Contemporary French Literature

Michel Houellebecq introduces his latest novel by describing a very particular and singular characteristic of literature compared to art or music: this strong and deep presence of someone's spirit who will accompany the reader for the time of the reading. This course hopes to help the students hear different voices which are familiar to and immediately recognized by French readers: Proust, Céline, Duras, Perec, and Modiano. Through the reading of excerpts and complete novels, we will travel through 20th-century French literature guided by the voices of these writers, by their singular perspective on some of the historical and social events that created the collective memory of French society. We will also go back and forth in time to discover some of today's writers and realize the significant imprint the earlier authors have left on the new literary generation.