TOPICS IN BLACK STUDIES: INTRO TO CARIBBEAN STUDIES

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Conklin, Room 304

Course Information: Mondays 6pm-9pm Conklin – 348
AAAS 21:014:303:60
Fall 2015

Department of African American and African Studies
Newark Campus - Rutgers University
Course Description

The Caribbean – Crossroads of the World – is more than a tropical region filled with palm trees, exotic people and resorts. This is a discussion-based interactive course where you will explore the history of the Caribbean, its geography, literary and cultural productions (music/film/food/religion), and its intellectual tradition. Together, we will reflect on major issues including: colonialism; economic intra and interdependence; culture and language; regional, national and ethnic identity; and independence. We will also connect the events of the past to current events to help explain the political, social and economic status of the countries of the Caribbean and their relationship to and with the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Emphasis will be given to understanding contributions of Caribbean Studies to the exploration of contemporary issues in our interconnected world.

Photo courtesy of Ocean Trader
http://oceantrader.co/emerging-caribbean-art/#comments
Course Learning Goals

By the end of the semester students will:

- Identify and analyze the relevance of major figures, events and ideas that have shaped Caribbean history, society and culture.

- Identify Caribbean nations on a map, differentiate according to colonial heritage and describe the historical impact of colonialism on its socio-economic and political status.

- Improve research and critical thinking skills, as applied to Caribbean Studies, through engagement with interdisciplinary scholarship and analysis of primary sources.

- Develop writing and presentation skills through the production of analytical and reflective essays and oral presentations in an academic setting.

- Employ and demonstrate the necessary skill sets enabling you to interact effectively in a team environment.
Course Grade Breakdown

Article Submission – Four articles on current events from the region

Reflections - Your thoughts on the readings/films

Class Participation – Consistent, ON-TIME, attendance and thoughtful contributions to in-class discussions.

Midterm - In-class exam will consist of short answer and multiple choice questions.

Presentation - A country presentation.

Final Exam - Short answer questions, country identifications and multiple choice questions
Grading

If you want to earn an “A” in the course: be alert during lectures and discussions; do not use electronics; make comments or ask questions that demonstrate your serious engagement with the course; prepare well for the midterm and final; and organize your submissions with enough time to ensure that they contain sufficient course references, clear, cogent and concise writing and impeccable grammar. Presentations, assignments, and papers will be evaluated for clarity of expression, and quality of presentation—not only content.

Also, make arrangements to meet with me if you have a question(s) that is not or cannot be covered during class because of time limits or its overall complexity. Doing this does not guarantee any particular grade, but it is my best general advice. I will be happy to give more recommendations, privately and during class, throughout the semester.

An “A” course grade equals excellent performance, the “B” range indicates very good/good performance, the “C” range indicates regular or average performance, the “D” range indicates poor performance and the “F” range indicates inconsistent and unsatisfactory work performance.

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<th>GRADE</th>
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<td>A</td>
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Exams

• Unless there is an exceptional emergency, tragedy or conflict, all of which must be properly documented, there will be no make-ups for exams and no extensions for assignments.

• If you have an major life event that conflicts with the date of the midterm or another final exam that conflicts with our final, you should tell me at least TWO WEEKS before the date of the exam to see if we can arrange a work around.

• Failure to do so will result in losing the opportunity to take the exam at any other time.

• If at all possible, I encourage you to form study groups. Research has shown that when students study together, their examination scores improve.
Class Participation and Attendance Policy

This course is designed to be an interactive learning experience. Discussion of assigned readings/films comprises a significant portion of every student’s final grade. Completing the required reading before class (to enable informed participation) is essential. Participation grades are calculated from both the quality and quantity of your classroom participation. You have a significant role to play in shaping the dynamics of each class. You will be placed into teams of three-to-five to enhance your learning experience and build on each other’s strengths. Because of the nature of the class design, you should make every effort to attend class. Final grades will be lowered because of a lack of participation or participation that does not reflect a proper engagement with the material. Students are encouraged to ask me how you are doing in discussion and how you can improve your class participation.

If you must miss a class, you are responsible for completing any in-class assignment for that day and for obtaining any important class-related information from that day. You will be held responsible for any agreement or change to the course announced or decided in class if they are absent.

