



# FRENCH 465:

## “Purloining” the Francophone African Novel

PROFESSOR QADER • W 3:00-5:50P

Edgar Allen Poe's famous short story "The Purloined Letter" provided the impetus for a fascinating theoretical and philosophical debate in the late 70s between Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and Barbara Johnson. At the center of the polemic were the questions of reading, of teleology, of destiny, and of signification. In other words, the ways in which crime, detecting, the law, and meaning circulate in this story made for a fertile ground for thinking literature and the enterprise of interpretation. The debate is revealing not only because of the ways in which each theorist reads the short story but also how each reads the other's reading and engages with its implications. In this course, we will begin by reading the texts of this polemic together with Poe's story as a kind of portal that will orient us in our own acts of reading as we make our way through a number of works by Francophone writers from Africa. Our readings will by no means be limited by the terms of this debate, nor will we merely apply its conceptual framework to them. Instead, we will allow the debate to provide us with a certain vocabulary as well as the opening questions that we will then pursue through the vicissitudes of each literary works. The organizing principle of the course is therefore not thematic. Rather, the debate about Poe's story will help us attend to literature as a question and reflect on practices of reading.



FRENCH 490/GAMS 400:

## The Avant-Gardes in the World

PROFESSOR BUSH • TH 3:00-5:50P

This seminar offers an introduction to the avant-gardes of the early twentieth century.

Our survey includes canonical European avant-gardes and their international circulation, but also a range of non-European movements: Futurism in Italy and Russia; Berlin Dada; Stridentism in Mexico; Surrealism in France, Japan, and Egypt; Brazilian Anthropofagism; and Négritude. Our focus will be on manifestos, literary works, and critical theories of the avant-garde, but we will also consider the visual arts, with a planned group trip to the Art Institute of Chicago.

