FREN 4064/6064

Sustainability & Development in the Francophone World

Spring 2027

Skiles 308

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Instructor: Dr. Brigitte Stepanov

Course Description

This course will analyze current sustainability and development issues in the Francophone World and policies initiated to address them. **Taught in French.**

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

Though there are no course prerequisites for FREN 4064/6064, this is a 4000-level class conducted in French, and thus a level above FREN 2002 is needed. Click the link to learn more about proficiency levels and the French placement test!
https://modlangs.gatech.edu/students/placement-tests.

General Information

Who is to say what counts as "developed"? This course takes as its premise the idea that the ways in which we define and measure development constitute forms of narrative. These narratives determine which lives, lands, and futures are deemed valuable and, by extension, which may be disregarded or even discarded. We'll be treating "development" and "sustainability" throughout as frames (that is, ways of seeing which make some things visible and others invisible).

In this course, we'll be looking at the histories, texts, and images through which development and sustainability have been imagined across the Francophone world (from the Caribbean to West and North Africa through to the French metropole itself, and with mentions of the South Pacific and Southeast Asia). We'll be reading Aimé Césaire, Pierre Rabhi, Véronique Tadjo, and Felwine Sarr, alongside Léopold Senghor, Édouard Glissant, Achille Mbembe, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, and Malcolm Ferdinand, plus a range of other material in various forms (novels, poetry, essays, film, and policy documents) in French.

We'll be asking how these narratives have been formed:

1. in, around, and for within colonial and postcolonial economies;
2. with respect to extraction, land, and the environment, including mining, plantation agriculture, nuclear testing, and ecocide;
3. by way of humanitarian and development institutions, and the "humanist" language they use; and
4. through literary, cinematic, and artistic representations, and what works show vs. leave out.

Overall, the course provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in close reading, comparative analysis, and research – all of considerable value for further study in the humanities and social sciences and for work in policy, international organizations, and the arts.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze how "development" and "sustainability" have been defined, measured, and narrated in the Francophone world, and situate key texts within colonial and postcolonial histories.
2. Close-read literary, theoretical, and cinematic works, attending to both form and content, while comparing how different genres and media represent environmental and economic change.
3. Assess the competing paradigms of progress (humanist, developmentalist, agroecological, decolonial) and relate them to the current sociopolitical and geopolitical discourse.
4. Formulate your own independent research question, underpinned by evidence from both primary and secondary sources.
5. Apply the methods of the humanities (close reading, historical contextualization, comparative and ethical reflection, and creative thought) to demonstrate how the humanities can provide answers to questions of value, meaning, and the human experience.
6. Communicate clearly both orally and in writing in French by: summarizing and rephrasing sources accurately, explaining key concepts in your own words, arguing a point using appropriate textual evidence, and being able to present your findings to your peers while creating a shared community experience in class (by expressing ideas, asking and answering questions, and thinking critically).

Course Materials

All books in French

Césaire, Aimé. *Discours sur le colonialisme*. ISBN: 9782708705319.

Sarr, Felwine. *Afrotopia*. ISBN: 9782848765020.

Rabhi, Pierre. Vers la sobriété heureuse. ISBN: 9782330156596.

Tadjo, Véronique. En compagnie des hommes. ISBN: 9782359496390.

Recommended: Caplat, Jacques and Rouxel, Laëtitia. *Deux mains dans la terre: vers une transition écologique*. ISBN: 9782330157395.

All other readings and additional viewing material will be made available through Canvas.

All other recommended materials will also be uploaded to Canvas.

Evaluation Criteria

Assignment	Weight (Percentage, points, etc.)
Attendance + participation (in-class discussion)	30%
In-class presentation	10%
Midterm (in-class)	20%
Vocabulary Lists	10%
Final Project	30%

Description of Graded Components

Attendance + participation (in-class discussion) (30%)
Active participation in class and engagement with the assigned materials are vital. Please come to class prepared by having read/watched/listened to the assigned readings/film/music. You are expected to participate in each class by making meaningful contributions, answering questions, and interacting with your peers. This course is grounded in dialogue, and I look forward to discussing these works with you!

Before class: Prepare the texts at home by reading them, using a dictionary and researching vocabulary/key terms, and completing the assignments as advised in the calendar. Access additional materials and resources on Canvas. Please bring any readings and notes to class.

During class: Class presence and participation points are given to encourage your active class participation and discussion. You will be rewarded with a perfect score as long as you come to class with a high level of preparedness and actively contribute to class discussions through thoughtful contributions. Participation includes thinking about what you have seen/read/listened to ahead of class and sharing these perspectives with the class; voicing opinions of, reactions to, and reflections on the assigned material; focusing on a particular passage or scene and explaining why it speaks to you or why you think it's important; engaging with the terminology of textual/visual analysis; volunteering to read passages out loud; speaking in French; responding to

your classmates' comments in a respectful and empathetic manner; focusing on the discussion and not checking texts/social media, doing homework for other classes, speaking in English, etc.

You will be awarded two participation grades this semester (1 before the midterm and 1 toward the end of the semester).

Participation will be graded on the following scale:

High degree of preparedness and active participation = 10 points
Moderate degree of preparedness and participation = 9 points
In class and making an okay contribution = 7 points
In class, but silent or ill-prepared = 4 points
Unexcused absence = 0 points

This grade includes mini presentations throughout the semester and short comprehension quizzes.

Attendance: You are required to attend class when it convenes, and I will be recording attendance in each class. An excused absence has to be documented by a letter from the Office of the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students. Absences and/or excessive tardiness will affect your participation grade – since it is worth a third of your final grade, please do attend class! If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what happened in class that day and to catch up on the work that you missed. ***I record attendance in Canvas (using the "Attendance" feature) right after each class. Please let me know within 48 hours if you observe a discrepancy between what is indicated in Canvas and your actual attendance for that day. Unfortunately, I cannot retroactively change attendance at the end of the semester.

