

FREN 347g (Category B, Humanistic Inquiry):
Race, Gender, and Power in Francophone Literature
French West Indian Women Writers and Post/colonial Power

Monday and Wednesday // 2pm-3:20pm// THH 115

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DESCRIPTION

In this course, we explore the work of four contemporary writers whose narratives unpack unique socio-political and cultural intersections of race, gender, and class for French West Indian women. We can understand these novels and short stories as what Christina Sharpe calls “wake work;” haunted by the afterlife of slavery, and riding waves of migration, their protagonists’ trajectories trace, in their transatlantic paths, “the wake” of the African diaspora. They care for those who have suffered death, social and literal, due to the legacies of slavery, colonialism, and authoritarianism. These novels and short stories deal with the political, but also the personal, as their protagonists cope with family trauma, generational cycles of violence, complicated romantic relationships, brutal break ups and dreams of reunification. We start with the story of a family living through dictatorship in Haiti: Marie Vieux-Chauvet’s classic, *Amour, Colère, Folie*. We continue with the Haitian-American writer Edwidge Danticat’s collection of interwoven short stories, *Krik? Krak!* as well as selection of her critical essays in *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work*. This collection will help us think about what’s at risk when writing during the Haitian dictatorship. Finally, we will move to a different region of the West Indies: Martinique. With novels by Suzanne Dracius (*L’Autre qui danse*) and Fabienne Kanor (*D’eaux douces*), we will read the stories of two college age French West Indian young women working through questions of belonging and difference between France and the Caribbean. This course, taught in French, counts towards French major/minor credit and GE-B (Humanistic Inquiry).