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. These are themes and activities that resonate with contemporary events both in Europe and in the United States. 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 migration of the last decade.

We will have several guest speakers who will include Spanish scholars working on immigration and also meet with a number of groups and NGOs that are active in immigration issues.

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 and palace, the Alhambra, and we will visit this wondrous site, where Muslim and Christian Spain left their marks. There will be 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 two-night visit to Morocco, to compare the contemporary Muslim culture and its ancient architecture with what we see in Granada. We will also visit with NGOs in Morocco that deal with African migrants and refugees waiting to enter Spain. Another field trip will entail two nights in Madrid where we will visit significant sites of the Spanish Civil War as well as, again, meet with groups that work on immigration issues.

Instructor: Robert Cancel
Phone: (cell)760-822-0613
Email: rcancel@ucsd.edu
Site Classroom
Meetings: TWTh 10AM – 11:50AM
Office hours: TWTh 12 – 1 PM

Course Requirements:

50% Class Participation: Though part of the course will comprise 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. Taking part in the various local and overnight field trips also count for the participation grade.

Writing Assignments: Because this is a relatively small class, I will be available to help students with their writing in order to improve their research skills as well as the quality of their class essays.

40% Papers: Two papers, each three 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: 7th July and 21st July.

10% Final Exam: Given on the last day of class, will be inclusive of the course material

Syllabus:

Brief walking tour of Granada, mostly near study center

6/29: The clash of the spirit and materialism: Islam and Western colonial rule
READ: Ambiguous Adventure, Cheikh Hamidou Kane

6/30: Western Rule and Dreams of Immigration
SCREEN FILMS: Borom Sarret and La noire de..., both by Ousmane Sembene

7/5: Postcolonial problems and migration options

7/6: Islam, marriage and hope in a European context
READ: The Translator, Leila Aboulela
Tour home of Federico García Lorca

7/7: The journey across cultures, borders and memory
SCREEN FILM: Ainsi meurent les anges, by Moussa Sene Absa
FIRST PAPER DUE TODAY
Field trip to Madrid, Friday to Sunday

7/12: Contemporary African literature in Spanish: explorations of past and present

7/13: Journey to Spain
SCREEN FILM: La pirogue, by Moussa Toure

7/14: Tour of the Sacromonte and Albaicin neighborhoods (half day)
7/18: Tour of the Alhambra

7/19: Dreams of and “Arrivals” in Spain
READ: Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits, Laila Lalami

7/20: A clash of cultures on the beach: humor and tragedy
SCREEN FILM: Bwana, by Imanol Uribe

7/21: Field trip to Morocco, Thursday to Saturday
SECOND PAPER DUE TODAY

7/26: Images of Immigration: Selected Short Stories

7/28: Immigration as a matter of conscience
SCREEN FILM: Poniente, by Chus Gutierrez

7/29: Final exam