Murray State University  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
SYLLABUS FRE 331

I. TITLE: ADVANCED LANGUAGE PRACTICE: MARTINIQUE– FRE 331

II. CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Course will offer students the opportunity to expand their cultural and linguistic knowledge of French speaking cultures through a central conceptual framework, such as an international conference, an apartment building, a hotel, or a business. As well as studying grammar, students will engage in extensive role-play and creative exercises to establish contexts, choose fictive identities, and improvise a series of encounters.

III. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

V. This course will offer students the opportunity to expand their cultural and linguistic knowledge of French-speaking cultures through a unique conceptual framework: a group of people staying at a hotel in Martinique. Taking this as our theme, students will be engaging in extensive role-play and creative exercises to establish our purpose for being in Martinique, choose identities for everyone at the hotel, and to improvise a series of encounters. While doing this, we will support our linguistic activities by completing complementary grammatical exercises in Bien Sûr: Grammaire en Contexte. Since this is conceived to be a thoroughly integrated course to teach not only language structures but also a specific French-speaking cultural context, we will also be investigating historical sites on the island, creole language and cuisine, music, and literature. Two short documentaries on Martinique will give us insights into the history and sociology of the region—from two completely different perspectives. As we progress through the semester, we will also be reading a novel by one of Martinique’s most celebrated writers, Patrick Chamoiseau, to help us understand the unique hybridized culture of the Antilles and its special relationship to France. To complement this, we will view the film version of a novel by Joseph Zobel (La rue case-nègres) which, though it takes place earlier, ties in well thematically with Chamoiseau’s later autobiographical novel, Chemin d’école. (On a similar topic, don’t forget to see Etre et Avoir, a wonderful documentary on a contemporary French one-room school house deep in the French countryside—Sept. 29,30, Oct.1).

As a culminating activity, students will do individual research in order to write a paper and participate as authentically as possible in a round table discussion in French. The forum will discuss the various aspects of French-speaking Caribbean identity in the world today: what are some of the principal
expressions of that identity? What are the issues surrounding this region’s complex relationships with France and the rest of the world today?

CONTENT OUTLINE: Please refer to the Programme which follows.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES: Each week, oral and written activities will be assigned to assist our work in elaborating our concept of the hotel conference: the setting, the participants, the hotel personnel, and all the interactions that take place between these characters. There will be an ongoing series of role-plays to encourage active use of vocabulary and structures; to aid in gaining greater grammatical control of structures for the role-plays, students will write out weekly grammar exercises from a supporting textbook. Additionally, students will be required to write compositions on topics that relate to the course theme. After a deeper study of the history, culture, and sociology of the island (via the novel, films, outside readings), students will write a paper and be ready to participate in a round table discussion; part of this will be improvisational depending on how others respond to what each participant has contributed. This will be the culminating event for the course, showing what each person has learned. Exams will cover a.) grammatical structures b.) short answers/essays over cultural topics + the novel.

VII. FIELD AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCES: N/A

VIII. RESOURCES: The Language & Culture Resource Center (FH403); Films on video

IX. GRADING: 10% Homework, Oral work
5% Grammar Presentation(s)
20% Midterm Exam
20% Written Assignments, Quizzes
20% Cultural project (written and oral work)
25% final exam


Viewed in class:
Video of film, La Rue Case-nègres, by Euzhan Palcy
Documentaries on the French Caribbean

XI. ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Attendance in this class is mandatory! If you miss over one-fourth of the class meetings, for any reason, you will not receive a passing grade for the course. No
absence from an exam will be accepted without prior notification of the instructor or medical justification.

XII. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:
1. It is the responsibility of every student to be informed about the collegiate Academic Integrity policy. Cheating in whatever form constitutes academic dishonesty.
2. Copies of the policy are available in: IDC workbooks, classroom bulletin boards, Department of Modern Languages office, College of Humanities & Fine Arts office.
3. Your signature on every assignment, quiz, or exam represents a pledge that you have adhered to this policy.
4. I expect students to abide by the highest ethical standards.

XIII. PREREQUISITE: FRE 202/FRE 203 or consent of instructor.