History of the Caribbean
Rutgers University Newark
Spring 2024
21:510:20

Section 63: Thursdays 6:00 – 9:00 in Hill Hall 210

Instructor: Lance C. Thurner
lancet@rutgers.edu

Course Description: This course surveys over five centuries of Caribbean history from just before Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas in 1492 until the end of the 20th century. The Caribbean is an incredibly complex region, with a unique history that must be understood in its own terms. Yet the Caribbean also played a pivotal role in world history, including the distribution of world human and non-human populations; the development of imperialism and slavery; the industrial revolution; the transformation of the USA into an imperial power; and anti-colonial, anti-racist, and feminist movements. As we survey Caribbean history within these wider contexts, our emphasis will be on the development of colonialism and slavery, and the legacy of that history as Caribbean colonies and nations struggled for freedom, equality, and prosperity. Major themes will include:

- plantation slavery, slave resistance, and emancipation
- the history of racism and racial inequality
- intersections of gender inequality and other forms of unequal power
- women’s experience through imperialism and independence
- US imperialism and influence in the region
- The struggle to build post-colonial nations

Additionally, this course teaches students how scholars create knowledge about the past, how to interpret a wide array of historical sources, how to evaluate historical interpretations, and how and why the past matters in the present.

Learning Objectives
Students will emerge from this course with the ability to…

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the general contours of Caribbean history, with special attention to:
   a. The Spanish conquest and inter-imperial competition
   b. How slavery developed, how it worked, and what was unique about slavery in the western hemisphere
   c. How ideas and cultural frameworks sustained European imperialism
   d. How diverse elements of the population resisted and accommodated imperial rule
   e. What independence meant, and didn’t mean, for different peoples in the Caribbean
   f. How diverse actors fought for their vision for a future society
   g. The causes and nature of US imperial power in the region
2. Demonstrate understanding of how historical knowledge is created and evaluated, including:
   a. How historians interpret historical data (i.e., primary sources):
      i. How to evaluate the value and utility of primary historical sources
      ii. How to situate historical evidence within its historical context
      iii. How to recognize the limitations of particular historical interpretations and sources
      iv. How to use situational and context clues to develop an interpretation of a source
   b. How and why historical scholarship is dynamic and always subject to revision
      i. How new sources transform historical interpretations
      ii. How and why historians raise new research questions
      iii. How scholars build upon and revise prior historical interpretations
   c. How to read and evaluate different historical interpretations (i.e., secondary sources)
      i. How to compare historical interpretations
      ii. How to evaluate the merits of historical interpretations
      iii. How to use historical knowledge to develop new questions about the past

3. Demonstrate awareness of how and why historical knowledge matters in the present, including:
   a. How historical knowledge is part of problem solving
   b. How historians use contemporary events, problems, and interests to reinterpret the past
   c. How and why historical interpretation is inherently politically salient and controversial

Books

There are no books to buy for this course. All readings and materials will be provided through Canvas or open and free links on the internet.

Office Hours, Communication, and Success

My Office Hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4 to 5pm, Conklin 210a. Students can also schedule a virtual appointment via my website here: https://www.statesofbelonging.org/office-hours/

Contacting me by email: Email is the best way to get a hold of me. I will always get back to you. However, I receive dozens of emails a day and it is always possible that yours got lost in the shuffle, so if you haven’t heard from me in two business days, please send me a gentle reminder -- I’ll be very appreciative of it. I generally am not reachable on the weekends.

I care about the success of each student. If you have questions about the course material, questions about the subject more broadly, concerns to discuss, accommodations you need, or thoughts you want to share, please email me or come talk to me.

I am committed to creating a learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and valued as a source of strength. I request that all students work with me to create a class culture based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. As a class we will approach all discussions with respect and civility. Disagreements and debates in academic discourse are expected and welcome, but personal attacks are never OK, and will not be tolerated. I strive to ensure an open and welcoming
classroom for all students. If I ever miss the mark, please don’t hesitate to come and talk to me. We are all learning together.

I have great respect for students who are balancing their pursuit of education with the responsibilities of caring for and supporting themselves and family members. If you run into challenges that require you to miss a class or assignment, or if your caregiving responsibilities are interfering with your ability to engage in remote learning, please contact me. Together, we’ll find a way for you succeed in this course.

