

Introduction to Caribbean History

Course Overview and Objectives

The eminent anthropologist and historian of slavery Sidney Mintz once called the Caribbean the “crucible of modernity.” From the oppression of plantation slavery to the anarchic criminality of the pirates, from the realism of a Fidel Castro to the idealism of Bob Marley, this course follows Mintz’s observation through 500 years of Caribbean history. Through your study of political, economic, social, and cultural forces, this course will provide you with an introduction to the major themes of the Caribbean past: discovery and conquest, colonialism and revolution, slavery and emancipation, nationalism and capitalism, migration and globalism.

With Mintz’s observation in mind and through an overview of these major events and themes, this course hopes to provide you with both an understanding of the forces that formed the particular history of Caribbean, as well as an understanding of the key role that the history of the Caribbean played in the formation of both European and American modernity. The experiences of Caribbean history provide an important object lesson for our own experience of the globalizing world.

Learning Outcomes

Through close reading, class discussion, and regular writing assignments, students will come away from this class having learned:

- Critical reading skills
- How to read primary sources
- How to contextualize and historicize documents
- How to write critically about both primary and secondary sources
- How to develop and defend an original argument

In addition to these broad critical skills, students will also be introduced to the history and culture of the Caribbean basin.

Required Texts

- Stephan Palmié and Francisco Scarano, eds., *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples* (University of Chicago Press – 978-0226645087) (**TCH**)
- Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, eds., *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804* (Bedford-St. Martin - 978-0312415013)
- Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World* (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux - 978-0374530112)
- Jamaica Kincaid, *Autobiography of My Mother*
- Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Penguin – 978-1594483295)

Assignments

All assignments must be turned in through dropbox. Please go to dropbox and check out how it works. The dropbox is designed to lock after a certain point, meaning that you will not be able to submit late assignments; therefore it is vital that you submit all your written work on time. You will notice that I have built into the assignments and discussion “freebies,” meaning that you can miss a couple assignments without being penalized. Please consult the Discussion Assignments and Primary Source Assignments instructions for further information.

- Primary Document Analyses (5): 200 points
- Class Discussion (6): 200 points
- Three Papers (3): 600 points
- Total for all assignments: 1000 points

*** Reading Schedule and Syllabus ***

Module One (07/10-07/13): The Pre-Encounter Caribbean & European Conquest

- Required Readings:
 - L. Antonio Curet, “The Earliest Settlers” in *TCH*, pgs. 53-68
 - Reinaldo Funes Monzote, “The Columbian Moment: Politics, Ideology, and Biohistory” in *TCH*, pgs. 83-96
 - Lynne Guitart, “Negotiations of Conquest” in *TCH*, pgs. 115-130
- Primary Readings:
 - Ramon Pané, “Account of the Indies” – online
 - Christopher Columbus – “Logbooks” – online

Module Two (07/13 – 07/16): Colonization: British, French and Dutch Colonies in the New World & The Middle Passage: Slavery and Commerce

- Required Readings:
 - Philip Boucher, “The French and Dutch Caribbean, 1600-1800” in *TCH*, pgs. 217-230
 - Hilary Beckles, “Servants and Slaves during the 17th C. Sugar Revolution” in *TCH*, pgs. 205-216
 - Carrington and Noel, “Slaves and Tropical Commodities: The Caribbean in the South Atlantic System” in *TCH*, pgs. 231-242
- Primary Reading:
 - Olaudah Equiano, “The Interesting Narrative” – online
 - Start reading Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*

Module Three (07/17 – 07/20): From Plantation to Revolution

- Required Readings:
 - Alison Games, “The Atlantic Framework of 17th Century Colonization” in *TCH*, pgs. 191-204
 - Philip Morgan, “Slave Cultures: Systems of Domination and Forms of Resistance” in *TCH*, pgs. 245-260
- Primary Reading:
 - Mary Prince, “The Life of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave” – online

Module Four (07/20 – 07/23): Revolution on Saint-Domingue

- Required Readings:
 - Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, eds., *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean* – whole book
- Primary Reading:
 - Primary documents from Dubois and Garrigus, eds., *Slave Revolution*
 - *Le Code Noir* – online

Module Five (07/24 – 07/27): Toussaint Louverture and Haiti

- Required Readings:
 - Laurent Dubois, “The Haitian Revolution” in *TCH*, pgs. 273-288
- Primary Readings:
 - Toussaint Louverture, “Autobiography” – online
 - Toussaint Louverture, “Final Proclamation” – online

- Finish reading Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*

***Assignment: Paper #1 due (July 30 before 10pm)**

Module Six (07/27 – 07/30)

