

**UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN
ANNOUNCEMENT**

Florida International University
University Graduate School

Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Abstract

Martinican Girlhood across the Atlantic: Between Colonial Education and Decolonial
Citizenship

by

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The end of the 19th century marked a period of profound changes in Martinique, at the time a colony of France. Martinican politicians deployed language about republican values to demand that Martinican girls, given their French citizenship, be granted increased access to education as girls in mainland France did. The aim for these politicians was to use cultural assimilation into France, achieved through colonial schooling, to obtain equal rights for Martinicans. The girls starting school in the early 20th century became the first generation to gain access to higher education and, eventually, the right to vote. This study follows their paths.

The dissertation argues that colonial education deeply influenced Martinican women's decolonial practices of the Interwar and decolonization periods. The curriculum and methodologies of colonial schools taught definitions of womanhood and citizenship that inherently excluded black women. After experiencing such alienation in their childhood, Martinican women dedicated their lives and careers to the modification of colonial schools and the creation of alternative spaces for education, rejecting metropolitan narratives of black womanhood and French universalism. In so doing, they contributed to a Martinican cultural renaissance which formed the base of a new, decolonial citizenship, one that allowed for multiple simultaneous ways of belonging and, thus, could accommodate the complex subjectivity of Martinican girls, women, and Martinican people more generally.

Date: October 30, 2026

Time: 10:00a.m.

Place: SIPA II, 301

Department: History

Major Professor: Dr. Terrence G. Peterson

Zoom: <https://fiu.zoom.us/j/82092544778?pwd=ahJ5SO29kPVfk4q9bmEYGYHxviCyNa.1>