



AMERICAN LITERATURE

Master in English and American Language, Literature and History

Faculty of Liberal Arts

Course information

Master year 1 24 HOURS

Spring Semester 5 ECTS

Seminars (S)

Professor: Delphine Louis-Dimitrov (ENS; PhD. Sorbonne-Nouvelle University)

Course description

Slavery in American literature

This seminar examines the treatment of slavery in American literature before and after its abolition.

The first semester deals with texts of the antebellum period so as to emphasize how they denounce – or sometimes defend – the institution of slavery. We will study the slave narrative genre through excerpts drawn from the narratives of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Ann Jacobs, as well as critical essays. We will also analyze the treatment of slavery in fiction from the plantation romance to the antislavery novel, with a special focus on Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). We will confront literary representations with political and philosophical essays stemming from the reformist and transcendentalist movements.

The second semester deals the treatment of slavery in postbellum literature. We will reflect on the new issues at stake in the representation of slavery in connection with memory, with the fight against racial discrimination and segregation, and with the place of slavery in the definition of an African-American literary identity.

A detailed bibliography will be handed out at the beginning of each semester.

Course validation : Oral presentation and essay (continuous assessment).