

English 4049
Topics in Caribbean Literature and Culture
Cultural Representation: Literature, Visual Arts, Performance, Film

Semester II, 2017 - 2018

Fridays, 1:00 – 4:20

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Office Hours:

Janter 241. Thursdays 1-4:30 and by appointment

The course explores varying notions of the Caribbean and Caribbean culture, including the languages spoken and scribal (literary) and non-scribal forms of creative expression. Does such a space as “The Caribbean” exist in any except ideological or mythical terms? Can “the Caribbean” be defined in geographical, geopolitical, economic, social, and especially cultural terms? What needs to be examined – languages, literatures, cultural performances, music, dance, film—to begin to shape an idea of the Caribbean as an area of study and transcultural beliefs and practices?

Readings:

Jab: The Blue Devils of Paramin (film).

Simone Schwarz-Bart, *My Handsome Captain* (Play)

Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island* (selections).

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets* (selections)

Eric Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance* (selections)

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (novel)

Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (selections).

Earl Lovelace, *The Wine of Astonishment* (Novel)

Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones* (Novel)

Selections of poems by a range of Caribbean poets, including

Louise Bennett, Martin Carter, Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott,
and Lorna Goodison

Derek Walcott, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (play)

Mervyn Alleyne, *The Roots of Jamaican Culture* (selections).

E. Kamau Brathwaite. *History of the Voice*.

Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban: Notes on the Culture of Our America* (selections).

Song of Redemption and *Art Connect* (films)

Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead* (selections).

The Harder They Come (Film)

Dancehall Queen (Film)

(Nearly all texts will be available in digital versions or through the Richardson Seminar Room.)

Changes and substitutions may be necessary during the course.

Course requirements:

(1) Attendance and participation. The course will be handled as an interactive seminar and much of the discussion will be student generated. You must be present to give reports, participate in discussions and forums, see films, and listen to reports and lectures. (25%)

- (2) There are no examinations but each student will submit at least two (2) written analyses of works read (25%) and give at least two (2) oral reports as part of student forums (25%).
(3) There will also be a final written project (and an oral presentation of it). This will be defined as the class progresses. (25%)

Grading system: A, B, C, D, F; Incompletes are discouraged and require consultation with the professor.

ATENCIÓN:

De ser necesario, se realizará evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes necesidades especiales.

Las y los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el/la profesor/a al inicio del semestre para planificar al acomodo razonable y equipo asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Persona con Impedimento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos/as estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren algún tipo de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el/la profesor/a.

Program: (**The order of readings can change depending on conditions during the semester.**)

Week 1: Course Introduction; texts, requirements, basic premises and assignments
Jab (documentary film)

Week 2: Simone Schwarz-Bart, *Your Handsome Captain* (play)
Antonio Benitez Rojo, *The Repeating Island* (Chap. I)
Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Caliban*

Week 3: Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (selections)
Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets* (selections)
Eric Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance*
(selections)
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (novel)

Week 4: J. Edward Chamberlin, *If This is Your Land Where are Your Stories: Finding Common Ground*
(selections)
Mervyn Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican Culture* (selection)
Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*

Week 5: Creative Expression: Mask Workshop; languages without words.

Week 6: Derek Walcott, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (play)
Elizabeth Cooper, "The Conundrum of Race: Retooling Inequality" (in Palmié and Scarano. *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its People*)
H. Hoetink, "'Race' and Color in the Caribbean" (in Mintz and Price, *Caribbean Contours*)

Week 7: Culture; Cultural Resistance; Cultural Survival
Earl Lovelace, *The Wine of Astonishment* (Novel)
Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (selection)

Week 8: Edwidge Danicat, *The Farming of Bones* (novel)

Week 9: *Song of Redemption* and *Art Connect* (films)

Week 10: *The Harder They Come* (film); *Dance Hall Queen* (film)

Week 11: Caribbean Cultural Marathon (topics to be announced)

Week 12: Caribbean Cultural Marathon (continued)

Books to buy or download from Internet sources: Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Derek Walcott, *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, Earl Lovelace, *The Wine of Astonishment*, and Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*.

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