

The University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History

The History of Caribbean Tourism



HIST 500

Fall 2025

Professor Orlando Deavila Pertuz
Tinker Visiting Professor

“[...] the benign blight that is tourism can infect all of those island nations, not gradually, but with imperceptible speed, until each rock is whitened by the guano of white-winged hotels, the arc and descent of progress.”

Derek Walcott, *The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory*, Nobel lecture, 1992.

Class Time: Wednesday 3:30 pm - 5:25 pm

Room: 5255 Mosse Humanities Building

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00 am - 12:00pm.

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Course Description

The seminar aims to introduce students to the major themes in the history of Caribbean tourism since the late nineteenth century. It highlights the debates, methodological approaches, theories, concepts, and central questions that have dominated the historiography. Particular attention is given to how these works connect tourism to the pivotal institutions that have shaped the region's modern history, including colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. To this end, the seminar examines the history of tourism through a multi-layered approach that intersects class, race, and gender. Tourism is explored not merely as an economic practice, but as a cultural, social, and political phenomenon that affects the lives of both tourists and host communities on multiple levels, extending far beyond the material dimension.

Drawing on Frank Fonda Taylor's foundational book on the history of tourism in Jamaica, this seminar explores the historical development of tourism while also engaging with the present. As he noted when introducing his work: "for many of the dilemmas this book delineates remain unresolved." This observation was as true three decades ago, when Taylor's work was first published, as it is today. In this sense, the seminar also seeks to shed light on the challenges and threats currently facing Caribbean nations, as well as the prospects for addressing them.

Requisites and Enrollment Information

Enrollment Requirement: HISTORY 201 or junior standing

Requirement Designation: Accelerated Honors (!)

Class Attributes: Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement

Course Designation and Attributes

Credits: 3.00 credits

Level: Advanced

L&S credit type: Counts as LAS credit (L&S)

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will identify the major political, economic, social and cultural forces that shaped tourism development from the late nineteenth century through the present.

Students will connect the history of tourism to major themes in the historical development of the Caribbean such as colonialism, racism, capitalism, imperialism and development.

Students will explain the critical problems that have affected the tourist industry and host communities in the Caribbean in the last twentieth-century and the foreseeable solutions in the near future.

Students will demonstrate their understanding of major theories, approaches, concepts, and current and classical debates in the historiography about the tourism in the Caribbean.

Students will examine the production of representations about the Caribbean and the host communities based on the analysis of primary historical sources.

Credit Hours and Student Workload

This three-credit seminar carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Main Readings

All these readings will be available in the course's Canvas page.

Babb, Florence E. *The Tourism Encounter: Fashioning Latin American Nations and Histories*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Colantino, Andrea, and Robert B. Potter. *Urban Tourism and Development in the Socialist State: Havana during the "Special Period"*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

Conway Dennis and Benjamin Timms, "Slow Tourism at the Caribbean's Geographical Margins," *Tourism Geographies* 14(3):396-418.

Dennis-Benn, Nicole. *Here Comes the Sun*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2016.

Gaztambide-Géigel, Antonio. "The Invention of the Caribbean in the Twentieth Century: The Definitions of the Caribbean as a Historical and Methodological Problem." *Social and Economic Studies* 53, no. 3 (September 2004): 127–157.

Guridy, Frank Andre. *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Henthorne, Tony L. *Tourism in Cuba: Riding the Wave toward Sustainable Prosperity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Kamugisha, Aaron. "The Coloniality of Citizenship in the Contemporary Anglophone Caribbean." *Race & Class* 49, no. 2 (2007): 20–40.

Kempadoo, Kamala, ed. *Sexing the Caribbean: Gender, Race, and Sexual Labor*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988.

Manley, Elizabeth S, “Runway Hospitality: Air Jamaica's “Rare Tropical Birds” and the Embodied Gender and Race Politics of Tourism, 1966–1980”, *Hispanic American Historical Review* (2022) 102 (2): 285–319.

———. “‘Created by God’ (or Columbus) for Tourism: Building Tourism Fantasy in the Dominican Republic, 1966–1978.” *The Business of Leisure: Tourism History in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Andrew Grant Wood. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021, 245-276.

Merrill, Dennis. *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Patullo, Polly. *Last Resorts: The Cost of Tourism in the Caribbean*. London: Cassell, 1996.

Saunders, Gail. *Bahamian Society after Emancipation*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1990.

