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 and the Middle East since the mid-nineteenth century, and, throughout, a sizeable influx of peoples from Europe. 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.

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) What’s Love Got To Do With It, Denise Brennan
(3) Creole Economics, by Katherine Browne
(4) Behind the Smile, by George Gmelch

Required reading: articles and chapters from books

See schedule of topics below. The readings marked by a ** on the syllabus will be accessible on Blackboard.

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 in lecture and recitation section are worth 20% of your final grade, so your own efforts to be with us and participate can make a big difference.
(2) There will be five essays (3-4 pages each), each worth 10% (total = 50% of your final grade). You will receive the questions on Blackboard at least one class meeting before the due date. See schedule of topics below for essay due dates.

(3) There will be one comprehensive final exam, held in class on university assigned final exam date (total = 30% of your final grade). You will receive on Blackboard an exam study guide one week in advance of final exam date.

(4) Students in each recitation section will post weekly to each other one paragraph called a brief communiqué on some aspect of the reading or lecture material (tba by your T.A. or by me). These brief communiques will be read by everyone in their section before the section meeting time, and discussed in section. The brief communiques will be figured into your attendance and participation grade (above).

Additional assistance for this class is available to you free of charge at the College Learning Center located on the 1st Floor of Weinstein Hall (right behind Java City). For information on one-on-one and group peer tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc

Schedule of Topics

Wed 9/6 Overview of the course
reading: **Richardson, “A Colonized Environment”

Mon 9/11 Historical Foundations: Class exercise, Colonialism
reading: continue above 9/6

Wed 9/13 Historical foundations: Colonialism continued
reading: begin A Small Place
film: “Life and Debt” (1st part)

Mon 9/18 Historical Foundations: Colonialism continued
reading: finish A Small Place
film: “Life and Debt” (2nd part)

Wed 9/20 Colonialism continued, Global-Local: The Heritage of Slavery
reading: **Mintz, “Slavery and the Afro-American World”

Mon 9/25 Global-Local: The Heritage of Slavery continued
reading: begin Creole Economics
Due: paper #1

Wed 9/27 Heritage of Slavery continued
reading: continue Creole Economics
Mon 10/2  Heritage of Slavery continued  
reading: finish Creole Economics  

Wed 10/4  Global-Local: Tourism  
reading: (1) **Pattullo, “The Lock and the Key: History and Power”; (2) **Pattullo, “Linkages and Leakages: The Planning Factor”  

Mon 10/10  No class (Columbus Day)  
reading: continue above 10/4  

Wed 10/11  Tourism continued  
reading: begin Behind the Smile  

Mon 10/16  Tourism continued  
reading: finish Behind the Smile  
Due: paper #2  

Wed 10/18  Tourism continued  
reading: **Phillips, “Tourist Oriented Prostitution in Barbados”  
**film: “The Tourist”  

Mon 10/23  Global-Local: Carnival and its Music  
reading: **Stuempfle, “Festive and Musical Traditions in Trinidad”  
**film: “Soca: Soul to Sale”  

Wed 10/25  Carnival and its Music continued  
reading: **Manuel, “Trinidad Calypso and Carnival”  

Mon 10/30  Debating Dancehall  
reading: (1) **Niaah, “Making Space: Kingston’s Dancehall Culture...”; (2) **Ulysse, “Uptown Ladies and Downtown Women...”  

Wed 11/1  Debating Dancehall continued  
reading: **Byrd, “Claiming Jezebel: Black Female Subjectivity”  
**film: excerpts from dvd, “Dance Hall Divas”  
Due: paper #3  

Mon 11/6  Global-Local: Migration  
reading: **Conway, “The Caribbean Diaspora”  

Wed 11/8  Migration continued  
reading: **Duany, “Reconstructing Racial Identity...”
Mon 11/13 Migration continued
reading: **Waters, “Growing Up West Indian and African American”

Wed 11/15 Global-Local: Love and Desire
reading: begin What's Love Got To Do With It?
Due: paper #4

Mon 11/20 Love and Desire continued
reading: continue What's Love...?

Wed 11/22 (Monday schedule) Love and Desire continued
reading: continue What's Love...?

Mon 11/27 Love and Desire continued
reading: finish What's Love...?

Wed 11/29 Global-Local: Rastafari
reading: **Fernandez Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert, “Rastafarianism”

Mon 12/4 Rastafari continued
reading: **Chevannes, “Rastafari and the Exorcism of the Ideology of Racism and Classism...”
Due: paper #5

Wed 12/6 Rastafari continued
reading: **McFarlane, “The Epistemological Significance of ‘I-an-I...”

Mon 12/11 Rastafari continued
reading: **Giovannetti, “Jamaican Reggae and the Articulation of Social...”

Wed 12/13 Rastafari continued
reading: continue above
film: “The Land of Look Behind”

Final exam: Wed, Dec 20th, 12:00-1:50pm