IAH 221C The Modern World
Immigration, Identity and Belonging in Post-Colonial Europe
The Maghrebi Experience

A. Goals of Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities

Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities at MSU seeks to assist student to become more familiar with ways of knowing in the arts and humanities and to be knowledgeable and capable in a range of intellectual and expressive abilities. IAH courses encourage students to engage critically with their own society, history, and culture(s); they also encourage students to learn more about the history and culture of other societies. They focus on key ideas and issues in human experience; encourage appreciation of the roles of knowledge and values in shaping and understanding human behavior; emphasize the responsibilities and opportunities of democratic citizenship; highlight the value of the creative arts of literature, theatre, music, and arts; and alter us to important issues that occur among peoples in an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world.

B. Course Description

The course invites students to examine the conflicting and often contradictory ideals of citizenship and identity experienced by immigrants from western North African - the Maghreb - living in France and Belgium and expressed through the work of immigrant and European film makers and writers. Faced with labor shortages, France initiated guest worker programs in the 1950s attracting immigrant laborers from its former colonies, but with opportunity came another legacy of colonialism: institutionalized racism and discrimination. Even though they struggled to retain elements of their traditional culture, that first immigrant generation began to internalize the culture and embrace the political ideals of the host society. Over time, as immigrant workers became immigrant families and their children became citizens, immigrant communities - many poor and marginalized - emerged. Most young people in these communities have embraced French culture, especially popular culture, which like hip-hop in the U.S., feeds on their alienation and creativity; others find meaning in Islam; and others express their frustration in sometimes violent demonstrations. For the French, the presence of immigrants, even third generation immigrants, is a reminder of a colonial past and a challenge to the popular belief in France as a unified nation-state. Right wing politicians point to headscarves and demonstrations as evidence that these “immigrants” cannot and do not wish to be part of French society. Drawing on history, anthropology, literature and film, we will uncover a reality is far more complicated and far more interesting.

C. Learning Objectives and Goals

In this course we will…

1) Examine the role of the arts in the creation of national narratives such as that of France as a république with a mission civilizatrice to bring the benefits and ideals of democracy to its North African colonies.
2) Contrast the way in which the mass media and the arts permitted the dominant culture to define and interpret the colonial experience and to silence indigenous voices, and are now being used by indigenous people to subvert and challenge these images.

3) Develop a chronology of French-Algerian relations and examine the political, social, and economic factors that shape the North African community to France.

4) Use film and literature as guides into North African and beur culture to understand the tension between the immigrant and the host societies, between generations of immigrants, and between those who would reconcile their personal narratives with their religious beliefs and the values of French society.

5) Utilize the methods and perspectives of literary criticism and social science to understand how language, symbols, events and stories provide the elements of a narrative *bricolage* that defines national and sub-national identities.

Students will…

6) Critically apply liberal arts knowledge in disciplinary contexts and disciplinary knowledge in liberal arts contexts.

7) Identify the credibility, use and misuse of scientific, humanistic and artistic methods.

D. Required Readings

The following books are available through Amazon.com. While discussion of the books will take place in English, students with sufficient knowledge of French have the option to read the French versions when available.

Novels and Autobiography


Essays/Analysis


Chapters


E-Resources (permanent links provided on course website)

Films
• The Battle for Algiers (DVD – 2004)
• Caché (DVD – 2006)
• La Haine (DVD - 2005)
• Inch’Allah Dimanche (DVD - 2005)
• Days of Glory (Indigènes) (DVD – 2007)
• The Secret of the Grain (DVD – 2007)

E. Reading and Discussion Schedule

Site Visits/Field Trips. Field trips and participant observation activities will be an important component of the program. Whenever possible the instructor will accompany the students and when not students will be given specific tasks or objectives to accomplish, which will be recorded as reflection papers or in short essays. The OSA standard two-hour field experience equals one-hour of class time will be observed.

In addition to touring sites of general interest such as the European Parliament in Strasbourg, we will also visit museums which reflect the colonial legacy of France and Belgium. For example, while ostensibly devoted to the classic Belgium comic book character, Tintin, exhibits at the newly opened Hergé Museum in Brussels draw attention to influence of the Belgium colonial experience in Africa on the illustrator and the story line. Students will be encouraged to seek out and observe neighborhoods to the degree that language and discretion allow.

