

The Foreign Languages Newsletter

Clark University · Worcester, Massachusetts

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FROM THE CHAIR

During the current academic year, members of the Foreign Languages faculty have met to discuss a series of new directions in our Comparative Literature program. This and upcoming issues of The Foreign Languages Newsletter will describe some of these changes. The focus of this issue is “The Caribbean Connection,” one of the crucial cross-cultural and transnational themes that is represented in our course offerings and the research of our colleagues. Subsequent issues of the Newsletter will highlight other areas of our curriculum that have attracted wide student interest. Among these will be “Francophone Culture,” “The Classical World and Modernity and Comparative Literature and Visual Culture”. As course selection for next semester draws near, keep in mind some of these new and exciting course offerings under the Comparative Literature rubric.

Michael Spingler

THE CARIBBEAN CONNECTION

Over recent years themes of Caribbean literature and culture have been well represented in our course offerings. Associate Professor of Spanish María Acosta Cruz regularly offers “Hispanic Caribbean Fiction” (Spanish 239). As well, Assistant Professor of French Odile Ferly teaches and researches Francophone popular culture. This year, the emphasis is intensified through an exciting collaboration between these two popular professors and a series of events that give new prominence to the Caribbean in our curriculum.

In early February, Cuban filmmaker Ricardo Bacallao presented his documentary on Cuban Hip

Hop in a well-attended event co-sponsored by the Higgins Humanities School. The event was planned to coincide with a new course offered by Professors Acosta Cruz and Ferly, CMLT 174: “Islands in the Stream: Puerto Rico and the French Antilles.” This course presents an overview of the history of Puerto Rico and the French Antilles while examining theoretical issues around colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism in the region. It also explores issues that are specific to these cultures, such as assimilation, acculturation and alienation.

Caribbean themes have long been a part of the research program for both professors. Prof. Acosta Cruz will deliver a paper at the annual meeting of the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies in Baton Rouge, LA on February 15th entitled “Nostalgia and the New Docile Puerto Rican.” Ferly will attend the Latin American Studies Association Meeting in San Juan in March, participating on a panel examining the relationship between Haitians and the rest of Caribbean nationals. Her paper is entitled “Les nègres des nègres: the representation of Haitians and Guadeloupeans in Caribbean women’s writing.”

Since arriving at Clark in 2004, Prof. Ferly has taught two courses on the Caribbean: in Spring 2005 she offered a new course: CMLT 208: “Her Story: History and Fiction in Caribbean Women’s Writing.” which looked at the history of the Anglophone, Francophone and Hispanic Caribbean through contemporary fiction by women writers (including Maryse Condé, Jean Rhys, Julia Álvarez, Jamaica Kincaid, Edwidge Danticat and Mayra Santos). In Fall 2005, Prof. Ferly taught the French capstone on “Literature and Identity in the Francophone Caribbean” (FREN 264) focusing on the history and societies of Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana and considering issues of regional cultural identity.

Prof. Acosta Cruz has developed an important unit on Puerto Rican, Cuban and Dominican

literature for CMLT 134: Latino Literature and Media Arts, team-taught with Prof. Marvin D'Lugo. "As a comparatist Caribbeanist," Prof. Ferly says, "I value particularly teaching courses that bridge various linguistic areas of the Caribbean. It seems to me that Caribbean Studies remains all too often compartmentalized into linguistic areas, which only reproduces the divisions imposed on the regions and its peoples by the various colonizers (Spanish, Dutch, English, French, at some points even Swedes and Danes). Her observation sums up the dynamics of cross-cultural study that is key to our Caribbean course offerings and the hallmark of Clark's Comparative Literature Program.

ALUMNI NOTES

JUAN ROJO (Spanish '97) is chairing a panel on "Social Resistance in Mexican Cinema" at the 2006 Latin American Studies Association Convention to be held in San Juan Puerto Rico in March. The program includes a paper by Professor Carol D'Lugo on "Issues of Race and Gender in Two films by María Elena Velasco (La India María)."

SPANISH NOTES

On Tuesday, February 14th, Valentine's Day, 12 noon to 1:15, there will be a concert in Estabrook 414. Lucelia de Jesus will sing Latin-American folklore, protest songs, and poems by authors such as Julia de Burgos, Mario Benedetti, and Nicolás Guillén. This will be the official presentation of her second CD "Ráfaga de luz". Everyone is invited. A question and answer session conducted in Spanish will follow the concert.

BELÉN ATIENZA presented a paper "El juez, el relojero, y el dramaturgo: justicia y lectura en el juez de los divorcios de Cervantes" at the El Quijote en Buenos Aires Conference at the University of Buenos Aires, September 20, 2005.

FRENCH NOTES

BETH GALE will present a paper entitled "Multiple Identities as Adolescent Coping Mechanism in Annie Ernaux's *Les Armoires vides* and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*" at the NEMLA Conference in Philadelphia, PA, March 2-4, 2006.

A series of activities has been planned for by the FRENCH TEACHING ASSISTANTS. These include:

The French Writing Center that provides one-to-one help with writing assignments to students of French. The Center will be open weekly on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 6:00 p.m. It will take place in ES 302. Please contact Laure Chagnot (lchagnot@clarku.edu) or Prof. Ferly (ext. 7723) for details.

The "Table Française" continues at Le Bistro from noon to 2:00 p.m. on first Tuesdays and 3rd Fridays of each month.

The French Film Series continues every first and 3rd Tuesday in Estabrook 303 @ 7:00 p.m. All films have English subtitles.

You read it here first!

Coming in the next issue:

**the 11th Latino Film Festival
in Worcester**



**&
Pedro Almodóvar at Clark!**

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES NEWSLETTER is published by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Estabrook Hall 301, Clark University, Worcester, MA 01610. Please send news items and announcements of coming events to Newsletter Editor, care of the Department, or call us at (508) 793-7342, 793-7234 (e-mail: jberg@clarku.edu). If you are not yet on our mailing list, please fill out this coupon and return it to us so that we can keep you fully informed of Foreign Languages Department activities.

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