This course will survey texts and films from West and North Africa, with an emphasis on Islam and the practices of migration to Western Europe over the last fifty years. While many North and West Africans target France, as the French-speaking metropole, many have more recently migrated to Spain, through the Canary Islands, the straits off of Tangier, and the Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla on the Moroccan Mediterranean coast. We will read some well-known literary texts in English translation that highlight Muslim culture and the dangers and traumas of migration. Films will come from both African and Spanish directors, treating issues of immigration of the last decade.

We will have several guest speakers who will include Spanish scholars working on immigration and at least one recent Senegalese immigrant who was fortunate enough to be granted residency and the right to work in Spain.

We will visit various sites in the city of Granada where recent immigrants live and work, mostly as vendors in open plazas but increasingly in other higher-paying employment. We will also visit the Sacromonte neighborhood, where historically Romas (“gypsies”), migrants arriving from Asia, Africa and Europe, for centuries, resided in cave houses. We’ll also visit the Albaicín, the former Arab quarter that retains the architecture and street layouts of the days when Moors ruled the city. The central attraction of the city is the famous Moorish fortress, the Alhambra, and we will visit this wondrous site, where Muslim and Christian Spain left their marks. There will be several opportunities to attend flamenco performances that combine elements of European and African/Arab aesthetics in both the dance styles and singing/instrumental music.

Field trips will include a visit to Morocco, to compare the contemporary Muslim culture and its ancient architecture with what we see in Granada. Two more field trips will include visits to Córdoba, where the Grand Mosque was considered too beautiful to destroy by the conquering Christians, so they built a cathedral within its walls, and to Málaga, where many new immigrants have settled, on the Mediterranean coast.

Instructor: Robert Cancel
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Site Classroom
Meetings: TTh 10AM – 11:50AM
Office hours: TTh 12 – 1 PM

Course Requirements:

40% Class Participation: Though part of the course will entail lectures on the material, a good deal depends on discussion of the films and texts. Attendance, obviously, is an important component of the class and missing more than one class session will result in a reduction of the grade for this requirement.
40% Two Papers: Two papers, each three to four pages long, will be required. One must be on a text and the other on a film. Specifics on these assignments will be provided the first week of class. Due dates: 9th July and 23rd July.

20% Final Exam: Given on the last day of class, will be inclusive of the course material

Syllabus:

6/30: Introductory Remarks; Historical Overview of Spread of Islam in Africa, Colonial Rule, Independence and Patterns of Immigration

7/1: The clash of the spirit and materialism: Islam and Western colonial rule
READ: Ambiguous Adventure, Cheikh Hamidou Kane

7/2: Western Rule and Dreams of Immigration
SCREEN FILMS: Borom Sarret and La noire de..., both by Ousmane Sembene

7/7: Postcolonial problems and migration options

7/8: Islam, marriage and hope in a European context
READ: The Translator, Leila Aboulela

7/9: The journey across cultures, borders and memory
SCREEN FILM: Ainsi meurent les anges, by Moussa Sene Absa
FIRST PAPER DUE TODAY
Tour: Alhambra and city outdoor markets (filled with immigrant venders)

7/14: Contemporary African literature in Spanish: explorations of past and present

7/15: Journey to Spain
SCREEN FILM: La pirogue, by Moussa Toure

7/16: Tour of the Sacromonte and Albaicin neighborhoods (half day)
FIELD TRIP: Saturday to Monday: Tangier, Tetouan, Chefchaouen and Ceuta, Morocco

7/21: Dreams of and “Arrivals” in Spain
READ: Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits, Laila Lalami

7/22: A clash of cultures on the beach: humor and tragedy
SCREEN FILM: Bwana, by Imanol Uribe
7/23: Working way through Spain
SCREEN FILM: *Las cartas de Alou*, by Montxo Armendariz
SECOND PAPER DUE TODAY
FIELD TRIP: Friday – Saturday, Málaga

7/28: Images of Immigration: Selected Short Stories

7/29: Immigration as a matter of conscience
SCREEN FILM: *Poniente*, by Chus Gutierrez

7/30: Final exam