

Last update: May 2021

Office Hours & Course Number: TBD.

Instructor: Valentin Duquet, vduquet@utexas.edu

French Graduate Level
“Orientalism & Francophonie: Narratives of Algeria”

Course Description:

This graduate seminar will look at French & Francophone literature of and from the Maghreb through a cultural history lens. We will read primary sources (mostly novels) in French in conjunction with historical accounts by French, American and Maghrebi scholars. While this seminar will span the entire history of colonial and postcolonial Algeria (1830-today), we will approach these texts in a comparative way rather than a chronological one. We will analyze Orientalist and Francophone postcolonial literature in tandem and divide the semester into seven themes (each lasting 2 weeks). Topics will include the descriptions of women by Assia Djebar and Orientalists; the relation to Islam for travelers like Isabelle Eberhardt and Kabyles in the Interwar period like Mouloud Mammeri; the legacy of Albert Camus; as well as recent manifestations of Islamophobia in fiction on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. The goal of this seminar is not to repeat that Francophone authors “write back” to the colonizers, but instead to try and understand how different writers across different centuries and from different backgrounds construct opposing narratives based on a same space. Rather than focusing heavily on the Algerian War of Independence, we will discuss our texts broadly with an emphasis on recent social, cultural and intellectual history. Algeria is a complex, fascinating land which has inspired countless visions in the past two centuries alone; it will serve as the starting point for us to rethink Orientalism and Francophonie in a global, transhistorical way.

~

“To read these major works of the imperial period [*Kim*, *The Immoralist*, *The Stranger*] retrospectively and heterophonically with other histories and traditions counterpointed against them, to read them in the light of decolonization, is neither to slight their great aesthetic force, nor to treat them reductively as imperialist propaganda. Still, it is a much graver mistake to read them stripped of their affiliations with the facts of power which informed and enabled them.”

(Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 161)

“While I have often used the term *face à face* to convey the confrontational dimension frequently thematized in this writing, it should now be evident that the term also conveys the tensions of its own undoing. On the one hand, the ‘Arab’ was systematically defaced—misrecognized—through the comforting projection of the stereotypical. On the other hand, confrontation was actually avoided by denying the possibility of partnership/dialogue—evident, for instance, in the reiterated claim that Algeria was being built without, indeed despite, the ‘Arabs.’”

(Peter Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria*, p. 303)

~

Courses Objectives & Expectations:

Our primary texts will include mostly classic and canonical works, but students will be invited to research lesser-known sources based on the historical secondary work suggested each week. Excerpted texts will be provided as PDFs on Canvas. While we will not be reading French literary theory or philosophy to elicit our primary sources, students are welcome to bring these contributions to class discussion or include them in their research papers. Additionally, students will be invited to apply our discussion topics on Algeria to their own research interests and areas of expertise. In this seminar, you will lead two class discussions, alone or in groups of two depending on class size. You will also write and submit one book review (1,000 words) based on a recent secondary source you plan to use for your research. In your final paper, you will compare and contrast different texts the way we have done in the course, but you may not include more than one primary source from our syllabus as your object of study. This final research paper will be a 3,000-word conference paper. While 3,000 words may seem short for a research paper, you will need to substantially edit and tighten it so that every word counts towards the argument you want to make. (3,000 words is standard for a 20-min conference presentation.) On the final week of class, you will pre-circulate your drafts to everyone and designate one student for peer review. We will dedicate this last day to hearing everyone's ideas and providing further feedback. For your secondary sources, you will choose and read at least 6 articles (or chapters from collective volumes): 3 from 'big-name' scholars who might review your article in the future, and 3 from emerging scholars whose voice you want to amplify (see [Chronicle article here](#) for more advice).

Texts:

Assia Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*

Gustave Flaubert, *Salammbô*

Kateb Yacine, *Nedjma*

Louis Bertrand, *Le Sang des races*

Mohammed Dib, *La Grande maison*

Isabelle Eberhardt, *Amours nomades* (eds. Delacour & Huleu)

Mouloud Mammeri, *La colline oubliée*

Albert Camus, *L'Étranger*

Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, contre-enquête*

Michel Houellebecq, *Soumission*

Boualem Sansal, *2084*

Grading:

Attendance & Participation: 15%*

Book Review: 15%

Leading Class Discussion: 15% + 15%

Final Paper: 40%

* Please remember that perfect attendance does not guarantee a full class participation grade. I expect students to participate actively.

