

MODERN CARIBBEAN HISTORY (HIST0971L S01)

Wednesday, 3:00-5:30 p.m.
101 Thayer St. (VGQ 1st fl), 116 E
Department of History
Fall 2014

Professor Jennifer L. Lambe
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Office Hours: Tues., 2:00-3:00 p.m./Wed., 12:30-2:30 p.m., and by appointment
Sharpe House, 102B

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

From Curaçao to Cuba (and Miami, New Orleans, Suriname, and beyond), the Caribbean is a region of rich history and stunning diversity. Yet international representations of the Caribbean cohere around an ahistorical pastiche of sun, sand, and sex: the Caribbean as playground for the “Western” world. This course reverses the emphasis of such characterizations to make an argument for the precocious *modernity* of the Caribbean, where global historical processes—imperialism, Atlantic slavery, capitalism, and transculturation—saw some of their earliest and most fully developed forms. We will examine not only the penetration of the outside world into the Caribbean across time, but also the historical evolution of oppositional and radical currents (anti-imperialism, radicalism, transnationalism, Marxism, and pan-Africanism) within the Caribbean.

Throughout the semester, we will pay particular attention to Cuba, Jamaica, and Haiti as case studies that exemplify the broader themes of the course: slavery, revolution, emancipation, nation building, U.S. imperialism, nationalism, pan-Africanism, migration, and transnationalism. Despite our overarching orientation to political and social history, however, we will frequently shift gears to examine the many legacies of Caribbean transculturation, from religion to music to racial constructs. Cultural sources—novels, films, and music—constitute a key base for discussions and papers.

Our conversations in the course will contribute to our efforts to define and deconstruct the concept of the Caribbean itself. Does the Caribbean exist only in the “mind” of the outside world, or is there a regional resonance of the concept? Is the Caribbean unit defined by forces originating in Europe and the U.S. (imperialism, African slavery), or, at a certain moment, does the logic of federation take hold among Caribbean people—politicians, activists, writers, musicians, the (mobile) working class? What unites the Caribbean across barriers of language, political status, and race? What divides it? In a time of all-inclusive resorts and unprecedented natural disasters, does the concept still hold? How does studying the history of the Caribbean change our understanding of American, hemispheric, and world history?

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This first-year seminar will introduce students to the historical study of the Caribbean, as well as the basic skills of historical analysis and writing.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

1. Map Quiz (5%). September 24, in class.

2. Participation in seminar discussion (30%): You must come to seminar each week prepared to discuss the readings and engage with primary source material. You are also expected to watch/listen to other sources posted on the course website and incorporate them into seminar discussion. *As part of your participation grade for this course, you will also be required to attend at least one lecture or film screening related to the Caribbean and write a short (1-pg.) synopsis.*

3. Short Papers (30%).

a. News Item Paper, 2-3 pgs. (10%): By the third class session, each student will assign a Google News alert to a geopolitical unit of the Caribbean and follow its news over the course of the semester. In at least one week, students will write a short paper analyzing a news item in the context of course readings and historical arguments. Though this paper represents an opportunity for students to reflect more informally in writing, it must have an argument and should not read like a blog entry. **Due in class.**

b. Response Paper, 5-7 pgs. (20%): Instructor will distribute list of potential paper topics on October 1. Paper will be due **IN CLASS** on October 15. Students may elect to write on a different topic in consultation with the instructor.

4. Final paper, 10-15 pgs. (35%). Due on DECEMBER 17 BY 4 P.M.

Your final research paper of 10-15 pages may engage any theme and any geographical entity within the Caribbean; you may use the paper to explore a theme or region that we did not cover in the course. The paper should evolve over the course of the semester in dialogue with class readings and discussions. Please note the following set of *required* deadlines:

September 10-October 8: Meet with instructor to discuss your ideas and initial interests.

October 22: Bibliography (primary and secondary sources) and 1-pg. paper proposal.

November 19: Rough draft of paper OR annotated, detailed outline.

December 17: Final paper due by 4 p.m. in instructor's mailbox.

COURSE MATERIALS:

The following books are available for purchase at Brown Bookstore and as 24-hour reserves at the Rock. **Other course readings (and required films and music) will be made accessible through Canvas.**

The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its People. Edited Stephan Palmié and Francisco Scarano (Chicago, 2011) [TC]

Matthew Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (UNC, 2006)

Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (UNC, 1999)

Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (UNC, 2013)

Gaiutra Bahadur, *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture* (Chicago, 2014)

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Riverhead, 2007)

SCHEDULE

September 3. Introduction to the Course: Defining the Caribbean

For next week, please read Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer, "The Caribbean: A Regional Overview" [*The Modern Caribbean*, eds. Knight and Palmer, 1989]; Antonio Benítez-Rojo, "From the plantation to the Plantation" (1999) [*The Repeating Island*, 1997]; and Stuart Hall, "Negotiating Caribbean Identities," *New Left Review* 1/209 (January-February 1995) [Canvas]. We will devote the first half of next week's session to a discussion of these texts, and they will serve as a point of reference throughout the semester.

