What constitutes revolutionary thinking? Our course will examine the Caribbean in four units as a site where radical challenges to and within Western thought have emerged. The first unit begins with the 16th-century theological problem of how to explain the existence of the American continent when these lands were unaccounted for in the Scriptures; this unit ends with the debate in the Spanish court and universities at that time on whether the “Indian” possessed a soul. The second unit focuses on the enigmas of freedom during the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), when slaves defeated Napoleon’s army, thereby creating the world’s only successful slave rebellion and the second independent nation-state in the hemisphere. The third unit examines the Cuban Socialist Revolution (1959) through an interrogation of the relationship between man and society that Fidel Castro and Che Guevara advocated. The final unit investigates whether the Caribbean is currently undergoing a revolution based on neoliberal economics; the focus will be on Jamaica and its long traditions of both participating in and resisting the world economy. Materials for analysis will also include political speeches, films, and song lyrics.

Booklist (Purchase at NYU Bookstore)

- Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies*
- C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins*
- Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*
- Marx and Engels, Rosa Luxemburg, Che Guevara, *Manifesto: Three Classic Essays on How To Change the World*
- Edmundo Desnoes, *Memories of Underdevelopment*
- Bonham C. Richardson, *The Caribbean In the Wider World, 1492-1992*

Additional Books on Reserve at Bobst Library

- Edmundo O’Gorman, *The Invention of America*
- Franklin Knight, *The Caribbean:*
Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*
Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*
Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History and the Gods*
Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed*
Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*
Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island*
Román de La Campa, *Cuba On My Mind*
Gerard Aching, *Masking and Power*

**Evaluation of Final Grade:**

- 3 Papers (5 pages each): 45%
- 1 Mid-Term Exam: 15%
- Participation (& Attendance): 15%
- Final Exam: 25%

**Attendance Policy:**

You are expected to attend all lectures and recitation sections. Please note that more than 4 unexcused absences during the semester will result in the reduction of your final grade. Obviously, you cannot participate if you do not attend the lectures and recitation sections. *(A helpful hint: since participation will amount to 15% of your final grade, please take the time to participate in your recitation sections in ways that will be meaningful for your own learning experience and that of your classmates. Good participation does not mean participating for the sake of participating but answering questions intelligently and also posing good ones.)*

**Readings and Assignments:**

[(Bb) = document on Blackboard site]

**Tuesday, September 6:**

Introduction: “Maps”

**Thursday, September 8:**


**Unit 1: “Discovery,” “Conquest,” and the Souls of the Indigenous**

**Tuesday, September 13:**

Readings: Anthony Pagden, “The Legacy of Rome” & “Monarchia Universalis” [in *Lords of All the World* (Yale, 1995)] (Bb)

Edmundo O’Gorman, The Invention of America (Bb)
Thursday, September 15:

Tuesday, September 20:
Readings: Bartolomé de Las Casas, The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account (Johns Hopkins, 1992)
Matthew Restall, “The Indians Are Coming to an End: The Myth of Native Desolation” (Bb)

Thursday, September 22:
Readings: Anthony Pagden, “The Theory of Natural Slavery” (Bb)

Tuesday, September 27:
Readings: Anthony Pagden, “From Nature’s Slaves to Nature’s Children” (Bb)

Thursday, September 29:
Turn in: First Paper (5 pages)

DEBATE

Unit 2: Slavery and the Haitian Revolution

Tuesday, October 4:
Readings: C.L.R James, “Prologue,” “The Property,” and “The Owners” in The Black Jacobins

Viewing: Tomás González Alea, La última cena [The Last Supper] (first half of film)

Thursday, October 6:

Tuesday, October 11:
Readings: Sibylle Fischer, “Foundational Fictions: Postrevolutionary Constitutions,” From Modernity Disavowed (Bb)
Thursday, October 13:
Readings: Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, Part One

Tuesday, October 18:
Readings: Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, Parts Two and Three

Thursday, October 20:
**Turn in:** Second Paper (5 pages)

Readings: Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*, Part Four
C.L.R. James, “Appendix: From Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro” in *The Black Jacobins*

Tuesday, October 25: **Mid-Term Exam**

**Unit 3: The Cuban Socialist Revolution**

Thursday, October 27:
Readings: Marx and Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” in *Manifesto*

Tuesday, November 1:
Readings: Louis A. Pérez, Jr., “Cuba, c. 1930-1959” in *Cuba: A Short History* (Bb)

Viewing: Mikhail Kalatozov (Dir.), *Soy Cuba/ I Am Cuba* (first two episodes)

Thursday, November 3:
Readings: Che Guevara, “Socialism and Man in Cuba” in *Manifesto*

Tuesday, November 8:
Readings: Edmundo Desnoes, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, from beginning to page 50

Thursday, November 10:
Readings: Edmundo Desnoes, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, from page 50 to end

Tuesday, November 15:
Turn in: Third Paper (5 pages)

Readings: Contemporary Cuba, TBA

Unit 4: The Neo-Liberal Economic Revolution

Thursday, November 17:
Readings: Martin Kohr, “A Closer Look: The World Bank” (Bb) and Anwar Shaikh, “Globalization and the Myth of Free Trade” (Bb)

Tuesday, November 22:
Readings: Leonard Barrett, Sr., “Paradise Island” from The Rastafarians (Bb) and Bob Marley’s lyrics (Bb)
Listen: Bob Marley’s Songs (Bb)

Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, November 29:
Readings: Leonard Barrett, Sr., “Ethiopianism in Jamaica” (Bb)

Thursday, December 1:
Readings: Excerpts from Jamaica Kincaid’s A Small Place (Bb)
Viewing: Stephanie Black (Dir.), Life and Debt

Tuesday, December 6:
Analysis of Black’s Film.

Thursday, December 8:

Conclusion & Exam Preparation

Tuesday, December 13: Final Exam