* More than one absence (in the event of family events, short illnesses, or other emergencies) requires documentation. Students should email me if they have missed or expect to miss a class

session; absences will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and determine whether a missed class necessitates make-up work. Excessive tardiness or absences, unless justified and documented, will significantly reduce your class participation grade. For every absence after the second, you will lose half a letter grade on your final grade.

Points	Grade		
93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	0-59	F

Week 1

- Introductions
 - Abdelkebir Khatibi, *Maghreb Pluriel* (1983): Introduction, pp. 11-40
 - James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (2017): Introduction, pp. 1-8
 - Henry Laurens, *Histoires orientales* (2012): Qu'est-ce que l'Orient?, pp. 7-22
-

I. DJEBAR & ORIENTALISM: HISTORICAL PALIMPSESTS

Week 2

- Assia Djébar, *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985)
- James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (2017): Chapter 2 'Conquest, Resistance and Accommodation, 1930–1911,' pp. 49-85

Week 3

- Assia Djébar, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement* (1980): Postface only
 - Paintings by Delacroix & Picasso
 - Roger Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics* (2003): Introduction & Chapter 1 'Orient or France? Nineteenth-Century Debates,' pp. 1-32
 - Peter Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria* (1999): Chapter 2 'Orientalist Writing Strategies,' pp. 36-68
-

II. NEDJMA & SALAMMBÔ: ALLEGORICAL WOMEN IN TIMES OF WAR

Week 4

- Gustave Flaubert, *Salammbô* (1862)
- Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question* (2005): Chapter 6 'States, Empires, and Political Imagination,' pp. 153-203

Week 5

- Kateb Yacine, *Nedjma* (1956)
 - Mostefa Lacheraf, *L'Algérie: nation et société* (1965): Chapter 2 'Le patriotisme rural,' pp. 69-87
-

III. NATURALISM & SOCIAL REALISM: THE STRUGGLES OF A PEOPLE

Week 6

- Louis Bertrand, *Le Sang des races* (1899)
- Seth Graebner, *History's Place: Nostalgia and the City in French Algerian Literature* (2007): Chapter 1 'Louis Bertrand and the Building of l'Afrique latine'

Week 7

- Mohammed Dib, *La Grande maison* (1952)
 - James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (2017): Chapter 4 'The Politics of Loyalty and Dissent, 1912–1942,' pp. 130-178
-

IV. SPACE, RACE & RELIGION: ISLAM IN A CHANGING WORLD

Week 8

- Isabelle Eberhardt, *Amours nomades* (eds. Delacour & Huleu, 2008)
- Julia Clancy-Smith, 'The Passionate Nomad Reconsidered: A European Woman in l'Algérie française,' in *Genealogies of Orientalism* (eds. Burke & Prochaska, 2008): pp. 193-214

Week 9

- Mouloud Mammeri, *La colline oubliée* (1952)
 - Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial identities* (1995): Chapter 7 'Scholarly societies in France: the Kabyle Myth as a racial paradigm,' pp. 146-166
-

V. REMEMBERING CAMUS: A CONTESTED POSTCOLONIAL LEGACY

Week 10

- Albert Camus, *L'Étranger* (1942)
- Claude Esposito, *The Narrative Mediterranean* (2013): Chapter 1 'A Humanism of the Sun: Albert Camus between Nature and Politics,' pp. 3-34
- Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993): Chapter 2, part VII 'Camus and the French Imperial Experience,' pp. 169-185

Week 11

- Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, contre-enquête* (2013)
- Alice Kaplan, *Looking for The Stranger* (2018): Prologue, pp. 1-6 & Chapter 26 'What's in a Name?' pp. 203-209

VI. ISLAMOPHOBIA & TYRANNY: CONTEMPORARY CAUTIONARY TALES

Week 12

- Michel Houellebecq, *Soumission* (2015)
- Per-Erik Nilsson, “F*ck Autonomy: Neo-Orientalism and Abjection in Michel Houellebecq’s *Soumission*,” *European Review* (27.4, 2019), 600-614