- Required Readings:
 - Diana Paton, “The Abolition of Slavery in the Non-Hispanic Caribbean” in *TCH*, pgs. 289-302;
 - Christopher Schmidt-Novara, “A Second Slavery? The 19th Century Sugar Revolutions in Cuba and Puerto Rico” in *TCH*, pgs. 333-346
- Primary Readings:
 - Start reading Kincaid, *Autobiography of My Mother*

Module Seven (07/31 – 08/03): The Post-Emancipation Caribbean

- Required Readings:
 - Aisha Khan, “Africa, Europe and Asia in the Making of the 20th Century Caribbean” in *TCH*, pgs. 399-416
 - Fernandez Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert, “Haitian Vodou” in *CRC*, pgs. 116-154 (available for download online)
- Primary Film:
 - Watch Maya Deren’s “Divine Horsemen” – link available online

Module Eight (08/03 – 08/06): Is There a Caribbean Nation?

- Required Readings:
 - O. Nigel Bolland, “Labor Protests, Rebellions and the Rise of Nationalism during Depression and War” in *TCH*, pgs. 459-474
 - Anne Macpherson, “Toward Decolonization: Impulses, Processes and Consequences since the 1930s” in *TCH*, pgs. 475-490
- Primary Reading:
 - Jose Martí, “Our America” – online
 - Jose Martí, “My Race” – online
 - Finish reading Kincaid, *Autobiography of My Mother*

Module Nine (08/07 – 08/10): A Second Migration

- Readings:
 - Christine Du Bois, “Caribbean Migrations and Diasporas” in *TCH*, pgs. 583-596.
 - Start reading Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*
- Primary Readings:
 - Sam Selvon, “Lonely Londoners” – online
 - Lord Kitchener, “London is the Place for Me” – link online
 - The Specials, “Ghost Town” – link online

Module Ten (08/10 – 08/13): Cultural and Political Nationalism

- Readings:
 - Fernandez Olmos & Paravisini-Gebert, “Rastafarianism” – online
- Primary Readings:
 - Aimé Césaire, “Discourse on Colonialism” – online
 - Burning Spear, “Marcus Garvey” – link online
 - Exuma, “Mama Loi, Papa Loi” – link online
 - Finish reading Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

***Assignment: Paper #3 due (August 16 before 10pm)**

Module Eleven (08/14 – 08/16): The Perils of a Small Place

- Required Readings:
 - Robert Goddard, “Tourism, Drugs, Offshore Finance, and the Perils of Neoliberal Development,” in *TCH*, pgs. 571-582
- Primary Materials:
 - Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* – online
 - Visit the webpages for Sandals Jamaica Resorts and Carnival Cruise lines – links online

Some Special Instructions for Online Learning

For many of you, this will be a new experience; others of you have probably already taken an online course. Regardless, these are just a few remarks to get you oriented.

FIRST: the best way to reach me if you have a question is either through the online forum I established for you to ask questions or to email me directly at: amdaily@memphis.edu. I do not check nor respond to my Rutgers email address.

SECOND: please take some time to head over to your Group Discussion Boards and introduce yourself to your groups. Since we have such a large class, I have decided to split the Class Discussion into smaller groups of 6-7 students. So we will not be using the Discussion Board question (other than to ask me questions), and will be concentrating on the Group Boards. Otherwise, I figured that discussion would become too unwieldy for everyone to keep up.

THIRD: please make sure that you take some time to browse through the website thoroughly, and that you carefully read all the assignments and familiarize yourself with the architecture of the course. Our course is organized around **11 Modules**, which can be found in the **Course Documents** section of Blackboard. There you will find an introduction to the module's material, as well as a selection of primary sources, questions, and other materials. The Module is our **basic unit of organization** and should be your starting point for each course unit. I know there will be a bit of confusion in the first couple of days, but please make sure you are up to speed as quickly as possible. With two modules per week, and six weeks in the term, this course will move quickly and you could be left behind just as quickly. Orient yourself with the course and the software, the expectations and assignments, immediately.

FOURTH: Since we will not be meeting in class, your grade will hinge upon your ability to keep up with the reading, engage and discuss it, write about it analytically, and finally, write carefully about the three novels we are reading. There are no exams, no quizzes, no extra credit, etc., only the discussion that you conduct together in groups, the primary source responses you write each week, and the three short essays you write for me.

FIFTH: please make sure that you review the school's policy on Academic Integrity and Honesty. Plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class and will be dealt with harshly. Please consult the terms of Rutgers policy here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity>

SIXTH: please enjoy our experience – and our experiment – in online learning. Try to have some fun with it, try to harness the fantastic power of the internet to enhance your learning experience and that of your peers, without forgetting that there is still value in the time-honored practice of reading carefully and writing intelligently.

FINALLY: do not hesitate to contact me with questions. Good luck!