

Between France and Morocco: Abdellah Taïa's Stories of Migration

Tuesdays from 1 PM - 3 PM on March 21, 28, April 4, 11, and 18, 2023

Format: Hybrid (In Person and Online)

Location: Rubel Room at the Poetry Center (1508 E Helen St, Tucson, AZ 85719)

Dr. Denis Provencher (denisprovencher@arizona.edu) is Professor of French and Francophone studies in the Department of French and Italian and is affiliate faculty in Anthropology, Gender and Women's Studies, LGBT Studies, Linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition and Teaching. His publications include over 30 essays and two books: *Queer French: Globalization, Language, and Sexual Citizenship in France* (2007) and *Queer Maghrebi French: Language, Temporalities, Transfiliations* (2017). He also recently co-edited the volume *Abdellah Taïa's Queer Migrations: Non-Places, Affect, Temporalities* (2021).

Course Description: In this course, we explore the life and work of queer novelist Abdellah Taïa who has built his life and literary career between his homeland of Morocco and his adopted France. We study several of his novels, short stories, letters, interviews, and watch his feature-length film *Salvation Army*. The course begins with an examination of his childhood and growing up poor in a large, working-class family on the outskirts of Casablanca. As a queer kid Abdellah develops a fascination for European films broadcast on the television in the family's living room as well as the books and music offered to him by his older brother. This fuels his eventual migration to Europe where he finishes his education, builds his literary career, and lives "openly" as a gay man. Throughout, we examine his migration to France, his trials and tribulations of fitting in as a queer person of color from the former Empire, and questions about what language to write in, where to go after several terrorist attacks in Paris, and the death of his mother and muse. We also meet and discuss all of this with the author who will be in Tucson as part of an international French conference, which all HSP members will be invited to attend.

Reading List:

Novels and other creative work

Taïa, [Another Morocco, Selected Stories](#) (short stories) 2017

Taïa, [Salvation Army](#) (novel) 2009 [2006 French]

Taïa, [An Arab Melancholia](#) (novel) 2012 [2008 French]

Taïa, [Infidels](#) (novel) 2016 [2012 French]

Taïa, [A Country for Dying](#) (novel) 2020 [2015 French]

Taïa, "Tired Men" (short story) 2021 [2021 French]- to be provided by professor

Film

Taïa, [Salvation Army](#) (film) 2013

Articles and Letters

Taïa, ["Homosexuality Explained to My Mother"](#) (letter) 2009

Taïa, ["A Boy to Be Sacrificed."](#) (op-ed) *New York Times* 24 May 2012.

Taïa, [“Is Any Place Safe?”](#) (op-ed) *New York Times* 18 Nov. 2015.

Additional chapters from Denis M. Provencher and Siham Bouamer, eds. [Abdellah Taïa’s *Queer Migrations: Non-Places, Affect, Temporalities*](#) (Lexington Books, 2021).

5- Week Syllabus

March 21: Morocco and Youthful Memories

Taïa, *Another Morocco, Selected Stories* (short stories) 2017

Taïa, *Salvation Army* (novel) 2009 [2006 French]

March 28: Migration to Europe

Taïa, *Salvation Army* (film)

Taïa, *An Arab Melancholia* (novel)

April 4: Selling Oneself to the Former Empire

Taïa, “Homosexuality Explained to My Mother” (letter) 2009

Taïa, “A Boy to Be Sacrificed.” *New York Times* 24 May 2012

Taïa, *Infidels* (novel)

April 11: Belonging or Not

Taïa, “Is Any Place Safe?” *New York Times* 18 Nov. 2015

Taïa, *A Country for Dying* (novel)

April 18: Discussion with the Author

Abdellah Taïa, “Tired Men” (short story) 2021 [2021 French]

Selected pdfs from Provencher and Siham, eds. *Abdellah Taïa’s Queer Migrations*

Conversation with Abdellah Taïa.