

**Black Matters**  
**Spring 2017**

**Essay Assignment #3**  
**Due as a WORD file**

Please read this prompt while keeping in mind our discussions during Prof. Sandy Alexandre's and Prof. John Tirman's visits, and the readings related to their visits.

Consider the use of translation in Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*: As you know very well by now, this novel is written in English, but it also uses Spanish and Kreyòl phrases, often with side-by-side English equivalents or, rather, approximations.

Here's your prompt: *What kinds of relationship does the novel establish between these three languages, and to what ends?* This prompt will require you to practice **close reading as exemplified by Prof. Alexandre during her visit to class**. As an answer to the prompt, generate a **thesis** that is supported by a close reading of 1 to 3 selected passages in the novel where Spanish or Kreyòl or both are used, alongside English.

The overall goal of this essay is to analyze the linguistic choices in *The Farming of Bones* in light of the issues discussed in class and in *all* the readings to date, especially those that relate to language, gender, culture, identity, body, geography, power, etc. **Select at most 3 passages, in a way that gives you an interesting and relatively substantial sample of Kreyòl and Spanish phrases to work with, then provide a coherent analysis of the author's linguistic choices in these passages.** Your essay should teach us something about the author's use of English vs. Kreyòl vs. Spanish and how these choices help convey the morale of her story and give us a deeper understanding of the issues that we've been discussing in class about Master Narratives and related matters. If space permits, feel free to share any insights derived from your own personal biographies, and from your own stories of ancestry and migration.

**Guidelines:**

1. Length of essay as **WORD document: 1,000 words TOTAL, including title and bibliography.**
2. Include your name, the course, the date and a title on the first page. Be sure to double-space, use a normal 12-point font and 1-1.25 inch margins.
3. Number your pages.
4. Quote and analyze specific passages from the chosen text to support your argument.
5. Please support any assertion with specific references to readings, **and make sure that your citations include page numbers and bibliography as necessary.**
6. Cite quotations correctly. Consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. This is the industry standard. Parenthetical quotations are fine for a short paper like this.
7. Refer to the **General Writing Guidelines** handout as you work on your essay.

**It's crucial that you make explicit reference to relevant passages in the class readings—as many passages as are relevant—and that you cite these passages appropriately. Please check the grading rubric which will help you in meeting the expected standards.**

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

24.912 Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies  
Spring 2017

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.