racism will allow us to problematise the sometimes competing, sometimes partnering relations between theory, activism and capitalist society.

Course Learning Outcomes

To characterize the principle ideas of a selection of important literary theorists from antiquity to the present

Use the thought of the authors studied to analyze literary texts

Relate current debates in theory and criticism to the critical tradition to which they are responding

Students will be able to engage in the writing practices and culture of their chosen major, adding to the skills acquired in the Research, Interpretation, and Writing classes to develop a personal, authentic disciplinary voice (CCR)

General Education

GLACC: This course can be used to fulfill the Disciplinary Research Methods and Writing (coded CCR)

requirement of the Global Liberal Arts Core Curriculum and as such has the following learning outcome (Learning Outcomes for GLACC components are defined on the [AUP GLACC Website](#)):

You will be able to engage in the writing practices and culture of your chosen major, adding to the skills you acquired in the Research, Interpretation, and Writing classes to develop a personal, authentic disciplinary voice.

Course Outline

This course begins by looking at the market imperatives as well as the potential for social transformation offered by Young Adult Fiction. It then looks at Black Aesthetics in Francophone and Anglo-Saxon contexts (Fanon, Gilroy etc.). Aesthetics is then brought into a dialectic relationship with economics via Black Marxism (Robinson etc.), Black Feminism (hooks et al) and Black Queer theory (Cohen et al). The last few classes are left open – students may propose their own readings; we can go back to theorists you found particularly exciting; we can look at popular culture or community organising; and in a wildly optimistic scenario, we can do class trips...

COURSE SCHEDULE:

JANUARY

Tue 19: Intro: Who's Black? Whose Black? Adiche, The Black Crows, "Moor." *Alliteration*

Fri 22: *Children of Blood and Bone* as Craft and Critique. *Polypton*.

Readings: Children's Literature pieces on BB

January 24th – last day to drop/add courses online

Tue 26: CBB. *Diacope*.

Fri 29: Senghor and how to write to write a contextual paragraph, how to annotate.

Reading: BB

FEBRUARY

Tue 2: CBB. *Merism*.

Fri 5: Fanon's Critique of Negritude + thoughts on language. Contextual paragraph due before class. Writing exercise emulating Fanon's style.

Readings: BB

February 8th – 10th, Mini break 1, (no classes)

Tue 9: Break

Fri 12: CBB. *Hyperbaton*.

Tue 16: Framing essays in anthologies. *Hypotaxis and Parataxis*.

Readings: BB

Fri 19: More on CBB and framing essays.

February 24th – 28th, Mini break 2, (no classes)

Tue 23: Soyinka's Critique of Negritude + Hall on Africa. Contextual paragraph due before class. *Hendiadys*.

Readings: BB

Fri 26: Break

MARCH

Tue 2: **Midterm.** A different passage from one of the thinkers to be contextualised and annotated

Fri 5: Gilroy, Introduction to *Against Race* + Black Atlantic. Contextual paragraph due before class. *Tricolon and The Fourteenth Rule*.

Readings: BB

Tue 9: Glissant. Contextual paragraph due before class. *Isocolon*.

Readings: BB

Fri 12: More Fanon. First framing essay and bibliography due by midnight. *Catachresis*.

Readings: BB

Tue 16: Cedric Robinson. Contextual paragraph due before class. *Enallage*.

Readings: BB

Fri 19: A Belated Introduction to Marxism. *Chiasmus*.

Readings: BB

March 17th, Mid-semester

March 19th, Mid-semester grades due

Tue 23: Preface to Robinson. *Metonymy and Synecdoche*.

Readings: BB

Fri 26: bell hooks. Contextual paragraph due before class.

Readings: BB

Tue 30: Cohen et al

Readings: BB

Fri 2: Fanon and Coates on reparations.

Readings: BB

***April 2nd*, last day to withdraw from a course.**

Last day to choose the CR/NC grading option.

April 5th, Easter Monday (no classes)

April 6th, Faculty retreat (no classes)

Tue 6

Fri 9, Tue 13, Fri 16: To be decided based on students' interests. Possible topics/thinkers:

Sadiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives*

Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*

Melina Matsoukas, From Beyoncé to the Big Screen

Queen and Slim

Documentaries like Nneka Onourah's *The Same Difference*

Tue 20: Final project – framing essay and annotated anthology due

Fri 23: Looking at reviews of anthologies and Reading each other's anthologies.

Tue 27: Final project returned. Reading each other's anthologies.

April 28th, Last day of classes,

April 29th, – May 2nd, Reading days (May 1st, holiday)

May 3rd – 12th, Final Exam

May 26th, all grades due

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Children of Blood and Bone	Tomi Adeyemi	Macmillan	9781509871353	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if

absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

After more than 4 unjustified absences and stark lack of participation (including tardy submissions or no submissions etc.), the professor may recommend that the student withdraw.

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are still expected to attend ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example, when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory. In all cases of missed course meetings, the responsibility

for communication with the professor, and for arranging to make up missed work, rests solely with the student.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an “F” for the course. An instructor may also recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods*.

Other

Random but important things I’d like us to do in terms of form and style:

1. Being alert to the importance of paratexts (prefaces, introductions etc.) as ways of situating the text in contexts of social injustice and resistance as well as within theoretical debates
2. Being alert to who one’s audience is and the extent to which how you write, perhaps even what you write, is directly linked to audience
3. The heuristic value of annotations and explanatory notes
4. How reviews are important in the reception and legacy of a work; how they reflect the reviewer’s theoretical and political allegiances as well as his or her blind spots
5. Attend to the craft of language and muck about with fancying rhetorical devices