Also, the final grade will be lowered two points for each unexcused absence beyond the initial two. Three late arrivals will count as an absence. The improper use of technology in the classroom will count as an absence and a student can be dismissed from class if the behavior continues. Four or more unexcused absences will drop your final course grade by one letter grade. Please note that sending an email stating that you cannot attend the class does not constitute an excuse. I expect you to inform me about an absence in person before or immediately after the absence takes place. Documentation will be required to excuse absences.

If you are going to miss a class, within 24 hours of your absence you are required to use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. Please keep in mind that using the reporting system does not mean that your absence is automatically considered “excused.” If you miss a class or exam for religious reasons, please consult http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/holidays1112.htm
Article Submissions

• You are responsible for posting four (4) Caribbean region-related current event reviews for this course. See grading rubric on Blackboard.

• Articles should be posted in BOTH the discussion and assignment tabs.

• These articles must discuss a major development either in the Caribbean region, or in a specific Caribbean country and should cover one of the following areas: environment/climate; politics; education; culinary arts, economics; literature; visual or performing arts; culture; media; history; health/disease; law/criminal justice; or women/children.

• Articles must be less than 30 days old and no two articles posted should discuss the same event. You will need to read what your classmates have posted, prior to your posting, to avoid a double-post on the same topic.

• Provide a one-page submission which includes: a synopsis of the article, why you chose the article, and why this article/event is relevant to our coursework, the region and/or the world.

• Post the first two articles prior to the midterm. Post the second two articles after the midterm. LAST DATE TO POST IS DECEMBER 1, 2015.
Article Submission Graphic

Identify Article & Provide Synopsis

Articulate Why You Chose the Article

Articulate Why Article is Relevant to Course & Implications to Region
Country Presentation

• For this presentation, choose a country from the region. Each presentation must: identify national dish, flag color choice, main export(s), current socio-economic/political status, ethnicity/demography, language(s) spoken, one independence/important leader, main tourist attraction(s) and two characteristics unique to this nation.

• Use creativity to present the information to your classmates, including song/dance demonstrations, music (ex: singing of the national anthem), wearing traditional attire, performing a traditional dance, food demonstration, poetry readings, etc. I strongly discourage presentations that rely only on PowerPoint or Prezi slides. Be creative. See grading rubric on Blackboard.

Bahamas, Barbados, Montserrat, Anguilla, Turks & Caicos, Cayman, St Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, St Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, British Virgin Islands (BVI), U.S. Virgin Islands (St Croix, St John, St Thomas), French Guiana, Guyana
Required Texts

  Isbn: 978-0394715025

- Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press.
  Isbn: 978-0802143006

  Isbn: 0374527075
Reading Assignments

Students must do the reading in advance of the class session. Additional readings will also be posted on Blackboard. To access the readings, log in with your "NetID" and click on "resources." I rely heavily on Sakai to communicate with the class, so I encourage you to check the site daily. If you do not get the Blackboard announcements, please alert me as soon as possible.
Reading Reflections

• The purpose of these reflections is to engender an informed class discussion and to ensure that you comprehend the assigned materials. For the weekly assigned reading, you must complete a typed reading reflection and submit in the assignment tab using the Blackboard Web site by 12 Noon on the day the assignment is due. Please bring a copy to class for reference/discussion. See grading rubric on Blackboard.

• The report must be type-written in good Standard American English. I will offer suggestions to improve your writing. Give me your best product so my comments will be useful. Responses should be brief – no more than two pages. For each reading, you should:

- Single spaced
- Place your full name, the name of the course, the assignment title, and the date of submission at the top of the first page. Clearly identify the author(s) and title(s) of the readings at the top;

- Double-spaced
- Write your version of the authors’ main message, or thesis, OR find a good quote from the reading that articulates the author’s main point. If you do the latter, you must reproduce the quote in your response, with page number.

- Write ONE (or TWO) key points from the reading that you think is worth discussing in class, or that you would like to remember from this reading.

