

CORE 102-001

Professor Lydie Moudileno

Office hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00pm

Office location: Taper Hall 278

Moudilen@usc.edu

Fall 2021 T-TH 12-1:50pm

Room: CPA 203

Representing Islands



The Western literary tradition is full of imaginary islands. Across periods and genres, island settings have been used by writers in order to reflect on essential questions about the human condition, to think about history, to express world-views, and sometimes to speculate about other worlds.

We will begin by examining representations of islands in the Western canon, and the ways in which they have contributed to a wider discourse on modernity and on Europe, often harnessing dichotomies such as civilization and barbarism; man and nature; center and margin; sameness and difference; or progress and immobility. In the second part of the course we will focus on texts and authors (less known, perhaps, and non-Western) who propose more indigenous perspectives on the postcolonial spaces they reclaim as sites of history, culture, and complex subjectivities. We will close by considering the lingering power of tropes of the “island” in the 21st century, with the aim to understand why and how fantasies of “exotic,” “strange,” and “foreign” islands continue to function.

Our survey will include drama, novels, short stories and essays ranging from Shakespeare to contemporary mainstream culture.

Required texts (all available at USC Bookstore)

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

William Golding, *Lord of the flies*

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*

Edwige Danticat, *Krik ? Krak!*