

**Syllabus for Introduction to Haitian Vodou,  
HAI 3930 (1481) /LAS 2930, Fall, 2009**

Center for Latin American Studies and Languages, Literatures and Cultures  
University of Florida, Gainesville

**Location: MCCB 1108 (5 Period)**

**IF YOU HAVE H1N1, STAY  
HOME, DON'T COME TO CLASS**

**Instructors:** Ben Hebblethwaite, Ph.D.  
**Office location:** Dauer Hall, 363  
**Office hours:** Monday 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. and Friday 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
**Contact information:** [hebble@ufl.edu](mailto:hebble@ufl.edu)  
352-392-2422  
352-392-1443

**Class website:** <http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/hebble/>

**Class objectives:**

This class provides an introduction to this important Haitian culture and religion. The class will examine Vodou mythology, songs, dances, rhythms, rituals, traditions, structure and culture. In addition, Vodou's important intersection with painting, proverbs, and popular music and culture will also be examined. Understanding the roots of Vodou in Benin is an important goal in this class. While concerned with foreign misrepresentations, the class primarily strives to understand Vodou from a Vodouist perspective. In order to achieve that goal a new English translation of Haitian Vodou songs (with the accompanying Haitian Creole originals) will be used in addition to scholarly works about the culture and religion. This class helps students learn about the form this ancient African religion and culture takes in Haiti.

The objective of this class is to help develop your understanding of the Haitian Vodou religion and culture. To do so, the class format involves lectures, slide-presentations (art slides), daily student presentations, classroom discussions, films and music. The class will have no more than 8 pop-quizzes, one midterm, one final, and a 6 page final paper (the essay topic is due on **October 26<sup>th</sup>**; the final draft is due on the last day of class). The textbooks provide the background knowledge needed to follow lectures, participate in discussions and pair-work, and to prepare for and perform well on the presentation, quizzes, examinations and the paper. Reading the assigned passages carefully while noting key ideas, events and individuals is a valuable way to study the material. Also, the assigned readings are your main sources for your paper and they must be cited and included in your bibliography.

**Grade distribution.**

(1) 10 % = 2 Class presentations      Grade 1: \_\_\_\_\_      Grade 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
10 minutes long. Graded for clarity; organization; preparation; effectiveness of  
your communication (are you connecting with us? are we convinced?); insight  
of your critique.

(2) 20 % = 6 page paper (essay topic and paper). Due on December 10<sup>th</sup>. *See grading criteria below.*

(3) 10 % = As many as 8 quizzes (most are pop-quizzes).

(4) 10% = Homework (HMWK). Write a short commentary on the reading for the day the paper is due. One well organized, well-written paragraph (1/2 page maximum). You are graded on your insight into the ideas found in the reading, your unique interpretation, your ability to discuss the book content in an objective, critical and scholarly voice. I will also grade you on your use of grammar, spelling and writing style.

(5) 20 % = Participation; attendance; punctuality, courtesy, attentiveness; respect for learning environment; etiquette; insights (please, no phones, newspapers and inappropriate work).

(6) 30 % = 2 Exams (15% each)

### **General Education Learning Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes**

- **International** – In this class we will learn about the values, attitudes and norms that shape the cultural differences of peoples who live in countries other than the United States. We will learn about the roles of geographic location and socioeconomic factors on the lives of citizens in other countries. Haiti and Benin, West Africa, will be our primary international focuses.

In this class you will analyze and evaluate your cultural norms and values in relation to those held by citizens in other countries.

- **Humanities** – In this class we will learn about the history, underlying theory and methodologies used within the disciplines of Vodou Studies, Religious Studies, and Haitian Creole and Haitian Studies.

In this class you will identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the disciplines of Haitian Language and Cultural Studies, Haitian civilization, Vodou Studies, Religious Studies and World Religions. You will approach issues and problems within these disciplines from multiple perspectives.

You will learn to communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the discipline, individually and/or in groups.

### **Required readings (books you need to buy for this class):**

1. Métraux, Alfred. 1959. *Voodoo in Haiti*. New York: Schocken Books.

2. Michel, Claudine and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith. 2006. *Vodou in Haitian life and culture: invisible powers*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
3. Hebblethwaite, Benjamin and Joanne Bartley, eds. Forthcoming. *Vodou Songs and Texts in Haitian Creole and English*. Gainesville: Classic Editions.

### **Films**

*Of men and gods, The Serpent and the Rainbow*

### **Music**

*Christopher Laroche, Azor, Chandèl, Boukman Eksperyans, Wawa & Racine Kanga, Toto Bissainthe, Koudjay, Tokay, Kanpèch, Boukan Ginen, Ram, etc.*

### **No late or makeup work policy**

No late or makeup work accepted **unless** a valid excuse is presented.

