

Fall 2013 MAP-UA 509 *Cultures and Contexts: The Caribbean*

Mon/Wed 12:30-1:45, Room 101, 5 Washington Place

Prof. Aisha Khan, 998-3751, ak105@nyu.edu

Office hours: Mon 2:00-5:00, Tues 10:00-12:00, and by appointment

Teaching Assistants: Joelle Nivens (jrn246@nyu.edu), Robert Chang (rchang@gmail.com),

Tiana Hayden (tbh222@nyu.edu)

**Course description**

Known for its beauty, cultural vitality, and diverse mix of peoples, cultures, and languages, the Caribbean is where today's globalization began some 500 years ago, and where the idea of "modernity" took shape. Its sugar economy and colonial history of slave labor and indenture made it the site of massive transplantations of peoples and cultures from Africa for four centuries, from Asia and the Middle East for two centuries, and, throughout, a sizeable influx of peoples from Europe.

This course examines Caribbean colonial and postcolonial history and cultures, focusing on the relationship between processes of development and exploitation of the region. It also explores local ideas about race, class, culture, gender, and sexuality, which both justify and challenge these processes. We will tack between the past and the present, in order to better understand the relationship between historical forces and contemporary processes. Our coverage will be interdisciplinary, and range across English-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and French-speaking territories.

Required reading: books

- (1) *A Small Place*, by Jamaica Kincaid (in NYU bookstore and on Bobst library reserve)
- (2) *Creole Economics: Caribbean Cunning under a French Flag*, by Katherine Browne (in NYU bookstore and on Bobst library reserve)
- (3) *The Pagoda*, by Patricia Powell (in NYU bookstore and on Bobst library reserve)
- (4) *Cultures and Contexts: Caribbean course pack* (available on line from Linus Books, website TBA, and on Bobst library reserve)

Other course requirements

All students are expected to attend lectures and recitation sections, to arrive on time, to participate in class discussions, and to complete assignments by the date they are due. Students are permitted two “free” absences (combined lecture and recitation); more than two absences will result in a drop of one letter in your final grade—UNLESS you have **verifiable documentation** of a medical or comparable emergency. **Attendance and class participation in lecture and recitation section are factored into your final grade (attendance is taken in both lecture and recitation)**, so your own efforts to be with us and participate can make a difference.

You will post **one Brief Communiqué each week** to your recitation section. These will be one or two paragraphs on some aspect of the reading or lecture material. Brief communiques will be read by everyone in your section, as well as your T.A., before the section meeting time, and discussed in section. The brief communiques, along with attendance and participation, will total **20% of your final grade**.

You will write **3 Response Papers** (see schedule of topics below for due dates). Each paper will be 4 pages, which together will **total 60% of your final grade**.

You will have **one Comprehensive Final Exam, held in class on university assigned final exam date**, which will be **20% of your final grade**. Material covered on the final exam will not include the subject matter covered in the 3 response papers.

Additional assistance for this class is available to you free of charge at the College Learning Center, located on the 1st floor of Weinstein Hall. For information on one-on-one and group peer tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: <http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc>

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Wed Sept 4th Overview of the course

Mon Sept 9th Foundations, and class exercise

Reading: Guillermo Wilson, “The Caribbean: Marvelous Cradle-Hammock and Painful Cornucopia” (in course pack)

Film: “Redemption Song”

Wed Sept 11th Foundations: interpreting the Caribbean

Reading: Trouillot, Michel-Rolph, “North Atlantic Fictions: Global Transformations, 1492-1945” (in course pack)

Mon Sept 16th Interpreting the Caribbean continued

Reading: Hall, Stuart, “Myths of Caribbean Identity” (in course pack)

Wed Sept 18th Interpreting the Caribbean continued

Reading: finish reading assignments

Mon Sept 23rd Foundations: colonialism, capitalism, modernity today

Reading: Begin *A Small Place*

Wed Sept 25th Foundations: colonialism, capitalism, modernity today continued

Reading: continue *A Small Place*

Film: “Life and Debt” (1st part)

Mon Sept 30th Foundations: colonialism, capitalism, modernity today continued

Reading: finish *A Small Place*

Film: “Life and Debt” (2nd part)

Response paper #1 due!

