

**University of Wisconsin–Madison  
Department of History  
Department of Afro-American Studies**

**History/Afro-American Studies 347  
THE CARIBBEAN AND ITS DIASPORAS  
Semester I, 2011-2012**

**Tuesday 1-2:15 p.m.  
1101 Humanities**

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263-3945/263-1800**

**Office hours:  
Tue. 2:30-3:30 (Walk-in hours)  
Tue. 3:30-5:30 (Sign-up only)**

**Course description:**

As a gateway to the Americas, the Caribbean region has been at the center of power rivalries and long-distance mercantile exchanges since the European invasions began five centuries ago. Competition between Atlantic powers for the fertile soils, vital trade routes, and strategic location found there has been a constant factor in the archipelago's development. So, too, has the islands' pervasive orientation toward, and dependence on, overseas markets for sugar, coffee, tobacco, and other tropical staples.

These patterns have helped define the contemporary Caribbean in precise and powerful ways. They have led to, among other things, an entrenched colonial and neocolonial dependence on outside powers; to a plantation economy—and, more recently, an industrial and tourism economy—geared for the satisfaction of external demands, and to the widespread use of slavery and other forms of unfree labor.

All these forms of exploitation were (and are) predicated, to one degree or another, on racial and cultural distinctions. In the end, these impositions required for labor control and colonial rule have had an ambiguous result. They have doubtless aggravated social problems and undercut opportunities for resolving them. But at the same time, they've led to the creation and entrenchment of resourceful, multiracial cultures, built upon a resilient African substratum which serves as a common denominator of the region's cultural formations. Thus, although the societies in question are quite varied in ethnic, racial, political, and linguistic terms, they are united by a common (though not evenly significant) African-American heritage and by their status as the European world's oldest colonial sphere.

Since World War II, the Caribbean has emerged as one of the world's regions most affected by the emigration of its people to countries in the North. While there are precedents for these out-migrations going back to the 1800s, a fundamentally changed political economy of industrial labor spurred massive emigration to Europe, the United States, and Canada after 1945. Simultaneously, decolonization and globalization opened up new "Caribbeans"—coherent ethnic communities—in the former or current metropolises. The intimate connections existing between "inner" and "outer" communities are of great import if one is to fully understand the dynamics of Caribbean life today.

This course explores major topics in the history of Caribbean societies, with emphasis on how they became the multiracial and diasporic nations of today. Our main objective

is to develop an understanding of the manner in which colonial rule, and the social institutions on which it was built—in particular, slavery and other forms of forced labor—shaped regional societies, beginning in the early days of European expansion and continuing into our times. A secondary emphasis will be on the diaspora communities created by Caribbean peoples in the United States and Europe.

### **Requirements:**

#### **A) Partial and Final Exams:**

The first and second partial exams (*due* Friday, Oct. 7 <take-home> and Thursday, Nov. 3 <in-class>) and the final exam (Tuesday, December 20, in-class, place TBA) will consist of identification items and two essay questions each. I will select these questions from a review list handed out several days before the exam date. Students are expected to be creative and original while integrating ideas and information gleaned from the pertinent core readings, as well as from lectures and class discussions. The partial exams are each worth 20% of the final grade and the final exam 25%, for a total of 65%. You will receive further instructions on how the first (take-home) examination should be handled.

#### **B) Papers:**

Two 5-7 pp. essays, due *Friday, October 21*, and *Wednesday, November 23*. For each, students will select one topic from those listed at the bottom of this section and will write a 5 to 7-page essay which cogently and concisely develops a thesis or argument about a specific, well-defined problem relating to the chosen topic. Further details, including specific instructions on writing the papers, will be provided in class. The first paper will be worth 5% of the grade; the second, 10%.

#### *Paper topics:*

For paper # 1 you will select from the following list of general topics:

- 1) Consequences (social, economic, ecological, *or* cultural) of the European conquest of the Caribbean;
- 2) Caribbean slavery as an economic and demographic system;
- 3) Slave women, the family, and culture-building in the Caribbean;
- 4) Capitalism, slavery, and anti-slavery (the so-called Williams Debate);
- 5) Resistance, rebellion, and the forging of autonomous and/or independent spaces and states;
- 6) Marronage and maroon societies;
- 7) The peasant groups of the Spanish Caribbean; or,
- 8) The Haitian Revolution as a problem in world history <you may also write on a more specific theme on the HR, but you need the instructor's or TA's approval>.