### **Attendance policy**

Students are expected to attend class **daily**. Students may take **3 unexcused absences**. Athletes must be excused by the athletics department. **Unexcused absences** and **tardiness** result in a lowering of the participation grade. Missing class can seriously affect a student's ability to perform in other categories of the syllabus (such as missed quizzes or the no late w.

If a student *is* absent, he or she is expected to contact the instructor within 24 hours with the reason for his or her absence. Medical treatment or a personal or a family crisis are grounds for an excused absence, *a note including a contact phone number is required*.

### **Examinations**

Class quizzes and exams are based upon readings, lectures and presentations. Students are expected to review their notes and readings prior to these evaluations.

### **Paper – (Read carefully!)**

Students are expected to write a research paper, **5 pages in length + bibliography**. The paper must use **12 Times New Roman font and be double spaced with 1 inch columns on all sides**.

The 1 page proposal is due 4 weeks before the end of the semester. **Include at least 5 refereed sources (i.e. books or articles; UF online database books and articles are OK; but NOT the open access WWW)**. 3 of your 5 sources must also be the 3 required readings in this class. The required readings must serve as guidance and form a foundation for your paper topic.

Citations must be accompanied by appropriate bibliographical references. Your paper will be graded based on the basis of the originality of the ideas, on the clarity and concision of the writing and editing and the adherence to the requirements given above and below in the reference and bibliography guideline. You want to show that you have carefully read the books and found additional sources, which you have read and synthesized, and added you own unique interpretation of events, individuals, ideas and phenomena. Aim to write a scholarly paper where you strive to produce an objective and accurate analysis of your topic. Avoid advancing personal ideological preferences and try to take an empirical approach where the facts are considered. Write an outline as you piece together your study of Haitian culture and society. Organize and link the parts together.

## Reference and Bibliography Guidelines

In the text:

- (a) Zéphir (1997: 223) advocates the instruction of Haitian Creole in the United States' secondary education system.
- (b) Misclassifying Creole-speakers as African Americans fails to properly account for linguistic and cultural differences (Zéphir 1997: 223).

In the bibliography:

Zéphir, Flore. 1997. Haitian Creole Language and Bilingual Education in the United States: Problem, Right or Resource? Article in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 223-37

a. Book:

Author. Year of publication. *Title of book*. City of publisher: Publisher.

b. Article in journal, magazine, etc.:

Author. Year of publication. Title of article. Article in *Name of source*, Volume/number of issue, page numbers.

See the bibliography for further examples.

## Academic Honesty Guidelines

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines include but are not limited to:

*Cheating*. The improper taking or tendering of any information or material which shall be used to determine academic credit. Taking of information includes copying graded homework assignments from another student; working with another individual(s) on graded assignments or homework; looking or attempting to look at notes, a text, or another student's paper during an exam.

*Plagiarism*. The attempt to represent the work of another as the product of one's own thought, whether the other's work is oral or written (including electronic), published or unpublished. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, quoting oral or written materials without citation on written materials or in oral presentations; submitting work produced by an on-line translation service or the translation feature of an on-line dictionary as your own.

*Misrepresentation*. Any act or omission with intent to deceive a teacher for academic advantage. Misrepresentation includes lying to a teacher to increase your grade; lying or misrepresenting facts when confronted with an allegation of academic honesty.

*Bribery, Conspiracy, Fabrication*. For details see below.

**The UF Honor Code states:**

*"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."*

On all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied:

*"On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."*

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action according to the judicial process.

For more details go to: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm>

### **Students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities must register with the Dean of Students office. Contact the Assistant Dean of Students/Director of the Disability Resources Program at:

P202 Peabody Hall

Gainesville, FL 32611-5055

Phone (352) 392-1261 (V), 392-3008 (TDD)

For stress, emotional and psychological support, please contact the Counseling Center at:

301 Peabody Hall

Phone (352) 392-1575

Or: [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu)

If you need this syllabus in an alternate format, please speak to Ben.