Week 13

- Boualem Sansal, *2084* (2015)
- James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (2017): Chapter 7 ‘The Fragile and Resilient Country, 1992–2012,’ & Afterword, pp. 290-343

VII. JEWISHNESS & THE MYTH OF A GOLDEN AGE

Week 14

- Joann Sfar, *Le Chat du rabbin* (film, 2011)
- Dorian Bell, *Globalizing Race: Antisemitism and Empire in French and European Culture* (2019): Chapter 2 ‘Colonial Conspiracies: Racializing Jews in the Era of Empire’ pp. 81-131
- Jacqueline Arnaud, *La littérature maghrébine de langue française* (1986): Chapter 7 ‘Albert Memmi et la fiction,’ pp. 309-369

Week 15

- Conclusions
- Final Papers Colloquium

Official Resources:

[University of Texas Honor Code](#)

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the *student's own work*. Should plagiarism, i.e. appropriation of another’s work without proper attribution, be deemed to have occurred, the student will automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

[Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#)

SSD ensures students with disabilities have equal access to their academic experiences at the

University of Texas at Austin by determining eligibility and approving reasonable accommodations.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical.

Thrive is a free iPhone app designed to enhance UT Austin student well-being and help better manage the ups and downs of campus life. Students will find short videos of actual UT Austin students sharing their own stories as well as interactive activities designed to help them apply these concepts to their own unique experience.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050.

Counselors in Academic Residence Program (CARE)

CARE is a program of the Counseling and Mental Health Center that was created in collaboration with the Office of the Provost. CARE counselors are located within the colleges they serve. They are licensed mental health professionals and work with students who have been referred by faculty and staff. CARE's primary mission is to provide access to mental health support for students who are struggling emotionally and/or academically. Cassy Moreno, LPC, is the CARE counselor for Liberal Arts and is available to meet with COLA students in need of mental health assistance.

Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC)

In addition to CARE, students can visit the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) for counseling services: Counseling and Mental Health Center Crisis Line 512-471-CALL (2255). (UT Students Only - available every day of the year including holidays). CMHC Crisis Line is a confidential service of CMHC that offers an opportunity for UT-Austin students to talk with trained counselors about urgent concerns. A counselor is available every day of the year, including holidays. You can call us when you want, at your convenience. Our telephone counselors will spend time addressing your immediate concerns. Our telephone counselors also have specific training in responding to crisis situations. Counseling and Mental Health Center offers several discussion groups students may attend that cover various topics. Some groups are drop-in groups while other groups topics range from identity-based groups, Voices Against Violence, Mindfulness groups, and other support groups. A list of all the group options are available at [this link](#).

Student Emergency Services (SES)

Student Emergency Services provides assistance, intervention, and referrals to support students navigating challenging or unexpected issues that impact their well-being and academic success. SES can be reached at 512-471-5017 (Mon – Fri from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.). Emergency situations include but are not limited to: Missing Student; Family Emergency; Fire or Natural Disaster; Student Death (current or former); Medical or Mental Health Concern; Academic difficulties due to crisis or emergency situations; Interpersonal Violence (stalking, harassment, physical and/or sexual assault).

UT Outpost

UT Outpost will help battle hunger and food insecurities of our students, as well as giving students access to professional attire for job and internship interviews. The service is located in the UA9 Building (2609 University Avenue) which is behind the Student Services Building (SSB).

Center for Students in Recovery (CSR)

The Center for Students in Recovery (CSR) provides a safe space and supportive community for students in recovery or seeking recovery from addiction. Participation at CSR is completely voluntary and there is no barrier to entry. Students at any stage of recovery and at any point in their academic journeys are welcome.

Sanger Learning Center

The Sanger Learning Center is UT Austin's main resource for academic support. Some of the services offered at the Sanger Learning Center include but aren't limited to: 1-on-1 tutoring or drop in tutoring; improving your study skills with a learning specialist; weekly meetings with a Peer Academic Coach; and help with public speaking assignment.

Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC)

The mission of the Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) is to provide opportunities for all members of the UT Austin community to explore, organize, and promote learning around issues of gender and sexuality. The center also facilitates a greater responsiveness to the needs of women and the LGBTQIA+ communities through education, outreach, and advocacy.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.