

**Québec Studies:
Migrant and Transcultural Writing in Québec
CDNS / FINS 4510**

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**Office hours:
by appointment – contact me by email**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we'll read contemporary works of Québécois literature that are considered to be examples of 'migrant writing', or 'écriture migrante', a term coined in the 1980s by Haitian-Québécois writer Robert Berrouët-Oriol. Since then, this body of literature has attracted significant critical interest as more and more writers who have immigrated to Québec weave into their writing themes relating to immigration, exile, belonging and identity. We'll examine how some of these issues are reinforced in the writing itself through the use of narrative techniques, intertextuality, plurilingualism, historical discourse, and different forms of storytelling. As we read these works of literature, which will include prose and theatre, we'll also consider what the label 'migrant writing' has achieved in terms of calling attention to these writers and their works, but also how it is limiting. While considering and questioning the term 'écriture migrante', we'll also look at other terms, such as 'transcultural' and 'transnational', to consider if they might be more appropriate and more inclusive of other works of literature such as Indigenous writing. More importantly, we'll discuss how this body of writing contests and modifies what is meant by "Québécois literature". By extension, how does the writing of immigrants from Lebanon, Haiti or Vietnam (to name a few examples), contribute to the shaping of Québec's society and culture, and to shifting what the phrase "Québec culture" suggests about its collective imaginary?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Explain what is meant by the terms 'migrant', 'transnational', and 'transcultural' writing

- Understand the value as well as the limits of these labels
- Identify some of the ways that experiences of migration, exile, displacement, belonging, and 'in-betweenness' are expressed in literary texts
- Contextualize this body of literature within Québec's literary tradition and more generally, its culture and society
- Consider how Indigenous writing in Québec manifests both similarities and differences with migrant writing
- Articulate your own responses to these texts and draw links between them, and/or the context within which they were produced
- sharpen your skills in critical reading and writing (analysis, synthesis, etc.) through discussion (in person and online) and through written work

Teaching mode :

Please see this link if you have any concerns regarding technical requirements :
<https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/faq-technical-specs-for-new-students/>

This course will be taught through a hybrid format of synchronous meetings, and asynchronous activities that will be posted on cuLearn and cuPortfolio.

We will meet every week on Mondays, starting at 11:30 am, for approximately 1-1.5 hour by Zoom. Please be prepared to have your video/microphone turned on and to actively participate in the discussion. This is a seminar, not a lecture course! Zoom links will be sent at the latest on Sunday evenings to your Carleton email address.

READINGS

Required:

Farhoud, Abba. *Game of Patience*. Digital copy on reserve.

Fontaine, Naomi. *Kuessipan*.

Laferrière, Dany. *I Am A Japanese Writer*. Douglas & McIntyre, 2010.

Ollivier, Émile. *Passages*.

Thuy, Kim. *Ru*. Vintage, 2015.

The books (in English) have been ordered at Octopus Books in the Glebe (116 Third Avenue; 613-233-2589). You can buy them there, or request to have them shipped to you.

https://shop.octopusbooks.ca/?q=h.tvviewer&e_def_id=G1UFuuBLcIA

If you prefer to read these books in the original French, please do so. They are available in the library (or possibly even at a public library), or they can be ordered at the Librairie du Soleil in the Byward Market (613-241-6999). You will be given a 10% discount upon presentation of your student card.

Critical and theoretical readings will be on reserve in the Library and / or posted on cuLearn.

EVALUATION

- 1) reading responses on cuPortfolio – one per module 20%
DUE DATE: throughout the term
- 2) “artefacts” on cuPortfolio – one per module 10%
DUE DATE: throughout the term
- 3) oral presentation: lead discussion on one course reading – 10%
DUE DATE: throughout term; you’ll be able to choose the date
- 4) Written critique of one critical reading (submit on cuLearn)– 15 %
DUE DATE: March 5, 2021
- 5) oral presentation (preliminary reflections on essay topic) – 10%
DUE DATE: April 5, 2021
- 6) essay (submit on cuLearn) – 35 %
DUE DATE: April 14, 2021

MODULES

Instead of organizing topics and readings week by week, I will organize them by modules. For each module, you will be expected to do the following

- i) submit a reading response in cuPortfolio: For each module, you are required to submit a minimum of one reading response/ reflection on cuPortfolio, as well as one final reflection in the final week of classes. Your reading responses should focus on your reading of the work of literature in question for that module, but you can also make connections with other works you have previously read, the critical readings, previous courses you’ve taken, etc. This is an informal piece of writing in the sense that you can use the first person, it can be relatively personal and / or creative, it doesn’t have to be perfectly polished, and you are not required to do any extra research. However, you are expected to write in complete,

grammatically correct sentences and your responses should be thoughtful and coherent, and should make it evident that you have read the literary text for the module. There is no maximum word count, but the minimum should be about 250-300 words. You may also add supplementary comments as you complete readings, after class discussion, and/or following my comments. These reading responses should help you reflect upon your own reading and interpretive practices and help you track your own progress through the course. They might also help you as you develop your ideas for the final essay.

