LAH 3725

The Black Caribbean:
Race, Religion & Revolution

Introduction to the Societies and History Examined in this Course

This course explores the conceptual emergence of “the Caribbean” by plotting the creation of imperial ideologies and institutions through the consolidation of slavery, ideas of white supremacy, colonial rule and a global system of capitalism. Resistance to imperialism and the inequality that imperial economies generated is a key focus of the course. We will examine resistance in a wide variety of forms, including rebellion, revolution and the formulation of alternative value systems among slaves, pirates, black workers, intellectuals and spiritual movements such as Rastafarianism and radical Christianities.

The societies, struggles and cultures of the Caribbean are foundational to understanding the roots of all historical processes forged in the Western Hemisphere, from the colonial period to the present day. In the fifteenth century when Europeans first arrived in the New World, the Caribbean became the first region of the New World to encounter the belief systems, economic interests and ideologies that would forge experiences central to our history as “Americans” and as citizens or residents of the United States. The Caribbean formed the site of the first indigenous genocide, the development of slavery as the basis of a global economy based on capitalist consumption, and social revolutions of the most profound and far-reaching consequences the world has ever known. Imperial rivalries and shifting relations of power among the French, Spanish, British, Dutch and U.S. Americans produced a tremendous diversity of languages and cultures unique to the region. They also generated a complex range of social responses among local peoples seeking to acquire and enjoy the greatest possible degree of freedom in a context continually shaped by opposing conditions: enslavement, the denial of human equality, and the commodification of cultural difference through direct and indirect forms of colonialism.

Methodological Approach and Topics

Through the examples of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Nicaragua, this course explores the evolution of race and blackness as a lived and living social construction over time, taking on different definitions as well as different discursive guises from the sixteenth century to the present. Although focused mainly on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the course considers early colonial imagery of the Caribbean as “the forgotten Eden” and "the Sea of Cannibals," later returning to this imagery in conceiving contemporary sex tourism and eco-tourism as cultural practices rooted in the ideology of conquest.

In our study of the Twentieth Century, we will trace the development of radical expressions of “black pride” in the Negritude and Garveyist movements of Haiti and Jamaica. Students also come to appreciate the origins of Nicaragua and the Dominican
Republic’s respective national myths denying the centrality of slavery and race to their countries’ formation, despite living evidence to the contrary.

In addition, this course refutes the tendency of “modern” society to insist on the segregation of the spiritual life from the political and economic spheres of reality. In fact, many Caribbean peoples, if not most, see such boundaries as fluid or artificial: imposing them "from without" on the societies we study is counter-productive to understanding them. Spiritual practice and belief have not only consistently served to inspire political change and revolutionary action in this region. They form critical dimensions of popular notions of "nation" that conflict with and even usurp, in some cases, the legitimacy of the state. In our study of Jamaica, Haiti, and Nicaragua especially, we will encounter and analyze the links, often direct, between Voudou and the state, Rastafarianism and Jamaica’s peculiar experience with socialism as well as the prominence of Catholic Liberation Theology in the Sandinista Revolution. We will also study the role of United States imperialism in impeding the democratization of these countries through repeated U.S. military occupations and economic policies that limited change. Years- and even decades-long U.S. military occupations of Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua tended to promote military dictatorships rather than pluralistic or democratic governments from the early Twentieth Century through the 1990s.

Goals
This course has three primary goals. First, this class seeks to transform the way students understand concepts that they take for granted, helping them to recognize the relevance of historical, often violent social struggles over definitions of freedom and equality to their daily lives. Second, this course will provide a deep knowledge of the complex realities of Caribbean societies, bringing students to identify with peoples who are among the least understood and often the most vilified, conceived often through such empty catch-all terms as “pirates”, “zombies”, “Communists”, “left-wing radicals”, “cannibals” and the like, both in popular U.S. culture and the mainstream media. Third, this class promises to challenge students at every level, honing their intellectual creativity and forcing them to use it.