September 10. The First Sugar Revolution: Monoculture, Empire, and Slavery

TC: "Toward Sugar and Slavery" (Palmié)

Diana Paton, "Punishment, Crime, and the Bodies of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica," *Journal of Social History* Vol. 34, No. 4 (Summer 2001): 923-954. [Canvas]

September 17. The Haitian Revolution

Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, ed. *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean: A Brief History with Documents* (2006), Introduction and selected documents [Canvas]

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995), Ch. 3 [Canvas]

September 24. King Sugar and Slave Rebellion in Cuba

Matthew Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (2006)

October 1. The Path to "Free" Labor in Haiti and Jamaica

TC: "The Abolition of Slavery in the Non-Hispanic Caribbean" (Paton)

Sidney Mintz, "The Origins of Reconstituted Peasantries" (1974) [Canvas]

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Inconvenience of Freedom: Free People of Color and the Political Aftermath of Slavery in Dominica and Saint-Domingue/Haiti" (1992) [*The Meaning of Freedom*, eds. McGlynn and Drescher] [Canvas]

Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (1992), Ch. 2-3, 5 [Canvas]

October 8. The Challenge to Spanish Colonialism in Cuba: Emancipation and the Struggle for Sovereignty

Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution in Cuba, 1868-98* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999), Ch. 1-2, 5-7

Cuba Reader (Duke UP, ed. Chomsky and Carr): "José Martí's 'Our America'" [Canvas]

October 15. The U.S. in the Caribbean: An Age of Intervention, 1898-1934

Cuba Reader (Duke UP): "U.S. Cartoonists Portray Cuba" (John J. Johnson); "The Platt Amendment" (President Theodore Roosevelt) [Canvas]

Eileen J. Findlay, "Love in the Tropics: Marriage, Divorce, and the Construction of Benevolent Colonialism in Puerto Rico, 1898-1910" (1998) [*Close Encounters of Empire*, eds. Joseph, LeGrand, Salvatore, Canvas]

Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism* (2000), Ch. 3-4 [Canvas]

Kate Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (2011), Ch. 3 [Canvas]
Skim TC: “The Rise of the American Mediterranean, 1846-1905” (Martínez-Fernández)

October 22. Transnationalism, Migration, and Popular Culture

Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (UNC, 2013)

****Listen to mento samples on Canvas**

October 29. Gender and Migration: Other Circuits

TC: “Africa, Europe, and Asia in the Making of the 20th-Century Caribbean (Khan)

Gaiutra Bahadur, *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture* (2014)

November 5. The Cold War in the Caribbean: Trujillo

Lauren Derby, “The Dictator’s Seduction: Gender and State Spectacle during the Trujillo Regime,” *Callaloo* 23, no. 3 (2000): 1112-1146 [Canvas]

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)

Skim TC: “An Island in the Mirror: The Dominican Republic and Haiti” (San Miguel)

November 12. Cuba, “Revolución con pachanga”

TC: “The Long Cuban Revolution” (Zeuske)

Excerpts from Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sartre on Cuba* (1960); Victor Franco, *The Morning After: A French Journalist’s Impressions of Cuba under Castro* (1962); Nicholas Wollaston, *Red Rumba* (1962); and Elizabeth Sutherland Martínez, *The Youngest Revolution* (1969) [Canvas]

Richard Fagen, “Toward a New Political Culture” (1969) [Canvas]

November 19. The British Caribbean and the Path to Decolonization

The Harder They Come (dir. Perry Henzell, 1972) [Canvas]

Eric Williams, “Massa Day Done: (Public Lecture at Woodford Square, 22 March 1961)”

Callaloo 20.4 (1998): 725-30. [Canvas]

Colin A Palmer, “Identity, Race, and Black Power in Independent Jamaica,” *The Modern Caribbean* [Canvas]

****Listen to *The Harder They Come* soundtrack on Canvas**

Skim TC: “Independence and Its Aftermath: Suriname, Trinidad, and Jamaica” (Maingot)

November 26. THANKSGIVING RECESS

December 3. Globalization, Tourism, and the End of Ideology (?)

Life and Debt (dir. Stephanie Black, 2001) [Canvas]

Amy Wilentz, *Farewell, Fred Voodoo* (Simon & Schuster, 2013), Ch. 11 [Canvas]

Nora Gámez, “Hearing the Change: Reggaetón and Emergent Values in Contemporary Cuba,”

Latin American Music Review 22, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2012) [Canvas]

****Instructor will distribute music and video clips prior to class meeting**

December 17. FINAL PAPER DUE