

By receiving the Arthur Felix Broomfield Prize in my second year, I was able to pay for my travel to Martinique, in the French Caribbean. In Martinique, I completed a seven-month work placement for my year abroad, teaching English in two secondary schools. As a joint honours student studying History and French, the possibility to spend this time in Martinique was invaluable given my research interest in Caribbean culture and literature. I was able to deepen my knowledge of Martinican culture through interacting with my students, making useful academic contacts, travelling around the island, and taking part in local customs and celebrations.

During my placement, I worked at two schools: a middle school, *Collège Joseph Lagrosillière*, and a high school, *Lycée Nord Atlantique*. My schools were in Sainte-Marie, a small town on the North Atlantic coast of the island, which is a far less touristic area than the well-trodden South. Throughout my work, I did a variety of activities, from giving presentations about British culture and history, to taking out small groups for concentrated conversation practice. My highlights were running a lunchtime English-club for Year 7 and 8s, where they insisted on playing hangman every week for four months, and then on the opposite end of the spectrum, having engaging discussions about geopolitics with my Year 13s. Both are pictured below.



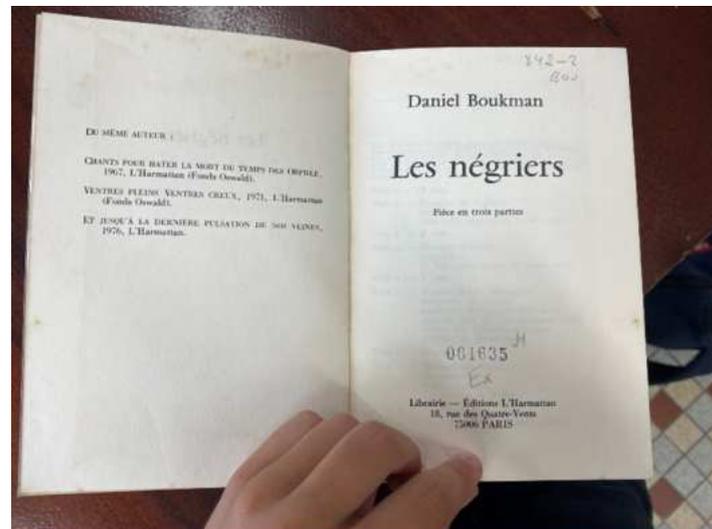
Aside from the time I spent at my schools, I was able to explore Martinique alongside other assistants doing the same program as me. We made the most of the island's natural beauty, going to beaches, waterfalls, and even hiking a gorge. As I lived in a small village on a natural reserve, *La Presqu'île de la Caravelle*, it became a weekly ritual to hike to the lighthouse, from which the view was stunning:



We also got involved in local traditions and customs, particularly during the carnival season, which begins after Christmas and crescendos over five days in February. Christmas, too, had its own set of traditions, my favourite being *Chanté nwel*, the Martinican equivalent of Christmas carols (which are danced to and set to lively, upbeat music). I also loved going to a Christmas market which was full of artisanal products, including madeleines variously made from banana, sweet potato, or even breadfruit flour. For both Christmas and Easter, it was impossible to miss the Martinican staple foods. For Christmas, this was ham with rice and pigeon peas, and seasonal sorrel juice on the side. At Easter, it is traditional to eat crab with sauce and rice; in the weeks leading up to Easter weekend, you could see crab traps all over the beaches and mangroves.



Lastly, I was certainly academically inspired by Martinique's history. I visited distilleries (old plantations) and Martinique's departmental library, the *Bibliothèque Schoelcher*. It was here that I found Daniel Boukman's play, *Les Négriers*, which I went on to write an article about for a student-led Oxford Journal, *Madras*. My key focus here was the interaction between literature and history, an area I am interested in further pursuing once I am back in Oxford.



Although the seven months also came with challenges—particularly those concerning living completely alone for the first time and not having a car while public transport was a challenge—my time in Martinique was truly life-changing. The vast richness of all my experiences in Martinique would not have been possible without the Arthur Felix Broomfield Prize and Pembroke College, to whom I am therefore incredibly grateful.