SYD 6639 Societies and Cultures of the Caribbean
Fall 2018
Wednesdays 3:00-5:40PM
Charles Perry Building Rm 445

LOCATING THE CARIBBEAN: POWER, FREEDOMS, AND BELONGING

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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 examines 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. 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—ethnography, literature, historiography or memoir—that students are expected to engage in both written and oral formats. With a focus on the Greater Antilles, this course will provide students with the opportunity to engage core questions relevant to the region and then further explore those questions through work on an independent research project of their choosing, which will culminate in a final term paper and presentation.

REQUIREMENTS
1. Canvas: All students are required to regularly utilize Canvas 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, while each student is expected to comment upon the small group discussion, one small group member will be appointed to present a question or set of questions that emerge from the materials 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 at least 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**


THE BOOKS ARE ON SALE AT THE MMC FIU BOOKSTORE, AVAILABLE AS E-BOOKS AND/OR ON RESESRVE AT THE GREEN LIBRARY RESERVE DESK WHERE INDICATED. THE ARTICLE IDENTIFIED IN THE COURSE SCHEDULE BELOW ARE AVAILABLE IN PDF FORMAT ON CANVAS. 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 22nd

Introduction to the Course

* Course Materials, Assignments, Student Facilitation Schedule, Canvas Orientation
* In Class Assignment: Danger of a Single Story
Week Two: August 29th
Caribbean Whose-Story

Reading

Assignment
Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, AUGUST 28th at NOON

Week Three: September 5th
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 Canvas by Tuesday, September 4th at 11:59PM and be prepared to discuss in class.

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

Week Four: September 12th
Culture, Power, History II


Assignment:
1) Come to class prepared to discuss your research interest in Caribbean Studies and potential term paper topics.
2) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11th

TAKE HOME EXAM #1 QUESTION POSTED: DUE MONDAY, SEPT 24th

FREEDOMS

Week Five: September 19th
Maroonage
**Reading**

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

**Week Six:** September 26th
Revolution…

**Reading**

**Assignment**
Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th

**Week Seven:** October 3rd
Revolution…

**Reading**

**Assignment:**
1) Submit a one-paragraph description of your term paper topic to Canvas by Wednesday October 3rd
2) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2nd

**Week Eight:** October 10th
And More Revolution…

**Reading**

**Assignment**
Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9th

**TAKE HOME EXAM #2 POSTED:** DUE FRIDAY, OCT 19th

**BORDERS AND BELONGING**

**Week Nine:** October 17th
Making Nation I

**Reading:**


**Assignment:**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16th
2) TAKE HOME EXAM #2 DUE FRIDAY

**Week Ten**: October 24th
Making Nation II

**Readings**

**Assignment**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23rd
2) Prepare a 3-5 minute presentation of your final project to share with the class

**Week Eleven**: October 31st
Diaspora Speaks

**Reading**

**Assignment**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30th

**Week Twelve**: November 7th
Sexual Politics of Belonging

**Reading**

**Assignment**
1) Reading Response Paper DUE TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8th
**Week Thirteen**: November 14th  NO CLASS MEETING
Gender, Race, Sex

*Reading*

*Assignment*
1) Reading Response Paper Due TUESDAY November 13th
2) Submit an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY for your final paper (at least 20 scholarly sources, 10 pts) **DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16th**

**TAKE HOME EXAM #3 POSTED: DUE WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21st**

**Week Fourteen**: November 21st  THANKSGIVING WEEK—NO CLASS

**TAKE HOME EXAM #3 DUE WEDNESDAY**

**Week Fifteen**: November 28th
LAST DAY OF CLASS: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH

**Week Sixteen**: December 5th
FINALS WEEK

**FINAL PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5th**