

SPRING 2024
CSLC 603, 22092D Seminar in Comparative Studies in Culture
Professor Lydie Moudileno
Mondays, 2:00-4:50 pm

Frantz Fanon's Archive: Critical Engagements

With an exponential growth of interlocutors across generations, Frantz Fanon's outstanding *œuvre* has now generated a fabulous interdisciplinary archive, which is being constantly reactivated by new intersections and dialogues in critical race theory, affect theory, postcolonial studies, literary criticism, gender and sexuality studies, and psychology, to name just a few. The purpose of this seminar is to introduce students to this influential scholar and activist, while connecting his critical engagements --as a scholar, as an anti-colonial militant and as a psychiatrist—to the broader intellectual history of transnational Black radicalism. We will emphasize the multidimensional and multi-sited archive of Caribbean-born Fanon, whose personal and political geography includes France, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Ghana and the U.S.

The seminar will be structured around Frantz Fanon's four published books, starting with *Black skin, white masks* (1952), a historical and phenomenological examination of blackness as experienced in space, language, sexuality, and social interactions, and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), his most incisive and controversial essay on colonization, violence, nation-building, and culture. We will then ground our discussion in the historical dynamics of the Algerian Revolution with the study of *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), before we explore Fanon's political theories (and prophecies) in the wider context of African decolonization, as presented in his fourth and posthumous publication, *Towards the African Revolution* (1964). Finally, it will be an opportunity to update the Fanonian archive in light of new materials made available recently in the 2018 volume *Alienation and Freedom*.

While the purpose of this course is to commit to in-depth reading of primary works, we will also use a range of secondary sources to examine the critical engagements it has generated over the last 40 years or so. The course will thus be

an opportunity to explore Fanon's connections with a number of intellectuals, scholars, and artists from various disciplines, origins, and periods, from his 1950s contemporaries Jean-Paul Sartre, Aimé Césaire, and James Baldwin, to Homi Bhabha, K. Anthony Appiah, Isaac Julien, Françoise Vergès, Lewis Gordon, and Ato Sekyi-Otu in the late twentieth-century and, more recently, Achille Mbembe, Kara Keeling and Fred Moten. In addition to required course material, students will engage in autonomous research by seeking out additional sources connected more specifically to their area of academic interest. We will relate Fanon's enduring legacy to contemporary events and societal issues in America and in the World, demonstrating not only the magnitude of its contribution to Black intellectual history, but also the extent to which Fanon's thought still matters today as issues of racism, inequality, violence and injustice continue to afflict our current times.

Required materials

Black Skin, White Masks. Richard Philcox, trans. New York, Grove, 2007.
[1967]e-book

The Wretched of the Earth. (Introductions by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha). Richard Philcox, trans. New York: Grove, 2004. [1963]
e-book + BB

A Dying Colonialism. (*Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, Monthly Review Press, 1965.) Haakon Chevalier, trans. New York: Grove, 1967, 1991.
Online pdf

Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays. Haakon Chevalier, trans. New York: Grove (1967), 1988. Online pdf and e-book

Other required material will be accessible through: Blackboard, Course Reserves (ARES), Streaming services (Kanopy), JSTOR and other resources from the USC's Library's website.