Course description

This course examines the impact of the Caribbean’s long colonial history through the relationship between processes of development and exploitation of the region and the ideas about race, class, culture, gender, and sexuality that both justify and challenge these processes. Known for its beauty, cultural vitality, and mix of peoples, cultures, and languages, the Caribbean is where today’s globalization began, some 500 years ago. Its sugar economy and history of slave labor and colonialism made it the site of massive transplantations of peoples and cultures from Africa for more than four centuries, from Asia since the mid-nineteenth century, and, throughout, a sizeable influx of peoples from Europe and the Middle East. Our readings examine the history of the region’s differing forms of colonialism, including contemporary (neocolonial) economic and political structures, and anthropological considerations of identity and community life, social stratification, local worldviews, the politics of popular culture, and the ways in which community, national, regional, and global connections are formed, and expressed as today’s “globalization.” Our coverage will range over the Caribbean region, including Antigua, Martinique, Trinidad, Haiti, Jamaica, and Barbados.

Required reading: books

All of the following books in the NYU bookstore; they are also on reserve in Bobst Library.
(1) *A Small Place*, by Jamaica Kincaid
(2) *Crick Crack Monkey*, by Merle Hodge
(3) *Georges Woke Up Laughing*, by Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron
(4) *Creole Economics*, by Katherine Browne
(5) *Behind the Smile*, by George Gmelch

Required reading: articles and chapters from books

See schedule of topics below; each of these readings will be accessible online (they are marked by a ** on the syllabus).

Other course requirements

All students are expected to attend lectures and recitation sections, to arrive on time, to participate in class discussions, and to complete assignments by the date they are due. Students are permitted two “free” absences (combined lecture and recitation); more than two absences will result in a drop of one letter in your final grade—unless you have verifiable documentation of a medical or comparable emergency.

1. **Attendance and class participation are worth 15% of your final grade**, so your own efforts to be with us and participate can make a big difference.
2. There will be **three in-class exams (essay format), worth 15%, 15%, and 15%**,
respectively (total = 45%), of your final grade. You will receive a study guide for each exam on Blackboard, at least one class meeting before the exam. See schedule of topics below for dates of in-class exams.

(3) **There will be six response essays, each worth 5% (total = 30%) of your final grade.** You will receive your response essay questions throughout the semester on Blackboard; see schedule of topics below for essay deadlines.

(4) Students will also keep a **reading journal, worth 10% of your final grade**, which you will hand in twice, at mid- and end of semester. Journal guidelines will be posted on Blackboard.

**Schedule of Topics**

Wed 9/7 Overview of the course  
reading: begin *A Small Place*

Mon 9/12 Class exercise, and Historical Foundations: Colonialism  
reading: continue *A Small Place*  
**film:** “Life and Debt” (1st part)

Wed 9/14 Historical foundations: Colonialism  
reading: finish *A Small Place*  
**film:** “Life and Debt” (2nd part)

Mon 9/19 Colonialism continued  
reading: **Richardson, “A Colonized Environment”**

Wed 9/21 Colonialism continued  
reading: **Mintz, “Slavery and the Afro-American World”**  
due: response essay #1

Mon 9/26 Global-Local: The Heritage of Slavery  
reading: begin *Creole Economics*

Wed 9/28 Heritage of Slavery continued  
reading: continue *Creole Economics*

Mon 10/3 Heritage of Slavery continued  
reading: finish *Creole Economics*

Wed 10/5 Global-Local: Tourism  
reading: begin *Behind the Smile*  
due: response essay #2

Mon 10/10 No class

Wed 10/12 **EXAM #1**
Mon 10/17 Tourism continued
reading: continue *Behind the Smile*

Wed 10/19 Tourism continued
reading: finish *Behind the Smile*
**film:** “The Toured”

Mon 10/24 Tourism continued
reading: **Phillips, “Tourist Oriented Prostitution in Barbados”**

Wed 10/26 Local-Global: Gendered Music
reading: **Mohammed, “A Blueprint for Gender in Creole Trinidad...”**
**film:** “Soca: Soul to Sale”
Mon 10/31 Gendered Music continued
reading: **Ross, “Mr. Reggae DJ, Meet the International Monetary Fund”**
**audio:** sampling calypsos and soca

Wed 11/2 Debating Dancehall
reading: **Niaah, “Making Space: Kingston’s Dancehall Culture...”**

due: response essay #3

Mon 11/7 Debating Dancehall continued
reading: **Ulysse, “Uptown Ladies and Downtown Women...”**

due: reading journals

Wed 11/9 Debating Dancehall continued
reading: **Byrd, “Claiming Jezebel: Black Female Subjectivity...”**

Mon 11/14 Local-Global: Gender, Family and Household
reading: **Morrissey, “Explaining the Caribbean Family”**

Wed 11/16 Gender, Family, and Household continued
reading: continue above

due: response essay #4

Mon 11/21 Gender, Family, and Household continued
reading: begin *Crick Crack Monkey*

Wed 11/23 Gender, Family, and Household continued
(Monday schedule)
reading: finish *Crick Crack Monkey*

Mon 11/28 **EXAM #2**
Wed 11/30 Global-Local: Migration
reading: ** Richardson, “Human Migrations”
due: response essay #5

Mon 12/5 Migration continued
reading: begin Georges Woke Up Laughing
(Monday schedule)

Wed 12/7 Migration continued
reading: continue Georges Woke Up Laughing
**Guest speaker:** Prof. Javier Totti (on Dominican and Puerto Rican migration)
**film:** “Dreams Ensnared”

Mon 12/12 Migration continued
reading: continue Georges Woke Up Laughing

Wed 12/14 Migration continued
reading: finish Georges Woke Up Laughing
due: response essay #6
due: reading journals

Wed 12/21 EXAM #3 (12:00pm-1:50pm)