Course Requirements:
In-class participation in discussions of readings 20%
Two Analytical Papers on Readings (3 to 4 pages in length) 30%
Midterm Exam 20%
Final Exam 30%

I. Approaches to Learning in This Course & Evaluation
By their nature, lecture courses offer students more information than they can possibly absorb. This course is no different in that respect. It is meant to build cumulative knowledge that, by the end of the course, will reveal relevant, new "truths" to students that explain not only the past, but their own reality in unexpected ways. Equally important, this course requires students to develop the basic skills that every historian needs to interpret the past. These skills include:
the ability to identify with the diverse people we study, no matter how different their interests, views or lives may seem so that we can explain their actions, beliefs and cultural responses to processes of change

the ability to take the short-range view of the historical moment in question and make sense of the long-term consequences of this moment (i.e. figure out what each one of us considers the "turning points" of history are over time)

the willingness to examine parallels between the past and present and to know how our own contemporary interests, identities or perspectives may influence our analysis of the past.

the ability to weigh the relative importance of several, potentially countervailing or coinciding factors at once, in order to determine their relative importance in contributing to collective actions, a historical moment or process of change

In order for students to learn, students must participate in a process that combines community-based analytical exchanges through discussion sections and a more individual dialogue with their instructors. The following assignments and requirements for this course reflect this pedagogical approach.

**Grading Scale:**

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**Attendance is a must and attendance will be taken every day at the start of class.** Students who do not attend lectures will fail to comprehend the individual histories of each country studied or the chronological order of events that drives the process of change connecting these countries as a region. Students who have an unexcused absence and do not attend discussions will receive a failing grade for that week's participation. Consistent with the policy of the UF College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, repeated
absences from the course may result in Professor Guerra preventing a student from attending the class or dropping the student from the course with a failing grade.

Note-taking is also a must. Knowledge of key events, locations, historical figures, organizations and movements is the basis of all historical analysis. History in this course (as in any course offered by UF’s history department) is not the study of generalizations but contingences: being able to explain why something happened is as important as explaining what happened. One cannot be achieved without the other.

Excused Absences: Students who will not be able to take an exam at the scheduled time, need an extension of the due date for a paper or were unable to attend class due to illness must provide medical documentation of their condition at the time. Students who have other conflicts that will prevent them from being able to complete an assignment on time must notify Professor Guerra in advance and discuss whether or not the extension or make-up exam is merited. Students must also notify Professor Guerra if they will incur absences due to UF-sanctioned activities (such as participation in UF teams, etc.).

Academic Honesty: Violations of academic honesty standards include but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of another's work as one's own, bribery, conspiracy and fabrication. The criteria for assessing whether student behavior meets one or more of these violations as well as the sanctions imposed may be reviewed at the website: http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/Rules/4017.htm

Students with disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to Professor Guerra when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resource Center through their website: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

Make-up Policy and Extra Credit: There is no way to make-up for missing discussions of the weekly reading assignment. These will normally take place before or after lecture unless otherwise noted below in the course schedule. Unexcused absences from discussion will result in a participation grade of zero for that week. Evaluation of oral participation in discussion is based on the criteria described immediately below this section.

Other Course Policies: All cell phones must be turned to vibrate at the beginning of class. Internet websurfing, texting, checking of email, or other tasks unrelated to note-taking during lecture, discussion or other classroom activities is not permitted. Professor Guerra will confiscate the cell phone or laptop of any student found engaging in these activities during class and s/he may be asked to leave the classroom. A second violation will result in disciplinary sanction.

II. Participation in Discussion and Importance of Readings (20%) Readings are fundamental to the successful completion of all requirements of this course, not just the discussion section. Papers will analyze readings and some exam
questions will be based exclusively on the reading. Reading assignments include not only analytical writings by historians but primary documents such as historic speeches by Marcus Garvey, the private and propaganda writings of Sandino and Bob Marley lyrics. Moreover, these readings are not only interesting, but many of them are actually exciting! They are also NOT onerously long. So do the reading!

Discussions will be organized around a set of questions found in this syllabus below each reading assignment. Surprise, easy quizzes (if you did the reading!) on the reading may be administered at the Professor’s discretion, as needed, to make sure that students are doing the reading.

Evaluation of oral participation in weekly discussions will be based on these criteria:
1. students' demonstrated command of the material in the reading
2. willingness to engage ideas, questions and other students in debate or dialogue
3. active listening and reflection on concepts presented in lectures in connection to readings
4. silence during class discussion will merit a participation grade of C- or below

Students will receive a mid-term grade for their participation at the time of the mid-term exam. Students who receive a grade of C- or below will be allowed to improve their grade by writing weekly one-page reflections on subsequent readings; these reflections will be due in class at the time of discussion in hard copy form. They will not be accepted afterward.