- Briefly state, IN ESSAY FORMAT, what you thought of the reading. Did you like or dislike it? Why? Why not? Try to say more than that "I liked this reading because it was interesting." You might admire the style of writing or argumentation; you might dislike the author’s underlying assumptions or biases; you might have been energized, stimulated, or angered, by the subject-matter or argument. Let yourself REFLECT on why these readings/films do/do not help your understanding of the Caribbean, then write.

- Most important, include references/citations from previous readings and class discussions. These reflections represent a continuation of knowledge.

• The following is a sample format to construct a paper:

- Introductory paragraph: this paragraph should briefly explain to the reader the content of your essay. DO NOT PROVIDE DESCRIPTION OF THE THEME. Instead, this paragraph should include a type of mini-outline of the paper that tells the reader what the essay is about, which includes the thesis. For example, you can announce your intentions as such; "The purpose of this essay is to..." This paragraph is where you include a thesis statement (an argument that you are presenting): "I analyze the chapters, articles, film by exploring..."; "I argue that...."

- In the second paragraph you should consider: What significant issues were explored? What kinds of topics did the authors, film, and course materials investigate? What social changes were taking place? In what way was the Caribbean impacted? For example, "The author(s) investigates, explores, and/or documents this topic by.... "This impacted the Caribbean or particular country in XXX ways because YYY which resulted in BBB or has ramifications for DDD."

- The third (and fourth paragraph) should begin your critical analysis component. Here is where you discuss why you agree or disagree with the author(s). Use evidence from this course or other courses and/or personal experience to prove your points(s). This paragraph(s) is about INTERPRETING the theme - you make a point about it and then use supporting evidence to prove it.

- Conclusion: In this paragraph, you should: include a summary of the main points from the 2-4 paragraphs, connect this submission with previous themes discussed and provide a final statement that demonstrates your thoughts.

- I will grade reading responses with an A, B, or C and together, this will comprise 15 percent of your final grade. An "A" response shows that you read all the assigned readings and that you took care in writing down your thoughts (e.g., no spelling or typographical errors; good grammar). "B" and "C" grades fall short of these criteria. "F" means that you did not complete the assignment as instructed. Due to the nature of the assignment (and the brevity of the course), NO LATE RESPONSES WILL BE ACCEPTED. I expect all students to receive an "A" for this portion of the course. By the end of the course, every student should have submitted THREE reading responses.

- **The Writing Center (Conklin Room 126) offers writing help if needed. Please see the attached link http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter**
Reading Reflection Graphic

Identify Main Argument(s) or Interesting Quote(s)

Articulate your key point(s)

Point A
- Provide Analysis & Evidence

Point B
- Provide Analysis & Evidence

Point C (if necessary)
- Provide Analysis & Evidence

Conclusion = summary + final thought(s)
Policy on Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Papers are to be done on a strictly individual basis unless it is otherwise indicated. They must be original, not recycled from another class, the Internet, or another student. All references must be properly documented, including Internet sources. No matter how much effort is put in the course, a failure to comply with any of these regulations will result on a failed grade for the paper or for the course.

- Any student who is found to be plagiarizing her/his work will be held accountable. Please refer to the Student Judicial Affairs Web site (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/definitions.shtml) for the Academic Integrity Policy and the Code of Student Conduct, including the definition of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote.

Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: 'to paraphrase Plato's comment...' and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference.

A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.

Keep Calm and Use your own Brain
E-mail Policy

• Unless I state otherwise, ONLY e-mail me for an urgent issue or emergency.

• You must come prepared to ask questions about the requirements or the material in class. Also, it is your responsibility to follow up about any email that you send to me, either before or after class.

• When you write emails, be formal and respectful. Do not assume that I, or any of your peers, will read and reply your email immediately. You should follow up in person if you do not receive a response from me.

• Finally, make sure that you follow proper “netiquette” when writing emails (see more on Blackboard). My email address is hyacinth.miller@rutgers.edu
Students With Disabilities

• Students requesting special consideration, such as extra test time, or classroom accommodations, must first register with the Office of Disability Services. Kate Torres, Coordinator – Newark Campus, is located in the Paul Robeson Campus Center - Suite 352. Her phone number is 973-353-5300 and her email at kate.torres@rutgers.edu

• Upon review of the individual case, this Office generates a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) which you must forward to me if requesting special consideration.