In-Class Presentation (10%)

An in-depth presentation focused on one of the readings of the semester.

Clear guidelines and grading criteria will be provided as we get closer to the presentation dates.

*FREN 6064 students will prepare presentations twice the length of FREN 4064 students.

Midterm (20%)

In-class midterm with questions in various formats (multiple choice, short, and longer answer) that address material discussed in class and give you space to elaborate on your thoughts. More information will be given as we get closer to the date of the midterm (with respect to the exact material to study and what to expect regarding the format).

Vocabulary Lists (10%)

Students will create lists of key terms related to the readings.

The assignment is an opportunity to hone your vocabulary and communication skills and synthesize the discussions had in class. This will help you prepare for your final project.

Final Project (30%)

Students will complete a research project on a topic of their choice related to the themes of the class. There will also be a creative component. Students will prepare a PPT presentation about their work. The presentation will be followed by a participative Q+A with the class. The dates for these presentations will be shared as we approach April.

If you cite external sources, as always, please practice good citation literacy (MLA citation practices): when in doubt, cite! Find credible sources and acknowledge the work that has been done before you, so that you can dialogue with and build on it.

Clear guidelines and grading criteria will be provided as we get closer to the final project date.

Grading criteria will include the depth and quality of your research, how well you relate your project to the themes and topics of the course; the coherence of your explanations; the organization of your presentation; and the depth and coherence of your answers during the Q+A.

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Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

For grades that are on the cusp, rounding up is at the discretion of the instructor.

Turning-in Assignments

Assignments are due by the start of class on the day they are due.

Late assignments will incur a 5% penalty per day late.

Not being prepared to present on the day of a presentation will incur a 10% penalty.

If you are struggling to complete work on time, please come see me. I am here to help and am happy to find a solution. If there are extenuating circumstances, we will figure something out!

***Guidelines for all written work that you hand in:

- Please submit a Word Doc
- Double-spaced
- Times New Roman, 12pt font
- Page numbers (anywhere on the page)
- "Normal margins"
- MLA citation practices for notes and bibliography (please find more info at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_g

uide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html and https://style.mla.org/works-cited/citations-by-format/)

***General guidelines for presentations:

- I encourage you to use audio/visual support (images, links, maps, video clips, songs, quotes) to engage your audience
- If you quote a text in your presentation, please cite it using MLA citation practices and, if possible, include the link where you found the information
- Please do not print your entire presentation and read it to the class; I encourage you to use brief notes/index cards

Course Calendar

Week 1: Introduction to the course and definition of key terms, including "development," "sustainability," "Francophone," and "frames"

Week 2: Césaire: Colonial and postcolonial contexts and histories

Week 3: *Afrotopia*/Afrotopias: Sarr and Senghor

Week 4: Economic systems and development: Sarr

Week 5: Architecture as development: Sarr and Mbembe's *Brutalisme* on demolition and building

Week 6: Health and sustainability: Tadjo's *En compagnie des hommes*

Week 7: Voice and the Novel vs. Policy and Data: Tadjo, Ebola, form, and witness

Week 8: Health and environment: Tadjo and Ferdinand's *Une écologie décoloniale*

Week 9: Spring break

Week 10: Review and midterm

Week 11: Sustainability I: Rabhi

Week 12: Sustainability II: Rabhi and Glissant on Relation and the Tout-monde

Week 13: Mbembe on critique and Diagne on translation as hospitality

Weeks 14–15: Final projects and group Q+As

Week 16: April 26 – final instructional class day and conclusion of course

Course Expectations & Guidelines

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/ or http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment, project or exam will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Attendance and/or Participation

Please remember that your attendance and timely participation is key to your success in this course, as well as that of your classmates.

Collaboration and Group Work

Language learning occurs in a community of people. This semester, you will participate in multiple small group activities both oral and written.

However, the following forms of assistance are not allowed for doing any of the work in this course: copying (from someone else's assignments or from another source [a reading in a textbook, the Internet, etc.]) without clear attribution of the source; having another student, a tutor, or a friend suggest changes or correct the work you are to turn in; completing assignments in consultation with other students ("working together") unless specified by your instructor; translating directly from another source; and especially **using electronic translation programs**. These restrictions apply to any work turned in for this course, even daily homework assignments. The issue of digital plagiarism has raised concerns about ethics, student writing experiences, and academic integrity. GT subscribes to a digital plagiarism detection program called Turnitin, which may be used to check assignments submitted in this course.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

No late assignments or extensions will be granted. Please plan accordingly. Contact your instructor in the case of extenuating circumstances.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/ for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Campus Resources for Students

The Center for Academic Success (success.gatech.edu/) offers a variety of academic support services to help students succeed academically at Georgia Tech (e.g. tutoring, peer-led study groups, study skills, etc.).

The Office of Disability Services (disabilityservices.gatech.edu/) ensures that students with disabilities have equal access to all programs and activities offered at Georgia Tech. They provide documentation and officially sanctioned requests for accommodation for students, and serve as a resource for instructors as they build learning environments to meet the needs of all students.

OMED: Educational Services (omed.gatech.edu/) is the unit charged by Georgia Tech with the retention, development, and performance of the complete student learner who is traditionally underrepresented: African American, Hispanic, and Native American. OMED's programming and academic support services are aimed at equipping all students with strategies to navigate the Georgia Tech environment.

Support for Students in Distress

Counseling Center counseling.gatech.edu/ 404-894-2575
Dean of Students (Student Life) studentlife.gatech.edu/ 404-385-8772
GT Police police.gatech.edu/ 404-894-2500
Stamps Health Services health.gatech.edu/ 404-894-1420