Course Overview

This course provides an introduction to the geography of the Caribbean. The course studies the countries, subregions, and peoples, and their regional organizations. The class will offer you with the basic knowledge of the physical environment, political geography, population distribution, economic development, and ways of life. Emphasis will be placed upon the changing societies of the region, the role of political economy, and the changing relationships between people and their environment.

However, much geographical information cannot be contained in any textbook, or covered by any length of lectures. In this class, you will be introduced to some tools for geographical exploration that range from searching for information to critically processing it. You will not be required to memorize trivial facts. Instead, I expect you to understand important concepts and explain processes and ideas that shape this region.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the term, students will be able to:
- Describe and understand the basic concepts and facts of Caribbean geography;
- Understand and explain how local and global political economic relations have shaped contemporary Caribbean life;
- Understand and explain how human populations interact with their environments to make cultural landscapes;
- Understand and explain the centrality of hybridity to contemporary Caribbean life;
- Conduct and present, in written and oral form, geographic research on political economic, cultural, and environment topics related to the Caribbean region.

Readings

This textbook provides a good geographical overview of the Caribbean region. However, it is dated in some respects. We will use some chapters from this text; other supplemental readings will be posted electronically on the course Blackboard page.

**Important Dates**
Aug 30 – Map Quiz 1
Sep 14 – Map Quiz 2
Oct 10 – Exam 1
Oct 24 – Annotated bibliography
Nov 30 – Group research papers due
Dec 5 – Final exam (9:45-11:45)

**Grading**
There will be 500 total points available in this class, broken down as follows:
50 points: Six 10-point in-class quizzes (lowest grade is dropped)
50 points: Two in-class map quizzes (25 points each)
100 points: Midterm exam
100 points: Final exam
200 points: Group research project, consisting of:
  70 points: final paper
  50 points: presentation
  70 points: in-class research activities
  10 points: annotated bibliography

500 points total

The grading scale is: which translates to, in points:
A = 100-93%, A: 500 thru 465 points
A- = 92.9-90%, A-: 464 thru 450 points
B+ = 89.9-87%, B+: 449 thru 435 points
B = 86.9-83%, B: 434 thru 415 points
B- = 82.9-80%, B-: 414 thru 400 points
C+ = 79.9-77%, C+: 399 thru 385 points
C = 76.9-70%, C: 384 thru 350 points
D = 69.9-60%, D: 349 thru 300 points
F = 59.9-0%, F: 299 thru 0 points

**Assignments**

**Exams**
Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay questions drawn from lectures, readings, videos, etc. – basically anything covered in class or assigned. Each exam covers only material covered since the previous exam. This includes the final. That does not mean major concepts should be completely forgotten after first tested – indeed some concepts will be covered again and again. **NB: essays will be worth a significant amount of points on the test, because this is a largely conceptual class.**
**Group Research Project**
This assignment will enable you to work with two to three other peers to conduct research on the political economic history of a specific Caribbean country. It is divided into four parts, which will give you experience conducting and presenting research: preparing an annotated bibliography, conducting research using secondary sources, preparing a written text, and designing and giving an oral presentation of your findings. While these are important for academic research, they are also skills and techniques you will utilize in a number of relevant career paths, whether this involves GIS work, policy analysis and advocacy, urban planning, locational analysis, and so forth.

**Quizzes and attendance**
During the course of the term, we will have six unscheduled quizzes and/or activities relating to readings and/or material we covered previously in class. Each quiz will be worth 10 points, and the lowest grade will be dropped. Note that this is a total of 50 points – or 10% of your final grade. This is one letter grade – so the easiest way to ensure a strong grade is to make sure you come to class and get these points!

We will also have two scheduled map quizzes on the political and physical geography of the Caribbean, respectively. Study guides will be provided before, and the map quizzes will be marked through peer review.

All students are expected to attend class, take notes, and participate. There are no excused absences or assignments except in the case of hospitalization or a religious holiday, both of which require hard copy documentation. If you are not present when materials are collected for points, you will forfeit those points.

