TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

French-Caribbean Culture and Civilization

ANT 290, EVS 290, FR 382, IDS 280, LAS 280

INSTRUCTORS: Dr. Adam John and Dr. Barty Thompson

♦ Course purpose

This interim course provides Albright students the opportunity to study first hand the French-speaking Caribbean island of Martinique from an interdisciplinary perspective. Students will travel to Martinique for two weeks to study culture and language and anthropology and ecology. Students can choose to receive IDS, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Anthropology, Environmental Science, or French credit. To receive credit for the French concentration, students are expected to complete the course requirements in French. A member of the Albright French faculty will closely monitor student performance in French.

♦ Course goals

Students enrolled in this course will observe and experience a cultural system distinct from their own in order to understand the complexity of this system, as well as the complexity their own cultural system. They will also have a better grasp of how human behavior influences and is influenced by perceptions of cultural “norms.” Students in French will gain additional knowledge of the language and its intricate ties to French-Caribbean culture.

To accomplish the aforementioned goals, students will examine the social dynamic between French and Creole, music, university life, market culture, rural and urban culture, the influence of culture on the environment and vice versa, cultural history, and daily life

♦ Course Materials

The primary material of this course is student interaction with innumerable aspects of Martinican culture. This interaction will entail educational excursions, seminars at the university conducted by experts on various topics, sharing ideas with students at the Université des Antilles-Guyane, taking steel-drum lessons at the cultural center in Fort-de France (the capital of Martinique) and, most obviously, observing and collecting data for designated course requirements. Prior to traveling to Martinique, students will learn about Martinique from various texts, including anthropological readings, cultural and historical readings, and literature.

♦ Course Evaluation

At the conclusion of course in Martinique, students will complete a detailed evaluation of the program that will enable us to assess the various components of students’ experience in Martinique.
Course requirements

PRE-TRIP ASSIGNMENTS – Completing readings, written summaries, and/or study-guide questions on each article and textbook as directed by professors. (15%) Readings can include:

- *Ulysees Travel Guide: Martinique* (English or French)
- *School Days* (English) / *Chemin d’école* (French) by Patrick Chamoiseau
- Selections from *Beyond Sun and Sand: Caribbean Environmentalisms* (2006), edited by Sherrie Baver and Barbara Deutsch Lynch
- Selections from *Caribbean literature and the environment: between nature and culture* (2005), edited by Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renée Gosson, and George Handley
- Selections from *Awakening spaces: French Caribbean popular songs, music, and culture* (2000) by Brenda Berrian
- Selections from *De solitude à Mélodie : histoire de femmes de Martinique : 1771-2004, témoignage* (2005) by Marie-Alice André-Jaccoulet (French)

GUIDED CULTURAL ACTIVITIES – Students will complete a series of activities in which they will analyze certain cultural phenomena by observing, answering directed questions, and interviewing local population about the phenomena. For example, students will study the culture of the island’s capital by visiting different areas of the capital, answering questions about what they observe, and interviewing local population about attitudes toward the capital. (10%)

PARTICIPATION IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS – students and faculty will meet to discuss activities they have engaged in and the materials they have read and analyzed. Students earning French credit will also have to read and discuss articles in local newspapers and magazines. (10%)

JOURNALS- Students will keep a journal of their experiences while in Martinique. Specific entries will be assigned frequently and will be assessed periodically while on the trip to ensure completion. These entries will require students to reflect on their experiences, and to relate them to other aspects of life in Martinique and to their own lives and cultural attitudes. These journals will serve as the basis for many of the group discussion sessions led by Albright Faculty members. (20%)

MINI-INDEPENDENT PROJECTS– In addition to gaining a comprehensive understanding of the island of Martinique through the seminars, group activities, etc., each student will be required to choose one topic to conduct more in-depth learning. The general categories are: French, Culture, and the Environment. (25%)

Students in French will choose the French track. They will be expected to develop their speaking ability to a certain level of proficiency. This will require them to conduct interviews with native speakers. The French instructor from Albright will evaluate these interviews and conduct an oral interview with students at the end of the course.
♦ Students who choose the cultural track will be required to gather information about a particular subculture on Martinique. Using methods of participant-observation they should gain knowledge about their target group’s worldview. They will give an oral presentation to other students at the end of the trip.

♦ Students who choose the environmental track will focus on some aspect environmental transformation on the island that has been produced by human development. They will need to describe and assess the situation and present their findings orally to other students at the end of the trip.

♦ FINAL ORAL EXAM – This exam will last approximately thirty minutes and is comprehensive. (20%)