ASSESSMENT: based on the coherence and thoughtfulness of your reflections; evidence of having read the book and having given thought to the sociocultural issues, the writing style, the characters, the representation of history and geography, the use of intertextuality, etc.

- ii) post an 'artefact' on cuPortfolio: find a link to a journal article, a mainstream media article, an interview, a video, a music or film clip, a report, which relates to the text/theme of the module. Briefly introduce the artefact and explain how it relates to the module (about 2-3 sentences). This is an opportunity for you to explore the themes of the literary text in a way that speaks to your own interests, whether they are literary or otherwise. For example, you might look for documents that are related to your own discipline/major, current and future research interests, etc.

ASSESSMENT: originality of the artefact and the relevance to the module in question (based in part on your explanation).

NOTE: the grade for the cuPortfolio component is on-going and will reflect how you develop your observational and interpretive reflections over the course of the term. I will provide comments on each of your reading responses and artefacts, and halfway through the term, I'll give you a provisional grade, in order to give you some idea of where your grade stands. The final grade will be attributed after the final responses and artefacts are submitted.

- iii) Read the works of literature, the articles, course notes
- iv) participate in weekly class meetings and the discussion forum on cuLearn Please inform me if you are not able to attend a scheduled class or if for some reason you are not able to turn on your video and / or microphone.

Module 1: Introduction (January 11 - 18)

- introduction to the seminar
- brief introduction to Québécois literature
- introduction to migrant writing
- excerpts by Régine Robin and Marco Micone
- Reading response due: **January 18 before 9 am**
- Artefact should be posted by **January 18**

Module 2: Migrant writing and an aesthetics of movement, exile, identity (January 25 – February 1)

- *Passages* by Émile Ollivier
- Gilles Dupuis, “Transculturalism and *écritures migrantes* » in *History of Literature in Canada. English-Canadian and French Canadian*. Ed. Reingard M. Nischik. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008. 497-508.
- Winfried Siemerling. *New North American Studies: Culture, Writing, and the Politics of Re/Cognition*. Routledge, 2005. 28-30.
- Reading response due: **January 25, before 9 am**
- Artefact should be posted by **February 1st**
- Presentations on one of the readings: **February 1st**

Module 3: Migrant writing and theatre (February 8)

- *Game of Patience* by Abla Farhoud
- Moss, Jane. “Immigrant Theatre: Traumatic Departures and Unsettling Arrivals” in *Textualizing the Immigrant Experience in Contemporary Québec*. Susan Ireland and Patrice J. Proulx, eds. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004, p. 65-81
- Reading response due: **February 8th before 9 am**
- Artefact should be posted by **February 12**
- Presentation on reading: **February 8**

Module 4: Transcultural writing and cultural translation (February 22-March 1)

- *Ru* by Kim Thúy
- Catherine Khordoc. “From Migrant to Transnational: Contemporary Québécois Writing (1999-2010).” *Québec Studies* 63.1 (2017): 79-98.
- Wills, Jenny Heijun. “Competing nationalisms in *Ru* and *La Trilogie coréenne*: Francophone Asian Québécois literatures.” *Canadian Literature*, no. 227, 2015.
- Reading response due: **February 22 before 9 am**
- Artefact should be posted by **March 1st**
- Presentations on one of the readings: **March 1st**

Module 5: Do labels matter? Issues of ghettoization (March 8-15)

- *I Am a Japanese Writer* by Dany Laferrière
- Oana Sabo, "Canonization. Dany Laferrière at the Académie française" in *The Migrant Canon in Twenty-First Century France.* Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. 127-159.
- Marie Carrière and Catherine Khordoc. "For Better or For Worse. Revisiting *Écriture migrante* in Québec. » *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Literature.* Oxford UP, 2016. 621-638.
- Reading response due: **March 8 before 9 am**
- Artefact should be posted by **March 15**
- Presentations on one of the readings: **March 15**

Module 6: Indigenous writing: transnational, transcultural? (March 22-29)

- *Kuessipan* by Naomi Fontaine
- Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, "Mes lames de tannage", slam poetry
- Macfarlane, H. (2010). Beyond the Divide: The Use of Native Languages in Anglo-and Franco-Indigenous Theatre. *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 35.2 (2010): 95-109.
- Lianne Moyes, « From one colonial language to another: translating Natasha Kanapé Fontaine's "Mes lames de tannage". » *TranscUlturAl*, vol. 10.1 (2018), 64-82.
- Reading response due : **March 22 before 9 am**
- Artefact should be posted by March 29
- Presentations on one of the readings: **March 29**

Concluding remarks and essay presentations : April 5

Essay topics and requirements will be circulated soon after Reading week.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;

- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and / of failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

The full policy can be found here:

<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Religious obligation

Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>