**Academic Integrity, Cheating and Plagiarism:**
Cheating and plagiarism are done by pathetic and desperate people – don’t be one of them. If you plagiarize on your research assignment, or cheat on an exam – you will receive at minimum a zero on that assignment, which instantly drops your score for the course by about two full letter grades. If you find yourself in a desperate situation while taking a test or up against a deadline – turn in the best work you can do at the time. Getting an F usually means you will get some points – getting caught cheating means you get zero. Furthermore, depending on the severity of the case, I can choose to pursue harsher penalties, including assigning an F0 for the course or pursuing your expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the FIU student handbook’s sections on cheating and plagiarism. Also, if you need to know more about how to not plagiarize, please check out the following websites:

1) “Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It (Indiana University)” at [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html)
2) “Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Words (Purdue University)” at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_paraphr.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_paraphr.html)
Absences & Make-Up

Excused absences include serious illness; illness of a spouse or dependent; death of an immediate family member; University-sponsored trips; and major religious holy days. It is your responsibility to inform me of the absence in advance of class by e-mail (and within 2 weeks of the start of class if it is a university trip or holy day), but no later than two class sessions after the missed class. In order to have an absence excused, you must provide original documentation which I can keep. If this is done, and I determine the absence to be excused, I will do my best make sure you make up what you missed.

Make-up exams will only be given in extreme circumstances. The make-up exam will not necessarily be the same one given to those who took the test on the established date, and will be given during the final examination period, during which time you will take both the make-up exam and the final. To sit a make-up exam, you must 1) provide documentation to me in class within two class periods of the missed exam addressing why your absence qualifies as excused 2) have that documentation accepted by me 3) email me asking to be given a make-up exam and 4) receive back an email from me confirming a make-up exam will be given.

Your choices to attend or not attend have consequences – just like they would at work. I take my responsibilities and role as a teacher seriously; I hope you hold your role and responsibility as a student in equal respect.

Disability Clause

Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. In order to receive accommodation, however, students with must register with Disability Resource Center:

GC 190 Voice: 305.348.3532 TTY: 305.348.3852 Fax: 305.348.3850 Email: drcupgl@fiu.edu

Course Schedule

***This schedule is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. If it changes, the changes will be announced in class. It is the responsibility of the student to mark the changes on the schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Aug 22 &amp; 24</td>
<td>Introduction Physical geography</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
<td>Assign research groups – Aug 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 – Aug 29 &amp; 31</td>
<td>Caribbean mobilities Identity and difference</td>
<td>Ch. 2, Sheller 2003 (22-35) Said 1978</td>
<td>Aug 31 – Map Quiz 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 – Sep 5 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Plantation economies and their legacy</td>
<td>Ch. 3 (Sep 5); Sheller 2003</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Readings</td>
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<td>4 – Sep 12 &amp; 14</td>
<td>Colonialism and slave resistance</td>
<td>Sheller 2005; Heuman 2005</td>
<td>Sep 14 – Map Quiz 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 – Sep 19 &amp; 21</td>
<td>Post-war Caribbean I: legacies of colonialism</td>
<td>Ch. 5; Ch. 7 277-293</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – Sep 26 &amp; 28</td>
<td>Sep 26 – Post-war Caribbean II: Independence Sept 28 – Project proposals</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
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<td>7 – Oct 3 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Post-war Caribbean: Industrialization and resistance</td>
<td>Ch. 8: 316-332; Meeks 2000</td>
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<td>8 – Oct 10 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Exam 1 – Oct 10 Neoliberal development I</td>
<td>Ch. 8; Klak 2004; Klein 2007</td>
<td>Oct 10 – Exam 1</td>
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<td>9 – Oct 17 &amp; 19</td>
<td>Neoliberal development II - Offshoring</td>
<td>Ch. 9; Panama Papers</td>
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<td>10 – Oct 24 &amp; 26</td>
<td>Neoliberal development III – Globalization</td>
<td>Ch. 10; Mullings 2009</td>
<td>Oct 24 – Annotated bibliography</td>
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<td>11 – Oct 31 &amp; Nov 2</td>
<td>Neoliberal development IV – Tourism</td>
<td>Ch. 11 (Nov 8); Sheller 2003</td>
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<td>12 – Nov 7 &amp; 9</td>
<td>Life and Debt</td>
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<td>13 – Nov 14 &amp; 16</td>
<td>Contemporary issues: finance and resistance</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>14 – Nov 21 Thanksgiving break – Nov 23</td>
<td>Contemporary issues: disasters and development Nov. 23 – No class!!!</td>
<td>Mullings et al 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 – Nov 28 &amp; 30</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Group research papers – Nov 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 – Dec 5 Exam Week</td>
<td>Final Exam – Tues, Dec 5, 9:45 - 11:45</td>
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