Course Materials:
1. Reading materials for this course come in a variety of forms that you are responsible for acquiring. Three books were obtained for the course by the University Bookstore or through your own means on-line: Michel-Rolph Trouillot, State against Nation: Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism; Eric Paul Roorda’s The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945; Nathaniel Samuel Murrell's Chanting Down Babylon. Only a few copies will be available from library reserve and it is very important that you get your own copy!

Many of the readings for this course will be made available in digital, downloadable form. Although most journal articles can be downloaded from JSTOR, a library database you can access from the UF library website, they may also be provided by Professor Guerra through Dropbox. Whenever possible, Professor Guerra will simply email the readings to the class through the class list serve. Because UF does not provide faculty with support for the creation of courses on Canvas, Professor Guerra is not able to make use of that system this semester. Students will receive an invitation via email to join a shared folder for this class that Professor Guerra maintains on her Dropbox account. Once a student joins that folder Dropbox, s/he can access all the class materials it contains at any time from any computer. Announcements notifying students of a reading’s availability will be made through the listserv provided by the UF Registrar.
Students are responsible for downloading the reading far in advance of the discussion time when knowledge of it is due and for downloading all other relevant class materials from the shared folder.

2. Maps, lecture outlines with lists of relevant or required terms, etc. will be made available on a weekly basis through the shared folder on Dropbox. Lecture outlines and PowerPoints for lecture will automatically be posted to the shared folder for Dropbox, without additional reminder emails from the professor. Please note that PowerPoints contain valuable imagery, tables and other data provided in lecture but they are no substitute for note-taking.

II. Two Short Analytical Papers (30%)

- **Minimum length** for each paper is three full pages; ideal length for each paper is four pages.
- All papers must be **typed in 12-point Times font and double-spaced**.
- **No digital papers (delivered via email or internet) will be accepted** unless the student is physically unable to deliver the hard copy paper on time. Students will still be required to provide a hard copy of the paper a.s.a.p.
- **Students will write each paper in response to one or more questions** on previously assigned readings provided by Professor Guerra. **Paper questions will be provided on the Monday before each paper is due.**
- **Due dates and delivery location:**
  - **Paper #1**, due **Monday, February 13 IN CLASS.**
  - **Paper #2**, due **Monday, April 17 IN CLASS.**
  - Only hard copies will be accepted except in case of emergency.

Papers must respond to / answer questions through a standard essay format in which a thesis statement is clearly stated, underlined for the purposes of clarity and supporting evidence primarily derived from readings provided. The more specific the examples given to support the argument, the better the paper will be.

Papers will be graded on:
- creative use of specific evidence drawn from the readings
- the clarity of their argument
- coherence of the writing
- grammatical correctness
- analytical “movement” toward a point.

III. Examinations: Midterm (20%) & Final (30%)

Students will take an in-class **midterm examination on the day of our return from spring break, Monday, March 13th** as well as a **cumulative final exam**, emphasizing material from the second half of the course, on the date and time assigned by the College.

The in-class midterm exam will consist of two parts.
Part one of the midterm exam will require students to **identify 3 out of 5 terms** and **locate 8 out of 10 items on a blank map** provided. Part two of the midterm exam will ask students to write a **short response essay in reply to one of two questions provided**. The midterm will be conducted in class, during the course of our regular 50-minute session.

- Fully half of the items on the midterm, as on the final, will derive entirely from the reading and half from the lectures.

A two-hour final exam will follow the same format as the midterm.

- The final exam will consist of **short-answer identifications and maps** as well as **essay questions** to which students will need to respond in analytical essay form. There will be a greater number of identifications on the final and students will write two essays instead of one.

**Please note:** Students will not receive specific essay questions until the day of the exam itself. While this may seem challenging, the purpose of the exams is to test the depth of your acquired knowledge and ability to interpret it in a convincing way. **Exam questions in this course are not meant to "trick you" or challenge you in unexpected ways.** Students who have done their reading, attended lectures and taken advantage of writing opportunities to try out their views of particular historical processes consistently will do well.

### Lecture Schedule & Weekly Reading Assignments

#### Unit I. Colonial Tragedies and Transformations

**W 1/04 Why Study Race, Religion and Revolution in the Caribbean? An Introduction**

**NO CLASS THIS FRIDAY 1/06. Reading for discussion W 1/11:**


**M 1/09 Paradise Lost: The Indigenous Holocaust in the European Imagination**

**W 1/11 Discussion of Sider & Seed. Discussion questions:** What values did early European conquerors and explorers impose on the people and places they saw or encountered? How did they impose these values? How did indigenous peoples experience first encounters with Europeans?