For paper # 2 you will select from the following list of general topics:

- 1) The establishment of U.S. hegemony in the Caribbean;
- 2) Race and nation-building in the twentieth century;
- 3) Workers' organizations and their lukewarm support of nationalist projects;
- 4) Gender as a factor in colonial domination;
- 5) Populist movements: similarities and differences;
- 6) Comparative decolonization processes;
- 7) Tourism as economic development—prospects and limitations;
- 8) Relationship between diasporic communities and originating societies;
- 9) Ethnic politics among Caribbean emigrants in the United States and Europe.
- 10) Transnational ties between islands and their diasporas, and their cultural significance.

***C) Reaction paragraphs:***

Several times during the semester, on an unannounced basis, students will be asked to write short (one-page maximum) reaction essays to the week's readings. These will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will count toward the 20% of the final grade assigned to the quality of work (including oral participation) in discussion sections. A separate syllabus for your work in discussion sections will provide details on these occasional assignments.

***D) Class participation:***

Because a part of each class hour will be devoted to discussion, it is essential that students participate actively in such exchanges. The final grade will, to a large degree, reflect the level of enthusiasm in and extent of participation by the student in her/his discussion section.

**Grading**

The final grade will be computed as follows:

Midterm and final exams.....	65 points
Papers.....	15 points
Class participation.....	20 points
 Total.....	 100 points

**Books and other materials**

The compendium on Caribbean history listed below contains the course's principal common readings. It is available for purchase at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative, 426 W. Gilman St. (tel. 257-6050).

Stephan Palmié and Francisco A. Scarano, *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and its Peoples* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

### **Other required readings**

Most other required readings will be available for electronic download from Mywebspace. You will be emailed a link to them, which you should have available for the entire semester.

Please note that for the individual papers you will be asked to conduct original library and online research. Thus, the common readings constitute a bare minimum, with more to be added as you work on your papers. *While you may cite the compendium or the lectures in your papers, it is assumed that such papers will principally derive from your own independent research and reading.*

### **Laptop policy**

I encourage you to take notes on a laptop. However, reading email, going on Facebook or Twitter, or browsing the web *is not allowed*. Such misuse of a web-capable device distracts other students and diminishes your own ability to take quality lecture notes. If it is apparent to me (and believe me, it will be!) that you are still doing so, I will ask you to move to a corner of the lecture hall and sit there for the rest of the semester.

### **Special needs**

I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. It is in your best interest if you inform me as soon as possible regarding any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course that may be necessary to enable you to fully participate in this course. Please be prepared to provide me with documentation from the McBurney Center (a copy of your VISA) by **September 15**. Special accommodations for individuals with obvious or documented disabilities require 2 weeks advance notice.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is:

- Using someone else's words or ideas without proper documentation.
- Copying some portion of your text from another source without proper acknowledgement of indebtedness.
- Borrowing another person's specific ideas without documenting their source.
- Having someone else correct or revise your work (not as in getting feedback from a writing group or individual, where you make the changes suggested by others).
- Turning in a paper written by someone else, an essay "service," or from a World Wide Web site (including reproductions of such essays or papers).

Plagiarism is a very serious offense, both in college and in the "real world." When you consult sources for a paper, you must document ideas or words deriving from them both by listing the sources in a bibliography at the end of the paper and by citing sources in the text itself. To cite a source is to make clear to the reader 1) who originated the idea or quotation that you have used and 2) where it can be found. This then allows the reader to

do further research or check your evidence. It also prevents you from taking credit—deliberately or inadvertently—for someone else’s work or ideas.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has established a range of penalties for students guilty of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. Appropriate penalties include suspension or expulsion from the university, a failing grade for a course, a failing grade for the assignment, or a reduced grade on a redone assignment.