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**HMWK = 1 PAGE COMMENTARY ON THE READING FOR THE DAY IT IS DUE.**

**1**

Monday, August 24

Wednesday, August 26

Friday, August 28

Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Introduction

Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Introduction

Monday, August 31

Wednesday, September 2

Friday, September 4

Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Introduction

Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Marcelin 26-46 \_\_\_\_\_

**HMWK.** Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Marcelin 46-66 ; \_\_\_\_\_

**3**

Monday, September 7

Wednesday, September 9

Friday, September 11

**LABOR DAY ~ NO CLASS**

Metraux 25-45; Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Marcelin 66-77; \_\_\_\_\_

Metraux 46-57; Hebblethwaite & Bartley; \_\_\_\_\_

**4**

Monday, September 14

Wednesday, September 16

Friday, September 18

Michel (Brown); Metraux 58-76; \_\_\_\_\_

Metraux 77-100; **HMWK** \_\_\_\_\_ ;

Metraux 100-119; Hebblethwaite & Bartley, J.L. 93-103 ; \_\_\_\_\_

**5**

Monday, September 21

Wednesday, September 23

Friday, September 25

Michel (Michel); Hebblethwaite & Bartley, J.L. 103-114 ; \_\_\_\_\_

Michel (Desmangles); Hebblethwaite & Bartley, J.L. 114-123 ; \_\_\_\_\_

Metraux 120-141; \_\_\_\_\_

**6**

Monday, September 28

Wednesday, September 30

Friday, October 2

Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Marcenat 126-140 ; \_\_\_\_\_

Metraux 141-156; **HMWK** ; \_\_\_\_\_ ;

Michel (Fleurant); Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Marcenat 140-145 ; \_\_\_\_\_

**7**

Monday, October 5

Wednesday, October 7

Friday, October 9

Michel (Wexler); Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Marcenat 146-150; \_\_\_\_\_

**Midterm Exam**

Metraux 157-168; \_\_\_\_\_

**8**

Monday, October 12

Wednesday, October 14

Friday, October 16

Metraux 168-192; \_\_\_\_\_

Michel (McAlister); \_\_\_\_\_

**9**

Monday, October 19

Wednesday, October 21

Friday, October 23

Michel (Bellegarde-Smith); \_\_\_\_\_

Metraux 192-212; \_\_\_\_\_

**HOME COMING (NO CLASS)**

**10**

Monday, October 26

Wednesday, October 28

Friday, October 30

Metraux 212-224; **Essay topic due**; . \_\_\_\_\_

Michel (Turner); **HMWK**; \_\_\_\_\_

Michel (Minn); \_\_\_\_\_

**11**

Monday, November 2  
Wednesday, November 4  
Friday, November 6

Metraux 224-243 ; Hebblethwaite & Bartley, Marcenat 151-155; \_\_\_\_\_  
Hebblethwaite & Bartley, 156-159; \_\_\_\_\_  
Metraux 243-265; Hebblethwaite & Bartley, terminology 160-163; \_\_\_\_\_

**12**

Monday, November 9  
Wednesday, November 11  
Friday, November 13

Metraux 266-281 ; Hebblethwaite & Bartley 163-166; \_\_\_\_\_  
**HOLIDAY**  
Metraux 281-292 ; Hebblethwaite & Bartley 167-170; \_\_\_\_\_

**13**

Monday, November 16  
Wednesday, November 18  
Friday, November 20

Michel (Benson) ; Hebblethwaite & Bartley 171-175; \_\_\_\_\_  
Michel (Coates); Hebblethwaite & Bartley 176-180; \_\_\_\_\_  
Metraux 292-312; Hebblethwaite & Bartley 181-185; \_\_\_\_\_

**14**

Monday, November 23  
Wednesday, November 25  
Friday, November 27

Metraux 312-322; Hebblethwaite & Bartley 186-189; \_\_\_\_\_  
Michel (Cosentino) ; Hebblethwaite & Bartley 190-193; \_\_\_\_\_  
**THANKSGIVING ~ NO CLASS**

**15**

Monday, November 30  
Wednesday, December 2

*Paper presentations* 1 \_\_\_\_\_, 2 \_\_\_\_\_, 3 \_\_\_\_\_,  
4 \_\_\_\_\_, 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_

Friday, December 4

10. \_\_\_\_\_ 11 \_\_\_\_\_, 12 \_\_\_\_\_,  
13 \_\_\_\_\_, 14 \_\_\_\_\_, 15 \_\_\_\_\_,  
16 \_\_\_\_\_, 17 \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_, 19 \_\_\_\_\_,

**16**

Monday, December 7  
Wednesday, December 9

20 \_\_\_\_\_, 21 \_\_\_\_\_, 22 \_\_\_\_\_,  
23. \_\_\_\_\_, 24. \_\_\_\_\_, 25. \_\_\_\_\_  
**FINAL EXAM; Essay Due**

	<b>SATISFACTORY (Y)</b>	<b>UNSATISFACTORY (N)</b>
<b>CONTENT</b>	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
<b>ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE</b>	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
<b>ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT</b>	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
<b>STYLE</b>	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
<b>MECHANICS</b>	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