Films/narratives provide a unique window into the less public aspects of French and immigrant North African society. Students will be required to view the films on their own time and be prepared to discuss the films and to submit reflections on them. Because viewing and re-viewing films will require the students’ full attention, time spent on film will be treated as 75% of class time, so viewing a 90 minute film will count as one course hour.
**Discussion and Readings** will occupy a majority of our time. Like the films, the narrative texts have been chosen in part because of their availability in English. Nevertheless, the books have been well received in literary circles and certainly within the growing canon of *beur* literature. The books and films will be grouped thematically and presented in a quasi-historical style. Part One looks at colonialism from the perspective of the colonizer and colonized in films like the “Battle for Algiers” and “Days of Glory” and in *Mother Comes of Age*. Part Two builds on “Mother” and examines the first generation immigrant experience through “Inch’Allah Dimanche” and novels such as “Shantytown Boy.” The middle segment explores the tension between generations in films such as “The Secret of the Grain” and the sense of marginality between the children of immigrants born and the broader French society described Bouraoui in *Tomboy* and by the very exciting young writer Faïsa Guène brings her community to life with *Kiffe-Kiffe Tomorrow*. *Tea in the Harem* introduces a youth culture in conflict, which along with “Caché” and “La Haine” explore colonial guilt and inner city anger. Finally, in Part Five we will reflect on what this means for *France in the Balance* and tease out the construction of individual identity and one’s sense of belonging.

**F. General Stuff**

- **Regular attendance in class is required.** Students, who miss class, arrive late or leave early will be considered absent. Students with more than two unexcused absences during the semester can expect to see their final grade lowered (see below).
- **Papers and projects are due on time.** Students will submit written materials in class. Points will be deducted for late assignments.
- **Assigned Readings.** Students are expected to have read the material assigned for the day of class, to take part in class discussion and in class activities, including pop quizzes and should bring their laptops to class.
- **Communication is essential.** If you have any concerns or difficulty with the course, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by email (handrick@msu.edu) or in class.
- **Religious observances will be respected.** MSU is a diverse community with members from diverse faiths. I will make every effort to schedule exams and otherwise ensure that no one is penalized for absence due to a religious observance. I do request, however, that students who plan to miss class for religious observances notify me by email one week in advance to help me avoid conflicts.

**G. Serious Stuff - Academic Honesty**

Cheating on examinations will not be tolerated. Section 1.00 Protection of Scholarship and Grades of the [General Student Regulations](#) in the MSU Student Handbook specifically addresses the question of cheating on examinations. Students found in violation of these guidelines will be censured, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course.

**H. Assessment and Grades**

Grades will be based on a combination of factors including participation and attendance, written assignments and a final paper each with an assigned Grade Point value.

**Participation/Attendance (30 Grade Points)**

My goal is to create an open, respectful and comfortable environment where students can feel free to express their views. This requires active and positive participation in group discussions and activities and the completion of assigned readings and other preparatory activities prior to class. Students who are not prepared for class or do not contribute to discussion or in-class activities can expect to see their Grade Point reduced.
**Reflection Papers/Short Essays (30 Grade Points)**

Students will be asked to prepare reflection papers or short essays on specific topics related to the readings or to material presented to class, or to prepare questions and comments on the assigned readings for group discussion. Reflection papers will be marked on a ten point scale: ten points for satisfactory completion of assignment; five points if incomplete or late; zero points if missing. Short essays may be marked on a different scale. The total grade points for these activities will be based on the percentage of points earned divided by the total possible points.

**Final Paper (40 Grade Points)**

In consultation with the instructor, each student will decide on a topic of special interest prior to the start of the program. By the end of the first week, he or she will submit a statement describing the problem, identifying the broader theoretical context, and describing how s/he plans to research it. By the end of the third week, the student will submit an outline of the final paper along with an introduction, summary of the relevant literature, and comments on the state of the research. This is an iterative process; each draft will be marked and critiqued by the instructor to indicate progress but the grade will be based solely on the final draft.

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<th>Possible Points</th>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>20 90% 18</td>
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<td>10 -2 unexcused absences 8</td>
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<td>Reflection Papers</td>
<td>30 87% average 26</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40 75% 30</td>
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**Final Grade**

Your final grade will be based on the total number of Grade Points you earn during the semester based on the following scale.

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