

**Introduction to
Caribbean Studies
Spring 2019**

21:014:113:03
Tuesdays & Thursdays
2:30-3:50pm
Hill Hall: 104

Instructor:
Keishla Rivera-Lopez
Keishla.rivera@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: 1:00-2:00
T & Th @ Conklin 326



Course Description

This course is an introduction to understanding and conceptualizing the Caribbean through an examination of Caribbean history, literature, and culture. Through the discussion of literary and academic texts, this course studies and questions what it means to be a product of diaspora, how the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and modernity affect Caribbean nations and people, and how migration is natural— although sometimes forced. Drawing from literature, music, and film of the Hispanophone, Anglophone, and Francophone Caribbean nations, students will learn how the Caribbean is connected through projects of modernity and empire and at the same time unique and dissimilar.

Course Objectives

- Identify and discuss important events, people, and places in the Caribbean
- Understand, identify, and analyze different definitions of Caribbean identity and culture
- Understand Caribbean history, culture, and identities in a multi-faceted manner utilizing academic texts, cultural texts, and other sources.
- Distinguish the strengths, weaknesses, and point of view in sources and texts of the course.
- Identify the main argument and focus of an author
- Analyze, compare, contrast themes and arguments across readings in different historical contexts
- Develop writing skills by blogging and writing papers
- Develop critical thinking and close reading skills

NOTE: Syllabus subject to change. I will email you in regard to any syllabus changes.

Course Requirements

All students are required to adhere to the Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct and Policy on Academic Integrity. Students are not allowed to plagiarize or submit work that is not their own. More information about the university policy on academic integrity: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/> Furthermore, cyber-bullying, disrespect, and any other negative behaviors will not be tolerated in our online classroom. More information on the Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/disciplinary-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/#1495569259725-1f451194-472b>

Required Texts:

Junot Diaz, *Drown*

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

*All other texts will be available on Blackboard or through the Rutgers University Library Resources.

Attendance and Participation: You are required to attend all classes. If you are going to be absent, you must email the instructor within 24 hours. Students missing class to observe a religious holiday must send an email to the instructor and will not be penalized for their absence. More than two unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. Class participation helps generate class discussion and enable you to ask questions or comment on class or reading material that interests you.

Discussion Board Posts: Biweekly discussion board posts are due every other Friday at 12pm in the discussion board section of blackboard under the designated week. A minimum of 2-3 paragraphs of analysis and/or reflection is required per post. Think of this as a blog where you are sharing (on a weekly basis) what you've read and what provoked your interests from the reading. You must connect or compare at least **two** texts/materials from the week. These posts are designed to help you think and write critically and analytically about the texts you are reading to prepare you for course essays.

Discussion Board Responses: In addition to biweekly discussion board posts, please respond to one classmate by midnight on Friday in the online discussion board. This is an opportunity for you to engage with your classmates and enable you to see how your classmates reacted to and thought about the weekly readings. A minimum of one paragraph is required in your response. I ask that you maintain online etiquette and adhere to the Rutgers student code of conduct by respecting each other in your responses.

Exams: There will be two exams in this course – your Midterm and your Final. The Midterm date is **March 14, 2019** and the final date is **May 14, 2019** during class time. They will require you to answer short essay prompts, identify and define key terms from the course, and answer short questions. I will dedicate a day to midterm and final reviews in class where you can bring up and questions or concerns.

Oral Presentation: Each student will be required to create and present a project about a Caribbean nation or theme we discussed in class. The presentation must be between 3-5 minutes long and is due **April 25, 2018**. The prompt for the presentation will be posted on Blackboard.

Extra Credit: There are events and lectures on campus that engage with the Caribbean in some fashion. I will share events on campus with you throughout the semester. You must write a 2-page response paper explaining how the information from the event connects with what you're learning in this course. You may find an event on your own, but I must approve it beforehand.

Note: All assignments lose half a letter grade for every day it is late.