Wed Oct 2nd Agent Provocateurs of Primitive Accumulation (Pirates)

Reading: Marx, Jennifer, “The Golden Age of Piracy” (in course pack)

Mon Oct 7th Pirates continued

Reading: Dawdy, Shannon Lee and Joe Bonni, “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” (in course pack)

Wed Oct 9th Pirates continued

Reading: finish pirates reading

Mon Oct 14th No class

Reading: Look Lai, Walton, “Push Factors and Migration Trends in India and China” (in course pack)

Wed Oct 16th Post-emancipation labor schemes: Asian indenture

Reading: Shepherd, Verene, “Indian Migrant Women and Plantation Labour in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Jamaica: Gender Perspectives” (in course pack)

Film: “Coolies, Sailors, Settlers”

Mon Oct 21st Asian indenture continued

Reading: Yun, Lisa, “The Depositions” (in course pack)

Wed Oct 23rd Asian indenture continued

Reading: Shepherd, Verene, “Indian Women and Labour Migration” (in course pack)

Mon Oct 28th Asian indenture continued

Reading: begin *The Pagoda*

Wed Oct 30th Asian indenture continued

Reading: continue *The Pagoda*

Mon Nov 4th Asian indenture continued

Reading: finish *The Pagoda*

Film: “The Chiney Shop”

Response Paper #2 due!

Wed Nov 6th Informal Economies and the Heritage of Slavery

Reading: begin *Creole Economics*

Mon Nov 11th Informal Economies continued

Reading: continue *Creole Economics*

Wed Nov 13th Informal Economies continued

Reading: continue *Creole Economics*

Mon Nov 18th Informal Economies continued

Reading: finish *Creole Economics*

Film: “Poto Mitan”

Wed Nov 20th The Industries of Tourism

Reading: Miller, Marian, “Paradise Sold, Paradise Lost: Jamaica’s Environment and Culture in the Tourism Marketplace” (in course pack)

Mon Nov 25th The Industries of Tourism continued

Reading: Burac, Maurice, “The Struggle for Sustainable Tourism in Martinique” (in course pack)

Wed Nov 27th The Industries of Tourism continued

Reading: Phillips, Joan, “Tourist-Oriented Prostitution in Barbados” (in course pack)

Film: “The Toured”

(Thurs Nov 28th-Sun Dec 1st Thanksgiving break)

Reading: Gregory, Steven, “Men in Paradise: Sex Tourism and the Political Economy of Masculinity” (in course pack)

Mon Dec 2nd Melodies of Resistance

Reading: Niaah, Sonjah Stanley, “Making Space: Kingston’s Dancehall Culture and its Philosophy of ‘Boundarylessness’” (in course pack)

Response Paper #3 due!

Wed Dec 4th Melodies of Resistance continued

Reading: Bakare-Yusuf, Bibi, “Fabricating Identities: Survival and the Imagination in Jamaican Dancehall Culture” (in course pack)

Film: “Dancehall Queen”

Mon Dec 9th Melodies of Resistance continued

Reading: Byrd, Ayana, “Claiming Jezebel: Black Female Subjectivity and Sexual Expression in Hip-Hop” (in course pack)

Wed Dec 11th Melodies of Resistance continued

Reading: Saunders, Patricia J., “Is Not Everything Good to Eat, Good to Talk” (in course pack)

Mon Dec 16th Melodies of Resistance continued

Reading: Hope, Donna P., “From *Browning* to *Cake Soap*: Popular Debates on Skin Bleaching in the Jamaican Dancehall” (in course pack)

Wed Dec 18th Final Exam 12:00pm-1:50pm (our classroom)

