

FRIT-F 651
Race and Ethnicity in Contemporary French Cinema
Spring 2017
Thursdays, 4:00 - 6:00 pm
Schedule Number 31167
Instructor: Brett Bowles (bowlesb@indiana.edu)



Taking an interdisciplinary perspective from postcolonial studies and film studies, this seminar will examine the representation of race and ethnicity in French cinema as a contested field of cultural production and of sociopolitical discourse.

To what degree does film serve both to reify and to contest institutional power structures and administrative practices inherited from the colonial period, as well as deeply ingrained modes of imagining racial and ethnic difference as part of or in contradistinction to French national identity? How have the general public and critics responded to these conflicting representations, and what do those responses tell us about the state of French democracy in the twenty-first century? To what degree does the image of race relations on screen distort social and political reality, particularly state policy with regard to minorities in fields such as housing, employment, immigration, and incarceration? Does French cinema by white metropolitan directors express nostalgia for the colonial period?

To answer these questions, the course will juxtapose various genres (commercial melodramas and comedies vs. non-commercial documentaries / docudramas / TV news reports); perspectives (films by Sub-Saharan African and North-African directors vs. white French directors); themes relevant to different demographic groups (legal and clandestine migration from Africa and other parts of the world to France; the hybrid cultural identities of French Muslims with ties to the Maghreb; the interaction of gender and class with race and ethnicity).

All films will be in French with English subtitles. The language of instruction and discussion may be French or English, depending on enrollment and students' needs.

For more information, please contact Professor Brett Bowles (bowlesb@indiana.edu)