**F 1/13 Sugar, Slavery & the Emergence of Global Capitalism in the British West Indies**


**W 1/18 Discussion of Mintz. Discussion questions:** As Mintz points out, the Caribbean is defined by its "blackness": whites are a minority in most of Caribbean societies, especially those which are the focus of this course. How does this reality serve to explain the historical patterns of development in the region—
economically, politically, culturally? What are those patterns? Given that both ideas originated in slavery, what is the difference between race and racism? (Is there a difference?)

**F 1/20 The Plantation and the Counter-Plantation: Slaves and Maroons**


**M 1/23 Pirates! Counterculture, Countereconomy & the First Anti-Imperial Movement?**

**W 1/25 Discussion of Trouillot. Discussion questions:** In this book, Trouillot argues that despite the fact that Haiti was the first independent nation in America to abolish slavery permanently, the state to which the Haitian Revolution gave birth became parasitic, even predatory by the early Twentieth Century. Moreover, the majority of Haitians, arguably the real "nation" of Haiti, seemed to be worse off over time and more impoverished, despite economic independence from France and abolition. Do you think that Haiti's leaders betrayed the Revolution? If so, what factors explain this apparent betrayal? If not, how do you explain the course of Haiti's nineteenth-century history?

**Unit II. The Age of Liberation and the Struggle for Caribbean Freedom**

**F 1/27 Slave Revolution: The Ideologies, Meanings & Impact of Haiti**

*Reading for discussion W 2/01:*


**M 1/30 English Abolitionists & Slaves as Political Actors in Jamaica**

**W 2/01 Discussion of Paton & Murry. Discussion questions:** The ideology of white racial superiority (and its attending ill of cultural supremacy) emerged in every dimension of colonial Jamaican society. These articles focus on how the legal and medical systems of British officials and planters reflected those values, both symbolically and in the treatment that they afforded slaves and black culture. What examples do they provide? Can symbolic violence be as powerful as physical violence? How do they work together? What are the effects of symbolic violence?

**F 2/03 From Slaves to Subject-Citizens in 19th Century Jamaica**


**M 2/06 Becoming Black: Ideologies of Freedom in the Morant Bay Rebellion**

**W 2/08 Garveyism, Political Control & Black Transnational Radicalism in the BWI**

*F 2/10 Discussion of Martin & Garvey documents. Discussion questions:*

1. Written largely in Jamaica and among West Indian migrants in New York, this selection of Garvey's writings apparently rejected the idea that blacks had anything to gain from cooperation with whites and argued that "a return to Africa", in the spiritual, literal and political sense was in order for black emancipation. *How did Garvey define race? What did Garvey believe was necessary for black empowerment? Do you think Garvey wanted to revolutionize, that is, invert the social order of contemporary society?*
2. Some analysts contend that Garvey's appeal lay in the messianic qualities of his message, rather than its practical political prospects. *How was his message messianic? Do you think Garvey saw himself as a black Christ?*

**FIRST PAPER DUE MONDAY, 2/13 IN CLASS, hard copy only.**

### Unit III. New Dangers, New Nations:

**The Rise and Results of U.S. Imperialism in Haiti, the Dominican Republic & Nicaragua**

**M 2/13 "Cannibal Cousins": The U.S. Military Occupation and Resistance in Haiti**

Reading for discussion F 2/17:


**W 2/15 Papa Doc Duvalier and the "Voodooization" of Haitian Politics, 1934-1971**

**F 2/17 Discussion of Dubois & Nicholls. Discussion questions:** How Haiti's "pariah status" vis a vis the once slave-owning and racially prejudiced Euro-American world affect Haitians' ability to construct a viable nation-state? How did the United States' nineteen-year military occupation of Haiti exacerbate this problem? What might have happened had the United States never occupied Haiti?

