Crossing Borders Seminar/ Spring 2012
Transcultural Communication and Migration
in the Indian Ocean Rim and Caribbean Regions

Instructors: Anny Curtius (anny-curtius@uiowa.edu)  Class timings: M 4:30 – 7:00 PM
Sujatha Sosale (sujatha-sosale@uiowa.edu)  Class location: 321 PH

Office hours: Anny Curtius: 555 PH, Tu & Th 3:30 – 5:00 P, and by appointment
Sujatha Sosale: W 331 AJB  M 2:30 – 4; TTh 12:45-1:30, and by appointment

Course description:

In this seminar, we will take a comparative approach to the study of media, and mediated cultural forms such as literature, film, and art in the Indian Ocean Rim and Caribbean regions. We will examine the histories, migrations, modernizations, globalization, media systems and networks, and culture in countries that have experienced British and/or French occupation. Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Trinidad are a few examples; other examples included non-island nations such as India, east and southern African countries on the Indian Ocean Rim, and Guyana in the Caribbean region.

The seminar is designed to familiarize students from a number of disciplines to alternate ways of viewing and comparing geographical areas that are labeled as “developing countries” or the "global South." Because of their ongoing ties with dominant European countries, some of these areas do to fit readily within the concept of development. While the temptation is to classify them with developing countries because of their everyday realities and living conditions, they clearly have a profile of developed countries from a geopolitical perspective. The exposure to the regions in tandem and the complications and nuances are intended to spark new ideas for interdisciplinary research across a variety of departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Readings will enable students to examine forced labor migrations across continents and oceans that resulted in the development of new roots and identities, the forging of new creolizations and postcolonial cultures, and changes in media and political systems. The readings will help us interrogate seemingly readymade concepts such as globalization, hybridity, imagined homelands, and Glissant's Tout Monde. We will look for possible intersections between cultural concepts, and structural aspects of the two regions--especially communication and political systems and networks.

The objectives of the course are to

a. Grasp and construct for ourselves new comparative perspectives on areas and regions that are often studied either from national or regional positions,

b. Intensify the connections that have been articulated between the two regions in Francophone Studies and explore new modes of linking these two regions from other perspectives such as Postcolonial Studies, and

c. Use these new comparative perspectives in research projects to investigate empirically the implications and outcomes of such migrations and shifts in communication, political, and cultural systems.
Course materials:


Guest presentations

As and when opportunities arise, guest presentations may be scheduled. They will be announced in advance in class, and also in the ICON news area.

Assessments

Class participation: 20 points
Summaries and presentations on readings: 3 @ 10 points (lead discussion on three readings of your choice; copies have to be distributed to all in class)
Research paper: 50 points

Course policies

Attendance: We operate on the assumption that attendance is not an option. Absences will be excused when circumstances warrant them.

Classroom conduct: It is assumed that you will come to class prepared with the readings, adopt a courteous and tolerant attitude toward your classmates and the instructors, and be respectful of the diverse viewpoints necessary for a course of this nature. In addition to active and constructive participation, it is assumed that you will serve as an attentive and engaged audience for your classmates and instructor.

Please turn off personal communication devices, sites, and Internet browsing when class is in session.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:
Policies and Procedures

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook [http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/index.shtml].

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (*Operations Manual*, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

Academic Fraud
Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for
Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS *Student Academic Handbook*.

**CLAS Final Examination Policies**
Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. University policy requires that students be permitted to make up examinations missed because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or unavoidable circumstances. Excused absence forms are available at the Registrar’s website: [www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf](http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/forms/absence.pdf). Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS *Student Academic Handbook*.

**Accommodations for Disabilities**
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See [www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/) for more information.

**Understanding Sexual Harassment**
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI *Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment* at [www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. (*Operations Manual, Part IV, 16. See items e, h, and i.*)

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and The University of Iowa *Operations Manual*. More comprehensive information is available on the site for Policies and Regulations affecting Students ’10 – ’11 at http://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/

Please take note of the following resources available to assist students in taking CLAS courses:

- Writing center 110 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0188, [www.uiowa.edu/~writing](http://www.uiowa.edu/~writing)
- Speaking Center 12 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0205, [www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/centers/speaking](http://www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/centers/speaking)
- Tutor Referral Service Campus Information Center, IMU, 335-3055, [www.imu.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor_referral_service](http://www.imu.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor_referral_service)
**Student Classroom Behavior**
The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior, distracting others; such behaviors are a violation of the Code of Student Life. When disruptive activity occurs, a University instructor has the authority to determine classroom seating patterns and to request that a student exit immediately for the remainder of the period. One-day suspensions are reported to appropriate departmental, collegiate, and Student Services personnel (Office of the Vice President for student Services and Dean of Students).

**COURSE CALENDAR**

**Please note:** The calendar provides a general plan of materials for the course; deviations may necessary depending upon the pace of the class, and guest lectures and videos when the opportunity presents itself. Announcements will be made in class and on ICON. Students are expected to keep fully informed about the correct schedule.

**Theme 1: Casting alternate geocultural and geohistorical ontologies**

**Week 1 Monday January 23**

Instructors’ introductions to the subject


--Eric Williams, “The origin of Negro Slavery” in *Capitalism and Slavery*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1964, pp. 3-29, ICON


**Week 2 Monday January 30**


**Theme 2: Conceptualizing the Indian Ocean and Caribbean regions**

**Week 3 Monday February 6**

Possible guest lecture
--Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizon*, chapters 3 and 4


--Edouard Glissant, “Errantry, Exile” (pp.11-22) “Closed Place Open Word”, in *Poetics of Relation*, The University of Michigan Press, (pp. 63-74) ICON


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**Week 4 Monday February 13**


To prepare for the Torabully article, students need to watch:

--Euzhan Palcy, *Aimé Césaire a Voice for History*, “Where the edges of conquest meet”, part 2, 56 minutes, 1994, (on reserve in the Main Library)


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**Week 5 Monday February 20**

Continue Lionnet discussion


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**Theme 3: Regional and national media and cultures: Modernization, development, and networked societies**

**Week 6 Monday February 27**

Kasenally, R. (2005). Regulating the media: Safety valve or threat?.


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**Week 7 Monday March 5**


**Week 8 March 12**

**Spring break! No class**

**Theme 4: Transoceanic Displacements: Forging New Connections and Diasporas**

**Week 9 Monday March 19**

Students need to watch the following documentary (English subtitles are available) in the LMC.

-- Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizon*, chapter 3


**March 22 – 25 Crossing Borders Convocation**

**Week 10 Monday March 26**

Possible guest lecture


Curtius, A. (2010). Gandhi et Au-Bero…. L’Esprit Createur, 50 (1), 109-123 [A translation of this article will be made available on ICON]


Torabully – discussion continued
Week 11 Monday April 2

Kanor documentary--Fabienne Kanor, *Des pieds, mon pied* [Some feet, my foot,] France, 2010, 27 minutes, on reserve in the LMC and the Main Library

--John Pilger, *Stealing a Nation* (2004), 56 minutes
http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3667764379758632511


Discuss documentaries in light of theoretical concepts from previous weeks

Week 12 Monday April 9


Week 13 Monday April 16


Week 14 Monday April 23

Student research presentations

Week 15 Monday April 30

Student research presentations

Have a wonderful summer!