Scarpaci, Joseph L. *Plazas and Barrios: Heritage Tourism and Globalization in the Latin American Centro Histórico*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005.

Scott, Blake C. *Unpacked: A History of Caribbean Tourism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021.

———. “Revolution at the Hotel: Panama and Luxury Travel in the Age of Decolonization.” *Journal of Tourism History* 11, no. 1–2 (2019): 1–25.

Sheller, Mimi. *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

———. *Citizenship from Below: Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.

———. “Mobility Justice and the Return of Tourism after the Pandemic.” *Mondes du Tourisme* 19, 2021.

Simoni, Valerio. *Tourism and Informal Encounters in Cuba*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016.

Skwiot, Christine. *The Purpose of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai‘i*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Strachan, Ian Gregory. *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002.

Taylor, Frank Fonda. *To Hell with Paradise: A History of Caribbean Tourism*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.

Thompson, Krista A. *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Torres, Rebecca, and Janet Momsen. "Gringolandia: Cancun and the American Tourist." *Adventures into Mexico: American tourism beyond the border*, edited by Nicholas Dagen Bloom. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, 58-73.

Ward, Evan R. *Packaged Vacations: Tourism Development in the Spanish Caribbean*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008.

Waters, Anita M. *Planning the Past: Heritage Tourism and Post-Colonial Politics at Port Royal*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

Walcott, Derek, *The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory*, Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1992

Wong, Alfred. "Caribbean Island Tourism: Pathway to Continued Colonial Servitude." *Études Caribéennes* 31–32 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudescaribeennes.7493>.

Course Website and Digital Instructional Tools

This course will use Canvas. You can find all the readings that are not part of the required books in the Canvas page.

Regular and substantive student-instructor interaction

This course involves regular and substantive student-instructor interaction through direct instruction during weekly meetings. There will be further substantive interaction between students and instructors through feedback on written work and during individual meetings. Students are required to show up for office hours at least one time during the semester to discuss assignments, readings, research interests, and general questions regarding the course.

Class Assignments

Assignment	Frequency / Due Date	Points
Class Participation	Weekly	15
Reading Responses	Weekly	15
Leading Discussion	Weekly (beginning Week 7)	10
Essay	Due Oct 2	15

Assignment	Frequency / Due Date	Points
Reflection Paper	Due Nov 7	15
Final Paper & Presentation	Due Dec 10	30
	Total	100

Class Participation:

As a seminar, you're expected to fully participate in classroom discussion. Please note that you are required to attend our meetings every week. Your grade will not only depend on attendance but will also take into consideration your engagement with the classroom materials. Your performance in class will be evaluated weekly. Please bring your reading responses to class as this will facilitate our discussions.

Consider the following criteria to think of your performance in class:

Excellent participation—fully prepared for class, completed assigned readings, participated actively and thoughtfully in class discussions, listened actively, allowed/encouraged others to contribute in class, arrived timely (Range of grades: A – AB)

Good participation—fully prepared for class, completed assigned readings, listened actively, participated in class discussions, arrived timely (Range of grades: B – BC)

Poor participation—unprepared for class, did not do the assigned reading or minimal or no participation in class discussion or did not pay attention or listen actively or did not arrive on time. (Range of grades: C-D)

No Participation—Did not show up (Grade: F)

Reading Responses:

Students will submit their reading responses (500–800 words) through Canvas twenty-four hours before our class meetings. These pieces must summarize central arguments, analyze methodologies, and connect readings to broader course themes. The response will be your blueprint for discussion and will allow you to engage with the course's readings critically before each meeting. The response must highlight the text's leading questions, methodological approach, and overall conclusions. It must include a list of the concepts that introduces and a quote that captures the main argument.

Leading Discussion:

Starting in Week 7, two students will be responsible for leading the discussion in each class session. This is a two-part assignment. You are expected to guide and facilitate the conversation for at least 50 minutes, ensuring that the class engages with the key questions,

themes, and arguments from the readings. The discussion format is flexible and can be designed as you see fit, but it must encourage active participation.

- Who wrote it? (Academic affiliation, education, research interests, scholarship, etc.)
- What can this reading tell you about the history of tourism in the Caribbean or about the history of the specific country covered?
- How does this reading build on, challenge, or complicate the arguments presented in previous readings?
- How does this reading contribute to expanding the historiography of tourism in the Caribbean?
- What larger issues in the region's history—such as imperialism, racism, colonialism, gender, etc.—does the text bring into consideration?
- What kind of primary or secondary sources did the author use to produce his work?
- What are some of the missing themes that the text overlooked?
- What are your thoughts and opinions about the readings?