If, after reading this, you are still not sure as to what constitutes academic misconduct, the following University websites and documents contain useful information and advice:

<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/misconduct.html>

<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/pdf/UWS14.pdf>

## WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

### Week 1: Introductory sessions (9/6-9/8)

Tuesday: Course Introduction

Thursday: Caribbean Counterpoints at the Onset of Modernity

Palmié and Scarano, *The Caribbean*, "Introduction" and chs. 1-2 (hereafter *PSTC*; *Introduction*, 1-2).

Map of the Caribbean Region (digital version).

### Week 2: The Geographical, Ecological, and Aboriginal Background (9/13-15)

Tuesday: Geographies of Opportunity and Restraint

Thursday: The Ancient People of the Caribbean

*PSTC*: 3, 5-6.

Ramón Pané, *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), selections.

### Week 3: Clashes and Negotiations of Conquest (9/20-22)

Tuesday: Economy and Society of the Conquest Caribbean

Thursday: Aboriginal Resistance and the Challenges of Depopulation

*PSTC*: 7-8.

Samuel M. Wilson, "Columbus, My Enemy," *Natural History*, 99, 12 (December 1990), 44 ff.

### Week 4: The Competitive Empires (late 16th-17th. centuries) (9/27-29)

Tuesday: Becoming Backwaters of Empire

Thursday: Imperial Competition

*PSTC*: 10-11.

### **Week 5: The Sugar Revolution: From Barbados to Saint Domingue (10/4-6)**

Tuesday: The Sugar Revolution: From Indentured Servants to Slaves

Thursday: Slave Societies Compared: Jamaica and Saint Domingue

*PSTC: 9, 12-15.*

### **Week 6: The Caribbean between Corsairs and Reformers (10/11-13)**

Tuesday: Peasant Societies in the Spanish Caribbean

Thursday: Daily Lives and Struggles of Enslaved People

*PSTC: 16.*

Michael Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man: Slaves and Plantation Life in Jamaica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), selections (“Introduction,” “Bungamen: Six Africans,” “Conformists: Ten Ordinary Slaves,” “Resisters: Five Slave Non-conformists”).

George D. Flinter, “The Xivaros,” in *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History*, eds. Kal Wagenheim and Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim (1994), pp. 38-44.

### **Week 7: The Haitian Revolution (10/18-20)**

Tuesday: Revolution, Emancipation, and Citizenship

Thursday: An Unthinkable Revolution and its Consequences

*PSTC:18-19.*

### **Week 8: Film Week (10/25-27)**

### **Week 9: Review/Partial Exam Date (11/1-3)**

Tuesday: Review.

Thursday: Partial exam.

**Week 10: The “Second Slavery” trumps British and French Emancipation (11/8-10)**

Tuesday: The Second Slavery: Cuba and Puerto Rico

Thursday: British and French Emancipation

*PSTC:20-22.*

Richard Henry Dana, *To Cuba and Back* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), selections.

**Week 11: Emancipation, Race, and Nationhood (11/15-17)**

Tuesday: The Problem of Nationhood in the Nineteenth-Century Caribbean

Thursday: The Cuban War and the Making of a Third Empire

*PSTC: 23-24, 26-27.*

**Week 12: The Rise of the American Empire (11/22)**

Tuesday: The American Sugar Kingdom

Thursday: Thanksgiving Recess.

*PSTC: 25, 28-30.*

**Week 13: Crisis and Response (11/29-12/1)**

Tuesday: Nationalisms of Right and Left

Thursday: Decolonization by Any Name

*PSTC:31-32.*

Luis Muñoz Marín, “The Sad Case of Porto Rico,” in Wagenheim and Wagenheim, eds., *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History*, 153-161.

**Week 14: Revolution and Cold War (12/6-12/8)**

Tuesday: Caribbean Dictators, Populists, and Revolutionaries

Thursday: Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel

*PSTC:33-37.*

**Week 15: The Caribbean and the Cold War (12/13-15)**

Tuesday: The Emigration Dialectic

Thursday: Globalization's Discontent

*PSTC: 38-39.*