• The processing time may take up to 30 days and it is your responsibility to take care of this. LOA’s must be renewed every semester.
Classroom Etiquette

- We meet in classrooms to discuss ideas and learn from each other. I will start class on time and expect you to arrive to class on time. I make important announcements at the beginning of class as well as take attendance.

- You will be expected to present to the class, to comment on the comments of others, and contribute to class discussions as appropriate. For some people, that may mean pushing yourself to talk more than feels instinctively comfortable, for others it may mean holding yourself back. If participation becomes consistently unbalanced, I will do my best to encourage full class engagement.

- You should respect each other and our academic safe space. Your focus should remain on the lecture and/or discussion.

- Do not talk or laugh while someone else is expressing an opinion. If you agree or disagree with a comment, raise your hand and I will allow you to respond, respectfully.

- There should be no eating during class.

- No hats allowed during class unless for religious purposes.

- ANY LAPTOPS OR TABLETS USED IN THE CLASS SHOULD ONLY BE FOR COURSE MATERIALS. Observed abuse of this policy will be reflected in your final course grade.

- Please remember to TURN OFF/SILENCE your cell phone.
Student Academic Support

• If you find, at any time during the semester, that you begin to struggle academically in this, or other courses, I encourage you to visit/make an appointment with the Rutgers Learning Centers.

• They provide peer-led academic support services designed to help you achieve maximum success.

• Access this link for more information
  http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc
Student Instructional Rating Survey

• The Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS) is a University-wide survey of students for their comments about their classroom experiences that semester.

• Instructors, departments, schools and the University use the results to strengthen and improve teaching instruction.

• SIRS is conducted toward the end of every semester by the Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research. Access this link for more information - http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/sirs/

• When you get the email notification, please complete the survey. Your input and responses will help me to improve this course.
Extra Credit Opportunities

• There may be opportunities to earn extra credit, which would most likely involve attending pre-approved Caribbean-related events, conducting a film review, etc. either on or off-campus.

• To get credit, you: attend, or participate in the activity and type a one-page summary to include a synopsis of the event and how the event relates to the course. Then submit the document in the Assignments tab under extra credit.

• I will determine the amount of extra-credit points possibly earned by each assignment at the end of the semester. I encourage everyone to take advantage of extra-credit assignments.

• You are only allowed to submit three extra credit assignments.

• All extra credit assignments must be submitted by December 1, 2015.
Extra Credit Graphic

- Attend/Participate in Activity
- Provide Synopsis of Activity
- Articulate Why This Activity Relevant
AAAS Social Networking

Join us on Facebook –
Department of African American and African Studies
Course Themes

• History and Independence
• Literature and Culture
• Tourism and the Economy
• Independence and Sovereignty
• Migration and the Diaspora
Weekly Course Schedule
Week 1 – September 8
Rules, requirements and overview of the course

**Learning Objective:** To learn the history of the Caribbean (BT: Comprehension/Analysis)

- Welcome to Caribbean Studies

  
  
  - Eric Williams. *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969*. Chapters 1-3

- How to write a reading response
Week 2 – September 14
Caribbean Revolution and Resistance – Maroons
Reading Response Due

Learning Objective: To learn about the Maroons of Jamaica and Suriname and identify and examine the circumstances which enabled their development (BT: Comprehension/Analysis/Evaluation)

  - [http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/maroon/educational_guide/63.htm](http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/maroon/educational_guide/63.htm);
  - [http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/maroon/educational_guide/46.htm](http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/maroon/educational_guide/46.htm);
  - [http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/maroon/educational_guide/23.htm](http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/maroon/educational_guide/23.htm)

- Review of Maroons
  - Eric Williams. *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969.* Chapter 12

- Background on Haiti – (watch HBO Vice clip if you can)
Week 3 – September 21
Caribbean Revolution and Independence - Ayiti/Haiti

Learning Objective: To learn about the Haitian Revolution and identify and examine the circumstances which enabled the development of independent Haiti (BT: Comprehension/Analysis/Evaluation)

- Film, Égalité For All: Toussaint L’Ouverture and The Haitian Revolution, DVD (Noland Walker, 2009).