**M 2/20 Caribbean Counterpoint: Miskitos, Nicaragua & The Regime of William Walker**

Reading for discussion F 2/24:


**W 2/22 Miskitos and the National Project of Modernity: Liberation or a New Colonization?**

**F 2/24 Discussion of Wolfe. Discussion questions:** Wolfe's article shows how elites understood their own political weakness and Nicaragua's relative poverty as an extension of poor laborers' freedom; that is, elites saw control over labor as critical to their empowerment, enrichment and therefore, Nicaragua's entrance into modernity. How differently did Nicaragua's mixed race laborers see the key to prosperity? How differently did they view the state and, consequently, the "nation" of Nicaragua?

**M 2/27 David vs. Goliath: Sandino, U.S. Marines & the Origins of Somocismo**

Reading for discussion F 3/03:


**W 3/01 "I don't need citizens, I need oxen": Somocismo in Nicaragua, 1930s to 1950s**

**F 3/03 Discussion of Sandino documents. Discussion questions:** Many Nicaraguans (and Latin Americans more broadly) see Sandino as both a nationalist revolutionary and a "Pan-Americanist": that is, they see Sandino as a Nicaragua version of José Martí and other similar intellectuals of the period who promoted Latin American unity saw U.S. interventionism, whether economic, political or both, as detrimental to the development of socially just societies and democracies.

1. What do you think Sandino's goals were? Was Sandino a revolutionary? If so, how did he define revolution? Was he more radical than Marcus Garvey?
2. To what extent did Sandino understand Latin Americans' struggle for sovereignty against U.S. imperialists as a racial struggle? How does gender—in terms of both masculinity and femininity—figure into his moral vision of Nicaragua's fight for freedom?

**SPRING BREAK 3/06-3/10. IN-CLASS MIDTERM WHEN YOU RETURN!!!**

**M 3/13 In-class Mid-term Exam. 50 Minutes. Bring your own blue books and pens!**
W 3/15 Dominican Dilemmas: Race, Nation and the Haitian Other


F 3/17 Totalitarianism, Caribbean-Style: Rafael Trujillo, *The Dictator Next Door*

Unit IV. Revolution and Reaction during the Cold War and Today

M 3/20 The Fall of Trujillo, the CIA, US Marines & the Neo-Trujillista State

W 3/22 Discussion of Roorda. Discussion questions: While Derby locates one of the principal sources of Trujillo's power in discourses of gender and sexuality, Roorda finds them in "gold braids and striped pants". What do these two approaches have in common? How did Trujillo's appeal to gender make him powerful domestically? Internationally?

F 3/24 Discussion of race in the DR, based on a film clip from the 1993 film "Mirrors of the Heart"


M 3/27 Toppling the Somoza Dynasty: Sandinismo Reborn, Revolution Redeclared


F 3/31 Discussion of Hawley. Discussion question: What factors explain Miskito cooperation with the US and participation in the Contra War?

M 4/03 Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: Democrats and Demagogues, 1990-2011


W 4/05 The Iran-Contra Scandal: What Happened & Why it Mattered

Film clip from "The Coverup: Behind the Iran-Contra Affair" (1986)

F 4/07 Discussion of Iran-Contra documents and Reagan readings. Discussion questions: What does the Iran-Contra Scandal reveal about the causes for the Contra War? What US interests were at stake in Nicaragua? What are the legacies of US policy in Nicaragua for today's foreign policies?

M 4/10 Independence and Jamaica's Socialist Way, 1940s-1980s Reading for discussion F 4/12:


W 4/12 Orphan or Pariah: Pigs, AIDS and other Betrayals of Democracy in Haiti

F 4/14 Discussion of Murrell. Discussion questions: Rastafarianism is both a form of black transnational radicalism, much like Garveyism, and a religion. *How different is it from the teachings and philosophy of Garveyism? Is it more radical? How important is blackness to being a Rasta? How do Rastas define "blackness" or race for that matter? In today's global age, do you think that Rastafarianism is a more effective means for effecting change and consciousness of the need for change than other forms of revolutionary thought and struggle that we have encountered?*

SECOND PAPER DUE MONDAY 4/17 IN CLASS, *hard copy only*. 
M 4/17 Dependent Development & the Legacies of Aid in Jamaica and Haiti, 1980s to 2011
W 4/19 FINAL LECTURE. Ecotourism, Cruise Ships, Walmart and Red Lobster:
What We Have to Do with Today's Caribbean

FINAL EXAM ASSIGNED FOR 26C TIME SLOT.
Final exam date May 2 and location assigned by the College. See Registrar website for further information. Be sure to bring your own blue books and pens!