Grading
Grades will be based on the following (100 points total):

1) Attendance and Participation (20 pts.)
   Attendance: Weekly attendance and participation is necessary. A great deal of the work for this class will be happening inside the classroom. If you do not anticipate being able to attend nearly all class periods, you should not enroll in this course. Recognized grounds for an excused absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions. I do not require documentation, but please inform me if some condition prevents you from attending and participating. Any student who misses 4 or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

2) Map Quiz (5 points)
3) Three Reading Responses (10 points each)
4) Two Source Interpretation Worksheets (10 points each)
5) Final Paper (20 points)
6) Timeliness of Assignments (5 pts.)
   All students begin the semester with these points; however, repeatedly late assignments will erode these points resulting in a lower overall semester grade.

Final grades will be distributed according to the Rutgers grade scale: A, B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, F. Plus grades will be awarded for excellent attendance and participation.

Etiquette, Plagiarism, and Technology
Students will be expected to comply with the History Department’s Classroom Etiquette Policy (see http://history.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/academicpolicies). Cell phones must be switched off and meals must be eaten before the beginning of class. Electronic devices may not be used for purposes unrelated to the class.

Plagiarism: As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/
You must include the following Rutgers Honor Code Pledge on all examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment). (Name) (Signature – typing your name is fine) (Date)”.

**Technology:** This course should require only a web browser, a word processing program, and reliable internet access. Our collaborative project, States of Belonging, works best if accessed through a computer, although many students have also used phones and tablets. If for any reason you are unable to access the technology you need to participate in the course, please let me know ASAP and we will find a way to work around the issue.

For technical issues, also see
RU-N “Technology LaunchPad” [https://runit.rutgers.edu/technology-launch-pad/](https://runit.rutgers.edu/technology-launch-pad/)

OIT-Newark Help Desk: [https://runit.rutgers.edu/hd/](https://runit.rutgers.edu/hd/)

**Accommodation and Support Statement**

EVERYBODY requires support to succeed in college. Some of that support comes from friends and family members, but some of the support you need can be provided by the university. I highly recommend that you utilize the services available to you. I took advantage of many such services during my college education, and they were greatly beneficial.

–Prof. Thurner

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

**For Individuals with Disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [ods.rutgers.edu](http://ods.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Individuals who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Absence Verification:** The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7](#) for
information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.
Learning Resources:

- Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)
  Room 140, Bradley Hall
  (973) 353-5608
  https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center

- Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops)
  Room 126, Conklin Hall
  (973) 353-5847
  nwc@rutgers.edu
  https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center

Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS: DUE SATURDAY AT MIDNIGHT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-Jan</td>
<td>Intro to the Course</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Student Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-Jan</td>
<td>Conquest, Genocide, and Colonization</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Map Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-Feb</td>
<td>Slavery</td>
<td>Walter Johnson, Soul By Soul</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-Feb</td>
<td>Women and Gender in Conquest and Slavery</td>
<td>Marisa Fuentes, Dispossessed Lives</td>
<td>Reading Response 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-Feb</td>
<td>Slave Resistance and the Question of Freedom</td>
<td>Podcast: Vincent Brown, Tacky's Revolt</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>22-Feb</td>
<td>Haitian Revolution</td>
<td>Michel Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Feb 29</td>
<td>Women, Indentured Servitude and Asian Laborers</td>
<td>Gaiutra Bahadur, Coolie Woman</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>7-Mar</td>
<td>Family Land and Emancipation</td>
<td>Dubois &amp; Turits, Freedom Roots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>21-Mar</td>
<td>Race and Independence</td>
<td>Excerpts from Ada Ferrer and Louis Perez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>28-Mar</td>
<td>Modernity, Science, and Nation in Cuba</td>
<td>Alejandra Bronfman, Measures of Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>4-Apr</td>
<td>US imperialism in the Early 20th century</td>
<td>Primary Sources on the US Occupations of Hati and the Dominican Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>11-Apr</td>
<td>Decolonization and Globalization</td>
<td>Aimé Césaire, Notebook of a Return to the Native Land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>18-Apr</td>
<td>The Cuban Revolution</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>25-Apr</td>
<td>Haiti and the DR During the Cold War</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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