



Wifredo Lam, *La jungla* (The Jungle), 1942-43, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Senior Seminar: Art and Thought in the Caribbean

African and African Diaspora Studies 376

Spring 2019

Instructor: Dr. Mónica A. Jiménez

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Caribbean, oft thought of as a tropical playground, a place to vacation, to enjoy and consume, has also produced some of the greatest artists and thinkers of the 20th century. The region's unique political and social history served as the catalyst for some of the foremost poets, painters, writers and thinkers of anticolonial thought and surrealist art. This course is concerned with understanding how the region's history helped to shape artists and thinkers such as Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, René Depestre, Sylvia Wynter, Wifredo Lam and Carmen Herrera and how their work continues to resonate into the 21st century.

Learning Goals

The course has several objectives:

- 1) To deepen our understanding of the rich intellectual history of the Caribbean.
- 2) To understand how the history of the region has led to its construction as a place of leisure and extraction rather than of intellectual and cultural production.
- 3) To explore alternative frameworks that might enhance our understanding of the histories of the people of the Caribbean as integral to our understanding of African Diaspora Studies.
- 4) To strengthen student critical thinking and writing through focused study.

This course carries the Writing Flag.

Grade Breakdown

Active Class Participation	20%
Reading Response	15%
Leading Class Discussion	15%
RESEARCH PROJECTS	50%
• Consultation and planning (10%)	
• Art Talk-Back (15%)	
• Paper (25%)	

Expectations and Assignments:

ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVE CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%): The success of this course requires your consistent presence in class as well as your contribution to class discussion.

Each student is expected to attend class, participate in discussions, and complete all reading and writing assignments by the deadlines indicated in this syllabus or any written addenda. Class discussions are an important component and students will be graded on their participation, contributions to discussions and engagement with their peers.

The first three absences do not affect your grade. The fourth unexcused absence and every one thereafter will deduct 2 points (out of the 20 possible) from the attendance grade in the class. **You are responsible for keeping track of your absences.**

Cell phone use will not be tolerated in class. Please keep your cellphone silenced and in your pocket or bag. If you are texting in class, I will ask you to leave and you will be counted absent for that day.

RESPONSE PAPER (15%): Students are required to turn in one thoughtful 3-page reading response to the weekly readings.

Reading responses should be turned in via Canvas by 12:30 pm on Thursday of the week they are due. Students will have rotating due dates so that only 7 students will turn in papers on any particular week. I will assign you due dates for your individual response papers.

RESEARCH PROJECTS – (50%)

- Consultation and annotated bibliography (10%)
- Paper (25%)
- Art Talk Back (15%)

Students will write a 10-12 page research paper that focuses on a work of art (visual, performance, literary, musical, etc.) of your choosing and related to the topics of our course. Your final paper will entail a three-step process: 1) A consultation with the professor on your potential paper topic and sources, 2) An abstract with an annotated bibliography, and 3) a 10 minute in class art talk back at the conclusion of the semester.

Final papers are due via Canvas on Monday, May 16th by Midnight.

EXTRA CREDIT: There will be two opportunities to earn extra credit this semester:

- 1) Attend the filming of season 7 of Blackacademics Television on Thursday, February 19 at 6:30 pm, or
- 2) Attend the Black Studies @ 50: 1968/1969 conference on Friday, March 15.

To earn credit you must turn in a two-page review of the event you chose to attend. These are due any time before the last day of the semester. Reviews should be turned in via Canvas.

Required Books:

- Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000). **(Available electronically via UT library.)**
- Suzanne Césaire, *The Great Camouflage: Writings of Dissent 1941–1945*. (Wesleyan: Wesleyan University Press, 2012).
- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. (New York: Grove Press, 2008).
- Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World*. (New York: FSG, 2008).
- Edwidge Danticot, *The Farming of Bones*. (New York: Penguin, 1994).
- Junot Diaz, *Drown*, (New York: Riverhead, 1996).

All other readings will be available on Canvas or available via the UT Library.

Course Schedule**Week One**

January 22 Introduction and Course Overview.

January 24, Discussion – What is African Diaspora Studies? Why does the Caribbean Matter?

Edmund Gordon, “The Austin School Manifesto: An Approach to the Black or African Diaspora.”

Lillian Guerra, “Why Caribbean History Matters”

Week Two

January 29, On Blackness and the Human in the Wake

Christina Sharpe, “Black Studies in the Wake”

January 31,

Sylvia Wynter, “No Humans Involved’: An Open Letter to My Colleagues.”
 “The Re-Enchantment of Humanism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter”, Small Axe, 2000

Week Three

February 5, Brief History of Latin America and the Caribbean

George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America: Black Lives, 1600-2000*, Chapter 1, “On Seeing and Not Seeing.” **Available electronically via UT Library.**

February 7,

Stephan Palmié and Francisco A. Scarano, “Caribbean Counterpoints.”
 Winston James, “Culture, Labor, and Race in the Shadow of US Capital.”

Week Four

February 12, Haiti and the Aftermath of Revolution

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World*, 1-90

February 14,

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World*, 91-180.

Week Five**February 19,**

No Class – Individual Student Meetings

Extra Credit Opportunity: Attend *Blackacademics Television* Season 7 live recording, 6:30 pm at KLRU Studio 6A, Moody College of Communications.

February 21, Transnational Flows – Caribbean Thinkers on the Move

Jesse Hoffnung-Garskoff, “The Migrations of Arturo Schomburg: On Being *Antillano*, Negro, and Puerto Rican in New York, 1891-1938.”

Week Six

February 26, The Caribbean in the mid-20th Century

O. Nigel Bolland, “Labor Protests, Rebellions and the Rise of Nationalism during the Depression and the War.”

Anne S. MacPherson, “Toward Decolonization: Impulses, Processes and Consequences since the 1930’s.”

February 28, Colonialism as an Organizing Principle

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 7-46.

Week Seven**March 5,**

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 47-94.

March 7, Art of Resistance and Rage

Selections from Aimé Césaire, Wilfredo Lam, Rene Depestre, Julia de Burgos, Marigloria Plma.

Week Eight**March 12, Surrealism and Caribbean Thinking**

Suzanne Césaire, *The Great Camouflage: Writings of Dissent 1941–1945*, Introduction- Part 1.

March 14,

Suzanne Césaire, *The Great Camouflage: Writings of Dissent 1941–1945*, Part 2&3.

March 15,

Extra Credit Opportunity – Attend “Black Studies @ 50: 1968/1969” Conference

Week Nine – NO CLASS/SPRING BREAK

March 19

March 21

Week Ten**March 26, Radicality and Revolutionary Thought**

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, vii-119

March 28

Week Eleven**April 2, Radicality and Revolutionary Thought**

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 120-206.

April 4

Video: *Concerning Violence*

Week Twelve**April 9, Caribbean History in the Literary Imagination**

Edwidge Danticot, *The Farming of Bones*.

April 11, No Class

Attend Institute for Historical Studies conference: “Genealogies of Freedom.”

Week Thirteen**April 16, El Vaiven: Writing the Caribbean from the US**

Junot Diaz, *Drown*.

April 18,

Video: *Si bondye vle, Yuli/God Willing, Yuli*

Week Fourteen**April 23, Making Caribbean Women Artists Visible**

Selections from the works of Belkis Ayon, Carmen Herrera, Gina Pellón.

Readings TBD.

April 25

Video: *The 100 Years Show*.

Week Fifteen

April 30, Art Talk Backs

May 2, Art Talk Backs

Week Sixteen

May 7, Art Talk Backs

May 9, Art Talk Backs and Wrap Up

May 16 – Final Papers Due via Canvas by Midnight