- Eric Williams. *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969*. Chapters 15 and 16

Week 4 – September 28
Caribbean Racial Formations – Reading Response Due

Learning Objective: To learn about racial and identity formation in the region (BT: Comprehension/Evaluation)

• Review of Maroons/Haiti

• Film, Film, Sugar Cane Alley (Black Shack Alley) Rue Cases Nègres, DVD (France: Euzhan Palcy, 1983).

• Frantz Fanon
  ❖ Black Skin, White Masks. Introduction & chapter 1, 2
  ❖ Black Skin, White Masks. Chapters 5 and conclusion.

• Background on Martinique
Week 5 – October 5
Puerto Rico – Quasi – Independent Nation

**Learning Objective:** To learn about the ways that the Caribbean has sought to establish an identity (BT: Comprehension/Evaluation)

- Review Haiti/Maroons/Race

- Puerto Rico background/review


- [http://fusion.net/story/159325/the-tragedy-of-puerto-rico-americas-very-own-greece/#mail-share](http://fusion.net/story/159325/the-tragedy-of-puerto-rico-americas-very-own-greece/#mail-share)
Learning Objective: To learn about the ways that the Caribbean has sought to establish an identity (BT: Comprehension/Evaluation)


• Dutch island nation background/review

• Group presentation
Week 7 - October 19

- Multiple-Choice Midterm

- Film, *Life And Debt*, DVD (UK: Stephanie Black, 2001)

- Antigua & Jamaica background/review
Week 8 – October 26
Caribbean Cultural Production – Post Colonial Commentary
Reading Response Due

Learning Objective: To learn about the emergence of Caribbean literature, reflections and social commentary on colonialism/To examine the economic behavior of Caribbean economies post-independence (BT: Comprehension/Analysis)


- International Monetary Fund - Western Hemisphere Department, Caribbean Small States: Challenges of High Debt and Low Growth, 2013.


- Caricom Reparations Commission –
Learning Objective: To analyze the ways in which the Caribbean as a tourism haven contributes/detracts from its identity (BT: Comprehension/Analysis/Evaluation)

- Film, *Heading South ("Vers Le Sud")*, DVD (France: Laurent Cantet, 2005).


Week 10 – November 9
Caribbean Cultural Productions - Performing Arts & Identity
Trinidad & Tobago, Belize, Yurumein/Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Reading Response Due

Learning Objective: To examine the Caribbean’s cultural productions and its relationship to identity

- Peter Manuel, Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae (Introduction, 1-18 and Ch. 10, 271-90)

- Film, “Chutney in Yuh Soca: A Multicultural Mix” (Trinidad: Karen Martinez, 1993) (Available online)

- Film, “Kaiso for July 27: (1990 Attempted Coup in Trinidad and Tobago)” (Trinidad: Karen Martinez) (Available online)

- Yurumein

- Review types of Caribbean music
Week 11 – November 16 Political Self-Determination – Cuba

- **Learning Objective:** To analyze the ways that the Caribbean has sought to delink itself from imperialism and economic dependence (BT: Analysis/Evaluation/Comprehension/Recall)

- Film, *90 Miles*, DVD (USA: Juan Carlos Zaldívar, 2001) (Available online)


- Eric Williams. *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969*. Chapter 28

- Article on recent developments and discussion on Cuba/US relations

- Review Cuba
Learning Objective: To examine the ways that the Caribbean has sought to establish a political and socio-economic self-identity (BT: Analysis/Evaluation/Comprehension/Recall)


- Review Sakai post – Grenada Key Players and Timeline

- Background on Grenada


Learning Objective: To analyze the role of Panama in the study of the Caribbean and evaluate the implications of its relationship with the U.S. (BT: Comprehension/Analysis/Evaluation)

- Review Cuba and Grenada

- Film, *The Panama Deception*, DVD (USA/UK: Barbara Trent, 1992). (Available online)

- [http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-3422](http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-3422)


- Background on Panama
Learning Objective: To analyze the ways that the Caribbean has sought to establish/reinforce/preserve an identity in the Diaspora (BT: Analysis/Evaluation/Comprehension/Recall)

- Eric Williams. *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969*. Chapter 29

- Final Review – Concept Mapping
Final Exam Date
DECEMBER 21 – 6:20pm to 9:20pm