LOCATING THE CARIBBEAN: CUBAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN FOCUS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
What is the Caribbean? What is a Caribbean? If, as Michel Rolf-Trouillot states, “Caribbean societies are inescapably heterogeneous,” what are the ties that bind its people, societies, and cultures? What are the histories that not only define the region but also locate it at the center of the production of modernity/post-modernity? Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this course uses the case of Cuba as a lens through which to examine fundamental questions of place- and self-making within and beyond the Caribbean. It places special emphasis on the politics of race and nation and the shifting contours of identities that both constitute and are constituted by socio-cultural hierarchy. With an examination of epistemological questions concerning history and religion as its foundation, the course is divided into three modules: Culture, Power, History; Freedoms; and Borders and Belonging. Each week is dedicated to a particular facet of these areas of inquiry and contains a text or texts—ethnography, literature, historiography, journal articles, and/or film—that students are expected to engage in both written and oral formats. This course will also provide students with the opportunity to work on an independent research project of their choosing, which will culminate in a final term paper and presentation.

REQUIREMENTS
1. **Blackboard**: All students are required to regularly utilize Blackboard for this course. Through this website, students will be able to access course information and materials, upload the assignments, view course announcements, send and receive messages, and access grades.

2. **Attendance**: Attendance is mandatory and absences will affect your grade. If you know that you will have a conflict, notify the instructor in advance. Timely attendance is also critical; therefore, recurrent lateness will affect your participation. We will have one break during class and it is important that you return by the time class resumes.
3. **Class Participation and Facilitation**: This class is a seminar and it is critical that you come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. This class requires small group work and class facilitation in collaboration with classmates. Each student is required to submit a response paper to the week’s materials the day before class. These papers will form the basis of a document that the instructor compiles and brings to class for students to read and discuss in small groups. Upon reconvening as a class, each student will comment upon the small group discussion; in addition, one small group member will present a question or set of questions that emerge from the materials that warrants additional consideration and facilitate that discussion.

4. **Weekly Response Papers**: Unless otherwise noted, students are required to submit a 2-3 page reading response paper each week by TUESDAY at NOON. While these papers are to contain a BRIEF summary of the text(s), their aim is to engage critically with the material. Thus, they are an opportunity to present not only the main arguments of the text(s), but your response to and an analysis of those arguments. It is imperative that you adhere to the deadline of TUESDAY at NOON as these papers are integral to our in-class discussion.

5. **Three (3) Take Home Exams**: These exams will consist of one essay question that will provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate critical engagement with the key ideas and course materials in each module. The question will be posted at the conclusion of the module and you will have one week to write your 5-7 page essay.

6. **Final Research Paper and Presentation**: Each student must write a 20-page paper (excluding a bibliography and endnotes) based upon independent research on a topic approved of by the instructor. This is an opportunity to work on a facet of your graduate research project that relates to the themes of the course. Throughout the semester, there are assignments related to the term paper. These include submitting the proposed topic, presenting preliminary research to the class, submitting an annotated bibliography, and making a final presentation to the class.

**EVALUATION**
Your final grade is out of a total of 100 points and will be determined as follows:

1) Class Participation and Facilitation: 20 pts
2) Weekly Response Papers: 24 pts
3) Take home exams (3): 21 pts
4) Final Project (annotated bibliography, paper and presentation): 35 points

**TEXTS**


Behar, Ruth 2007, 2013. An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba


THE BOOKS ARE ON SALE AT THE MMC FIU BOOKSTORE AND ON RESERVE AT THE GREEN LIBRARY RESERVE DESK WHERE INDICATED. THE ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS IDENTIFIED IN THE COURSE SCHEDULE BELOW ARE AVAILABLE IN PDF FORMAT ON BLACKBOARD. FILMS ARE ON RESERVE ON THE 5th FL OF THE GREEN LIBRARY UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. ALL READINGS MUST BE DONE IN ADVANCE, ACCORDING TO THE SCHEDULE OF CLASSES (see below).

CLASS MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

CULTURE, POWER, HISTORY

**Week One:** August 24th

Introduction to the Course
* Course Materials, Assignments, Student Facilitation Schedule, Blackboard
* In Class Assignment: Danger of a Single Story

**Week Two:** August 31st
Caribbean Whose-Story

**Reading**

**Assignment**
Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, AUGUST 30th at NOON

**Week Three:** September 7th
Cuban Culture, Power, History I

**Reading**

**Assignment:**
Whose-Story?: Autobiography/Biography (2-3 double-spaced 12 pt pgs)
**What is Caribbean Culture?** This short essay can take the form of a narrative, a dialogue or an interview (with summarizing commentary) and can but need not include poetry, song lyrics, or any other form of creative expression. All students will make a brief informal presentation to the class based on this reflection.
Submit Assignment on Blackboard by Tuesday, September 6th at 11:59PM and be prepared to discuss in class.

**READING RESPONSE TO “COOKING OF HISTORY” DUE NEXT WEEK**

**Week Four:** September 14th
Cuban Culture, Power, History II


**Film**
Africa’s Oggun

**Assignment:**
1) Come to class prepared to discuss your research interest in Caribbean/Cuban Studies and potential term paper topics.
2) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th
TAKE HOME EXAM #1 QUESTION POSTED: DUE FRIDAY, SEPT 23rd

FREEDOMS

Week Five: September 21st
Maroonage

Reading


Assignment
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, September 20th
2) TAKE HOME EXAM #1 DUE FRIDAY

Week Six: September 28th
Revolution…

Reading:


Film
Egalité for All: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution

Assignment
Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th

Week Seven: October 6th
Revolution…

Reading

El Craneo de Maceo (on Blackboard)

Assignment:
1) Submit a one-paragraph description of your term paper topic to Blackboard by Wednesday October 6th
2) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5th

**Week Eight:** October 12th
And More Revolution…

**Reading**


**Assignment**
Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11th

**TAKE HOME EXAM #2 POSTED: DUE FRIDAY, OCT 21st**

**BORDERS AND BELONGING**

**Week Nine:** October 19th
NO CLASS MEETING, NO OFFICE HOURS THIS WEEK
Making the Nation

**Reading:**


**Film**
1912, Voces Para Un Silencio/1912, Breaking the Silence OR Raices de mi Corazón

**Assignment:**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18th
2) **TAKE HOME EXAM #2 DUE FRIDAY**

**Week Ten:** October 26th
Reproducing the Nation: Out of Many One and Other Fictions

**Readings**
Selections on Blackboard from Cesaire, Ortiz, Vasconcelos, Braithwaite, Smith, and Glissant

**Film**
On The Map

**Assignment**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25th
2) Prepare a 3-5 minute presentation of your final project to share with the class

**Week Eleven: November 2nd**
Diaspora Speaks

*Reading*


*Film*
Adio Kerida

**Assignment**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1st

**Week Twelve: November 9th**
Sexual Politics of Belonging I

*Reading*

**Assignment**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8th
2) Submit an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY for your final paper (at least 15 sources) DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11th

**Week Thirteen: November 16th** NO CLASS—OFFICE HOURS ON MONDAY 2-4PM
Sexual Politics of Belonging II

*Readings*
Assignment
Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15th

TAKE HOME EXAM #3 POSTED: DUE WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd

Week Fourteen: November 23rd THANKSGIVING WEEK—NO CLASS
TAKE HOME EXAM #3 DUE WEDNESDAY

Week Fifteen: November 30th
LAST DAY OF CLASS: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH

Week Sixteen: December 7th
FINAL'S WEEK

FINAL PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7th