Essay & Reflection Paper

Both will be approximately 4-5 pages long and are designed to engage students with the classroom material. The essay is research-oriented and will require the historical analysis of primary sources based on the scholarly works already discussed by then. I will hand out the essay prompts in week 3, and students will have two weeks to submit their responses. The reflection paper is intended for you to describe and explain in an introspective, first-person narrative one of the problems addressed in the seminar. I will hand out the reflection paper's prompts in week 8, and students will have two weeks to work on it.

Final Paper:

For the final paper, students will explore a topic related to the history of Caribbean tourism. Students will meet with Prof. Deavila Pertuz to identify an appropriate topic on week 8. The seven-to-ten page essay should be submitted in Word format and should include both primary and secondary sources. It should be submitted as a Word document and in 'zine format.

Grading Information:

Grades on assignments and exams are recorded as numerical scores out of a total of 100 points (these scores are later weighted to arrive at a final composite course grade). The table for converting your final composite (weighted) numerical grade into final letter grades is as follows:

Points	<60	60-68.9	69-74.9	75-80.9	81-86.9	87-92.9	93 and above
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Grade	F	D	C	BC	B	AB	A
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- Students must submit all assignments and complete all essays to pass this course.
- Students may **not** elect to opt out of an assignment and receive an F on it.
- Any non-emergency extensions must be requested prior to the due date.

Course Schedule

Week 1: The Caribbean: An Introduction

1. Wednesday, September 3

Readings:

Antonio Gaztambide, “The Invention of the Caribbean in the 20th Century. The Definitions of the Caribbean as a Historical and Methodological Problem”, *Social and Economic Studies*, September 2004, vol. 53, no. 3, 127-157.

Derek Walcott, *The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory*, Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1992

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*, 3-19, 23-37.

Week 2: The Historical Origins of Tourism and the Remaking of the Caribbean

2. Wednesday, September 10

Readings:

Frank Fonda Taylor, *To Hell with Paradise*, chapters 2, 3.

Mimi Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*, chapter 2.

Week 3: Tourism and its Colonial Legacies: A New Plantation?

3. Wednesday, September 17

Readings:

Frank Fonda Taylor, *To Hell with Paradise*, chapter 6

Polly Patullo, *The Last Resorts in the Caribbean*, chapter 3

Ian Gregory Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation*, chapter 3

Week 4: Tourism and its Colonial Legacies: Race and Representations

4. Wednesday, September 24

Readings:

Mimi Sheller. *Citizenship From Below. Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom*, chapter 8

Frank Guridy, *Forging Diaspora*, chapter 4

Devyn Spence Benson, "Cuba Calls"

Week 5: Tourism and Imperialism

5. Wednesday, October 1

Readings:

Christine Skwiot, *The Purpose of Paradise*, chapters 1, 2.

Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise*, chapters 5, 6.

*****Essay #1 Due on Friday October 3*****

Week 6: Tourism Development during the Twentieth Century

6. Wednesday, October 8

Blake C. Scott, *Unpacked. A History of Caribbean Tourism*, chapter 2

Evan Ward, *Packaged Vacations: Tourism Development in the Spanish Caribbean*, chapter 1, 2

Week 7: Imagining the Paradise

7. Wednesday, October 15

Readings:

Krista A. Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics*, chapters 1, 2.

Blake C. Scott, *Unpacked. A History of Caribbean Tourism*, chapter 5

Week 8: Tourism and the Caribbean City

8. Wednesday, October 22

Readings:

Gail Saunders, *Bahamian Society after Emancipation*, chapter 9.

Rebecca Torres and Janet Momsen, “Gringolandia: Cancun and the American Tourist”

Andrea Colantino and Robert B. Potter, *Urban Tourism and Development in the Socialist State*, chapter 6.

Week 9: A World to Discover: Caribbean Tourism since the Mid-Twentieth Century

9. Wednesday, October 29

Readings:

Elizabeth S. Manley. “Created by God” (or Columbus) for Tourism: Building Tourism Fantasy in the Dominican Republic, 1966-1978”

_____ “Runway Hospitality: Air Jamaica's “Rare Tropical Birds” and the Embodied Gender and Race Politics of Tourism, 1966–1980”

Blake C. Scott, “Revolution at the hotel: Panama and luxury travel in the age of decolonization”

Week 10: Sex Tourism (Exploitation) and Gender Relations

10. Wednesday, November 5

Readings:

Kamala Kempadoo, *Sexing the Caribbean*, TBD.

