FRENCH 132 SPECIAL TOPICS IN FRENCH STUDIES II
SEC. 01. ÉCRITURES DE L'AILLEURS

Department of French Studies
Fall Semester, 2006-2007
Mon., Wed., Fri., 12:00-12:50
Sayles Hall 104

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Prerequisite: FR 60
No enrollment limit or written permission required
Changes to syllabus and/or additional details will be announced in class

Course Materials

The following books for the course will be available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore:

- Victor Segalen, Équipée. (1929; Gallimard)
- Henri Michaux, Ecuador. (1929; Gallimard)
- Albert Camus, L'exil et le royaume. (1957; Gallimard)
- Hergé, Tintin au Congo. (1946; Casterman)
- Hergé, Tintin au Tibet. (1960; Casterman)
- Roland Barthes, L'empire des signes. (1970; Seuil)
- Marguerite Duras, Hiroshima mon amour. (1960; Gallimard)
- Eric Chevillard, Oreille Rouge. (2005; Minuit).

Other readings will be in a coursepack available for purchase at the Allegra Copy center. Students enrolling in the course should acquire the coursepack by the end of the second week of term.

Course work load and evaluation

The course will follow a lecture/discussion format, with weekly reading assignments of approximately 100 pages. In the course of the semester, students will be expected to:

- write two 5-page papers due respectively on 11 Oct and 3 Nov (30%)
- write a 10-12 page term paper due at the end of term, preceded by a detailed outline and bibliography due 13 November (35%)
- present a short paper (orally) in class on an excerpt from an assigned literary text or theoretical essay from the coursepack [students sign up for topics in the second and third weeks of the semester] (15%)
- attend classes regularly and engage actively in class discussions; the Thanksgiving break “Experimental Travel project” [optional] may be considered part of this active engagement with course materials/concepts (20%)

Calendar:

Introduction: Approaching the “Elsewhere”

Literary exoticism: Constructions of the “Elsewhere”
9/6  The invitation to travel: Poems from Baudelaire’s Fleurs du Mal
9/8  The Voyage en Orient: Excerpts from Claudel’s Connaissance de l’Est

Literary exoticism: Critical Perspectives
9/11  Henri Michaux, “Les poètes voyagent” : representing and/or creating the elsewhere
9/13  Victor Segalen – excerpts from Essai sur l’exotisme
9/15  The politics of the elsewhere: Edward Said’s Orientalism

I.  Is travel (writing) still possible?

Voyage au pays du réel? Victor Segalen’s Équipée (1929)
9/18  exoticism: theory and practice
9/20  The Self and the Other
9/22  Real vs Imaginary

Mais où est-il donc, ce voyage? Henri Michaux’s Ecuador (1929)
9/25  The travel journal
9/27  * Tutorial on use of library resources, Rockefeller Library
9/29  Disenchanted travel
(*first of student presentations)

II.  Je et l’Autre: The limits of exoticism

Ethnography, Autobiography I: Michel Leiris’ Afrique Fantôme (1934)
10/2  The split voice/subjectivity of the ethnographer-traveler
10/4  Approaching the Other: Limits of ethnography, limits of exoticism
10/6  Ethnography, exoticism, cont'd.

The colonial traveler: Hergé’s Tintin
10/11  The animal Other: violence and travesty
(* first 5-page paper due)
10/13 The cultural/racial Other

Ethnography, Autobiography II: Lévi-Strauss’ *Tristes Tropiques* (1955)
10/16 The writing lesson (the question of “culture”)
10/18 *Adieu sauvages! Adieu voyages!*: The end of travel
10/20 The tragedy of the ethnographer: “L’histoire de l’anthropologue incompris” in Georges Perec’s *La Vie Mode d’Emploi*

III. Symbolic Elsewheres: exile, memory, semiology

Exile: Albert Camus’ *L’exil et le royaume* (1957)
10/23 “La femme adulte”
10/25 “L’Hôte”
10/27 “Le rénégat”

Memory: Marguerite Duras’ *Hiroshima mon amour* (1960)
10/30 The geography of memory, of trauma; screenplay vs film
11/1 The elsewhere as place, image/montage, allegory, voice, silence, violence
11/3 Nobuhiro Suwa’s *H Story*: Intertextuality and Otherness
(*second 5-page paper due)

11/6 *H Story* (2)
11/8 The elsewhere as a system of signs
11/10 Literary reference; semiological exoticism?

IV. Post-modern Travel: play and pastiche

Play: Georges Perec and Experimental Travel
11/13 Experimental travel: from Jules Verne to the contemporary
(* submit outline and bibliography of term paper)
11/15 The grammar of banal travel: Perec’s “Deux cent quarante-trois cartes postales en couleur véritable” (1978)
11/17 Perec discussion (contd.): with excerpts from *Espèces d’Espaces*
11/20 *Latourec*, or the Laboratoire de Tourisme Expérimental

------------ Thanksgiving break ------------ [optional experimental travel projects]

Ironic and Pastiche I: Post-touristic travel
11/27 Experimental Travel forum (students present their projects)
11/29 Excerpts from J-P Toussaint’s *Autoportrait (à l’étranger)* (2000)
Beyond Tourism

Irony and Pastiche II: Eric Chevillard’s *Oreille rouge* (2005)

12/4  Pourquoi voyager?
12/6  Elusive animals: Où est l'hippopotame?
12/8  The question of *authenticity*

12/11  Conclusion(s)