

Spring 2020 CORE-UA 509 Cultures and Contexts: Caribbean

Mon/Wed 12:30-1:45, Silver 408

Professor Aisha Khan, ak105@nyu.edu, (212) 998-3751

Office hours: Mon 2:30-4:00, 25 Waverly Place, room 606

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*Course description*

Known for its beauty, cultural vitality, and diverse mix of peoples, cultures, and languages, the Caribbean is where today's globalization began some 500 years ago, and where the idea of "modernity" took shape. Its sugar economy and colonial history of slave labor and indenture made it the site of massive transplantations of peoples and cultures from Africa for four centuries, from Asia and the Middle East for two centuries, and, throughout, a sizeable influx of peoples from Europe.

This course examines Caribbean colonial and postcolonial histories and cultures, focusing on the relationship between processes of development and exploitation of the region. It also explores local ideas about race, class, culture, gender, and sexuality, which both justify and challenge these processes. We will tack between the past and the present, in order to better understand the relationship between historical and contemporary forces. Our coverage will be interdisciplinary, and will include ethnographic and other non-fiction works, fiction, and films.

Required reading (in campus bookstore)

- (1) Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*
- (2) L. Kaifa Roland, *Cuban Color in Tourism and La Lucha: An Ethnography of Racial Meanings*
- (3) Course pack, *Cultures & Contexts: Caribbean*

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 will write **3 Response Essays**, which will total **75% of the final grade (up to 25 points for each essay)**.

Students will take **1 Comprehensive Final Exam**, which will be **25% of the final grade (up to 25 points)**. Material covered in the three response essays will not be included in the final exam.

Grading scales

Each assignment: 25-24 = A, 23-22 = A-, 21-20 = B+, 19-17 = B, 16 = B-, 15 = C+, 14 = C, 13 = C-, 12-10 = D, 9-0 = F

Overall: 100-95=A, 94-90=A-, 89-85=B+, 84-80=B, 79-75=B-, 74-70=C+, 69-65=C, 64-60=C-, 59-50=D, 49-0=F

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. For information about 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 and Assignments

Mon 1/27 Overview of the course

Wed 1/29 Foundations: Class exercise

Reading: Barker, "Geographies of Opportunity, Geographies of Constraint" (course pack)

Film: "Redemption Song: Iron in the Soul," Episode 1, parts A and B

Mon 2/3 Foundations: Interpreting the Caribbean

Reading: McGregor, "Contemporary Caribbean Ecologies: The Weight of History" (course pack)

Wed 2/5 Foundations: Indigenous peoples

Reading: Curet, “The Earliest Settlers” (course pack)

Mon 2/10 Indigenous peoples continued

Reading: (1) Hulme, “Caribs and Awawaks,” (course pack) (2) Funes Monzote, “The Columbian Moment: Politics, Ideology, and Biohistory” (course pack)

Wed 2/12 Indigenous peoples continued

Reading: Sued-Badillo, “From Tainos to Africans in the Caribbean” (course pack)

Mon 2/17 NO CLASSES

Wed 2/19 Colonialism, Capitalism, Globalization

Reading: start Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Mon 2/24 Colonialism, Capitalism, Globalization (continued)

Reading: continue *A Small Place*

Response essay #1!

Wed 2/26 Colonialism, capitalism, globalization continued

Reading: continue *A Small Place*

Film: “Life and Debt,” part 1

Mon 3/2 Colonialism, capitalism, globalization continued

Reading: continue *A Small Place*

Film: “Life and Debt,” part 2

Wed 3/4 Colonialism, capitalism, globalization continued

Reading: finish *A Small Place*

Mon 3/9 Agent provocateurs of primitive accumulation (pirates)

Reading: Marx, “The Golden Age of Piracy” (course pack)

Wed 3/11 Pirates continued

Reading: <http://mentalfloss.com/article/58889/9-female-pirates-you-should-know>

Film: “Great Ships, Pirate Ships” (50 minutes)

Mon 3/16—Sun 3/22 **BREAK**

Mon 3/23 Post-emancipation labor schemes: Asian indenture

Reading: Look Lai, “Push Factors and Migration Trends in India and China” (course pack)

Film: “Coolies, Sailors, Settlers” (Kanopy streaming)

Wed 3/25 Post-emancipation labor schemes: Asian indenture

Reading: Faruqee, “Conceiving the Coolie Woman: Indentured Labour, Indian Women and Colonial Discourse” (course pack)

Mon 3/30 Asian indenture continued

Reading: finish Look Lai and Faruqee

Response essay #2!

Wed 4/1 Asian indenture continued

Reading: (1) Yun, “The Depositions” (e-book, Bobcat)

Mon 4/6 Asian indenture continued

Reading: Helly, selections from *The Cuba Commission Report* (course pack)

Wed 4/8 Asian indenture continued

Reading: continue above

Film: “Finding Samuel Lowe”

(Kanopy streaming)

Mon 4/13 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: start Roland, *Cuban Color*

Wed 4/15 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: continue *Cuban Color*

Mon 4/20 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: continue *Cuban Color*

Wed 4/22 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: finish *Cuban Color*

Mon 4/27 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: O’Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor, Ch. 2, “Fantasy Islands,” in *Sun, Sex, and Gold* (e-book, Bobcat)

Film: “The Toured”

Response essay #3!

Wed 4/29 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: Wilkes, chapter 6, “The Postfeminist Bride...,” in *Whiteness, Weddings, and Tourism* (e-book, Bobcat)

Mon 5/4 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: Cabezas, “Women’s Work is Never Done,” in *Sun, Sex, and Gold* (e-book, Bobcat)

Wed 5/6 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: Naipaul, “The Baker’s Story” (course pack)

Mon 5/11 Postcolonial inheritances

Reading: Hope, “From Browning to Cake Soap” (course pack)

FINAL EXAM: tba, University schedule