Grade Breakdown:

Discussion Board Posts: 20%

Class Participation: 10%

Oral Presentation: 20%
Midterm Exam: 25%
Final Exam: 25%

Rutgers University Student Resources:

- Tutoring Services: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc>
- Writing Center: <https://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>
- Counseling Services: <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu>
- Disability Services: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students>

Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus' disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at 973-353-5375 or by email at odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu.



What is the Caribbean? What is Caribbean Identity?

1/22: Introductions & Presentation Sign Up

1/24: "Myths of Caribbean Identity," Stuart Hall

1/29: *A Small Place*, Pages 1-37

1/31: *A Small Place*, Pages 41-81

Discussion Board Post and Peer Response Due 1/31

Colonialism

2/5: *Black Skin, White Masks*, Pages 1-44

2/7: *Black Skin, White Masks*, Pages 45-108

2/12: *Black Skin, White Masks*, Pages 109-162

2/14: *Black Skin, White Masks*, Pages 163-181

"Discourse on Colonialism," Aimé Césaire

Discussion Board Post and Peer Response Due 2/14

Freedoms, Revolutions, and Resistance

2/19: Watch "Égalité for All Toussaint Louverture and The Haitian Revolution"

<https://vimeo.com/213852728>

"Autobiography of a Slave," Juan Francisco Manzano

2/21: Watch *Sugar Cane Alley*

2/26: "Writing the Nation: Race, War, and Redemption in the Prose of Independence, 1886-1895," Ada Ferrer

2/28: Jose Martí, "Our America" (1892) <http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/marti/America.htm>

Discussion Board Post and Peer Response Due 2/28

Migration, Neocolonialism, and U.S. Imperialism

3/5: "Migration and Geopolitics in the Greater Antilles: From the Cold War to the Post-Cold War," Ramón Grosfoguel

"Life Off the Hyphen: Latino Literature and Nuyorican Traditions," Juan Flores

3/7: "Cloud Cover Caribbean," Ana Lydia Vega

"Latino Caribbean Diasporas in New York," Ramón Grosfoguel and Chloé S. Georas

3/12: Midterm Review

"Puerto Rican Obituary," Pedro Pietri

"my graduation speech," Tato Laviera

3/14: Midterm Exam

3/18-3/24: Spring Break

Diaspora

3/26: *Drown*, Pages 1-43

3/28: *Drown*, Pages 45-107

"Thinking Diaspora from Below," Juan Flores

Discussion Board Post and Peer Response Due 3/28

4/2: *Drown*, Pages 111-160

"They Came in Ships," Mahadai Das

4/4: *Drown*, Pages 163- 208

"A Far Cry from Africa," Derek Walcott

Caribbean Culture: Literature, Film, and Music

4/9: "Introduction: Caribeños, Counterstreams, and Cultural Remittances," Juan Flores

4/11: "Dan is the Man in the Van," The Mighty Sparrow

"Tego Calderon: Reggaeton on Black Pride," <https://www.npr.org/2008/09/03/94243997/tego-calderon-reggaeton-on-black-pride>

"New York Bomba: Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and a Bridge Called Haiti," Raquel Z. Rivera
Discussion Board Post and Peer Response Due 4/11

4/16: "When the Tom Tom Beats," Jacques Roumain

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=23547>

"Colonization in Reverse," Louise Bennett <http://louisebennett.com/colonization-in-reverse/>

"Río Grande de Loíza," Julia de Burgos <https://www.poesi.as/jbu007uk.htm>

4/18: Excerpt from *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, Julia Alvarez

Excerpt from *How to Leave Hialeah*, Jeanine Capo Crucet

Contemporary Caribbean: Migration, Capitalism, and Globalization

4/23: "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity," Paul Gilroy

"Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Comparative Approach," Ramón Grosfoguel

4/25: "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," Sylvia Wynter

Discussion Board Post and Peer Response Due 4/25

4/30: Presentations

5/2: Presentations + Final Review

5/14: Final Exam