Florence E. Babb, *The Tourism Encounter*, chapter 5.

Dennis-Benn, Nicole. *Here Comes the Sun*, chapter 1.

*****Response Paper Due on Friday November 7*****

Week 11: Heritage Tourism and Historical Centers

11. Wednesday, November 12

Readings:

Joseph L. Scarpaci, *Plazas and Barrios*, chapters 4, 5.

Anita M. Waters, *Planning the Past*, chapters 2, 4.

Week 12: Tourism in Socialist Cuba: A Broken Lifeline

12. Wednesday, November 19

Readings:

Evan Ward, *Packaged Vacations: Tourism Development in the Spanish Caribbean*, chapter 8

Valerio Simoni, *Tourism and Informal Encounters in Cuba*, chapter 1, 3.

Week 13: Tourism and Citizenship in the Contemporary Caribbean

13. Wednesday, November 26

Readings:

Aaron Kamugisha, "The Coloniality of Citizenship in the Contemporary Anglophone Caribbean", *Race & Class*, 49(2), 20-40.

Alfred Wong, "Caribbean Island Tourism: Pathway to Continued Colonial Servitude", *Etudes Caribeennes* 31-32, 2015.

Week 14: Caribbean Tourism at the Turn of the Century

14. Wednesday, December 3

Readings:

Tony L. Henthorne, *Tourism in Cuba*, chapter 9

Mimi Sheller, “Mobility Justice and the Return of Tourism after the Pandemic”

Week 15: The Future of Caribbean Tourism

15. Wednesday, December 10

Readings:

Benjamin Timms and Dennis Conway, “Slow Tourism at the Caribbean's Geographical Margins,” *Tourism Geographies* 14(3):396-418

Final Paper Due in Class

Course Policies

Plagiarism & Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is critical to the mission of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a research institution with high academic standards and rigor.

- Academic misconduct is governed by state law, UWS Chapter 14. Misconduct includes the following, but is not limited to this list:
- The student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation (plagiarism).
- The student uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise (using notes for a closed-book online exam).
- The student forges or falsifies academic documents or records (having a friend sign you in for attendance when you're absent).
- The student intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others.
- The student engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance (altering test answers and submitting the test for regrading).
- Assists other students in any of these act

AI Policy

This seminar strongly discourages the use of AI tools. The ultimate aim of this course is to allow the students to develop the necessary skills to produce historical knowledge and to think critically of the problems and challenges that human societies have faced historically. AI cannot replace critical thinking and will not contribute to enhance your capacities to understand and produce historical knowledge. While it seems a time-saving and helpful

tool when it comes to research and writing, AI cannot consider the nuances of key historical events in the region, let alone fully capture the major theories, approaches, concepts, and historiography debates about the history of tourism in the Caribbean.

Teaching and Learning Data Transparency Statement

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UW-Madison. The university carefully reviews and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through [learning analytics](#), and to enable proctoring capabilities. View the university's full teaching and learning [data transparency statement](#).

Campus Resources for Academic Success

- [University Health Services](#)
- [Undergraduate Academic Advising And Career Services](#)
- [Office Of The Registrar](#)
- [Office Of Student Financial Aid](#)
- [Dean Of Students Office](#)
- [Graduate Student Services](#)

Course Evaluations

Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate their enrolled courses and their learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of course development, and confidential feedback is important to the institution. UW-Madison strongly encourages student participation in course evaluations.

Digital Course Evaluation

UW-Madison uses a [digital course evaluation](#) survey tool. In most instances, students receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying them that course evaluations are available. Students receive an email with a link to log into the course evaluation with their netid. Evaluations are anonymous. Student participation is an integral component of course development, and feedback is important. UW-Madison strongly encourages student participation in course evaluations.

Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities

[Rights & Responsibilities](#)

Diversity & inclusion statement

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public

mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve wisconsin and the world.

Academic integrity statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary [sanctions](#) include, but are not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin state statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([uw-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the mcburney center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (see: [mcburney disability resource center](#))

Academic calendar & religious observances

[Academic Calendar & Religious Observances](#)